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Modifying Mindfulness: A Christian Translation of Mindfulness

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Modifying Mindfulness: A Christian Translation of Mindfulness

by

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MODIFYING MINDFULNESS: A CHRISTIAN TRANSLATION OF MINDFULNESS

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Has been approved

at the

Graduate School of Clinical Psychology

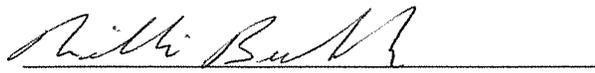
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Abstract

Recently, psychologists have been captivated by the utility of mindfulness in treating a number of psychological problems. Despite the prevalence of mindfulness based treatments, Christian psychologists have done surprisingly little work towards integrating mindfulness, an originally Buddhist concept, with a Christian worldview. Using Johnson's (2007) translation metaphor, I proposed a Christian translation of mindfulness. In order to produce a faithful translation, I first described mindfulness as it appears in the psychological literature. Next, I translated the different elements of Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition of mindfulness as well as a number of proposed mindfulness change mechanisms into a Christian worldview, showing how such a translation captures the core components of mindfulness while also expanding and enriching the concept. I then argued that prayer, when understood as entering into the ongoing and eternal conversation of the triune God, is a faithful final translation of mindfulness. Like mindfulness more generally, such mindful prayer is a liturgical practice that with practice, changes one's "feel for the world" in such a way that one's automatic nonconscious responses—those which lie midway between instinct and conscious decision-making—are transformed. Christian mindfulness, when

understood as entering into the eternal conversation of God, leads us more deeply into the story of God's redemption and is one means through which we learn to "feel" our way within that story. A Christian translation of mindfulness not only connects us with the story of redemption, it brings us into loving and intimate community with God and others; in contrast the mindfulness found in psychology, which leaves a person to delve into his or her own experience alone. Lastly, I suggested directions for future research based on my Christian translation of mindfulness.

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Chapter 1

Psychology, Modernism, and Mindfulness

As psychologists have established the clinical effectiveness of third wave cognitive behavioral therapies, they have started to turn more attention towards understanding the mechanisms of change within these therapies (see Lynch, Chapman, Rosenthal, Kuo, & Linehan, 2006). Of the proposed mechanisms of change, researchers have been keenly interested in mindfulness. But it is not only researchers who are interested in mindfulness; therapists spanning all theoretical orientations are looking for ways to incorporate mindfulness into their practices, particularly as an empirically supported means of fostering emotion regulation (Davis & Hayes, 2011).

Christian therapists are also taking notice of the effectiveness of mindfulness, thus it is surprising that little work has been done to integrate mindfulness—originally a Buddhist concept—with a Christian worldview. Currently, only two published articles have attempted to begin the integration of mindfulness and Christianity. The first is by Siang-Yang Tan, who focused more on the history and clinical uses of mindfulness than on integration itself (Tan, 2011). Tan's main integrative contribution comes from two paragraphs at the end of his article where he summarizes areas where mindfulness may and may not fit well within Christian belief and practice. Due to the brevity of Tan's (2011) comments, his work should be viewed more as a conversation starter than as a true attempt to integrate.

Symington and Symington (2012) wrote the other article attempting to integrate mindfulness practices with Christianity. While Symington and Symington developed an interesting model of mindfulness for their Christian clients to use, their integrative efforts suffered from two shortcomings. One problem was that most of their discussion regarding mindfulness and Christianity is not their own work, but rather was based on the previously cited Tan (2011) article. This means that much of the foundation for their mindfulness model is based on some initial thoughts regarding how to integrate mindfulness into a Christian worldview, rather than a thorough integrative conceptualization of mindfulness.

Another problem with their integration is that their own unique interaction with mindfulness is incomplete. For example, they stated,

Christians are free to extract and employ a truthful principle while not embracing the religious or philosophical tradition to which it is attached. Scripture states that God knows and looks at the heart of the individual (1 Sam. 16:7). God has gifted humans with higher cognitive capacities to assign meaning and intention to activities. Both a Buddhist and a Christian can be engaged in breath meditation, where he or she is following and focusing solely on the breath. Each assigns a different meaning to the same exercise. The Buddhist is reminded of the self being an illusion. The Christian, on the other hand, reflects on the breath of life God has gifted and His loving presence. Thus, the intention of the practitioner can change the meaning and function of the same mindfulness exercise.

(Symington & Symington, 2012, p. 72)

According to Symington and Symington (2012), because humans have the capacity to assign meaning to activities and because God is more concerned with the heart, Christians may use

truthful principles from false contexts in order to pursue God. One short-coming with this approach is that the authors fail to define in what sense mindfulness is a “truthful principle.” They appeal to Tan (2011) in order to say that mindfulness does not appear diametrically opposed to a Christian worldview, but they never explicitly state in what ways mindfulness may be considered a “truthful principle.” Furthermore, they leave the very concept of a “truthful principle” undefined, which means that it is unclear exactly what constitutes a “truthful principle.” As such, while their attempt to integrate mindfulness into a Christian worldview is laudable, it ultimately ends up being partial and incomplete.

Part of the issue may be the integration metaphor itself, for it implies that there are two fields—psychology and theology—that need to be fit together. Yet it is not a given that theology and psychology ought to be—or are—distinct disciplines. Johnson (2007) argues that a Christian psychology ought to be defined, “as simply the study of the nature of individual human beings—and open to any legitimate method of inquiry into its objects” (p. 19). For Johnson (2007), this means that Scripture, philosophy, and theology are inherently included in a Christian psychology. While Johnson (2007) provides a much more thorough and comprehensive argument as to why a Christian psychology inherently includes philosophy and theology, I intend to briefly argue along the same lines, leaning heavily on the work of MacIntyre (2007). My contention is that the primary reason why psychology and theology are seen as two distinct fields of inquiry is because of modernist assumptions that have guided psychology. Specifically, one of the pushes of modernity was to reject an Aristotelian view of the world in order to get behind the distortions that theory brings and face the bare facts of world as they are (MacIntyre, 2007). This drive to get behind theory was one impetus that led to things such as values and telos to be

excluded from science, which I contend results in a reductionistic science. This reductionism within psychology leads modern psychology to miss, and even exclude from psychology itself, essential aspects of what it is to be human. While Dunnington (2011) noted that there is not just one modernity, he rightly points out that there are nonetheless broad generalizations that can be made about modernity, generalizations which I believe will illuminate why integration may not be the best metaphor for the work of Christian psychologists.

From Aristotle to Modernism

How did we arrive at this state of science? According to MacIntyre (2007), there were at least two cultural/philosophical movements leading to the truncated science we see today. The first is the cultural and philosophical movement of empiricism. In short, what the empiricist argued was that knowledge only consisted of those things that were open to direct or indirect experience through the senses (Moreland & Craig, 2003). In other words, according to empiricists, the only possible way to know the world is through seeing, tasting, smelling, hearing, and sensing. The effect of empiricism was,

to close the gap between *seems* and *is*, between appearance and reality. It was to close this gap by making every experiencing subject a closed realm: there is to be nothing beyond my experience for me to compare my experience with, so that the contrast between *seems to me* and *is in fact* can never be formulated. (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 80)

The second cultural and philosophical movement was the emergence of the natural sciences. The natural sciences are characterized by systematic observation and experimentation (MacIntyre, 2007) and in order to systematically observe and perform experiments, those in the natural sciences began to insist that if an object or phenomenon were to be studied, it must be

measurable or defined in such a way as to be measurable, a method which Coe and Hall (2010) define as quantification. The natural sciences, by demanding that objects to be studied must be quantified in order to be systematically observed by means of a controlled experiment, actually increased the distance between seems and is. MacIntyre (2007), commenting on this, says,

The lenses of the telescope and the microscope are given priority over the lenses of the eye; in the measurement of temperature the effect of heat on spirits of alcohol and mercury is given priority over the effect of heat on sunburnt skin or parched throats.

Natural science teaches us to attend to some experiences rather than to objects and only to those when they have been cast into proper form for scientific attention. It redraws the lines between *seems* and *is*; it creates new forms of distinction between both appearance and reality and illusion and reality. (p. 80)

Given the contrast between how empiricism reduces the distance between seems and is and how the natural sciences increase it, it is curious that these two cultural and philosophical movements together contributed to the creation of the reductionistic science we see today. And yet, according to MacIntyre (2007), the two could coexist in the same worldview because they both rejected an Aristotelian view of the world and science. But the empiricists and those in the natural sciences did not just reject Aristotle, they also rejected theory more broadly because of the belief that theory distorts facts. While commenting specifically on the rejection of Aristotle, MacIntyre (2007) makes an illuminating point, saying,

What they agreed in denying and excluding was in large part all those aspects of the classical view of the world which were Aristotelian. From the seventeenth century onwards it was a commonplace that whereas the scholastics had allowed themselves to be

deceived about the character of the facts of the natural and social world by interposing an Aristotelian interpretation between themselves and experienced reality, we moderns—that is we seventeenth century and eighteenth century moderns—had stripped away interpretation and theory and confronted fact and experience just as they are. It was precisely in virtue of this that those moderns proclaimed and named themselves the Enlightenment, and understood the medieval past by contrast as the Dark Ages. What Aristotle obscured, they see. (p. 81)

Both empiricists and those in the natural sciences sought to get behind *a priori* interpretive frameworks and theories in order to simply see bare facts and experiences without the distortion such prior theory bring. This desire to get behind the distortions of *a priori* theories is popularly expressed in the work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes." For Holmes deductive method involves first gathering the facts and only after the facts have been gathered, creating a theory to fit the facts. Thus in "A Scandal in Bohemia" Sherlock comments on his method to Dr. Watson saying, "It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts" (Doyle, 1892/1976b, p. 13). Sherlock echoes this same sentiment in "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box," saying, "Let me run over the principal steps. We approached the case, you remember, with an absolutely blank mind, which is always an advantage. We had formed no theories. We were simply there to observe and to draw inferences from our observations" (Doyle, 1892/1976a, p. 207). These two quotes precisely illustrate what both empiricists and those in the natural sciences sought to do. Scientists were to approach their experiments with a "blank mind." Theory was not to be rejected period, instead theory was to emerge out of the building blocks of facts because it was believed that if

one put theory first, the theory would inevitably distort the facts. Thus scientists using the scientific method believed they could observe the facts of reality and the mechanisms operating in the world as value neutral facts, undistorted by a priori theories, which any rational creature could assent to (MacIntyre, 2007).

The problem with this perspective is that it is impossible to observe and experience reality apart from any interpretive framework (i.e., theory). This is because we always bring an interpretive framework to every experience and use that interpretative framework in order to make sense of the world (Johnson, 2007; MacIntyre, 2007; Smith, 2013). Moreland and Craig (2003) highlight this same point with reference to the process of science by saying,

First, one cannot merely start with observations without some guiding hypothesis or background assumptions, however tentatively they are held, to guide in deciding what is and is not relevant to observe. Pure, presuppositionless observations are a fable in science, and scientists almost never start with observations. Usually, they start with a problem to be solved and a set of assumptions and hypotheses about what is and is not relevant to observe. In the Mendel case above, Mendel and his associates did not observe and record the position of the moon, the weather in Boston or the color of shoes they wore as they did their experiments. These and a vast host of other factors were not observed because the experimenters had enough of an idea about pea breeding to know that these factors were irrelevant but others (the color and texture of seeds, the length of stem) were relevant. These judgments were brought to the task of observing; they were not simply derived from observations. (p. 312)

Yet it was exactly this sort of presuppositionless science that modernist scientists were attempting to achieve. And because of this, scientists were unwittingly bringing their own worldviews to their scientific endeavors, for it was only within those worldviews that the data of science could make any sense. Rather than facing bare, undistorted points of data, scientists were simply denying that they were using their unacknowledged worldviews to select the data to be observed and to make sense of the data they received.

Despite these problems, psychologists have sought to avoid the distortions they believed a priori theories afforded and have attempted to explain humans in entirely mechanical terms. MacIntyre (2007) illustrated the effect this had by saying,

But what is it to try and understand human action in mechanical terms, in terms that is of antecedent conditions understood as efficient causes? In the seventeenth and eighteenth century understanding of the matter—and in many subsequent versions—at the core of the notion of mechanical explanation is a conception of invariances specified by law-like generalizations. To cite a cause is to cite a necessary condition *or* a sufficient condition *or* a necessary and sufficient condition as the antecedent of whatever behavior is to be explained. So every mechanical causal sequence exemplifies some universal generalization and that generalization has a precisely specifiable scope. (pp. 82-83)

So whereas, “For the middle ages mechanisms were efficient causes in a world to be comprehended ultimately in terms of final causes” (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 81), from the Enlightenment on, mechanisms were to be formulated without any reference to purposes, intentions, or reasons (MacIntyre, 2007). The result is a science that excludes any place for values or telos from the outset and thus becomes reductionistic.

Or I should say, such a science becomes reductionistic from a Christian worldview that understands the world with reference to its telos in Christ (Ephesians 1:8-10), for if one is a naturalist or empiricist, such a science is obviously not reductionistic. If we are always interpreting the world through our worldviews, then there is no neutral, completely objective science that any and every “rational” person could assent to. As Johnson (2007) highlights, “Watson argues that all scientific communities are guided by norms that regulate scientific practice and discourse” (p. 158) and if these norms differ, then how different communities evaluate scientific claims will differ. In short, if different scientific communities utilize different standards for interpreting and evaluating scientific claims, then these communities will talk past each other when seeking to argue for their own particular point of view. This is not to say that all truth claims are relative or that there is no way to rationally choose among different truth claims (MacIntyre, 2007), rather it is to say that communities, including scientific communities, create a sort of community specific logic that guides how members of that community interact with, perceive, and evaluate truth claims. This is part of the reason why Johnson (2007) says that there should not only be a Christian psychology, but also a Buddhist psychology, a Muslim psychology, a modernist psychology, and so forth. Johnson (2007) recognizes that different communities have different views of the world which will inherently shape how they conduct and evaluate a science of psychology.

As such, a Christian psychology¹ does not seek to integrate certain faith beliefs with scientific facts. Rather a Christian psychology starts from a Christian understanding of the world

¹ While I use “a Christian psychology” as a shorthand, I recognize with Johnson (2007) that there are many Christian traditions and thus potentially just as many Christian psychologies. Yet I would also be in full agreement with Johnson (2007) when he says, “It is only through dialogue

and builds its science upon its Christian foundation rather than on a secular modernist one. Thus instead of cutting out of psychology things like God, sin, union with Christ, etc. because they are “not scientific” according to the standards of modernity, a Christian psychology starts from the worldview standards of Christianity and includes all relevant information from theology, philosophy, and other applicable fields as an integral part of the science of psychology. From such an approach, the Christian psychologist’s job,

is less about relating two distinct fields of study or domains (psychology with theology, science with faith, psychology with Christianity, or the descriptive with the prescriptive); rather, the task is more about doing a single, unified science or psychology of all reality relevant to understanding the person (which includes study of human emotions, relationships and neuropsychology, as well as sin, values, life in Christ, and what it is to be filled with the Holy Spirit). (Coe & Hall, 2010, p. 72)

Such a psychology, based on a different foundation and worldview, would inherently look different than a secular psychology (Johnson, 2007) and while Christians would undoubtedly include many of the conclusions of modern psychology (particularly those that are less value-laden, such as neuropsychological conclusions), many of the concepts and theories that Christians psychologists would develop would be inherently different than their secular counterparts, due to the inclusion of concepts such as God, sin, human telos, ethics, and union with Christ, just to name a few examples.

with other Christian communities that the strengths of one’s own community’s distinctives can be tested and demonstrated (if they survive)—the worst that can happen is one’s own subtradition is enriched” (p. 218). Thus I would contend that there could be a broad Christian psychology under which a variety of Christian psychologies interact in order to critique and enrich each other.

As Johnson (2007) points out, such an approach to psychological science would effectively leave Christian psychologists speaking a different scientific dialect than their secular peers, for Christian and secular psychologists would both be studying the same object (i.e., humanity) but would be approaching their study and their findings from very different philosophical foundations. Yet despite these differences, Christian psychologists ought to be able to communicate with their peers because there is a common object of study. However, if Christian psychologists are speaking a different scientific dialect than the rest of their peers, then translation might be a more appropriate metaphor for describing how Christian psychologists relate to the rest of the psychological community (Johnson, 2007).

Translating Between Communities

Johnson (2007) argues that to translate, “five 'steps' must be taken: comprehension, evaluation, translation, transposition and composition” (p. 231). Each step will be described in turn. In order to talk about the task of comprehension, one note must be made first. Johnson (2007) observes that Christian psychologists must be fluent in two dialects in order to engage in translation: a “first dialect” (p. 229), which is fluency in Christian theology/thought and a “second dialect” (p. 229), which is fluency in modern psychology. This observation makes intuitive sense. In order to faithfully translate between two languages, one must be intimately familiar with the content and nuances of each language. Without such knowledge, a translator is likely to mistranslate. Thus the task of *comprehension* involves understanding a psychological concept as the authors originally intended. Understanding a topic in a way that the original authors can say, “Yes, that is exactly what I mean,” demonstrates that one has accurately

understood the topic. Such understanding also demonstrates some sense of fluency in psychology (i.e., one's second dialect).

The step after *comprehension* is *evaluation*, which involves critically examining the assumptions and underpinnings of one's second dialect from the vantage point of Christian faith (i.e., one's first dialect). Such an evaluation is meant to make, in the words of Johnson (2007), "the text's meanings (including its connotations and assumptions) that conflict with those of the native tongue rendered salient" (p. 232). It should be noted that much of this chapter has already been devoted to the task of evaluation by showing how modernist assumptions within science have resulted in a reductionist science that, by its very nature, is incommensurate with a more robust Christian worldview.

Different ways to translate. According to Johnson (2007), after *evaluation* comes *translation*. Translation should only occur after one has demonstrated some fluency in the two dialects being discussed and involves actually translating a text or concept from one's second dialect (i.e., psychology) into one's first dialect (i.e., theology). The process of translation is complex and complicated, as translators of the Bible can attest. Bible translations are regularly prefaced with an articulation of the difficulties in translating from one language to another. For example, in the English Standard Version (ESV) the translators state, "Every translation is at many points a trade-off between literal precision and readability, between 'formal equivalence' in expression and 'functional equivalence' in communication, and the ESV is no exception" (Crossway Bibles, 2007, p. vii). In other words, any translator is faced with the tension between being literal and being understandable. Johnson (2007) expands on the translator's dilemma by describing four ways that concepts can be translated. The first way is a simple, word-for-word

transliteration. In transliteration, the translator takes a concept from secular psychology and places it within a Christian worldview with no significant changes to the concept. How neurons fire in the brain is an example of a concept that could be transliterated, for neurons presumably do not fire differently within a Christian worldview than in a natural science worldview (Johnson, 2007). While Christians will affirm that God beautifully designed the neural system in the brain, there seems to be little else that most contemporary American Christians would want to critique about how secular psychologists describe the functioning of neurons in the brain.

A second way that concepts can be translated is by paraphrasing (Johnson, 2007). In a paraphrase, the translator captures the essential meaning of what another person said, but the two languages/dialects will give each expression a unique nuance. In talking about paraphrasing, McFee and Monroe (2011) use the terms stressor from psychology and trial from Christianity as an example of paraphrasing. They explain that, “a stressor is an external phenomena that leads to a stress response” (McFee & Monroe, 2011, p. 319). In contrast, the word trial suggests that some difficult circumstance occurs that is an opportunity for character/moral development. Thus the term stressor does not have any of the moral implications that the word trial has. So while both terms refer to external difficulties, the two terms have nuances in their respective dialects that lead to slightly different meanings, which require a paraphrase when translating what a stressor is within a Christian worldview.

A third way to translate is what Johnson (2007) calls “with explanation” (p. 237). Johnson (2007) explains that some psychological terms and constructs become contaminated from the worldview assumptions of secular psychology. When this happens, psychological terms from secular psychology provide a grain of truth, but ultimately do not portray reality accurately

and thus need to be translated in such a way that the falsehoods or false connotations are corrected. He pointed to research on attributions as an example of psychological research that needs to be translated “with explanation.” He noted that historically, research exploring what attributions people give in order to explain the cause of an event has focused on two types of attributions: internal and external. He says, “Causal attributions for an action can be directed at something ‘inside’ the person (ability, effort) or ‘outside’ the person (luck, someone’s assistance)” (Johnson, 2007, p. 234). What Johnson highlights though is that from this perspective, attributions directed toward God must be interpreted as external. Yet such an interpretation does not necessarily capture how Christians conceptualize attributions directed toward God. For example, might such an attribution for Christians hold a sort of middle ground between internal and external, “for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13, ESV). Such an attribution may or may not inhabit a middle ground, but the point is that research from a Christian worldview is needed to tease this question apart (Johnson, 2007). Thus Johnson (2007) concluded,

To translate the secular literature on attribution accurately will require a fair amount of additional explanation to do justice to the Christian community’s understanding of good action by Christians, and it warrants special research by Christians informed by our community’s assumptions. (p. 235)

A fourth method of translation is substitution (Johnson, 2007). Substitution is for those times when a concept from psychology is simply incompatible with a Christian worldview. In other words, the Christian psychologist has determined that the concept in his or her second dialect is, “plainly inaccurate or at least seriously misleading, given the understanding of the

native dialect community” (Johnson, 2007, p. 235). In these cases, the concept from secular psychology will need to be substituted with a term from Christian psychology that is more accurate and true. An example of a concept that needs to be substituted is self-actualization from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Johnson, 2007). While there are some superficial similarities between self-actualization and Christian sanctification, the differences are too profound to be reconciled. The term self-actualization is firmly rooted in a humanistic conception of reality where the Self is the center of the universe and as such, the primary motivation for seeking self-actualization is individualistic. Sanctification on the other hand, is grounded within a theocentric worldview, where love of God is the primary motivation for all that one does. Furthermore, the processes of sanctification and self-actualization are vastly different. Self-actualization occurs as one progresses up Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, whereas sanctification occurs as “we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18, ESV). Because of these irreconcilable differences, it would be better to reject Maslow’s conceptualization of maturity and instead use the concept of sanctification as a paradigm for optimal health (Johnson, 2007).

Thus according to Johnson (2007), there are four different ways to translate a concept from secular psychology into a Christian psychology. Christian psychologists can utilize transliterations, paraphrases, translations with explanation, and substitutions when trying to translate. These four different ways of translating are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Different Ways to Translate

| Process | Description | Example |
|------------------|---|---|
| Transliteration | Taking a concept from secular psychology and placing it within a Christian worldview with no significant changes to the concept | How neurons fire in the brain |
| Paraphrase | Capturing the essential meaning of concept, but giving a different nuance based on Christian worldview | Stressors vs. trials |
| With Explanation | Translating a concept from secular psychology that has been contaminated with secular worldview assumptions in such a way as to correct those worldview assumptions | Attribution theory with a third category for attributions directed toward God |
| Substitution | A concept from secular psychology is incompatible with a Christian worldview and is thus replaced with an appropriate concept from a Christian worldview | Sanctification for Self-actualization |

Transposition and composition. Once the translation process is completed, the next step is to transpose concepts into a “higher context of meaning” (Johnson, 2007, p. 238). While modern psychology generally only talks about biological and psychological aspects of reality, Christians affirm that there is more to life than biological and psychological realities. Thus Christian psychologists need to draw out the ethical and spiritual realities within psychological concepts. One salient example of a concept that requires transposition is religious conversion (Johnson, 2007). If conversion is only studied with regards to biological, psychological, and social variables, something integrally important to the concept is missed. Conversion to

Christianity exemplifies this point, because when a person truly comes to Christ, there are deep spiritual realities at work in the conversion—such as the Spirit regenerating a person and making that person alive to God—that will necessarily be missed if one is content to only talk about religious conversion at biological, psychological, and social levels.

The final step in the translation process is *composition* (Johnson, 2007). Composition involves the final production of a new Christian psychology text. This new text will be necessarily entail two characteristics: (a) it will be written in an explicitly Christian dialect, using all sources of relevant data (e.g., psychological studies, Scriptural data, etc.), and (b) it will demonstrate some enrichment of the concepts that have been studied. The ultimate goal of composition is to produce a more full and complete description of reality that does not neglect any relevant data (Johnson, 2007).

Summary

Using the translation metaphor, I intend to present a Christian translation of mindfulness. Following Johnson (2007), in Chapter 2 I will first demonstrate comprehension of mindfulness by summarizing the psychological literature on mindfulness. The next step in translation, according to Johnson (2007) is evaluation, but because the majority of this chapter has been dedicated to evaluating and critiquing the philosophical underpinnings behind mindfulness within psychology, Chapter 3 will move directly to translating mindfulness into the Christian dialect, transposing it into a “higher context of meaning” (Johnson, 2007, p. 238), and finally composing a final translation of mindfulness. In my final composition of mindfulness, I will argue that prayer captures the essential components of mindfulness while expanding and enriching the concept of mindfulness, provided that prayer is understood not as starting a

conversation with God, but entering into the ongoing and eternal conversation of the triune God. In Chapter 4 I will provide a detailed argument for why prayer should be understood as entering into the eternal conversation of the triune God. I will then describe how lectio divina could be one concrete example of a Christian mindfulness practice. Lastly, I will point to how a research agenda for lectio divina could be started before providing a concluding summary that highlights the arguments presented in this dissertation.

Chapter 2

What is Mindfulness in Modern Psychology?

The first step in Johnson's (2007) model of translation is comprehension, which involves understanding a psychological concept as the authors originally intended. In order to accomplish this task, I will first highlight a number of proposed definitions of mindfulness and draw out some of the common elements within those definitions before pointing to a summary definition of mindfulness that will be used for the rest of the article. But a summary definition of mindfulness may not capture the fullness of what mindfulness actually is, since there may be mechanisms operative in mindfulness practice that accepted definitions miss. As such, in order to capture other potential aspects of mindfulness, I will end the chapter by summarizing some of the commonly proposed mechanisms of change for mindfulness.

Definition of Mindfulness

Definitions of mindfulness vary (Bishop et al., 2004; Davis & Hayes, 2011; Tan, 2011), which complicates the task of summarizing what mindfulness is. One of the first major proponents of mindfulness within the field of psychology was Kabat-Zinn (Brown, Marquis, & Guiffrida, 2013). He proposed the following definition for mindfulness, which is still often quoted in the mindfulness literature: "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). This definition of mindfulness proposes there are three aspects of mindfulness, which are paying attention purposefully, with a focus on the present moment, and with a nonjudgmental attitude. Shapiro,

Carlson, Astin, and Freedman (2006) pointed to a similar set of three components undergirding mindfulness, which they summarized as, “1. ‘On purpose’ or intention, 2. ‘Paying attention’ or attention, 3. ‘In a particular way’ or attitude (mindfulness qualities)” (p. 375). Shapiro et al. (2006) further argued that these three qualities of intention, attention, and attitude are part of a cyclical process, the outcome of which is mindfulness.

Another commonly cited definition of mindfulness comes from Bishop et al. (2004), who defined mindfulness by saying,

We propose a two-component model of mindfulness. The first component involves the self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment. The second component involves adopting a particular orientation toward one’s experience in the present moment, an orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance. (p. 232)

Although the authors stated that their definition is a two-component definition, notice how they include “in the present moment” in both components. Thus their definition could be split into a three-component definition where mindfulness is composed of (a) sustained attention, (b) in the present moment, (c) with curiosity, openness, and acceptance. When stated with three components, Bishop et al.’s definition overlaps substantially with Kabat-Zinn (1994) and Shapiro et al. (2006).

Linehan (2015) also offered a similar definition to those surveyed thus far. She stated that mindfulness is, “the act of consciously focusing the mind in the present moment without judgment and without attachment to the moment” (Linehan, 2015, p. 151). Or stated negatively,

to be mindful is to avoid acting in autopilot, to refuse to cling to the present moment, and to cease seeking to avoid, suppress, or reject any aspect of experience. Again, notice how this definition points to mindfulness involving purposefully focusing attention in a particular way on the present moment. While Linehan adds “without attachment to the moment” to her definition of mindfulness, the idea of not clinging to some aspect of experience appears to be very similar to being open, nonjudgmental, and accepting of whatever comes up in the present moment. Were one to cling to some aspect of his or her present experience, he or she would end up clinging to one aspect of experience and closing off other aspects of experience. If acting “without attachment to the moment” is understood as a component of having a nonjudgmental attitude to experience, then Linehan’s (2015) definition of mindfulness highlights the same three components as Kabat-Zinn (1994), Bishop et al. (2004), and Shapiro et al. (2006).

Brown and Ryan (2003) described mindfulness as a process comprised of awareness and attention. They stated,

Mindfulness can be considered an enhanced attention to and awareness of current experience or present reality. Specifically, a core characteristic of mindfulness has been described as *open or receptive* awareness and attention (Deikman, 1982; Martin, 1997) which may be reflected in a more regular or sustained consciousness of ongoing events and experiences. (Brown & Ryan, 2003, pp. 822-823)

Following Shapiro et al. (2006), Brown and Ryan (2003) conceived of mindfulness as a process, as opposed to a state or trait. Brown and Ryan’s (2003) definition of mindfulness also shares with the other definitions surveyed a focus on intentional attention on the present moment with an open and receptive attitude.

While it is apparent the definitions surveyed have different nuances, they share a common core. Almost every definition conceptualizes mindfulness as involving purposeful attention, in the present moment, and with an open and nonjudgmental attitude. As such, the definition offered by Kabat-Zinn (1994) may still be the best summary definition of mindfulness as it has been conceived of by psychologists and it will serve as the definition of mindfulness to be translated in the present article.

Even though definitions of mindfulness share substantial overlap, this does not mean that such definitions capture the fullness of what mindfulness is or accomplishes. It may be that mindfulness fosters a number of different processes that are generally beneficial to practitioners and when translating mindfulness into a Christian context, it may be that there is no directly equivalent concept but rather a number of concepts that when taken together, capture what mindfulness captures. Thus it is important to also consider the potential underlying mechanisms of change in mindfulness.

Five Commonly Cited Mechanisms of Change

Mindfulness practices within psychology have generally been used to promote more effective emotional regulation in clients. Thus it has been used by a variety of therapies in order to treat a variety of clinical concerns (Melbourne Academic Mindfulness Interest Group, 2006; Tan, 2011). The question though is how does mindfulness help individuals to more effectively regulate their emotions? Hölzel et al. (2011) pointed to five core mechanisms that they believed accounted for the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation and it is their list that serves as the basis of what follows².

² The terms used to name the five components differ from those used by Hölzel et al. (2011).

A different relationship to thoughts, feelings, and experiences. A number of authors have hypothesized that mindfulness enables individuals to simply observe thoughts and feelings, which leads to a different relationship to thoughts and feelings, where they are seen as impermanent and transitory. Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2013) called this different relationship to thoughts and feelings decentering and they stated that it is an essential component in preventing future depressive episodes for individuals with a history of depression. In a similar vein, Shapiro et al. (2006) argued that mindfulness leads to what they term “reperceiving,” whereby a person is able to simply observe moment-to-moment experience rather than become engulfed in the life story he or she believes to be true. In short, the authors believe that reperceiving is analogous to the observing ego and that the development of reperceiving allows for a shift in perspective that gives a person freedom to see himself or herself as distinct from his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Both decentering and reperceiving are similar to Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson's (2012) concept of self-as-context, which they stated is a form of perspective taking. When talking about self-as-context, they said, “We are speaking of an aspect of self that metaphorically cannot be looked at but instead must be looked *from*” (Hayes, et al., 2012, p. 85). And it is by looking from the perspective of self-as-context that a person is able to see that he or she is distinct from his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Notice that in decentering, reperceiving, and self-as-context, the idea is that an individual is able to take an observing stance toward experience and see that his or her experiences are impermanent, transitory, and not necessarily reflective of reality, which also allows the individual to better tolerate distressing aspects of experience.

Cognitive reappraisal. Another commonly cited mechanism of change is that mindfulness fosters the ability to cognitively reappraise events. Lynch et al. (2006) indirectly argued for this point. They hypothesized that mindfulness may facilitate changes in action tendencies associated with different emotions and it is this change in the latent action tendencies that in turn alters the meaning of a given event. So for example, say person A tends to yell at others when angry. In this case, person A's anger is so closely associated with yelling that the two come to share a meaning; anger means to lash out at others by yelling. Mindfulness practice, especially in the face of anger, would break the relationship between anger and yelling, which in turn would change the meaning of anger for person A. Garland et al. (2010) also believed that mindfulness promotes the ability to cognitively reappraise events by broadening a person's awareness and promoting positive emotional experiences, which in turn enable more flexible thinking styles. Chiesa, Serretti, and Jakobson (2013), in a paper reviewing research on whether mindfulness promotes better emotional regulation through a top-down or bottom-up process, noted that some studies found mindfulness practice was associated with greater activity in areas of the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and decreased activity in the amygdala, especially in novice meditators. This brain activity is associated with cognitive reappraisal and so they interpreted these findings to mean that in novice meditators, mindfulness promotes cognitive reappraisal.

At this point it should be noted though that there are some inconsistencies in the research literature over whether mindfulness is a top-down or bottom-up process (Hölzel et al., 2011). The question is whether mindfulness fosters the ability to regulate emotions by enabling an individual to cognitively reappraise an event (top-down) or by reducing reactivity to emotional experiences within areas of the brain associated with the production of emotions (bottom-up).

Chiesa et al. (2013) reviewed a number of neuroimaging studies done on mindfulness practitioners and noted that in experienced mindfulness meditators, emotion regulation appeared to be a bottom-up process, whereby emotion regulation was associated with decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex and increased activity in areas associated with sensory processing. Yet in novice meditators, mindfulness appeared to be a top-down emotion regulation process, which enabled cognitive reappraisal as evidenced by increased activation in the prefrontal cortex and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC). Hölzel et al. (2011) noted a similar difference in brain regions activated in novice versus more experienced mindfulness meditators. This inconsistency will be further addressed below.

Exposure. A third commonly cited potential mechanism of change is exposure. Because mindfulness involves an openness to all of experience without reacting to it, many authors believe that mindfulness leads to non-reinforced exposure of previously avoided thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (Lynch et al., 2006; Hölzel et al., 2011; Shapiro et al., 2006). It is hypothesized that such non-reinforced exposure creates a new memory or association, which masks an original unconditioned stimulus (US)-conditioned stimulus (CS) connection (Hölzel et al., 2011; Lynch, 2006). In fact, Hölzel et al. (2011) pointed out that the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), the hippocampus, and the amygdala, all of which are implicated in the extinction of a US-CS association, have all been found to be impacted by mindfulness practice, which led the authors to conclude, “There thus appear to be striking similarities in the brain regions being influenced by mindfulness meditation and those involved in mediating fear extinction” (p. 547).

Increased awareness of emotions. A fourth proposed mechanism of change is that mindfulness practice leads to a greater awareness of one's emotions and reactions to them, which assists in emotion regulation. Chiesa et al. (2013) argued that awareness of one's emotions is a prerequisite for regulating emotions and Hölzel et al. (2011) echoed this point. Both suggest that mindfulness leads one to a greater awareness of bodily sensations, which in turn leads to a greater awareness of one's emotional life—though it should be noted that Hölzel et al. (2011) could not find any studies that objectively show that mindfulness meditators actually have a greater awareness of their bodily sensations. This increased awareness allows a person to better regulate his or her emotions since he or she will be able to more quickly identify emotions and take action to regulate them as necessary. In this vein, Segal et al. (2013) hypothesized that individuals who have experienced a depressive episode are more prone to adopt depressive thought patterns in response to sadness. They believed that mindfulness practices may help such individuals to recognize sadness and the depressive thought patterns that follow more quickly, which allows them to utilize effective coping strategies more quickly. A recent review of Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) by van der Velden et al. (2015) found support for Segal et al.'s (2013) hypothesis. They stated that the studies they reviewed showed, "...increased metacognitive awareness of thoughts and feelings predicted reduced relapse risk in MBCT plus TAU [treatment as usual] compared with TAU alone" (van der Velden, 2015, p. 30).

Enhanced attentional control. One last commonly cited mechanism of change is that mindfulness mediates emotion regulation by enhancing one's control over attention. Lynch et al. (2006) hypothesized that mindfulness leads to greater control over attention, saying,

From this perspective, mindfulness would be expected to increase individuals' ability [sic] to turn their attention to what they would like to focus on and let go of that which they do not. Specifically, learning to observe, describe, participate, and decrease attachment to emotional stimuli and sensations may result in shorter, more tolerable emotional regulations. (p. 467)

They also noted such attention may interrupt rumination, which has been associated with a variety of psychopathology (Lynch et al., 2006; Wolkin, 2015). Segal et al. (2013) also suggested that mindfulness uses up the limited attention capacities of humans, which in turn does not leave room for rumination in depressed and post-depression individuals. This conceptualization implies that mindfulness involves attention control, for mindfulness is the means used by these authors to teach individuals to purposefully direct their attention in such a way as to use up a person's limited cognitive space. Wolkin (2015) also suggested that mindfulness enhances emotion regulation by helping practitioners to develop control over their attention and to broaden their attention, which in turn decreases rumination. Or put differently, Wolkin (2015) said mindfulness decreases rumination by teaching individuals to intentionally distract themselves by shifting attention to the present moment and by enabling individuals to decenter and distance themselves from thoughts, feelings, and sensations (note how even when attentional control is the proposed mechanism of change, decentering shows up).

Wolkin's (2015) article merits further comment, for her conceptualization of how mindfulness works may help to clear up the discrepant findings regarding whether mindfulness is a top-down or bottom-up process. Wolkin believes that mindfulness practice is a skill that develops with practice. When one first begins to engage in mindfulness exercises, a great deal of

focused attention is required. This is because many mindfulness exercises involve focusing attention on specific aspects of experience, such as one's breathing or other physical sensations (such as sounds present in the environment). In each of these beginning mindfulness practices, the mind is prone to wander and thus beginning meditators have to constantly redirect their attention to the object of contemplation. Yet as meditators gain experience, no object of contemplation is needed because with experience, meditators are better able to step back and simply notice different aspects of experience. This means that with practice, focused attention plays less of a role in mindfulness meditation and receptive attention, or nonspecific attention, becomes more prominent. Thus another way to interpret Chiesa et al.'s (2013) findings in their review of neuroimaging studies of mindfulness is to say that novice mindfulness meditators show increased activation in the PFC and ACC in part because novices need to repeatedly redirect their attention back to a specific mindfulness exercise, such as mindful breathing. But as meditators gain experience, less PFC and ACC activation is needed to sustain attention, which frees the brain's limited attentional resources to notice other aspects of experience, such as somatosensory elements, which alters the areas of the brain that are activated. We might say that experienced meditators have developed a new habit that is now able to function automatically.

Such an interpretation of Chiesa et al.'s (2013) findings is also consistent with the idea that mindfulness mediates emotion regulation through cognitive reappraisal. If mindfulness is indeed a top-down emotion regulation process, then it may not be very different from the notion that mindfulness enables individuals to have a different relationship to their thoughts and feelings. For in promoting a different relationship to thoughts and feelings, mindfulness will promote a different interpretation of such events. In other words, it could be that mindfulness, in

fostering a different relationship to thoughts, feelings, and experiences, promotes a view of the world where thoughts, feelings, and other events are viewed as transitory and impermanent, which would be a very specific cognitive reappraisal of all reality. Because both creating a different relationship to thoughts, feelings and experiences and cognitive reappraisal have to do with changing how one looks at the world, it seems that these two mechanisms of change can be combined into one, which I will call a global cognitive reappraisal of all reality.

If this interpretation is correct, then the findings by Chiesa et al. (2013) can also be explained by the fact that novice meditators would be expected to show greater activation in the PFC and ACC because in being mindful they are engaging in a new cognitive reappraisal. But over time, less PFC and ACC activation would be needed to make such an overarching reappraisal of reality. In other words, with practice, meditators would not need to reappraise events in order to see them as impermanent and transitory, such an interpretation would gradually become automatic and so no additional activation of the PFC and ACC would be necessary. Thus the notion that mindfulness is a top-down emotion regulation strategy that also enhances attentional control is consistent with the findings of Chiesa et al. (2013).

Summary

This chapter has noted that while definitions of mindfulness vary, in general the same three core components show up: intentional attention, in the present moment, with an open and nonjudgmental attitude. So while mindfulness has now been studied for the better part of two decades, the definition proposed by Kabat-Zinn (1994) may still be the best summary definition. He defined mindfulness by saying, “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). But as the

survey of the proposed mechanism of change indicates, there may be other aspects operative in mindfulness that the definitions cited do not capture. Therefore it is important to consider the mechanisms of change proposed for mindfulness when translating mindfulness. While five common mechanisms of change were cited in this review, I noted that the conceptual similarity between mindfulness as a method for promoting a different relationship to thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and mindfulness as a cognitive reappraisal strategy warrant combining these two mechanisms of change into one, which I called a global reappraisal of all reality. Thus the four mechanisms of change I will explore in my translation of mindfulness are: (a) Mindfulness creates a cognitive reappraisal of all reality (b) Mindfulness leads to exposure, which reduces reactions to different thoughts, feelings, and sensations, (c) Mindfulness enhances one's awareness of thoughts and feelings, which in turn enables a person to more quickly respond to and regulate emotional states, and (d) Mindfulness promotes emotion regulation by enhancing one's control over attention. Both the definition provided by Kabat-Zinn (1994) and the aforementioned mechanisms of change will be utilized in translating mindfulness into a Christian context.

Chapter 3

Translating Mindfulness into the Christian Narrative

In this chapter, I will seek to translate Kabat-Zinn's (1994) three-component definition of mindfulness as well as the four commonly cited mechanisms of change described in the previous chapter. As you may recall, in Chapter 2 I argued that mindfulness as a means of fostering a different relationship to thoughts, feelings, and experiences and mindfulness as a means of fostering an overarching cognitive reappraisal were one and the same mechanism of change. But before I seek to translate the various aspects of mindfulness, I need to broadly sketch the narrative into which I am translating mindfulness. This is because, as I argued in Chapter 2, we are never able to objectively face the bare facts of reality. Rather we always perceive and make sense of the world from some prior interpretive framework and as such, parts gain their fullest meaning in relation to the whole. Thus as I translate each part of mindfulness, it is necessary to know the broad contours of the interpretive framework (i.e., the whole) I am translating into. In this way, I am actually engaging in transposition and translation at the same time, for in tracing out the story of redemption before translating, I will set myself up to translate and place each aspect of mindfulness within the higher context of God's redemptive purposes. But as I endeavor to offer a broad sketch of the story of redemption, I am very aware that different denominations will emphasize different parts of the story. Furthermore, different denominations employ different hermeneutical methods, which lead to various understandings of redemptive history itself. For example, a progressive dispensationalist understands the relationship between Israel

and the church very differently than someone persuaded by covenant theology. While it is impossible to completely remove my own biases from my summary of redemptive history, the sketch of redemptive history that follows is intentionally broad and seeks to avoid points of controversy. So for example, while I have strong opinions regarding the relationship between Israel and the church which inform how I view redemptive history, I do not comment on that relationship in what follows. My hope in doing so is that I might stay in the vein of C. S. Lewis and present a sort of “Mere Christianity” (Lewis, 1952/2002). Such a sketch risks not totally satisfying anyone, but it is offered as such with the hopes that as broad an audience as possible might benefit from and interact with my translation of mindfulness.

My sketch of redemptive history starts at the beginning, when God created a good world (Genesis 1:31) and placed his own image bearers in the world to tend to it and fill it (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15). Tragically though, God’s image bearers rebelled against God and thus plunged themselves and the world into darkness (Luke 2:79; John 3:19; Colossians 1:13) and subjected themselves and the world to slavery (Romans 6:17-18, 8:19-21). But God, who is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4), decided to redeem the world and rescue it from its darkness. As previously mentioned, while different denominations understand the progression of redemptive history differently, almost all agree that the culmination of God’s saving work occurred in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God who is both fully God and at the same time fully human, the Father’s anointed king. In the death of Jesus, God reconciled the world to himself (Ephesians 1:10) and offers adoption, redemption, and the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:5-7) for all who repent and confess that Jesus is the risen lord (Romans 10:9-10). Furthermore, when God raised Christ from the dead, he enthroned him at his right hand and gave him authority

as king over all things (Ephesians 1:20-23; Matthew 28:18). With Christ as king, his people now seek to be lights to the world (Matthew 5:14-16) as they wait for Christ to return to “judge the quick and the dead” (Episcopal Church, 1979, p. 66) and to bring about the fullness of his kingdom, where there is no more sin, darkness, sickness, or evil (Revelation 21:3-4, 22-27, 22:1-5).

Hays (1996) summarizes the story similarly saying,

That story may be summarized roughly as follows:

The God of Israel, the creator of the world, has acted (astoundingly) to rescue a lost and broken world through the death and resurrection of Jesus; the full scope of that rescue is not yet apparent, but God has created a community of witnesses to this good news, the church. While awaiting the grand conclusion of the story, the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is called to reenact the loving obedience of Jesus Christ and thus to serve as a sign of God’s redemptive purposes for the world. (p.193)

Within this redemptive framework, God is renewing humans as well. As his people “strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33) they are being conformed into the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29). As Lewis (1952/2002) says,

The real Son of God is at your side. He is beginning to turn you into the same kind of thing as Himself. He is beginning, so to speak, to ‘inject’ His kind of life and thought, his *Zoe*, into you; beginning to turn the tin soldier into a live man. (p. 153)

This is important to note because if conformity to Christ is the end goal for humans, then a Christian translation of mindfulness must not only fit into the broad story of redemption, but it must also serve to further our growth into the image of Christ. In other words, if conformity to

Christ is true health, then a transposition of the translation of mindfulness must situate Christian mindfulness within God's work to make his people like Christ.

And with that broad sketch of redemptive history, I now turn to the task of translating mindfulness. In Chapter 2, after reviewing a number of definitions of mindfulness, I noted that the definition offered by Kabat-Zinn (1994) may still be the best summary definition of mindfulness and as such, would be used as the basis for my translation of mindfulness.

According to Kabat-Zinn (1994), "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally," (p. 4). I also highlighted four commonly proposed mechanisms of change in mindfulness: (a) Mindfulness leads to a global reappraisal of all reality, (b) Mindfulness is a means of exposure, (c) Mindfulness promotes the ability to shift attention, and (d) Mindfulness promotes greater awareness of one's emotions. As I seek to translate mindfulness, I will examine the three components proposed in Kabat-Zinn's definition (i.e., paying attention: (a) on purpose, (b) in the present moment, and (c) nonjudgmentally) as well as the four commonly cited mechanisms of change (summarized in Table 2).

Translating Mindfulness

Paying attention on purpose. The first aspect of mindfulness in Kabat-Zinn's definition is paying attention on purpose. This aspect of mindfulness appears to work as a transliteration, as Scripture often points to the importance of purposefully focusing attention. For example, in Colossians 3:1-3, Paul tells the Colossians,

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things

that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (New Revised Standard Version [NRSV])

Table 2

Definition of Mindfulness and Mechanisms of Change

Definition: “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally,” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4)

| Three Components of Kabat-Zinn’s (1994) definition: | Four Commonly Cited Mechanisms of Change: |
|---|---|
| 1. Paying attention on purpose | 1. Mindfulness leads to a global cognitive reappraisal of all reality |
| 2. Paying attention in the present moment | 2. Mindfulness promotes exposure |
| 3. Paying attention nonjudgmentally | 3. Mindfulness increases emotional awareness |
| | 4. Mindfulness enhances attentional control |

Here Paul argues that because they have been raised with Christ, the Colossian believers ought to not only pursue things that are above (which Paul spells out in greater detail in 3:12-4:5), but they should also intentionally set their minds on such things. Paul gives the Philippians a similar charge, saying,

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that

you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9, NRSV)

Once again, Paul encourages the church to both do certain things and to intentionally think about certain things.

This theme of purposeful, directed attention is not limited to the New Testament. Two very significant Old Testament passages point in the same direction. The very first Psalm in the Book of Psalms points to the importance of intentional and purposeful attention. Generally considered a wisdom Psalm (VanGemeran, 2008; Williams, 1986), Psalm 1 introduces the Psalms and sets the stage for the rest of the book (VanGemeran, 2008). The fact that Psalm 1 is a wisdom Psalm is important, for wisdom in Hebrew, “means generally, ‘masterful understanding,’ ‘skill,’ ‘expertise,’” (Waltke, 2004, p. 76). In the context of the Old Testament, wisdom refers to the virtue that arises out of a covenant relationship with God (Waltke, 2004). In short, wisdom is what is needed to live a happy, flourishing human life. And so Psalm 1 opens with,

Happy is the one who does not take the counsel of the wicked for a guide, or follow the path that sinners tread, or take his seat in the company of scoffers. His delight is in the law of the LORD; it is his meditation day and night. He is like a tree planted by water channels; it yields its fruit in season and its foliage never fades. So he too prospers in all he does. (Revised English Bible).

According to Psalm 1, the flourishing human being is the one who eschews all that is ungodly and purposefully meditates on the law of God day and night. It is important to note that the “law of the LORD” refers not only to the commandments of God, but rather refers to all of God’s

revelation of himself, in word and mighty deed, to the Israelites (VanGemeran, 2008). So at the beginning of the Psalms, purposeful meditation on the words and acts of God is put forth as the way of wisdom, the way of the fully flourishing human.

While this will be addressed in greater detail later in my translation, it is interesting to note that the sort of practiced and continual meditation envisioned here points to the law of God being internalized into the very being of the worshiper who meditates. In other words, over time, meditation on the word of God leads to an overarching reappraisal of all of life that is ultimately expressed in action. Thus VanGemeran (2008) says,

The alternation of perfect (v.1) and imperfect (v.2) brings up the habitual aspect of reflection on God's word (Jouon, par. 112d). The one who meditates *continually* reflects God's word in life.... Meditation is not the setting apart of a special time for personal devotions, whether morning or evening, but it is the reflection on the Word of God in the course of daily activities (Josh. 1:8).... Even when the word is not explicit, the godly person has trained his heart to speak and act with wisdom (Prov. 1:1-7). (p. 55)

A second significant Old Testament passage that points to the importance of purposeful attention on the law of God is Deuteronomy 6:6-9, which occurs after the famous Shema and the call to love the Lord with all of one's being. In this passage, the author of Deuteronomy writes,

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to you children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your head, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(Deuteronomy 6:6-9, NRSV)

To talk about the law at home and away and when lying down and rising connotes talking about and reciting the law at all times (Crossway Bibles, 2007). Thus in both Psalm 1 and Deuteronomy 6:6-9, there is an emphasis on exercising intentional attention on the law of God.

Because of the emphasis on purposeful attention within Scripture, it seems fair to say that the purposeful attention called for in mindfulness can be translated as a transliteration. Yet in surveying the above-mentioned passages, it becomes apparent that there is a directionality to how Christians purposefully pay attention. For Christians are not to focus their attention on anything and everything. Rather they are to set their minds on things above and meditate on the law of God. This element sets apart Christian mindfulness.

Paying attention in the present moment. The second part of Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition to translate is "in the present moment." It seems to the present author that to say that mindfulness involves attention to the present moment is a troublesome concept and presents a couple of problems. First, anything a person does or focuses on inherently occurs in the present moment. A thought about the past is still a thought in the present moment. Thus by changing my focus from a thought about the past to the feel of my pen as I write this sentence is not to suddenly become focused on the present moment, but simply to switch what I am focusing on in the present moment. Which leads to the second problem with the notion that mindfulness involves purposeful attention in the present moment: namely, which part of the present moment is to be focused on? For the present moment is not a monolithic entity. I could focus on my heartbeat, the sound of the nearby fountain, the feel of the table on my forearm, and the sight of the red bricks surrounding the aforementioned fountain, not to mention any given thought that passes through my head, all of which would be "in the present moment." The problem is not that

people are not living in the present moment, but that they are either stuck in a ruminative thought pattern or are acting on autopilot rather than intentionally directing their attention. And so when Segal et al. (2013) discuss how mindfulness helps clients with a history of depression, a part of their explanation is that mindfulness helps clients to switch attention and to place their limited attentional pathways on other—presumably less troubling—things. So, what “in the present moment” tries to capture might be better captured by saying that mindfulness fosters the ability to shift attention, which it may be recalled, is one of the commonly cited mechanisms of change cited in Chapter 2.

But it should also be noted that purposeful attention is essentially the same as the ability to shift attention. The only thing added by “enhances attentional control” is the “enhances” part. But if we assume that mindfulness involves purposeful attention and that with practice, one can better exercise that purposeful attention, then a separate translation for mindfulness “enhances attentional control” is not needed. As such, the ability to purposefully pay attention also captures the essence of the commonly cited mechanism of change that says mindfulness enhances one’s ability to shift attention. In other words, “in the present moment,” “enhances attentional control,” and “purposeful attention” all refer to the same thing (i.e., the ability to purposefully shift attention). If this is the case, then “in the present moment” and “enhances attentional control” can both be folded into “purposeful attention” and as such do not need to be translated separately; a translation of “purposeful attention” will translate what “in the present moment” and “enhances attentional control” pointed to in the first place. Thus “in the present moment” and “enhances attentional control” can both be translated as purposeful attention on, “things that are above” (Colossians 3:2, NRSV).

Paying attention non-judgmentally. The last part of Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition states that mindfulness practice is "nonjudgmental." But before translating the nonjudgmental portion of mindfulness, it is important to understand precisely what is meant by the term "nonjudgmental." Linehan (2015) argues that there are two kinds of judgment. The first kind she calls "Judgments That Discriminate" (Linehan, 2015, p. 200). She says, "To 'discriminate' is to discern or analyze whether two things are the same or different, whether something meets some type of standard, or whether something fits the facts" (Linehan, 2015, p. 200). To discriminate is different than the second type of judgment—to evaluate—which Linehan (2015) describes by saying, "To 'evaluate' is to judge someone or something as good or bad, worthwhile or not, valuable or not. *Evaluations are something we add to the facts. They are not part of factual reality*" (p. 200; emphasis added). Thus to discriminate is simply to describe the facts of reality whereas to evaluate is to add claims like "good" and "bad" to the observed facts of reality. According to Linehan (2015) then, "Nonjudgmentalness is describing reality as 'what is,' without adding evaluations of 'good' and 'bad' or the like to it."

Kabat-Zinn (1994) points in a similar direction when he says (in reference to being nonjudgmental),

What we are interested in in meditation is direct contact with experience itself—whether it is of an inbreath, an outbreath, a sensation or feeling, a sound, an impulse, a thought, a perception, or a judgment.... While our thinking colors all our experience, more often than not our thoughts tend to be less than completely accurate. Usually they are merely uninformed private opinions, reactions and prejudices based on limited knowledge and

influenced by our past conditioning. All the same, when not recognized as such and named, our thinking can prevent us from seeing clearly in the present moment. (p. 56)

And so for Kabat-Zinn, being nonjudgmental has to do with directly experiencing reality without the distortions of evaluative thoughts. For both Linehan (2015) and Kabat-Zinn (1994), being nonjudgmental means directly and objectively experiencing reality as it is without the distortions of interpretation.

The reader may recall that in Chapter 1, I argued that such an objective view of reality is impossible. So how are we to understand the nonjudgmental aspect of mindfulness? Despite the fact that Kabat-Zinn's (1994) overall perspective on being nonjudgmental is flawed, he nonetheless points in the right direction when he says that while we tend to think we know reality, all too often we fundamentally distort it. But while his and Linehan's (2015) solution is to be more objective, the Christian solution calls for the renewing of our minds to see reality as God sees it (Romans 12:2). So instead of a more objective view of reality, we could say Christians are to have a more covenantal view of reality. A covenantal view of reality, as I am calling it, rejects the idea that a person, with only pure reason, can objectively see reality as it is. Instead, a covenantal view of reality affirms that reality can only be grasped as it truly is in relationship to the covenanting God. Far from being detached and objective, a covenantal view of reality is deeply attached to a particular view of reality; in this sense it involves worldview transformation. But this attachment does not make the perspective less reflective of reality; rather, from a Christian perspective it makes it more accurately reflective of reality.

As such, a Christian translation of mindfulness will not involve being nonjudgmental in the sense of avoiding evaluation. Rather, Christian mindfulness will involve a substitution of the

nonjudgmental aspect of mindfulness for the call to “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2, NRSV). Thus Christian mindfulness involves evaluation of the degree to which thoughts and experience are consistent with the will of God. Commenting on when substitution is appropriate in translation, Johnson (2007) stated, “The native translator makes this assessment after concluding that the secondary dialect discourse is plainly inaccurate or at least seriously misleading, given the understanding of the native dialect community” (p. 235). I believe the term “nonjudgmental” would be seriously misleading as it would suggest one goal of mindfulness is to directly experience reality and be more “objective” in the sense of doing so in the absence of any values or meaning system.

While being nonjudgmental also involves the recognition that humans do in fact distort reality, I believe that the notion that our minds must be renewed also captures that reality, without suggesting we can gain some sort of objective and detached view of the world. The notion that those who are in the flesh set their minds on the things on the flesh while those who are in the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5) seems to amplify this by suggesting that our very perception of the world is always focused either through the lens of the flesh or the lens of the Spirit. Furthermore, Romans 12:2 and similar passages (such as Ephesians 4:23-24) point to the fact that in being renewed, our minds are to discern the will of God in order to lead lives that are pleasing to God and transformative for his people. Thus Christian mindfulness takes us beyond perceiving what is; it guides us toward transforming ourselves and thus what is around us in the direction of conformity to God’s will and kingdom—“thy kingdom come.”

Translation of Kabat-Zinn (1994). Kabat-Zinn (1994) defined mindfulness as, “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally” (p. 4). After examining each of the three parts of his definition, I concluded that a Christian translation of mindfulness will involve purposeful attention, but that such purposeful attention is directed toward “things above” and on the law of God.

I also argued that Kabat-Zinn’s (1994) “in the present moment” is a troublesome concept both because everything a person focuses on occurs in the present moment and because the present moment is not a monolithic entity. It seems that what “in the present moment” seeks to capture is that in mindfulness, rather than being stuck in rumination, a person is able to shift his or her attention onto other aspects of experience. In other words, mindfulness practice involves purposeful attention. Thus what “in the present moment” tried to point to is captured more adequately by “purposeful attention” and as such, it does not need its own separate translation. I also noted that to say that mindfulness involves “purposeful attention” and to say that mindfulness “enhances attentional control” is to say essentially the same thing. The only thing added by “enhances attentional control” is the “enhances” part. But if we assume that mindfulness involves purposeful attention, and that with practice one can better exercise that purposeful attention, then a separate translation for mindfulness “enhances attentional control” is not needed. In short, the translation of “mindfulness involves purposeful attention” captured the core of both “mindfulness involves attention in the present moment” and “mindfulness enhances attentional control.”

Lastly, I showed that the “nonjudgmental” portion of Kabat-Zinn’s (1994) definition actually meant to seek a more objective view of reality. Yet as noted in Chapter 1, such an

objective view of reality apart from interpretive frameworks is impossible. What Christians ought to seek is not a more objective view of reality, but a more covenantal view of reality. A covenantal view of reality is essentially “faith seeking understanding” (Migliore, 2014, p. 2) in relationship to God and while very “biased,” it is nonetheless reflective of reality. Yet there is an element where our views of reality are distorted and we are called to, “. . .not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2, NRSV).

In summary, then, a Christian translation of mindfulness will take into account at least two elements. It will take into account that Christians are to purposefully pay attention on things above and on the Word of God. And they are to pay attention on things above and on the Word of God in order to, in covenant relationship with God, be renewed in the spirit of their minds. Having examined each part of Kabat-Zinn’s (1994) definition of mindfulness, I will now seek to translate the three remaining mechanisms of change, noting that “enhances ability to shift attention” has been folded into “purposeful attention”.

Translating the Mechanisms of Change Behind Mindfulness

Global cognitive reappraisal of reality. As argued in Chapter 2, two of the proposed mechanisms of change—mindfulness as a means of fostering a different relationship to thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and mindfulness as a means of promoting cognitive reappraisal—may reflect a single mechanism of change, which I called a global cognitive reappraisal of all reality. To say that mindfulness promotes emotion regulation by creating a global cognitive reappraisal of all reality may be slightly misleading though. This is because mindfulness practices do not teach practitioners to believe certain truths; rather mindfulness practices lead to a new view of

reality that is “caught rather than taught.”³ In other words, the very practice of mindfulness over time leads to changes in how a person sees reality, but such a change is likely more akin to a new “feel for the game” than it is an explicit change in propositional beliefs.

The work of Smith (2013) and a review of research by Bargh (2005) will help to make my point clear. In his book “Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works” Smith (2013) argues that humans are primarily desiring beings who have a bodily “feel” for the world, a “feel for the game” if you will, that is between instinct and cognition. It is through this bodily “know how” that we perceive and evaluate the world even prior to cognitive evaluation. But this knowledge of the world contained in the body is not just static knowledge, according to Smith. Humans, in the space between instinct and conscious cognition, move in the world with goals and intentions. Thus humans both understand and move in the world in ways that go beyond mere instinct and conscious choice. Smith (2013) illustrates this point by talking about human sexuality, saying,

When I perceive a situation as sexually charged or as having a kind of sexual significance, such perception is not the result of some deductive, rational process. For example, if I have been adequately socialized to pick up on certain cues, I will ‘know’ when someone is flirting with me. Now, the sort of ‘training’ that equips me to ‘know’ such a sexual situation is rarely if ever didactic and explicit; it’s rather a kind of know-how one ‘picks up.’ Furthermore, if someone were to ask me to articulate how I ‘knew’ so-and-so was flirting with me, I might not be able to propositionally articulate the criteria by which I

³ Throughout Smith’s (2013) work, he utilizes quotation marks when referring to the knowledge that is between instinct and conscious choice. I follow that convention in this dissertation in order to convey that this bodily knowledge, precisely because it is not propositional knowledge and is instead nonconscious knowledge, is hard to translate into propositional statements.

made such a judgment. Nonetheless, the inability to articulate such sexual ‘understanding’ does not thereby prove the perception wrong or false—it can also indicate that ‘there is an erotic ‘comprehension’ not on the order to understanding’ (PP 181). (p. 62)

In Smith’s example, we see that there is an implicit feel for the world that is learned and thus goes beyond instinct and yet is not consciously or explicitly taught or thought about.

Bargh (2005) presents evidence suggesting that humans monitor, perceive, and respond to much of their world at a nonconscious level and that nonconscious systems can guide complex, goal directed behavior; evidence that is consistent with Smith’s (2013) contention. Bargh looks at the neurological evidence for nonconscious perception and behavior. He states,

The brain structure that has emerged as the primary locus of automatic, nonconsciously controlled motor programs is the cerebellum, and specifically the neocerebellum (Thach, 1996). With frequent and consistent experience of the same behaviors in the same environmental context, this brain structure links the representations of those specific behavioral contexts with the relevant premotor, lower level movement generators. In this way, complex behavior can be mapped onto specific environmental features and contexts and so be guided automatically by informational input by the environment (i.e., bypassing the need for conscious control and guidance). Critically, cerebellar output extends even to the main planning area of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, providing a plausible neurological basis for the operation of automatic, nonconscious action plans (e.g., Bargh & Gollwitzer, 1994). As Thach (1996) concludes from his review of research on the role and function of the cerebellum, “[it] may be involved in combining

these cellular elements, so that, through practice, an experiential context can automatically evoke an action plan” (p.428). (Bargh, 2005, p. 43).

Here, Bargh (2005) points to three of things of note. First, the cerebellum can, with repeated exposure, link environmental cues with specific situations. Second, this repeated exposure allows the cerebellum to also link such contexts with relevant responses. And third, such automatic responses do not need conscious thought to be enacted. In short, the body can, with training, have an implicit feel for what a situation is and how to respond to it, a feel that is beyond instinct and yet does not require conscious choice.

In addition to this evidence about the cerebellum’s role in nonconscious goal directed behavior, Bargh (2005) also points to research examining the differing effects of brain lesions in various regions of the brain. He says,

Those with lesions in the parietal lobe region could identify an object but not reach for it correctly based on its spatial orientation (such as a book in horizontal versus vertical position), whereas those with lesions in the ventral-visual system could not recognize or identify the item but were nonetheless able to reach for it correctly when asked in a casual manner to take it from the experimenter. In other words, the latter group showed appropriate action toward an object in the absence of conscious awareness or knowledge of its presence. (Bargh, 2005, p. 44).

Once again, Bargh shows that humans can appropriately perceive and act in the world in a way that goes beyond mere instinct but is nonetheless automatic and nonconscious.

More recently, Kahneman (2011; as cited in Moes & Tellinghuisen, 2014) points in a similar direction to Bargh (2005) regarding the ability of humans to perceive and interact in the

world in nonconscious and automatic ways. Kahneman (2011; as cited in Moes & Tellinghuesen, 2014) describes two ways of thinking through the world. The first he calls System 1 or fast thinking. Commenting on System 1 thinking, Moes and Tellinghuisen (2014) said, “Kahneman states that System 1 continuously generates information and conclusions based on intuition” (p. 128). So in one sense, to call System 1 “fast thinking” is misleading, for it is more of a gut level intuitive process than a propositional thinking process. The second type of thinking through the world is called System 2 or slow thinking. System 2 thinking is slower and deliberate. It takes the conclusions of System 1 thinking and when necessary, examines those conclusions more closely in order to see whether revision is needed. Kahneman (2011; as cited in Moes & Tellinghuisen, 2014) also noted that the deliberate use of System 2 thinking can, over time, be used to reshape the intuitive and automatic conclusions of System 1 thinking.

Recall how I noted that Smith (2013) argues that we feel our way through the world and that such feeling is prior to conscious thinking. While Kahneman (2011; as cited in Moes & Tellinghuisen, 2014) speaks of both systems as “thinking,” it is striking that the intuitive and automatic thinking occurs prior to and serves as the basis of the slower and more deliberate thinking process. Thus the research by Bargh (2005) and Kahneman (2011; as cited in Moes & Tellinghuisen, 2014) both seem to provide evidence for Smith’s (2013) contention that humans primarily “feel” their way through the world in a way that is both automatic and nonconscious and yet also resides in a space between instinct and conscious cognitive thought.

How does such a gut level, bodily-based feel for the world get developed? Smith (2013) argues that it is shaped through story, metaphor, art, and bodily practices that “carry” and enact a story within them. So the Eucharist (in part) carries and enacts the new exodus whereby Jesus

delivers us from sin and death and leads us into the kingdom of God. Smith (2013) uses the term “liturgy” to describe such practices (cf. Smith, 2009). He says,

Liturgy is the shorthand term for those rituals that are loaded with a Story about who and whose we are, inscribing in us a *habitus* by marshaling our aesthetic nature. Liturgies are ‘cunning’ pedagogies that exhort what is essential while seeming to demand the insignificant, precisely because they are stories that are told by—and told upon—our bodies, thereby embedding themselves in our imagination, becoming part of the background that determines how we perceive the world. Liturgies are those social practices that capture our imaginations by becoming the stories we tell ourselves in order to live. (Smith, 2013, p. 139)

In Smith’s (2013) argument, liturgies are those ritual practices that over time shape our feel for the world and instill in us an implicit story by which we navigate the world.

What I am suggesting is that mindfulness is a sort of liturgical practice that over time instills in practitioners a gut level, bodily based feel for the world. This feel for the world includes a sense that emotions, thoughts, and experiences are transitory and impermanent, as well as bearable. And with practice, such a gut level feel for the world and how we engage in it can be activated automatically and can guide both nonconscious perception of situations and behavior. So for example, a person who habitually practices mindfulness may automatically and implicitly know that strong emotions are transitory and may also nonconsciously engage in mindfulness to cope with them.

Such an interpretation of how mindfulness works is incredibly consistent with my earlier reflections on purposefully meditating on Scripture. I noted that VanGemeran (2008),

commenting on Psalm 1, said, “Even when the word is not explicit, the godly person has trained his heart to speak and act with wisdom (Prov. 1:1-7)” (p. 55). In other words, the liturgical practice of meditation on the word of God trains the godly person to automatically and nonconsciously perceive and act in accordance with wisdom; Scripture meditation is one practice that leads a person to gradually become more like Christ by second nature.

All of this is to say that to translate mindfulness by saying it promotes a cognitive reappraisal of all reality would be misleading. As such, a substitution is once again deemed appropriate. Instead of saying mindfulness promotes a cognitive reappraisal of all of reality, I will adopt Smith’s (2013) terminology and say that mindfulness is a liturgical practice that shapes our gut level, bodily feel for the world and our ways of engaging in it.

Mindfulness promotes exposure. This understanding of how mindfulness leads to a different, though largely implicit, view of the world may also inform how to translate mindfulness as a means of exposure. I will not provide a thorough treatment of mindfulness as a means of exposure, for such a treatment would require its own separate translation of exposure itself, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. But it is worth noting the similarities between how exposure works and how mindfulness leads to a different view of the world. For in exposure work, cognitive changes in how one sees a feared stimulus are not sufficient to reduce fear reactions. Though such cognitive information about how a feared stimulus is not actually as dangerous as believed may help a person become willing to engage in the actual work of exposure, what actually leads to a new perspective of the feared stimulus is repeatedly facing it for extended periods of time until a person learns on an implicit, non-cognitive level that the feared stimulus need not be feared (Emmelkamp, 2013). Such implicit, non-conscious

knowledge of course leads to cognitive changes in how the stimulus is perceived, but it is the repeated practices of exposure itself, rather than the cognitive reappraisal, that actually leads to change.

Mindfulness enhances emotional awareness. The last mechanism of change to translate is mindfulness mediates emotion regulation by increasing one's awareness of his or her emotions. Few would argue that increased awareness of one's emotions is a bad thing or incompatible within a Christian framework, but one caveat must be made anyway. Greater awareness of one's emotions, by itself, does not lead to better regulation of one's emotions; it must be paired with some preferred way or ways of responding to the emotions that are now known. Following this train of thought Segal et al. (2013) argue that mindfulness helps prevent future depressive episodes by fostering greater emotional awareness *which allows a person to respond more quickly to depressed states*. The increased awareness is helpful because it allows for earlier action. A Christian translation of mindfulness will function in the same way; emotional awareness will help with emotion regulation insofar as it is paired with the knowledge of preferred ways to respond to various emotional states.

This leads to a second point, which is that we only know how to respond to various emotional states well as we allow the Spirit, through Scripture, to read and interpret our experiences (Billings, 2010). Sorrow resulting from wounded pride and sorrow resulting from evil and injustice in the world must be handled differently. But it is only as the word of God reveals the thoughts and intentions of our hearts (Hebrews 4:12) that we are able to discern the appropriateness of given emotional reactions and then determine how to respond to our emotional reactions. And so the emotional awareness brought about by a Christian mindfulness

is only helpful insofar as it is connected to the work of the Spirit who reads and interprets our experiences and also teaches us how to respond to different emotional states in greater conformity to Christ. As such, this mechanism of change can be translated “with explanation.”

Summary

It may be helpful at this point to summarize what I have said thus far. After looking over Kabat-Zinn’s (1994) definition of mindfulness, I suggested that a Christian translation of mindfulness involves a purposeful attention on things above that is intended to transform practitioners into the image of Christ by the renewing of their minds. I also argued that the idea that mindfulness involves attention “in the present moment” is troublesome because all of our attention is inherently in the present moment and because the present moment is not a monolithic entity to be focused on. As such, I argued that the idea of purposeful attention (which includes the ability to shift attention) captures what “in the present moment” was attempting to capture. I then argued that a Christian mindfulness is a liturgical practice that with repetition and time will lead practitioners to have a new implicit view of the world that while primarily nonconscious, can nonetheless be partially articulated consciously. I noted that the idea that Christian mindfulness is a liturgical practice that shapes our implicit feel for the world might also partially explain how mindfulness works as a means of exposure. Lastly, I argued that Christian mindfulness is a practice that leads to greater emotional awareness that, in conjunction with the Spirit’s work of interpreting our experiences, helps us to discern how to respond to different emotional states. In Chapter 4 I will argue that prayer actually captures all of these components of a Christian translation of mindfulness and as such, is a faithful translation of mindfulness.

Chapter 4

Mindfulness, Prayer, and Lectio Divina

At first glance, translating mindfulness as prayer may seem odd and perplexing. Isn't prayer, in some ways, the opposite of mindfulness, where instead of purposely paying attention in the present moment and nonjudgmentally, we talk to God and ask for what we need?

Mulholland Jr. (1993) captures this view of prayer well by saying,

We tend to think of prayer as something we *do* in order to produce the results we believe are needed or, rather, to get God to produce the results. Go into any Christian bookstore and note the number of books devoted to techniques of prayer. We are interested in knowing what works and developing the skills that will ensure that our prayers are effective. As a result, our prayer tends to be a shopping list of things to be accomplished, an attempt to manipulate the symptoms of our lives without really entering into a deep, vital, transforming relationship with God.” (p. 105)

Certainly if this view of prayer is taken as the starting point, then translating mindfulness as prayer would be a mistranslation! But I intend to argue for a different perspective on prayer, after which the appropriateness of this translation will become clear.

Instead of seeing prayer as something where I speak to God and wait for an answer, my contention is that prayer is entering into the eternal conversation of the triune God; an eternal conversation that God himself takes the initiative in inviting us into. Lewis (1952/2002) points in this direction when he says,

What I mean is this. An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers. The man is being caught up into the higher kinds of life—what I call *Zoe* or spiritual life: he is being pulled into God, by God, while still remaining himself. (p. 134)

Sanders (2010) explicitly makes the point that prayer is entering into the eternal conversation of the triune God when he says,

Prayer thus opens up to an eternal Trinitarian vista. There is always already a conversation going on among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we pray, we are joining that conversation. We have been invited to call on God as Father, invited by a Spirit of sonship that cries out ‘Abba, Father’ as the eternal Son does. (p. 215)

Yet Sanders language of entering could be misleading because it suggests that we are the ones who make the move to enter into conversation. But as Lewis (1952/2002) notes, entering into this eternal conversation is something that is itself prompted by God. In other words, in prayer,

we are never initiating a dialogue with God, we are simply responding to the God who already speaks to us. Smith (1989) describes this well, saying,

In complete contrast, Israel's God was all initiative. The living God acted and spoke first, choosing, wooing, calling, inviting. Experience was marked all over with the print of otherness, encounter with the unpredictable, uncalled-for, surprising, endlessly versatile action and manifestation. Religion is supremely responsive. The whole of existence, the individual's and community's, is a conversation which God begins. In prayer, as in life, we are the ones who answer. God touches us, God speaks to us, God moves us, God reveals his truth to us, and life and prayer is our response. In prayer we are never 'getting a conversation going' with God. We are continuing a conversation which God has begun. (p. 18)

Smith (1989) does not stop with describing prayer as a conversation we are invited into though; he continues by tying prayer back into the life of the triune God, just as Sanders (2010) and Lewis (1952/2002) do, and comments that prayer is not simply conversation with God, "It is joining the conversation that is already going on in God" (p. 28).

If prayer is joining the eternal conversation between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, then translating mindfulness as prayer makes more sense. For one thing, it emphasizes that in prayer, we start not by talking, but by paying attention to and listening to the already ongoing conversation in God. This aspect of intentionally seeking to hear God captures well the idea that mindfulness involves purposeful attention on things above. It also captures the covenantal knowing I pointed to earlier; rather than seeking to see the world more objectively, in prayer we seek to know ourselves and our world in covenant relationship with the living God. Yet because

we are entering into God's conversation, we enter into it with openness and receptivity to what he is saying, which in the end captures what the nonjudgmental feature of mindfulness was trying to capture in the first place.

Understanding prayer in the way I have argued also points to how prayer fundamentally changes us and thus changes our implicit feel for the world. Going back to Lewis (1952/2002),

There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made. Good things as well as bad, you know, are caught by a kind of good infection. If you want to get warm you must stand near the fire: if you want to be wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. (p. 144)

Prayer then is one of the ways we get close to the fire and enter into the water. And the more we enter into and get close to it, the more our very being is conformed to the image of Christ. And lastly, as Calvin (1536/2011) pointed out, there is a dynamic relationship between knowing God and knowing ourselves. Prayer is one of the means of entering into the life of God and coming to know him more. If this is so, then prayer is also one of the means through which we grow in self-awareness by the Spirit, and learn to act in greater conformity to Christ.

Yet understanding Christian mindfulness as prayer does not simply capture the core of mindfulness, but also enriches and expands it. This is important, since Johnson (2007) notes that one of the core components of a Christian translation is that it ought to enrich and expand the psychological construct in question. In this case, as I have already emphasized, to translate mindfulness as prayer is to connect the practice with the great story of redemption and God's work of bringing his people out of darkness and into his light. But it also enriches mindfulness in

another way. In mindfulness as understood in psychology, the practitioner finds himself or herself isolated and alone with his or her own private experiences. Even in group mindfulness exercises each individual delves alone into his or her own world. In contrast, prayer brings the Christian out of himself or herself and into the very presence of God. In individual prayer, a person finds that he or she is not alone but rather finds the community of the eternal God. In corporate prayer, the people find that they are one body, one people in Christ, and their prayer brings them as one people into the conversation of the triune God. In short, in mindfulness, practitioners find themselves alone, whereas in prayer, Christians find themselves in communion with God or with God and his people.

Investigating Mindfulness as Prayer: Lectio Divina

Even if one finds my argument that prayer is an adequate translation of mindfulness is a persuasive argument, it is difficult to imagine practically what this sort of prayer would look like clinically, let alone how psychologists might go about testing whether this sort of prayer actually leads to similar psychological gains as current mindfulness practices. Developing an entire research agenda for the prayer described in this dissertation is way beyond the scope of this dissertation. Such a research agenda is beyond the scope of this dissertation precisely because such research will be complex and varied, given that just as there are several mindfulness practices, there are a number of prayer practices and each practice may play a slightly different role in the life of the Christian. For example, Foster (1992) noted a number of different types of prayer; among those listed one would not expect the prayer of *examen* to play the exact same role in the Christian life as *petitionary* prayer.

Nevertheless, I would like to point to one specific way of praying called *lectio divina* and describe how it could start to be researched. According to Paintner and Wynkoop (2008), “*Lectio divina* means ‘holy or sacred reading’” (p. 1). This sort of holy reading is an ancient Christian practice, referred to in works by Augustine, but first formally described as a way of praying with four intimately connected acts (Magrassi, 1998, p. 104) by Guigo II in the twelfth century (Paintner & Wynkoop, 2008; Magrassi, 1998). The four acts described by Guigo II are lectio (reading), meditatio (meditation), oratio (prayer), and contemplatio (contemplation) (Casey, 1996; Magrassi, 1998; Paintner & Wynkoop, 2008). I will briefly provide a sketch of each act before pointing to how *lectio divina* might be studied in research.

The first act of *lectio divina* is reading. The person entering into *lectio divina* chooses a text of Scripture, whether that be from a book of the Bible the person is reading or whether that be from a reading appointed in a reading plan or lectionary, and slowly and attentively reads the text (Magrassi, 1998). Smith (1989) suggests reading until a word or image strikes the reader, at which point the reader stops reading, while Paintner and Wynkoop (2008) suggest reading a passage fully once, before engaging in a number of slower readings until an image, word, or group of words strikes the reader.

Either way, the point of this slow and attentive reading is not to analyze the text, rather it is to wait for the word God intends to speak. Pennington (1998) describes the approach to *lectio divina*, saying, “We come to *lectio* not so much seeking ideas, concepts, insights, or even motivating graces; we come to *lectio* seeking God himself and nothing less than God” (p. 27). And so *lectio* is a different sort of reading; it is not like our typical reading where we try “...to pick up the bits and pieces we want to use” (Smith, 1989, p. 118). Rather it is a calm and

receptive reading where we are open to whatever God wills to speak (Magrassi, 1998). Magrassi (1998) expands on this point, saying,

The starting point is reading. With it I get ready to listen; God speaks to me. It is the moment when, as Jerome would say, ‘I unfurl my sails to the Holy Spirit’ in whom I have the joy of hearing the Lord’s true voice. Full hearing requires *attentive* reading. Even before we reflect, we must listen and receive. (p. 105)

And so *lectio divina* starts with a reading, a reading of Scripture that is slow and attentive, with an open and receptive attitude which listens for God himself.

The next act in *lectio divina* is meditation. In meditation, a person repeats the word or phrase that originally stuck out. Smith (1989) describes the process of meditation in this way, Gently repeat this phrase or word again and again within the heart. Let the repetition be gentle and not mechanical. There is no need to conjure up any mental picture to accompany the words or try to make yourself feel any particular emotion as you speak them. Resist the temptation to force particular lessons or meanings from the words. You know what the words mean well enough; the repetition is to allow you to savor and relish them at an intuitive level. (p. 120)

The notion of savoring and relishing the Word captures well what meditation is. Magrassi (1998) notes that meditation has often been likened to eating food. He expands on the image of meditation as eating when he says,

The heart is the mouth in which the text is chewed—or as they preferred to say, ruminated. We ponder each word in order to grasp its full meaning, imprint it on our memory and taste its sweetness, find joy and nourishment for our soul: ‘The more the

Word of God is chewed in the mouth, the more sweetly it is savored in the heart.’

(Magrassi, 1998, p. 109-110)

As one meditates, the word of God soaks into the person’s very being (notice once again the notion that this habitual act causes a change in our very being, in our very way of being in the world). As this happens, God may evoke a feeling, an impression, an attitude (Smith, 1989), or associations with other texts that leave the person knowing God more deeply (Magrassi, 1998). When this gift is given, the person turns to God in prayer. Once again, Magrassi (1998) describes the turn to prayer well and is worth quoting at length. He says,

Meditative prayer as we have described it leads spontaneously to prayer. In fact, it is prayer: ‘Reading, too, is prayer.’ In any case, the two activities complement each other. They are two moments in the mystical dialogue, harmoniously alternating. The soul leaves its reading to run to God. William of St. Thierry calls this ‘meditative prayer’: it springs from the heart at the touch of the divine Word. There is no easier or surer way to express ourselves to God. All we need to do is read, listen and ruminare. Then, having filled those words with all of our thought, our love and our life, we repeat to God what he has said to us. The Word is not only the center of our listening; it is also the center of our response. (p. 113)

And so reading and meditation, listening attentively to God and waiting for his word, leads to our response in prayer. But notice how in *lectio divina*, this response is not forced. Rather the response of prayer is the natural overflow of a heart touched by God’s divine Word. Instead of starting a conversation with God, in *lectio divina*, we attentively listen as God speaks to us and

prompts a response from us that grows out of his Word that he himself has caused to sink into our very soul.

The last act of *lectio divina* is contemplation. This last act is the height and culmination of *lectio divina* (Magrassi, 1998) and is in many ways, different from the first three acts. Paintner and Wynkoop (2008) state the difference well when they say, “The previous steps of *lectio* are all active: we read, we listen, we respond. When we enter contemplative prayer we are still; we are before God” (p. 56). And in this stillness, a person simply gazes upon and is present with God. Thus Magrassi (1998), describing contemplation, says, “We are at the final stage of the journey that begins with *lectio* and ends with astonishing intimacy with God. There is nothing left except that contemplation which fills the eternal day—beyond veils, words, and symbols” (p. 118-119). This sort of contemplation of the divine corresponds to what Paintner and Wynkoop (2008) call Apophatic prayer. In contrast to Kataphatic prayer, which is a prayer that draws on imagery and metaphors from creation, in Apophatic prayer, words, symbols, metaphors, and images all fall short. They describe Apophatic prayer, saying,

Apophatic prayer is known as the ‘path of unknowing.’ Images help us to express our experience of God and move us closer to the divine but they only *point* to the sacred.

Words and images limit us. Ultimately, they fail to reveal the fullness of who God is.

(Paintner & Wynkoop, 2008, p. 56-57)

And yet such “unknowing” is not subjective for as Magrassi (1998) notes, our contemplation is centered on Christ and as such can be said to be objective. Based on what has been said, contemplation can best be summarized by saying that in contemplation, a person looks on the face of Christ and has a taste of the infinite God.

While the above description of *lectio divina* is a brief sketch, it should be clear how it fits as a type of Christian mindfulness. Although *lectio divina* involves reading, it is a very different reading than that in which we typically engage (Smith, 1989). Rather than being informational or analytical reading, it is instead a listening reading, where one listens for the voice of God. And thus it is both a covenantal reading focused on things above and an open and receptive reading. Yet *lectio divina* also requires purposeful attention and concentration. Furthermore, it is prayer that is meant to bring a person into fellowship with the triune God and transform a person into the image of Christ. As this transformation into the image of Christ occurs, a person both begins to “feel”⁴ his or her way in the world differently and also begins to know himself or herself more truly (Smith, 2013). As such, *lectio divina* appears to capture the aspects of Christian mindfulness I articulated previously.

But in order to initiate a research agenda for Christian mindfulness and to start the process of validating the arguments made in this dissertation, it could be helpful to compare the effects of *lectio divina* to the effect of mindfulness as it is commonly conceived. Earlier I argued that mindfulness practices are liturgical practices that over time shape a person’s nonconscious “feel for the world.” This sort of nonconscious shaping of one’s implicit experience of the world may explain, in part, why mindfulness leads to an enhanced ability to regulate one’s emotions. Since prayer, as I have described it, is another set of liturgical practices that shape how a person implicitly experiences the world and because it is a set of practices meant to shape a person into the image of Christ, I would expect a practice like *lectio divina* to also lead to a greater ability to

⁴ Throughout Smith’s (2013) work, he utilizes quotation marks when referring to the knowledge that is between instinct and conscious choice. I follow that convention in this dissertation in order to convey that this bodily knowledge, precisely because it is not propositional knowledge and is instead nonconscious knowledge, is hard to translate into propositional statements.

regulate one's emotions. Thus researchers could begin by researching my Christian translation of mindfulness by comparing the effects of repeated mindfulness practice and repeated lectio divina on emotion regulation.

A study by Shamini et al. (2007) may provide a good template for an initial research study. In their study, Shamini et al. (2007) utilized a randomized controlled trial experimental design to examine the differential effects of mindfulness meditation, somatic relaxation, and a waitlist control group on, "psychological distress, positive states of mind, distractive and ruminative thoughts and behaviors, and spiritual experience" (p. 11). In the study, members of the mindfulness meditation group engaged in four, one-and-a-half-hour classes on mindfulness meditation based on MBSR (Kabat-Zinn, 1982), while members of the somatic relaxation group engaged in four, one-and-a-half-hour classes on somatic relaxation. Additionally, each group participated in its own separate six-hour retreat between the third and fourth class meetings. Prior to the study, once per week during, and after the study, the researchers measured the participants overall psychological distress, positive psychological experiences, and time spent practicing their respective practices. They also measured the participants' ruminative and distractive thoughts and behaviors, as well as their relational and experiential aspects of spirituality, once before and once after the intervention. What they found was that compared to the wait-list control group, both mindfulness mediation and somatic relaxation reduced overall psychological distress and increased positive psychological experiences; the effect size for mindfulness mediation and somatic relaxation were similar in reducing overall psychological distress ($d = 1.36$ and $d = .91$ respectively), whereas the effect size for mindfulness meditation was significantly larger ($d = .71$) than somatic relaxation ($d = .25$) for positive psychological experiences. They also found that

mindfulness meditation led to reductions in ruminative and distractive thoughts and behaviors, effects that were not present in either the somatic relaxation or waitlist groups.

This research by Shamini et al. (2007) could be modified to include a lectio divina group as a fourth group. Such a modification would have the advantage of providing an opportunity to replicate their findings while also examining whether lectio divina leads to similar outcomes as mindfulness meditation (which one would expect if prayer is a faithful translation of mindfulness). While lectio divina is in some ways difficult to study in that aspects of it such as the prayer act and contemplation act are particular graces that God gives and thus cannot be manipulated in an experiment, I would still expect lectio divina to produce similar results as mindfulness just from the fact that it is a liturgical practice that shapes the person. Thus while there are aspects of lectio divina that are not open to manipulation, I still think such an experiment would work.

One other modification should be made to this research and that is that the study I am proposing ought to be conducted with professing Christians. Why would such a modification be necessary? When Johnson (2007) talks about the final product of translation, he notes that the final composition will unapologetically use the conceptual and linguistic resources of the Christian dialect. He says,

In the composing of Christian psychological discourse, the resources of the canon and Christian traditions will be used without apology, even when it does not meet the discursive standards of the modern psychological community. Christians have a complex and thick vocabulary for describing some features of human beings—particularly ethical

and spiritual dynamics—terms that are often entirely lacking within modern discourse.

(Johnson, 2007. p. 239)

In this particular case, Magrassi (1998), Pennington (1998), Casey (1996), and Smith (1989) all note that faith in Christ is necessary to approach God in prayer. And while I have not focused on it explicitly up to this point, I assume that one of the change agents in my translated mindfulness is actually an encounter with God himself. So for example, Paul seems to point to this reality in 2 Corinthians 3:18 when he says,

And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. (NRSV)

In prayer we encounter the living God and, glimpsing his glory, are transformed more and more into the image of his Son. Yet to see God in the face of Christ requires faith.

Thus there are two reasons then to conduct this research with Christian participants. One is that it does not make sense to ask participants who do not believe in the living and reigning Christ to try and approach him in prayer. But second, even if such participants were willing to do so, I would not expect the same outcomes for Christian and non-Christian participants, as part of the reason prayer is transformative is because, by faith, a person enters into God's eternal conversation and is fundamentally changed. Without faith, beholding God in Christ simply will not happen, a reality which Paul points to a few verses later in 2 Corinthians 4:4, "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (NRSV).

It is hoped that such research may start to validate the arguments put forth in this dissertation. To summarize what I have argued for, I presented a Christian translation of mindfulness that translates mindfulness as purposefully paying attention to things above in order to be transformed into the image of Christ. I suggested that such purposeful attention is a liturgical practice that shapes our implicit “feel for the world,” which in turn leads to a different way of being in the world. Furthermore, this practice leads practitioners to have a greater awareness of themselves, which with the Spirit’s guidance leads to healthier living and better emotion regulation. I then proposed that prayer is an adequate translation of mindfulness if prayer is understood neither as starting a conversation with God nor asking for things from God, but rather as a means of purposefully entering into the eternal conversation of the triune God. After providing a brief sketch of one specific form of prayer, *lectio divina*, I then proposed how a research agenda for my Christian translation of mindfulness may be started.

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I argued that modern psychology, based on modernist assumptions, ends up fostering a materialistic reductionism and that a Christian psychology must be built that starts from a Christian understanding of the world rather than a modernist one. But if this were to happen, while Christian psychologists would be studying humans along with secular psychologists, they would be starting from very different worldview assumptions that would fundamentally impact the science of psychology itself. If this is indeed the case, then Johnson (2007) is right in suggesting that translation may be a better metaphor for the work of examining concepts in secular psychology than integration is. Following Johnson (2007), I sought to examine mindfulness and provide a Christian translation of mindfulness.

This process of translating mindfulness into a Christian context started in chapter 2 where I summarized the literature on mindfulness. I noted that despite various definitions of mindfulness, Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition still appears to best capture the core of what mindfulness is. He defined mindfulness as, "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally" (p. 4). Yet I also noted that definitions of mindfulness may miss core components of what mindfulness is. As such, I also summarized five commonly cited mechanisms of change. After noting that two of the commonly cited mechanisms of change—mindfulness as a means of fostering a different relationship to thoughts, feelings, and experiences and mindfulness as a cognitive reappraisal strategy—seem to reflect the same thing, I combined the two to reflect one mechanism of change which I called a cognitive reappraisal of all reality. This left four commonly cited mechanisms of change to translate: (a) mindfulness leads to a global cognitive reappraisal of all reality, (b) mindfulness promotes exposure, (c) mindfulness increases emotional awareness, (d) and mindfulness enhances attentional control.

In Chapter 3, I sought to translate each part of Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition of mindfulness as well as the four commonly cited mechanisms of change. After examining each component of Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition and the four commonly cited mechanisms of change, I argued that prayer, when understood as entering into the eternal conversation of the triune God captures the core of what mindfulness is while expanding and enriching the construct. Prayer captures the purposeful attention involved in mindfulness, as to enter into prayer is to intentionally direct one's attention to God and listen to his words.

And prayer captures what the nonjudgmental aspect of mindfulness tried to point to. While Kabat-Zinn (1994) rightly notes that we tend to distort reality, he and Linehan (2015) both wrongly conclude that the solution is to be nonjudgmental; after reading their comments on nonjudgmentalness, it becomes clear that by nonjudgmental they mean more objective and less biased. As I have argued throughout this dissertation though, such an unbiased and objective view of the world is impossible. Instead, we ought to seek to counter our distorted view of reality by seeking the renewal of our minds in covenant relationship with God. Prayer points to this reality, for in prayer we seek to hear God's powerful, living, and active words (Hebrews 4:12), which transform us and renew our minds.

Using Smith's (2013) notion of liturgy, I also argued that mindfulness is a liturgical practice that shapes our implicit, gut level "feel" for the world. But at the very least mindfulness as it is commonly understood is a liturgical practice that instills a vision of the world where all things are impermanent and transitory. In contrast to this, prayer as a liturgical practice seeks to instill a vision of the world where God is the center of all things and where his Son Jesus Christ is the eternal risen king, who has purchased our salvation with his blood, and will come again to fully and finally establish his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. And so prayer captures the liturgical, habit forming nature of the practice of mindfulness, while aiming the practice toward the love of God and knowledge of him. And while I did not provide an extensive translation of mindfulness as a means of exposure, I did note that the idea that mindfulness is a liturgical practice that shapes our implicit, gut level "feel" for the world may, in part, explain why exposure is effective.

The last mechanism of change that I translated says that mindfulness increases emotional awareness. I noted that prayer also captures this aspect of mindfulness, for as Calvin (1536/2011) so insightfully noted, the knowledge of God and knowledge of self are inseparably connected. In prayer we come face to face with God, and in that encounter we start to learn who we really are. In essence, in prayer, the Spirit reads and interprets our experiences (Billings, 2010), including our emotional experiences, and leads us to respond to these emotional states more appropriately.

But prayer does not just capture the elements of mindfulness pointed to in the psychological literature; prayer also expands and enriches what mindfulness is. Prayer not only connects the believer into the story of God's redemption, but it also takes the person out of isolation and into the community of God and others. For in mindfulness, the practitioner enters alone into his or her own experience; whereas in prayer, a person takes his or her experience into the fellowship of the triune God and within the context of that relationship is transformed.

Lastly in Chapter 4, I articulated the very beginning of a research agenda for mindfulness by suggesting that *lectio divina* is one specific prayer practice that could be compared to other mindfulness exercises. After summarizing research conducted by Shamini et al. (2007), I suggested that their research paradigm could be modified to include a *lectio divina* condition. This *lectio divina* condition would be expected to produce results similar to the mindfulness condition if prayer is truly an appropriate translation of mindfulness. Yet as I noted, if prayer not only translates mindfulness well but also expands and enriches the construct, then the research I proposed would only be the very first step in a much larger research agenda. If the conclusions of this dissertation hold, I hope it will inspire other researchers to take up the larger research agenda

of creatively showing the multitude of ways that prayer can lead to greater health and conformity to Christ.

In sum, mindfulness as commonly understood in psychology involves purposeful attention in the present moment in a non-judgmental fashion. This sort of mindfulness promotes a feel for the world as transitory, impermanent, and best experienced in solitary detachment. In contrast, I proposed that a Christian mindfulness involves prayerful entering into the ongoing conversation of the holy trinity. This sort of mindfulness is a liturgical practice that promotes a feel for the world where one loves God and loves neighbor while pursuing the Kingdom of God.

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Appendix A

Curriculum Vitae

Ryan P. O'Farrell
rypofarrell@gmail.com

Education

2011-Present

George Fox University

Newberg, Oregon

- Doctor of Psychology Candidate
- Masters of Arts in Clinical Psychology (Awarded May 2013)
- Cumulative GPA: 3.918
- Clinical Department of Graduate Psychology: APA Accredited
- Dissertation: Modifying Mindfulness: A Christian Translation of Mindfulness

2008-2010

Biola University

La Mirada, California

- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
- Commencement Date: May 2010
- Cumulative GPA: 3.5 Cum Laude

Clinical Experience

8/15-7/16

Doctoral Intern

Biola Counseling Center, La Mirada, CA

Population: Undergraduate and graduate students, as well as community clients; diverse culturally and presenting with problems ranging from identity issues and anxiety to trauma and psychosis

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Willingham

- Performed weekly individual and couples therapy with undergraduate and graduate students, as well as with a diverse group of clients from the local community
- Conducted intake interviews and wrote intake reports
- Diagnosed patients and formulated treatment plans based on diagnosis
- Handled 24/7 crisis on-call duties, performed self and other harm assessment, triage, and safety planning when appropriate
- Delivered psychoeducational outreach presentations to university student groups

- Administered one full neuropsychological evaluation with integrated written report
- Acted as primary supervisor for one 2nd year PsyD graduate student in first year practicum, while receiving weekly supervision of supervision
- Participated in 3 hours of individual and 2 hours of group supervision weekly utilizing videotape review, case presentations, and consultation
- Attended daily didactic trainings

8/14-5/15

Counseling Intern

George Fox University Health and Counseling Center, Newberg, OR

Population: Undergraduate and graduate students

Supervisor: Dr. Bill Buhrow

- Performed weekly individual therapy with undergraduate and graduate students
- When appropriate, coordinated care with the university medical staff
- Conducted intake interviews and wrote intake reports
- Diagnosed patients and formulated treatment plans based on diagnosis
- Administered psychological assessments and composed reports with case conceptualization and recommendations
- Participated in individual and group supervision
- Attended weekly didactic meetings
- Prepared and delivered hour long training on Time Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy

9/13-8/14

Counseling Intern

Behavioral Health Clinic, Newberg, OR

Populations: Low SES; persistent mental health issues; culturally and religiously diverse populations

Supervisor: Dr. Joel Gregor

- Performed weekly individual, couples, and family therapy
- Conducted intake interviews and wrote intake reports
- Diagnosed patients and formulated treatment plans based on diagnosis
- Administered psychological assessments and composed reports with case conceptualization and recommendations
- Participated in individual and group supervision
- Attended weekly didactic trainings
- Prepared and delivered hour-long training on Exposure Therapy for PTSD

8/12- 6/13

Counseling Intern

Warner Pacific College, Portland, OR

Populations: Undergraduate college and adult degree program students; culturally, socioeconomically, and religiously diverse population

Supervisor: Dr. Denise Haugen

- Performed weekly individual therapy with undergraduate and adult degree program students
- Conducted intake interviews and wrote up intake reports
- Diagnosed patients and formulated treatment plans based on diagnosis
- Administered psychological assessments and composed reports with case conceptualization and recommendations
- Participated in individual and group supervision

1/12-5/12

Prepracticum

George Fox University, Newberg, OR

Populations: Undergraduate college students

Supervisor: Dr. Mary Peterson

- Performed weekly individual therapy with undergraduate students
- Conducted intake interviews
- Diagnosed patients and formulated treatment plans based on diagnosis
- Attended group and individual supervision sessions, which included videotape review, case presentations, and consultation

Relevant Work Experience

09/14-12/14

Teaching Assistant: Religious and Spiritual Diversity

George Fox University, Newberg, OR

- Graded weekly quizzes
- Role-played scenarios about religious and spiritual issues that arise in therapy
- Processed with students their questions about religious and spiritual diversity

2010-2011

Utility Coach

InJOY Life Resources, Bellflower, CA

- Implemented behavioral plans for adults with developmental disabilities
- Led an experiment designed to examine the effects of mere exposure to adults with disabilities on community perceptions of adults with developmental disabilities
- Evaluated and made recommendations concerning incoming members

2009-2010

Resident Assistant

Biola University, La Mirada, CA

- Enforced the community standards of Biola University in order to promote a positive, safe, and enjoyable living atmosphere for 52 students in Hope Hall

- Attended to the emotional and practical needs of students by working to resolve issues or by directing students to resources that could help to resolve issues.
- Managed the budget for 4 floor/hall events
- After each hall and floor event, evaluated where team goals were met and areas where improvement could occur. For those areas where improvement could occur, proposed solutions to the problem/s and implemented solutions into future events

Presentations

- 11/15** **Sexual Assault Awareness**, Ryan O’Farrell, M. A. (Panel member for documentary film presentation and discussion)
- 10/15** **Managing Conflict in Relationships**, Ryan O’Farrell, M. A., David Choi, M. A., and Liz St. Clair, M. A.
Biola University
- 9/15** **Maintaining Healthy Boundaries**, Ryan O’Farrell, M.A. and Liz St. Clair, M. A.
Biola University
- 11/14** **Christian Diversity in Therapy**, Ryan O’Farrell, M.A.
George Fox University
- Psychology and Religion: A Brief Survey**, Ryan O’Farrell, M.A.
George Fox University

Research Experience

- 08/09-02/10** **Research Assistant**
Biola University, La Mirada, CA
- Transcribed 4 interviews for research investigating the spiritual histories and journeys of current and former Biola students

Volunteer Work

- 2013** **Church Training**
Rolling Hills Community Church, Tualatin, OR
- Led a psychoeducational training on caring for individuals attending a weekly homeless ministry with severe mental health problems

2010-2011

Youth Group Leader

Rolling Hills Covenant Church, Rolling Hills, CA

- Led a group of 10 junior high boys in Bible study and other activities