

The author demonstrated a broad understanding of philosophical thought, an ability to make precise conceptual distinctions, and a firm grasp of theoretical implications for educational practice. I encourage him to produce a second volume in which he constructs an integrated Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy in harmony with the principles he enunciated. This could be a significant contribution to teachers, students, trustees, and patrons who, for over a century, have operated denominational schools without such a guide.

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A Psychological Test for Christians?

Peter Blitchington; Robert J. Cruise. *Understanding Your Temperament: A Self-Analysis with a Christian Viewpoint*. 38pp., with tables. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1979.

reviewed by Ronald Geraty

Based on Peter Blitchington and Robert J. Cruise's *Understanding Your Temperament*, I am a phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric who is bold, insensitive, and scatterbrained. In the first part of my discussion of this newly developed psychological test, I will hope to live up to those descriptors. In the second part, I will hope to make up for it by being sociable, cheerful and carefree, tactful, diplomatic, and even flexible without being bland and unorganized.

Blitchington and Cruise describe their psychological test as having a Christian viewpoint, but I wonder what makes it Christian. The authors are Christians, the

validation studies appear to have been done on Christians, and the authors discuss how various temperamental traits may impact on moral and spiritual development, but none of these characteristics make the test "Christian." Andrews University Press even published the test, but I doubt that makes it Christian, and none of the test questions, analyses, or findings have anything to do with Christianity or spirituality. I conclude that the test does not have a Christian viewpoint, though some of the authors' discussions of the test do. I further suggest that a Christian psychological test is probably no better than a non-Christian one. Would a Christian microscope be better than a non-Christian microscope? It might be interesting to develop a moral and spiritual development scale and have it standardized to measure the maturity of Christians, but even then it may be difficult to find agreement on what characteristics constitute Christian maturity.

Leaving the Christian issue aside, I do not understand why the authors use Hippocratic terms such as sanguine, melancholic, choleric, and phlegmatic. Though they do try to equate them with adjectives in current usage, their attempt fails and merely evokes images of an ancient human physiology with its "evil humours" lurking in body cavities and pulsing through tubes with blood and other liquids. Equally problematical are technical difficulties with the temperament inventory. It took me two tries to fill out the questionnaire due to its length and confusing repetitive questions. On the important issues of validity and reliability, which are dealt with elsewhere in a more scientific presentation of the inventory, it appears that the test has been well validated and has been shown to be reliable except for one important issue. The authors do not adequately describe the population they used to standardize the test.

I differ with the authors' implication, in their discussion of the inventory, that since temperament is due to heredity, it is unchangeable. Recent developmental studies

seem to support the discontinuous theories of development and place more emphasis on the "fit" between the styles of the child and the parent. In other words, an easily excitable child with an easily excitable adult stimulate each other; a calm adult with an excitable child complement each other. Hence, parent-child difficulties are often due to a poor fit rather than "poor parenting." Temperament can be shaped, and little evidence (if any) exists to show that a phlegmatic-choleric child stays that way, becoming a phlegmatic-choleric adult.

It is important, however, for parents to look at each of their children and recognize their *inborn* characteristics. After all, the difficulty the child is having may have been inherited from the parent. Each child is an individual with God-given characteristics that must be nurtured, influenced, and sometimes punished. Children do not come from the same molds and must not all be pushed into the same mold. Some adults who take this test and analyze their temperament may be relieved to find that some of their troubles are less available to change than others (if indeed that is true). Each temperamental characteristic has both positive and negative attributes, and a person may be able to find settings in which a certain strong characteristic is important. For example, introverts may make excellent writers or

successful Bible workers but poor salesmen or evangelists.

In support of what I believe is the partial intent of this booklet, I applaud Cruise and Blitchington for trying to make psychology germane and palatable to Seventh-day Adventists. Too often the ambivalence between psychology and Christianity prevents either from turning to the other for help. Christians, and especially Seventh-day Adventists, look distrustfully at psychology and suspect psychologists of influencing the mind, while psychologists often see devout Christians as unsophisticated and naive. But the authors have attempted to turn what may be a reasonable psychological self-analysis into a Christian mold where the test does not seem to fit. The goal is laudable but the attempt falls short.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. R. J. Cruise, W. P. Blitchington, W. G. A. Fitcher, "Temperament Inventory: An Instrument to Empirically Verify the Four-Factor Hypothesis," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 40 (1980): 943-954.

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