

# Illuminating Theology With Psychological Science

## Examples of Interdisciplinary Team Science



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# ~~DANGERS~~ COMPLICATIONS OF DOING INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK

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# COMPLICATIONS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Different disciplinary languages

Different use/understanding/extent of shared terms

Different publication speeds

Different article formats/constraints

Different hermeneutical lenses

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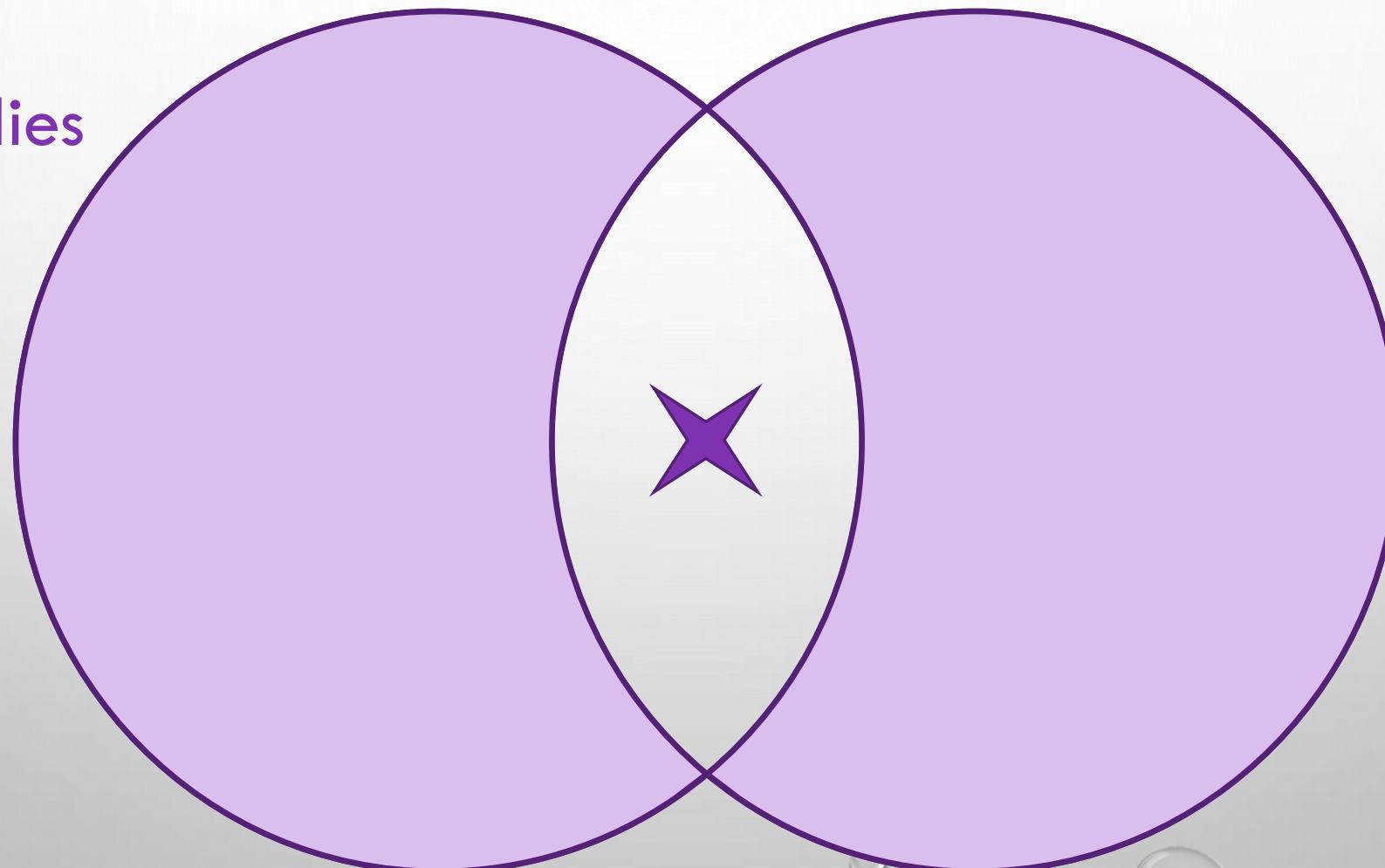
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# COMPLICATIONS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

## disability studies

- SOCIAL MODEL
- LIVED EXPERIENCES
- SUSPICIOUS OF MUCH SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE



## philosophy

- TENDS TOWARD MEDICAL MODEL
- OFTEN IGNORANT OF DISABLED LIVES
- OFTEN EXTREMELY ABLEIST



# CHARACTER AND VIRTUE DEVELOPMENT IN YOUTH MINISTRY

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TYLER S. GREENWAY



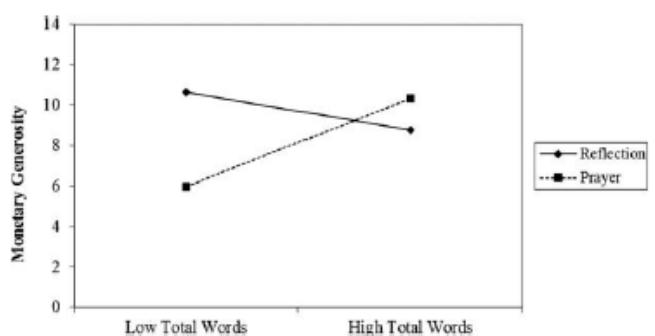
Local Christian congregations have been slow to understand and benefit from character and virtue development science and resources

**Table 2.** Results from multiple linear regressions of total monetary generosity on predictors.

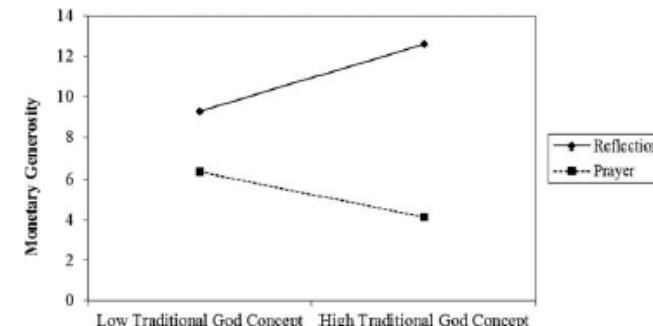
Predictor	B	SE	t	$\beta$
<b>Model 1</b>				
Activity	-5.66	2.10	-2.70	-.30**
Target	0.79	1.48	0.54	.04
Total words	-0.00	0.00	-1.31	-.10
Harm/Care foundation	-1.57	1.38	-1.13	-.13
Fairness/Reciprocity foundation	1.94	1.51	1.29	.15
Traditional God concept	5.73	2.64	2.17	.18*
Target $\times$ Activity	0.71	2.11	0.34	.03
Activity $\times$ Total Words	0.01	0.00	2.60	.24**
Activity $\times$ Harm/Care Foundation	4.55	1.78	2.57	.24*
Activity $\times$ Fairness/Reciprocity Foundation	-3.67	1.83	-2.01	-.18*
Activity $\times$ Traditional God Concept	-9.58	3.74	-2.56	-.21*
Target $\times$ Harm/Care Foundation	-1.22	1.73	-0.70	-.07
Target $\times$ Fairness/Reciprocity Foundation	-0.76	1.82	-0.42	-.04
<b>Model 2</b>				
Activity	-6.20	2.09	-2.97	-.33**
Target	0.29	1.49	0.20	.02
Total words	-0.00	0.00	-1.49	-.11
Religious fundamentalism	-0.86	0.65	-1.31	-.17
Target $\times$ Activity	1.07	2.13	0.50	.05
Activity $\times$ Religious Fundamentalism	0.45	0.89	0.50	.06
Target $\times$ Religious Fundamentalism	0.99	0.86	1.15	.14
Activity $\times$ Total Words	0.01	0.00	2.75	.26**
Target $\times$ Activity $\times$ Total Words	-1.00	1.18	-0.85	-.11

Note. The variables were coded as follows: Activity (0 = reflection, 1 = prayer), Target = Target of reflective activity condition (0 = Christian, 1 = Muslim).

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Figure 1.** The effect of activity on monetary donations as moderated by total words recorded during the reflective activities.

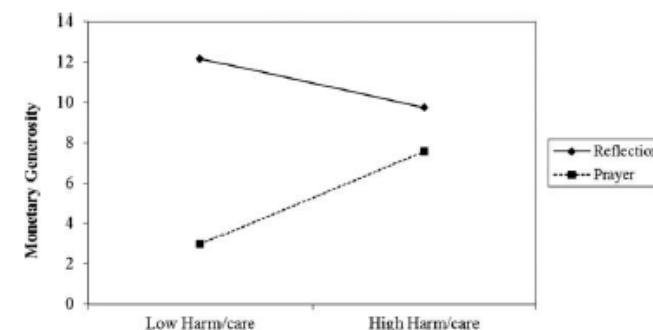
Initial analysis of the interaction of activity and traditional God concept with activity as the moderator revealed that the simple slopes test was only significant for the reflection condition ( $b = 5.73$ ,  $t = 2.17$ ,  $p = .031$ ). Figure 2 displays the effects of prayer and reflection on monetary generosity as moderated by traditional God concept levels. Participants in the reflection condition gave more with high traditional God concepts than with low traditional God concepts. When the simple slopes test was run with traditional God concept entered as the moderator, slopes were significant when God concept was at the mean ( $b = -5.66$ ,  $t = 2.70$ ,  $p = .007$ ) or one standard deviation below the mean ( $b = -8.45$ ,  $t = 3.51$ ,  $p = .001$ ), but they were not significant one standard deviation above the mean ( $b = -2.54$ ,  $t = -1.24$ ,  $p = .106$ ). Slopes were significant when God concept was outside the region of significance of -2.65 to -0.15.

**Figure 2.** The effect of activity on monetary donations as moderated by traditional God concept.

Simple slopes analyses examining the interaction of activity and the harm/care foundation with activity as the moderator (Figure 3) were not significant for the prayer condition or the reflection condition ( $p > .05$ ). The slope for the prayer condition approached significance ( $p = .060$ ) suggesting that the significant interaction was driven by the prayer condition, rather than the reflection condition. When the simple slopes test was run with harm/care entered as the moderator, slopes were significant when harm/care was at the mean ( $b = -5.66$ ,  $t = 2.70$ ,  $p = .007$ ) or one standard deviation above the mean ( $b = -9.17$ ,  $t = 3.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but they were not significant one standard deviation below the mean ( $b = -2.15$ ,  $t = -0.82$ ,  $p = .411$ ). Slopes were significant when harm/care was outside the region of significance of 0.29–6.11.

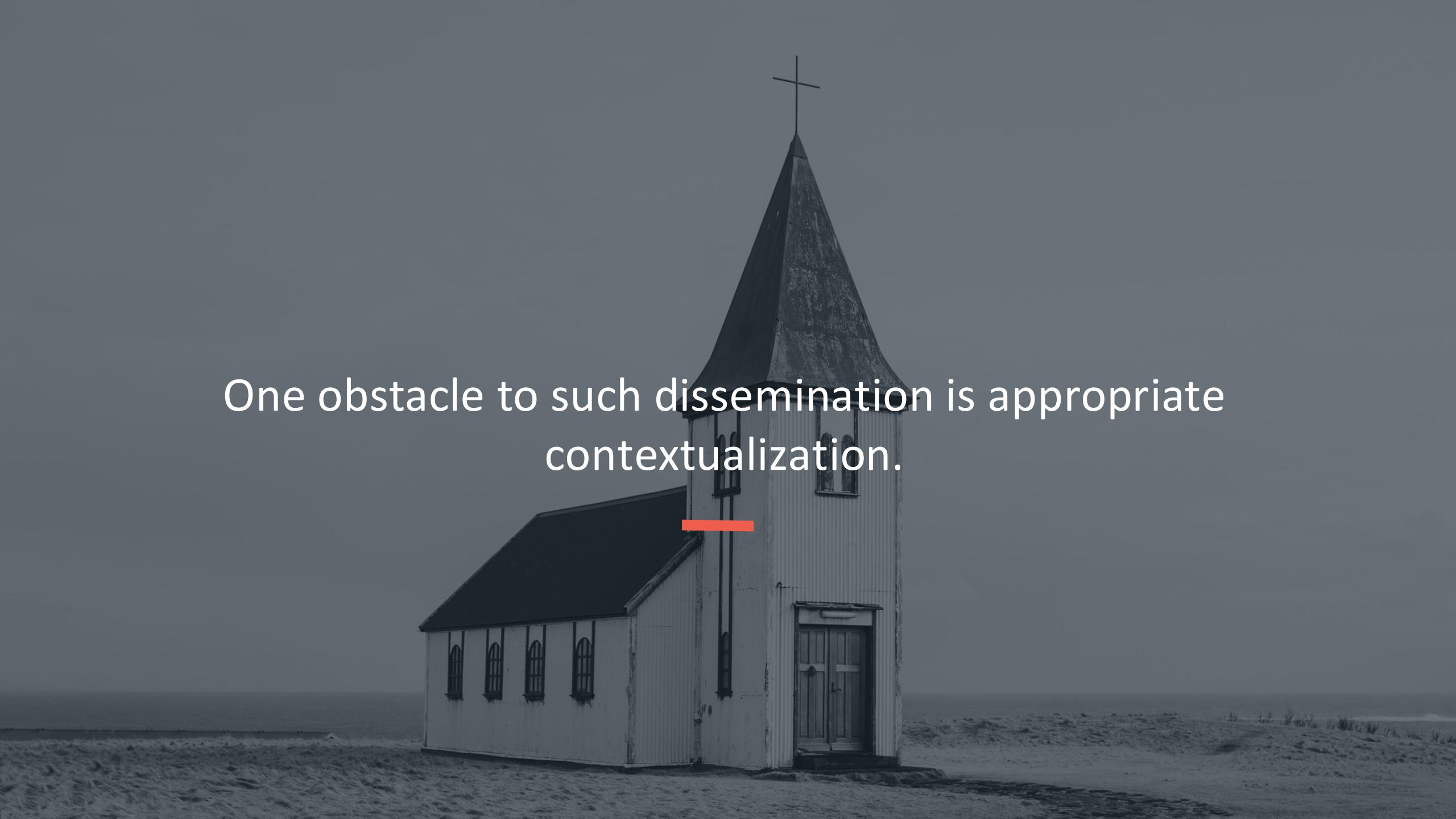
Simple slopes analyses examining the interaction of activity and the fairness/reciprocity foundation (Figure 4) were also not significant for the prayer condition or the reflection condition ( $p > .05$ ). When the simple slopes test was run with fairness/reciprocity entered as the moderator, slopes were significant when fairness/reciprocity was at the mean ( $b = -5.66$ ,  $t = 2.70$ ,  $p = .007$ ) or one standard deviation below the mean ( $b = -8.33$ ,  $t = 3.44$ ,  $p = .001$ ), but they were not significant one standard deviation above the mean ( $b = -2.99$ ,  $t = -1.18$ ,  $p = .240$ ). Slopes were significant when fairness/reciprocity was outside the region of significance of -80.47 to -0.35. Thus, there is a difference in the prayer and reflection condition when fairness/reciprocity is low.

Finally, an alternative model was also tested including a variable measuring participant's prayer outside the assigned experimental activities (0 = no prayer outside the activities, 1 = prayer outside

**Figure 3.** The effect of activity on monetary donations as moderated by the harm/care foundation.



The primary goal of the Character and Virtue Development in Youth Ministry Project is to help Christian congregations better instill in young people key virtues and components of character



One obstacle to such dissemination is appropriate contextualization.

# Team members

- Practical theologians
- Psychologist
- Youth ministry leaders

# Consultants

- Practical theologians
- Psychologists (character and virtue development; positive youth development)
- Youth ministry leaders
- Ethicists
- Denominational/para-ministry leaders
- Ministry resource creators
- Leadership scholars



# Literature Review

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Character and Virtue Development



# Survey of Youth Ministry Audience

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364 participants

Criteria: (1) being 18 years of age or older; (2) being a youth ministry leader



# Interviews with Youth Ministry Leaders

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98 participants

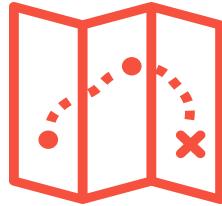
Criteria: (1) being 18 years of age or older; (2) being a youth ministry leader



# Literature Review

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Christian Ethics  
Character Education  
Discipleship Studies



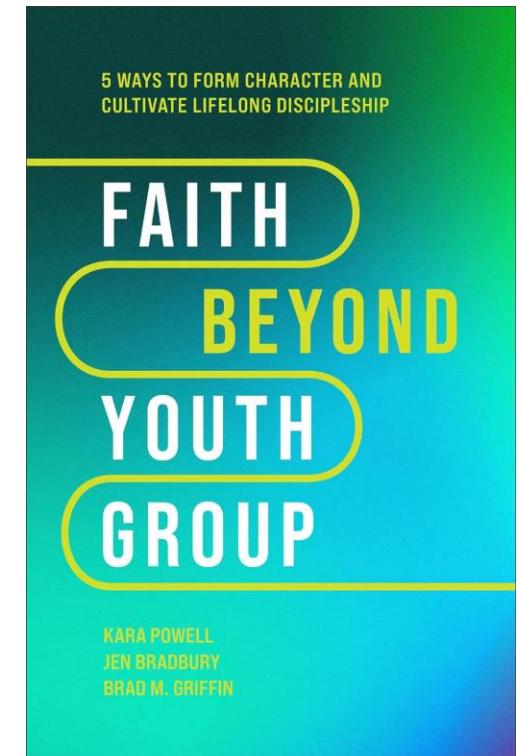
# Illustrative Case Studies

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7 Site Visits

# Framework for Character-Forming Discipleship

- Cultivate Trust
- Model Growth
- Teach for Transformation
- Practice Together
- Make Meaning



# Acknowledgments



John  
Templeton  
Foundation



**Fuller Youth Institute**



Team Science



Erin I. Smith

# The Outsider Model



# The Science of Children's Ministry

## Question 1:

Does church matter? (i.e., can't kids get the benefits at home?)



Crosby & Smith, 2015

## Question 3:

What is the developmental impact of church-based social support?



Crosby, Smith, & Frederick, 2015; Crosby & Smith, 2017; Crosby & Smith, 2018

Smith & Crosby, 2017

## Question 5:

What are the features of church children's ministries that are supportive for kids?



Smith & Crosby, 2021

Crosby, Smith, LaChausse, Blanchette, & Palardy, 2021

## Question 2:

How do we measure church-based social support for school-aged kids?



## Question 4:

Yeah, but couldn't it be something *else* causing these outcomes?



Can we help ministries do better (and how), especially for kids who have experienced trauma?  
Crosby, Smith, Gage, & Blanchette, 2021, Louisville Grant, [reachhurtingkids.com](http://reachhurtingkids.com)



## **Outside Experts can...**

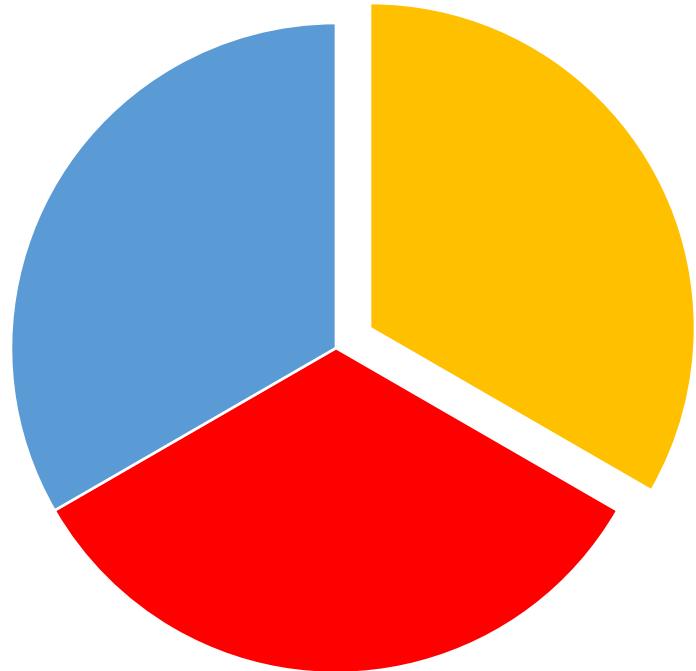
- Be a sounding board/reality check
- Connect to relevant stakeholders
- Get published

## **But the limits are...**

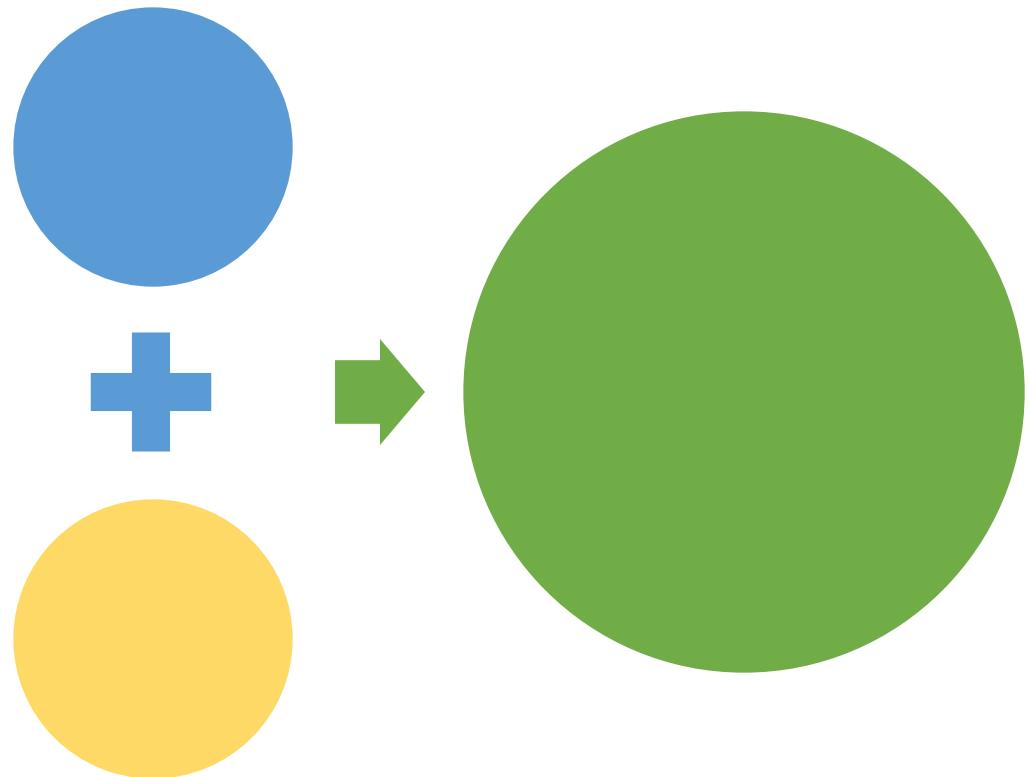
- Shallow involvement
- Lack of shared learning
- Limited growth/career opportunities

# Integrative Models

**Everybody has a part; play to individual strengths (Integrated Outsider)**



**Something truly new emerges (Reciprocation, Insight)**



# The Role of Moral Emotions in Christians' Perceptions of Science

