

**A CHRISTIAN TRANSPOSITION
OF THE ENNEAGRAM:
WITH PAUL OF TARSUS
AND IGNATIUS LOYOLA**

**by Jean-Marc Laporte S.J.
Jesuits of Canada**

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1 THE CHALLENGE

Various versions of the enneagram teaching have helped many Christian spiritual directors and animators since the early 1970's. There is controversy about the remote origins of the enneagram which we will not go into here, but in the early 70's Claudio Naranjo and Oscar Ichazo were instrumental in introducing the enneagram as a tool for self-knowledge and self-growth, and this led to the ongoing development of a body of teachings. Among those initiated to the enneagram at that time were Helen Palmer and Sandra Maitri, who later have written books on the enneagram. Robert Ochs, a Jesuit, was one of these pioneers, and he taught the enneagram to other Jesuits. This led to the emergence of numerous authors, such as Richard Riso, Jerome Wagner, Theodore Dobson, Patrick O'Leary, and Tad Dunne, many of whom linked the enneagram with the Roman Catholic spiritual tradition, especially the Ignatian one. The general outlines of the enneagram teaching are clear enough, but many differences of detail emerge as we contrast the contributions made by many authors since the early '70's, marked by their own practical experience and/or research.

The original context of the enneagram teaching was esoteric, and tended towards a gnosticism which invites us to find at the core of our being not so much a personal self in relation with a personal God distinct from ourselves, as a universal Self in which all distinctions between creatures with God their creator are blurred or eliminated. The enneagram teaching has strong opponents, especially among more conservative Catholics, for example Mitch Pacwa, S.J.,¹ who studied under Robert Ochs but had a change of heart. In a provisional report of the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, entitled *Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life: a Christian reflection on the "New Age,"*² the enneagram teaching is included within the New Age movement, and treated with suspicion, on the basis, it

¹He refers to the enneagram in a number of writings. Cf. his article *Tell Me Who I Am, O Enneagram*, found on the web at <https://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/crj/crj-jrnl/web/crj0146a.html>. This article critiques various superficial approaches to the enneagram, which serious enneagram teachers also do, but often caricatures current enneagram teaching and sometimes resorts to ridicule. He is refuted by Theodorre Donson, Cf. http://www.hurleydonson.com/religious_accusations.htm. Donson sees Christian antecedents to the enneagram in the work of early Christian ascetical writers such as Evagrius who came up with a list of 8 passions, which are the ancestors of the 7 capital sins of classical Roman Catholic doctrine.

²Available on the internet at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-age_en.html

seems, of second-hand reports such as that of Fr. Pacwa.

Used sensitively and with respect for the person(s) being guided or directed, insights from the enneagram have had a very positive and liberating impact on the lives of many. The challenge, however, is two-fold: (1) there are many variations in the way the enneagram is presented, and there is need to continue empirical research in order to bring more precision to the teaching, and to better correlate it with psychology and other approaches to human personal development; (2) there is a need to carefully examine the esoteric context of the earlier enneagram teaching, to tease out the elements of truth it contains, to reverse what in it may be wrong or wrongly expressed, and to transpose the valuable insights of the enneagram teaching in a Christian context. In this essay we hope to re-express the basic categories of current enneagram teaching in integrally Christian terms, for example, those found in the letters of Paul and the Exercises of Ignatius. Detailed descriptions of each of the various “numbers” or enneatypes can be found in standard books referenced at the end. This is not a complete and self-enclosed handbook but an aide for Christians engaged in enneagram work.

2 BASIC CATEGORIES FOR THE ENNEAGRAM: THE TOTAL HUMAN BEING

The enneagram teaching sometimes uses terms loosely, in a way unique to itself. We will sort them out as best we can. The first set of terms has to do with the different components of the total human being. Since we are attempting to present the enneagram in a way that is useful for Christian spirituality, we will use the basic categories of Pauline anthropology to structure our presentation of these terms. The second set of terms will focus on human consciousness and its gradations. We will take them up in our next section.

2.1 THE COMPONENTS OF HUMAN NATURE

Presenters of the enneagram make use of many terms to describe human nature and functioning as they attempt to flesh out the basic structure of the enneagram. Some variants of enneagram teaching relate it in different ways to contemporary psychology. Other variants may also relate to contemporary psychology, but their real focus is spiritual, building on the esoteric mysticism of the original enneagram teachers. Others will make use of commonly used categories of Christian spirituality and anthropology to present the enneagram. We belong to this last group, and in our explanation of the enneagram we will draw on Christian understandings of human nature and growth grounded in categories essentially derived from the letters of Paul.

2.1.1 A Christian anthropology based on basic Pauline categories

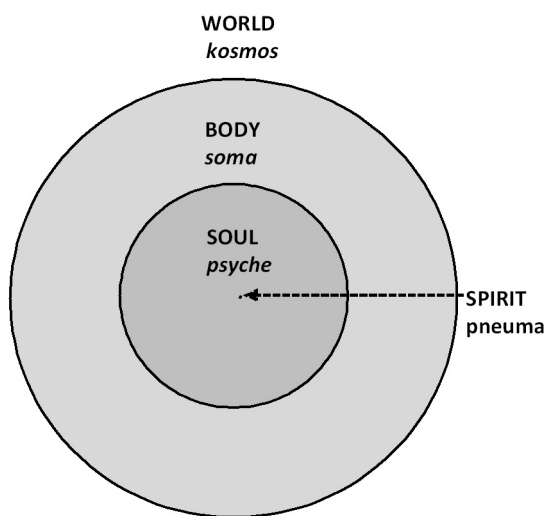
Human beings are at the intersection of two worlds, the material and the spiritual:

- ◆ as members of the animal kingdom who are distinct because they are endowed with rationality and self-reflection: they are distinct from other animals in being rational.

- ◆ as members of the realm of spiritual beings who are distinct because they are embodied or incarnate: they are distinct from pure spirits.

These definitions begin from different viewpoints but in the end they converge: in human beings the spiritual and the material realms come together.

Paul's anthropology is along the same lines: he reveals its basic outline in the following passage of his earliest epistle: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ". (1 Thess 5:23). Spirit, soul, and body: let us comment on each of these components, beginning with spirit, which is innermost in the diagram just below, and fleshing out this Pauline structure with content that emerges in later centuries within the Christian theological and philosophical tradition.



Spirit: the spirit, or *pneuma*, is the "I" mystery at the centre of the human person. Its presence in human beings means that they are at heart spiritual creatures, and makes of them specifically rational animals. It always remains elusive, in the background,³ but it centres and personalizes everything that makes up each human person. Paul also calls it the heart, and that is the locus of the fundamental conversion of the person to God: "the love of God is poured into our hearts", as Paul tells us (Rom 5:5), and that love is to permeate all else. Our hearts are where we are most deeply called to relate to God. One could describe the

heart in this sense as a mystery of emptiness which only God, the mystery of fulness, can fulfill. "You have created our hearts restless until they rest in thee", as Augustine puts it. This constitutive relation to God is also a constitutive relation to the totality of being, since God is Being par excellence and anything that exists exists by His knowledge and His will. We are not limited to knowing and managing our relationship with our immediate environment like non-rational animals – which they often do in amazing ways – but we can inquire about God, about anything that exists. We are part of being, and our fundamental orientation is also to knowledge and acceptance of ourselves. Self-reflection stands out as a characteristic of human animals.

³When I reflect on myself, I realize that there is always a gap between me doing the reflecting ("I" as subject) and me being reflected on ("me" as object). If I try to focus on myself as subject, that myself as subject becomes the object of my reflection, but there still is in the background the mysterious "I" that does the reflecting. This process can be repeated *ad infinitum*. I can never totally grasp this generative "I".

In the enneagram tradition this mysterious centre has been called essence (which is distinct from personality) or self (distinct from ego). In the diagram it occupies a tiny space at the centre of the concentric circles, but in reality that space images a point, which has position, but does not occupy any area of the circle and therefore ought to be invisible. Still the centre point plays a crucial role: it is generative, it makes the circle a circle, the total self a total self.

The basic issue for the human spirit is its relation to God. Will God be recognized as the key to human self-unfolding, the self-unfolding of a being created by and for God, or will God be seen as an oppressor, an interloper, to be set aside or placated, or as an impersonal energy to tap into? At some point this struggle will emerge in consciousness, but it can also, for most of one's life, remain unspoken, in the depths of one's heart.

The human spirit is embodied.⁴ When I enter into the world, my spirit is asleep. I am gradually aroused to self-knowledge and self-acceptance and freedom as my body and psyche transmit stimuli from the outside world to me. I am awakened to myself through these stimuli and from very early on I develop the rudimentary ability to say "I" to myself and others. I begin a life-long struggle to appropriate and accept who I am in the deepest sense, to discover/shape my authentic self,⁵ to choose my place not just within my animal environment but within the universe of being. As I do this, I develop my own unique personality.

Soul: the soul, or *psyche*, is closer to spirit, while the body is closer to the outside world.⁶ The stimuli from the outside world which come through the body and its senses trigger off the functions of knowing and feeling within my psyche. Animals also know and feel, but the spiritual component of humans raises them to an openness to the whole of being, and to a freedom to make decisions rather than have actions determined through the working of instincts and spontaneously occurring emotions. This trigger begins, as with every animal, with sensory knowledge and spontaneous feelings in relation to what is outside myself, but in rational animals leads to a process, ultimately oriented towards the totality of being, of

⁴By contrast angels are defined as pure spirits, who do not need external stimuli from a body to know and accept their own selves.

⁵If something impinges on my sensory apparatus, I become aware of it and focus on it. But, having been made alert to it, I am also at the same time aware, but in an unfocused and sub-liminal way, of myself and my process of awareness or knowledge. My vital self-presence is always in the background, even when I focus on my own self and my own processes of knowledge, making of them an object. I can develop a deeper understanding of it but will never exhaust its reality.

⁶One has to be careful to recognize that "soul" has two different meanings. In this threefold scheme, it is distinct from the spirit; in the commonly taught twofold scheme, in which humans are composed of body and soul, soul includes spirit. When referring to the soul in the threefold scheme, we will generally use the corresponding Greek word, *psyche*, the word used by Paul.

experiencing, understanding, judging, loving, deciding.⁷ Once engaged by outside stimuli, my self becomes present to itself, and this self-awareness is the basis of my life-long struggle for self-appropriation and self-acceptance such as I am in God's eyes. In common enneagram parlance these two functions of the psyche, knowing and feeling, are termed head and heart respectively. (Heart here is used in a sense other than that of Paul.)

Body: It is through the intermediary of the body that stimuli from the outside world awaken the psyche and the spirit. More than mere biological organisms, our bodies with their sensory equipment insert us in the world, that of the physical universe, that of man-made objects, and that of other human persons and communities. Our bodies are a means of communication, enabling us to share with others both passively (we are impacted by them in various ways) and actively (our actions/words/gestures have an impact on others). As bodily, we are animals, and animals instinctively need to (1) assure their survival within their world (2) belong to a "pack" of their species; and (3) find mates for the purpose of reproduction. Within human beings these instincts have a broader scope: (1) is described as the self-preservation instinct, (2) as the social instinct which enables us to get along with groups, and (3) as the sexual instinct which attracts us to other individual human beings. In the enneagram teaching, these three are seen as a cluster of instincts, and together with the body itself are often described as the "gut", which, together with the two main functions of the psyche, knowing and feeling, yield the enneagram triad of head, heart, and gut.

Within our diagram one would situate these instincts at the border point between body and psyche: on the one hand they are grounded in our bodily needs, but on the other they are an integral part of our psychic life and thus enter into our awareness.

2.1.2 Implications for the enneagram

Having presented a simplified anthropological model we need to acknowledge its limitations. The diagram invites us to imagine clear borders between the world and the body, between the body and the psyche, between the psyche and the spirit. Such sharply defined borders may be erected in various forms of spiritual pathology, but in reality these borders are not impermeable but osmotic, permitting constant communication in both directions. A diagram without borders, with a gradation of colours from the spirit and from there reaching out to the world, with psyche and body as zones blending into each other, distinct but not separate, would be complementary to the bordered diagram we have devised.

In its interaction with the world, we come to awareness of ourselves, develop characteristic ways of understanding ourselves and the world, of functioning within that world, of warding off dangers, surviving, of thriving, and so forth. We do all that through the psyche and the body,

⁷This progression is formulated by Bernard Lonergan in his epochal work *Insight*. It is fuelled by a series of questions: how do I understand the experience I am having? Is my understanding correct? How am I to act responsibly in response to this understanding which I have judged to be correct?

which little by little develop habitual patterns of dealing with what impinges on us from outside ourselves, taking it in and reacting to it. These patterns, already well developed before we have the maturity to deal with the issues of our life, deeply affect how we function, and are often accessible to our self-knowledge only with great difficulty. As a whole they are what the enneagram teaching usually refers to as personality (ego), which is contrasted to essence (self). In this view, enneagram work consists in uncovering and dismantling the personality inasmuch as it becomes a screen which makes the inner self inaccessible, and in this way coming in touch with that self and its untapped potential. More on that later.

In summary:

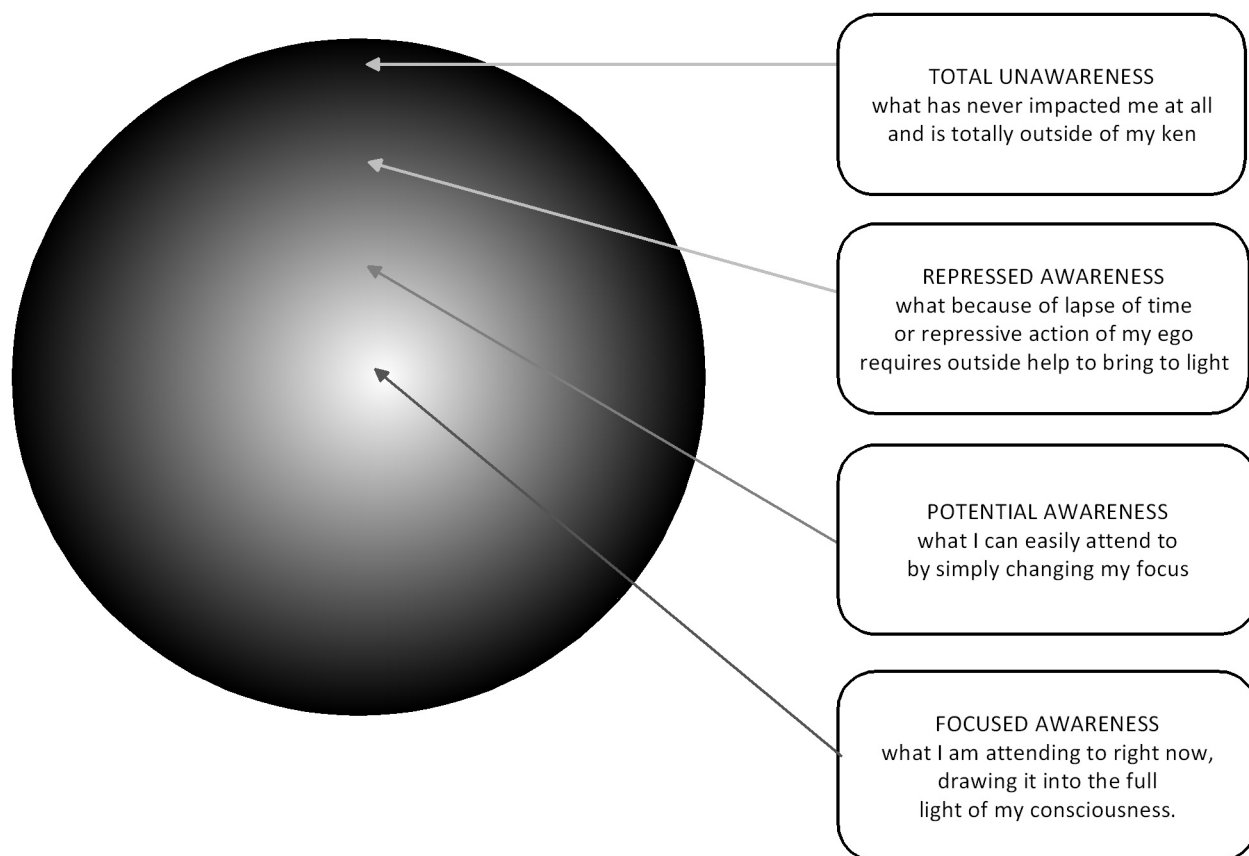
CHRISTIAN/PAULINE TEACHING		TRADITIONAL ENNEAGRAM TEACHING	
God		Essence or Self	
Spirit (<i>Pneuma</i>)			
Soul (<i>Psyche</i>)	<-Knowing <-Feeling <-Instincts:	Head-> Heart-> Gut->	Personality
Body (<i>Soma</i>)	Social(we) Relational (I-thou) Survival of Self		
<-----World (<i>Kosmos</i>)----->			

(1) The left half of the diagram summarizes how we have filled in the structure provided by the Pauline categories; the right one offers the corresponding terms used in enneagram teaching. In enneagram teaching, within “Essence” the distinction between God and the human self (spirit) is blurred and within “Personality” that between the psyche and body. The former blurring is of crucial significance. Christian anthropology is very clear on the relationship between God and the human self: between them there is to be distinction but not separation; union but not absorption. Indeed the more God and humans are able to treasure their distinctness from one another the more deeply united they will be. This is a point where Christian teaching takes a firm stand. (2) The middle column in the lower part of the diagram shows the correspondence of the enneagram triad of head, heart, and gut with knowing, feeling, and instincts. A more precise diagram would have presented instincts squarely at the place where body and psyche meet. (3) The three instincts are developed in enneagram teaching but are presented here where they would fit within the Christian/Pauline structure.

3 BASIC CATEGORIES FOR THE ENNEAGRAM: HUMAN AWARENESS

Human awareness – we can also use the term ‘consciousness’ – is a topic that emerges in many

enneagram books. Some authors deal with it at greater length, for example Riso / Hudson, and Palmer.⁸ We begin by presenting the map of human awareness in a diagram:



Before moving into a description of the various levels of awareness depicted in the balloons to the right, two basic points need to be made:

3.1 SELF-REFLECTION AS THE ROOT OF HUMAN AWARENESS:

Human awareness is self-reflective, turned not only on what is outside ourselves but on our very selves and our behaviours. We are not only aware, but aware that we are aware. We not only exist, but we can ask “Who am I? What is my purpose?” The point which grounds and originates this self-transparency is the centre point found in the circular image.

3.2 THE GRADATIONS IN HUMAN AWARENESS

⁸Cf. *The Wisdom of the Enneagram* (New York, Bantam, 1999), ch.4, on the form of awareness required for enneagram work. Also cf. Helen Palmer, *Understanding the Enneagram*, pp.12-15, and her website. The required awareness is termed the “inner observer”.

As spiritual creatures, such self-transparency is at the heart of who we are. However, we are spiritual creatures in a body which interacts with the physical world in which we live; we grow into that self-transparency gradually; and usually this growth involves a struggle. Our self-awareness has its gradations, which are depicted in the circular image above.

This image represents a beam of light as it focuses on an area outside itself. The ensuing pattern of reflected light is very bright in the middle, where the greatest illumination and clarity are to be found. However, as we move away from the centre the light diminishes little by little, until we reach total darkness. This is a good image of our consciousness or awareness.⁹

3.2.1 Focused Awareness: When actually I pay attention to an object within or outside of my own self,¹⁰ either because it intrudes on me and I cannot help but advert to it, or because I choose to attend to it, my awareness is focused and the light of my self-presence is shed on it. What I am attending to is illuminated by that light. I can only focus on one thing at a time.¹¹ All else is moved away from the bright centre towards the periphery.

3.2.2 Potential Awareness: Even though I am focussing on a certain object, there are many other objects of which I am aware at the same time, but in a diminished sense, sub-liminally, as it were. They are there in the back of my mind while I am focussing on something else. I can readily bring them to awareness. For example:

a) While fully engaged in a certain task, there may be some discomfort nagging away at me, trying to grab my attention. I can choose to change the focus of my attention, deal with the discomfort and then return to my main concern.

b) Or else a pervasive mood may possess me because of a recent unpleasant encounter, and I can promote it to central focus and either try to dispel it or else nurse it along.

c) Or else I can choose to turn the focus on myself and on what I am doing when I attend to any object or event. In this case I am attempting to objectify my very own self which mysteriously illuminates all that comes within my focused awareness. To be able to do this in a steady and

⁹These differentiations are often put in terms of consciousness. In those terms one might talk in broad terms about repressed and potential awareness as the sub-conscious.

¹⁰I use the word “object” in a broader sense, as opposed to “subject”. I am the subject who is present; the object is what I am present to. Object in this sense includes persons, events, bodily changes, sensations, and anything else in my environment including objects or things in the normal sense.

¹¹ I only have so much spiritual energy (i.e. I am a spirit which needs a body and a world in order to come to itself rather than a pure spirit), and this limits my ability to pay attention in a focused way at the same time on many objects, events, persons, etc. What I can do to some extent is to focus on a link that embraces at least in an implicit way many objects, events, persons.

clear way is the accomplishment of many years of human maturation.

d) Or else I may become aware of various habitual dispositions which affect how I function. Normally such habits stay in the background,¹² though I am aware of them subliminally, but I can choose to focus on them.

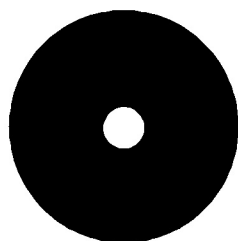
e) In any event my focus often shifts from one object to another as I carry out a complex project. Often, if I am on a roll, the moving in and out of focus can take place with ease. But at times, especially when dealing with myself and what goes on within me there is a struggle and a difficulty in moving from potential to focussed awareness. This leads us to the next category:

3.2.3 Repressed Awareness: Further away from the illuminated centre, as one moves towards the total darkness, there are objects or events or parts of my total self which are difficult to summon to my attention, because I have repressed them in some way, not wanting, consciously or unconsciously, to deal with them. Often they result from negative events of my past which I do not want to face. This repression continues to have a toxic effect on me. I am unable or unwilling to integrate what I have repressed into my fuller self. Thus I will remain in a comfortable rut, satisfied with being a six cylinder engine with only three cylinders in action, the other three having being shut down for many years. Without prompting, pedagogical guidance, or therapeutic intervention I can scarcely bring to the light that toxicity and its sources. This toxicity involves a fixation or compulsion, and in Christian terms can be referred to as a capital sin. My mind is prone to misinterpreting or misjudging in accord with this characteristic toxicity, and I will fail to notice, unless the effects of this toxicity are really dramatic, how it affects my behaviour, my reactions, my attitudes. I am caught in a vicious circle.

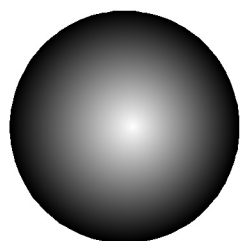
3.2.4 Total Unawareness: At the dark edge of the circle are found the multitude of objects, events, persons, etc., which have not had even the slightest impact on me. They are out of the realm of my consciousness. I don't even know that I don't know them.

3.2.5 Hyper-awareness: Hyper-awareness usually accompanies repressed awareness. When I repress something, my focal awareness becomes enlarged, over-intense, repetitive, tense, frozen in place. For example, my first reaction to an imminent threat is to become hyper-attentive to the threat and to go rigid. But I need very quickly to adopt a more flexible stance, changing my mental focus from the impending threat and seeking helpful ways of coping with the situation. I must stop being hyper-conscious of the threat, in effect repressing parts of my experience which may be helpful in countering the threat. Reacting in this negative way over and over again in my years of immaturity means that I will get stuck, and repetition of this pattern of stuckness leads to disordered habits, compulsions, and fixations.

¹²To clarify terms: I don't have to be actually doing mathematics to be a mathematician. If I am actually doing something else, I still remain a mathematician, with a habitual knowledge of mathematics that I can readily call on when I need it. Some habits are disordered, and they can end up spoiling my life. I must bring them to the light, judge them for what they are, and work for their removal.



Hyper-awareness



Fluid alertness

The right circle represents free and fluid alertness, in which I can move to and fro in my consciousness between actual and potential awareness as required. The left circle represents what happens when I rigidly focus on something at the centre. Instead of an easy flow of attention in and out, there is a barrier between the inner area of light, marked by anxiety and over-intensity, frozen and rigid,¹³ and the outer area of

darkness which is repressed. This is a dysfunction from which we all suffer to some extent during this life.

In sum, the totality of my psychic reality is generally unavailable to me. Many aspects of my psyche remain in the penumbra, either because they are still potentially conscious and have not yet been explored, or else because they have been repressed, hidden away from the light. In the latter case our awareness is anxious, rigid, neurotic. We have built false egos which we need to recognize and dismantle, in order to have access to the full resources of our total self, and to develop an ego which is the authentic servant of our real self.

3.2.6 From hyper-awareness to fluid alertness:

When we turn our focus on ourselves and our own ultimate welfare as human beings, we have a whole inner world to explore: our desires, anxieties, need for survival, feelings, our acts of experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding. This can so easily be a fruitless exercise. We go around and around in our thoughts without becoming aware of what is most significant within our psyche, what would lead to insight and breakthrough. We are invaded by repetitive thoughts and images that keep us awake when we want to sleep or distracted when we need to concentrate. By contrast, in many other areas of our life, especially where we have acquired some expertise, we move easily to and from between potential and focused awareness as required.

¹³For example, I may wallow in the feeling of being hurt and nurse thoughts of revenge, trapping psychic energy that ought to be focussed elsewhere. Or I might be trying to sleep, and I feel super-awake, unable to bring my mind to a more relaxed way of focusing, one that will invite sleep. My reaction will likely be “I just can’t get this out of my mind”, or “I just can’t get out of this psychic rut.” My self-consciousness becomes obtrusive and pathological, and makes me uncomfortable. In this case the over-focused part of my total self is oppressive, and the repressed part is oppressed. The pattern that obtains in our world is similar: a first world swimming in abundance, but very unhappy and unfulfilled; and a third world constantly scratching for the essentials of life, even more unhappy and unfulfilled.

What we are seeking is for this fluid alertness¹⁴ in the area of our own self-appropriation as authentic human beings, which means that we can move the focus of our mind easily and gracefully, that we can catch ourselves in the act of being stuck in our fixation or compulsion, before it gets out of hand. How can we escape from the vicious circle of an awareness that is infected by the very same bias that we are trying to uncover? We will deal with this later in our essay. Frozen awareness is closely linked with faulty ego, which is our next topic.

4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FALSE EGO

All humans develop a false ego (the term used in classical enneagram teaching for false ego is personality) in the first crucial years of their human development. Is this the same as saying, in Christian terms, that all humans are affected by original sin? Let us explore this issue:

4.1 ORIGINAL SIN

According to two converging definitions of human beings, we are rational animals or incarnate spirits. As animal beings we are focussed on survival in the here and now of the physical universe. As spiritual beings we are open to the whole of being, including God who is Being in its fulness, and fulfilled only by God's gift of a personal relation with Himself. This fulfilment we cannot claim or control but only receive as a free gift. The tension between the animal and spiritual components of our nature is at the root of what is known as original sin:

- ◆ As incarnate spirits we come into the world asleep to ourselves, in a state of helplessness and vulnerability, dependent on parents, unable as yet to take hold of our lives and make meaningful decisions about them. By the time we reach the stage where through mature self-reflection we can appropriate, accept, and direct ourselves as spiritual beings ought to do, we have already been profoundly marked by others, especially their bad example and the deficiencies, whether through ill-will or ignorance, of their behaviour towards us. In this stage of immaturity, not yet able to be in possession of ourselves, we face situations and need to react, but by and large these reactions will be marked by disorder. This disorder is not yet sin in the personal sense, but the dynamic of sin is there from the beginning: sin and violence, no matter how subtle, beget deeply rooted disorders in others. Parents, for instance, may be very caring and loving in our earliest months and years, but they have their own character flaws, their anxieties, which cannot but affect their infants when they are in a state of total vulnerability.
- ◆ As incarnate spirits we are born within a threatening physical environment, and the

¹⁴When dealing with this topic, Riso/Hudson uses the term "awareness", whereas in my presentation awareness is more generic. I prefer "alertness" and use the term when the issue is bringing to light what in me impacts on my development as a human being in the image of God.

instinct of survival kicks in right from the start. Our animal tendency is to reach out and grab, to clutch to ourselves what we have grabbed lest it be taken away. This attitude seeps into all realms of our being, including the spiritual, and is fundamentally opposed to God's plan which is to fulfill us by the free gift of Himself in a personal relationship which we cannot claim or demand or grab or clutch to ourselves.

Thus a warp installs itself in the development of our personality. Rather than trusting in the mystery of God we hang on to some value we think we can own and control, which will differ from person to person, and this leads to the division between the over-focused and the repressed parts of our psyche. This begins in infancy, when, without reflection on our part, we develop mechanisms for coping, attitudes, ways of behaviour which seem to ward off danger and/or bring on a sense of security, and we cling to them. Bringing these mechanisms to light and little by little dismantling them, in other words, as we shall see, becoming less like Adam and more like Christ, is what enneagram work is all about.

4.2 SELF AND EGO:

The language of self and ego is used by many contemporary proponents of the enneagram and may be helpful in dealing with this dynamic of sin:

We begin with the self which we can reflect on as spiritual beings, objectify in some measure, but never totally grasp. This self is ever elusive and mysterious.¹⁵ It expresses itself and relates to what is outside itself – persons, events, objects – through the psyche and the body. The psyche, and to some extent the body, develop a distinctive behavioural configuration referred to as ego or, in classical enneagram terminology, as personality. The ego is that aspect of my total self that I readily identify with, and which integrates and shapes my actions and relations. This ego can be either true/authentic or false/truncated.

4.2.1 The **False Ego** is defensive, rigid, marked by an imbalance between hyper-consciousness and repressed consciousness. Faced with a difficult environment, we will exploit a strength which we perceive within ourselves, and keep on exploiting it as long as we sense that this strategy works well in getting approval of others and removing threats. That part of ourselves becomes overdeveloped, and the rest is underdeveloped, and even repressed, and is unavailable for the ongoing integration of our total self.

To have a false ego is to be touched by the dynamic of sin. The opposite of sin in this sense is to refrain from clutching defensively to the strength with which we are endowed, but to hold it in an open-handed manner. Sin means changing my basic attitude towards the gifts that God

¹⁵The word "self" used by itself in this article is the deep self, the point at the centre of the circle which personalizes all else in the human being. We will sometimes refer to the total self which, to follow the image or circle and centre point, is represented by the circle as a whole, and includes all aspects, dimensions, components, relationships of the human person.

bestows upon me from “I am beloved of God and what God bestows on me is for others as well as for myself” to “I have these gifts and they are mine to defend myself and enhance my status”.¹⁶

4.2.2 The **Authentic Ego** is the ego which functions in accord with the model of flexible and fluid consciousness. Not everything about us is integrated into the true ego, but it builds no rigid barriers, no obstacles to further development. This ego is a true instrument and exteriorization of the self, one which seeks to include and integrate all the psychic potential of the person, all his/her gifts. It is a good servant of the self, helping it establish genuine relationships, and originate actions which are constructive and compassionate.¹⁷

4.3 THE DYNAMIC OF THE FALSE EGO:

The basis for our false ego is laid during our earliest years, when we are the most vulnerable and the least aware of ourselves. We develop habits which lead us to depend unduly on certain parts of our psyche, to shut out other parts, to develop attitudes towards others and assumptions about the world which are false. I may be focally aware of the objects to which I am attracted, those which I fear, the decisions I want to make, but in the background, hidden to me, there are many underlying patterns, assumptions, fears, and motives.

As we have said before, the psyche has both a cognitive dimension and an affective/feeling dimension. Both are needed for us to function as human beings. The false ego impacts the functioning of both dimensions. In brief, fixations affect the cognitive function, and compulsions the affective/feeling dimension. Fixations and compulsions feed upon and reinforce each other. Generally the fixations are part of our hyper-awareness, and the compulsions operate from within the repressed area of our psyche.

4.3.1 **Fixations:** the mind is constricted, it develops principles of behaviour based on a limited range of human experience, e.g. that of my immature years when I needed to protect myself in

¹⁶The enneagram teaching develops nine possible patterns of false ego one of which predominates in each human being, basically because of patterns that were set in very early childhood, in relation to our environment and those who care for us. What is the respective role of the particular environment which envelops us, which includes the personalities and actions of our mothers, fathers, siblings, and our own bodily-based temperament, with its strengths/weaknesses? This is a chicken and egg question. It makes sense to entertain the view that one's original bodily and neurological endowment has an impact on what strategies gradually firm up in infants and young children as they face the issues arising in their environment. More research is needed for conclusive answers.

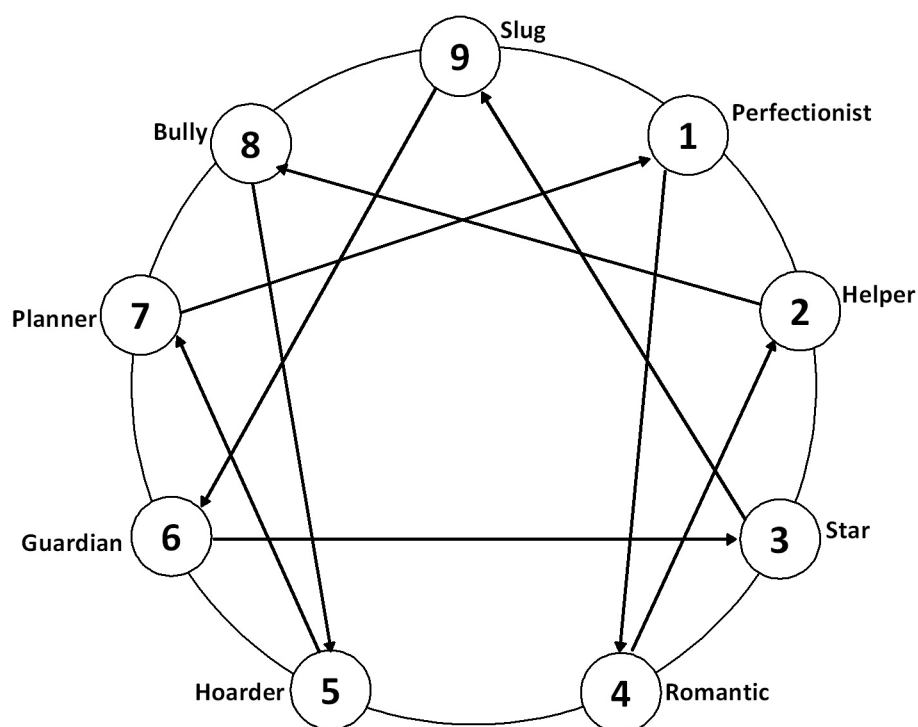
¹⁷Some enneagram authors speak about dismantling the ego – which for them is a false ego – without referring to the true ego which replaces it. This gives access to the essence, or self, but that essence or self cannot function in the world without an ego to serve as its instrument. The issue is not that of whether we function with or without an ego, but of our self being hindered by a false ego rather than helped by an authentic ego.

any way, bypassing a wide range of strategies, situations, and resources available within myself. These principles are inadequately based, and even when they fail, the cognitive fixation is impervious to criticism because the mind understands these failures from within its own old and rigid world-view, and finds excuses for continuing along the same lines. Rather than ready to accept all truth from whatever source, my mind is constricted and biased. (Dunne 37-40)

4.3.2 Compulsions: in addition to the faulty ways I understand myself and the world around me, I find my feelings and my affective disposition warped as well. These warps are known as compulsions, or in classical enneagram terminology, passions, which are opposed to virtues. They are compulsions because when faced with certain situations, they are autonomic: i.e. triggered off within me beyond my conscious control and difficult to counteract.¹⁸ They make me unfree and stereotyped in my behaviour. Other creative possibilities than those suggested by one's compulsion or fixation are simply set aside and not considered. Usually passions elicit the support of a mental fixation to maintain a consistent ego-strategy. For each enneatype there is both a typical compulsion and a corresponding typical fixation.

5 THE NINE ENNEATYPES IN THEIR UNREDEEMED FORM

Each of the enneatypes has its redeemed and unredeemed form. Typically each one of us stands somewhere on the continuum between the two forms, continuum for each enneatype very well described by Don Riso in the *Wisdom of the Enneagram*. This section will present the negative,



unredeemed, side of the coin, and the next ones how to move towards the positive, redeemed side. Most of us are somewhere on the continuum between these two:

The diagram to the left, known as the enneagram, shows the configuration of the nine enneatypes (*ennea* in Greek means "nine").

To each of the nine types there pertains a type of false ego, defined by fixations and

¹⁸Autonomic is the word used by Tad Dunne in his *Enneatypes: Method and Spirit*. The word comes from the Greek and literally means law unto itself. The word "autonomy" is related.

compulsions of its own, but for each of the false egos there is a corresponding authentic ego that needs to be released.

Often the numbers are used as short hand (e.g. I am a One, you are a Two, he is a Three, etc.) The points are related dynamically through the arrows which connect them. And, according to many exponents of the enneagram, while positioned at one of the nine points on the circumference of the circle, each person will typically have an inclination towards the point on either side, and its behaviours. (To use the traditional nomenclature, I can be a One with a Two or with a Nine wing, and so forth.)

The enneagram does not rule out the uniqueness of each person. Each person has a unique way to express his/her own enneatype. The arrows and wings introduce a major element of diversity. Moreover each person, whatever his/her position on the enneagram circle, is affected by many other factors of nature and nurture which add further diversity, for instance the three instincts we have mentioned above (I-thou relations; we-community; survival within the world). The point is not to force each one of us into a box – that would turn a serious spiritual endeavour into a parlour game – but to invite each one to work towards a break-through insight into how otherwise unconnected patterns of behaviour in his/her character basically stem from one flawed strategy, in other words to enter into further self-analysis and investigation, and eventually find liberation and transformation.

The nine enneatypes are amply described in a number of books and web sites, which we will reference at the end of this article and not repeat. The descriptions, based on a whole lot of anecdotal experience, on the whole converge. There are, however, some differences of detail, and various authors analyse them under different lenses. Tad Dunne provides the brief description of each position which is found in the diagram above.¹⁹

As we have already indicated, there are both cognitive and affective components to the psyche. The next diagram presents the warping of the cognitive dimension which takes place in the false ego. The one which immediately follows that one presents the warping of the affective/volitional component. The compulsions are in and of themselves disordered and all are to be avoided, whereas with the fixations the disorder consists in focusing exclusively on one precept which fits one's truncated self-definition, and repressing the others. Which come first, fixations or compulsions? We will not go into this question.

Finally note that these patterns describe persons deeply caught up in their disorder. For most of us the false ego is partially dismantled, and the building of the authentic ego is an ongoing task already begun. We are somewhere on the continuum between being unredeemed and redeemed, between reacting automatically in stereotyped ways and being genuinely free.

We will first briefly present the typical fixations of each enneatype, and then the typical

¹⁹Tad Dunne, *Enneatypes, Method and Spirit*, p. 67.

compulsions. We will present all nine without any effort at this point to interrelate them. That we will do in a later chapter on triads.

FIXATIONS

	The FIXATIONS (in each enneatype a different ennea-precept is over-emphasized)	
1	Be good, be perfect	<i>These ennea-precepts govern our behaviour, as well they should. We should indeed be perfect, helpful, efficient, and so on. However if any one of these precepts becomes so predominant that others are brushed aside, the precept we choose to apply becomes a fixation. The other precepts should play a key role in a balanced, constructive response to what life throws our way. Instead we rely on one familiar strength. We over-focus on and identify ourselves with that strength: I am good, helpful, successful, and so on. This constricted view is central to the false ego we construct. Many other strengths and facets of our personality are left in the dark. We are the six-cylinder engine working on three cylinders.</i>
2	Be helpful, be self-sacrificing	
3	Be successful, be efficient	
4	Be original, be refined	
5	Be observant, be wise	
6	Be on guard; be loyal	
7	Be joyful, be enthusiastic	
8	Be in control, be assertive	
9	Be peaceful, be unobtrusive	

5.1 COMPULSIONS

	COMPULSIONS in the affectivity; (disordered passions)	
1	Anger	<i>An observant reader might find this list familiar as indeed it should be: a long-standing Christian tradition identifies certain sins as capital, i.e. root disorders which govern many elements of our sinful behaviour. The current tradition identifies seven of them. The enneagram teaching incorporates these seven but adds the disorders of type 3 and type 6.</i>
2	Pride	
3	Deceit; Vanity	
4	Envy	<i>In the fixations the disorder consists in choosing one of the precepts and repressing the others. As expressed here, not only the predominant compulsion which corresponds to my type ought to be avoided, but all the others as well.</i>
5	Avarice	
6	Anxiety	
7	Gluttony	<i>These compulsions give rise to stereotyped patterns of behaviour which might feel familiar and good for us to follow, but ultimately are self-defeating.</i>
8	Lust	
9	Sloth	

We may have fairly vivid images of what each of the capital sins might mean, but it would be a mistake to take these images literally. Each capital sin begins with an inner attitude which is disordered, and ends up, when fully blown, in the gross behaviours which we usually identify with that sin, but likely it will spawn other faulty behaviours and attitudes, subtle and even more insidious in their effects.

Underlying these compulsions there is the attempt to avoid a particular type of life experience which comes our way from time to time and which, though negative and especially upsetting for us, is necessary for growth towards our authentic ego. Needless to say, this attempt is ultimately fruitless. There is also a characteristic defence mechanism for each enneatype. At the end of the description of each capital sin, we note the pertinent avoidance pattern to the left, and the defence mechanism to the right:

<i>CAPITAL SIN</i>	<i>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOUR / ATTITUDES</i>
<i>AVOIDANCE</i>	<i>FAVOURED DEFENSE MECHANISM</i>
ONE: <u>ANGER</u>	Usually hidden anger, which begins with a basic attitude of dissatisfaction with self, and then with the world. Both are out of joint, need to be corrected, criticized, shaped into perfection. The One's desire to be perfect usually means that the rage seethes within their own psyches, because to let it out would be an imperfection. Still it gets to be expressed insidiously, with harmful results.
Avoids anger	Reaction Formation: To keep your angry impulses out of your awareness, you do the opposite of what you are inclined to do. You may be extra nice but seething with anger inside.
TWO: <u>PRIDE</u>	Pride is often identified with the sin of Lucifer, ready to defy God. Human pride can come to that, but the characteristic of Twos is ego-inflation. Twos becomes important in the life of others by helping them, focusing on their needs but ignoring their own. They are proud of the resources that they make available to them, and crave recognition. Twos come across as loving, but their love is manipulative, love with a hook.
Avoids his/her own personal needs	Repression: Because your own needs make you uncomfortable, you keep them out of your awareness by repressing them. You project your needs onto others (others are needy, you are not).
THREE: <u>DECEIT or VANITY</u>	The disorder of Threes is in craving for others to recognize them as successful, efficient. They need to be a star, presenting a self-image that is shining, dazzling, which is all surface and no inner authenticity. They look for status, recognition. Very often that image is deceitful, marked by exaggeration, and giving a wrong impression of the reality within. Some Threes even believe their own deceitful self-promotion.
Avoids failure	Identification: To keep failure out of your awareness, you identify with whatever successful mask or role you are playing at the time. You identify with your role rather than with yourself.
FOUR: <u>ENVY</u>	Fours feel inadequate, out of touch with their ordinary day to day self, and deeply desire to be recognized as special, original, refined, to project a dramatic yet authentic image. They feel that others neglect them, pass them over, fail to recognize their uniqueness. Others come across as more real than they are themselves. They envy others, and seek to be original by imitating them.
Avoids ordinariness	Introjection: you introject bits and pieces of what you imagine are the qualities and positive experiences of those you envy, and with them create a fantasy self which is different from the ordinary day to day self which is really yours.

FIVE: <u>AVARICE</u>	Fives survey their environment from a distance, take it all in, lodge it within their minds, but let little out. They hoard their selves, their energy, their knowledge, and fear the involvement with others that might drain, entangle, engulf them. What they have they must at all costs retain. Their avarice goes far beyond financial resources. It applies to every aspect of their being.
Avoids emptiness	Isolation: you isolate yourself in your head away from your feelings and people. You go to your thoughts where you feel good and comfortable. You compartmentalize or isolate periods or aspects of your life.
SIX: <u>ANXIETY</u>	Some enneagram teachers will refer to fear for this enneatype rather than anxiety, but anxiety is a better word, because the issue is with facing not so much present situations as the imagined future. Sixes imagine all sorts of possible negative scenarios, need to protect themselves, find security. They experience dread when having to make decisions of their own without the protection of some authoritative principle that gives them that security.
Avoids doubt and insecurity	Projection: You project onto others your own sense of disobedience and rebellion. Other people are trying to get on with things, and you need to monitor them and bring them in line with authority. Others are trying to trip you up or trap you.
SEVEN: <u>GLUTTONY</u>	Gluttony for Sevens might indeed involve over-indulgence in food, but their gluttony is all embracing. They seek all sorts of pleasant experiences, savouring none of them in depth, but devouring them one after another. They imagine and plan for all sorts of pleasant outcomes, but shun the hard work of realizing them. They cultivate an image of optimism, happiness.
Avoids pain	Sublimation: To keep pain out of your awareness, you sublimate or rationalize it into something good. You automatically look for the good in everything and avoid looking at the bad.
EIGHT: <u>LUST</u>	Lust for Eights may involve disordered quest of sexual pleasure, but not necessarily so. In their case lust applies to all their human relationships and goes to what is at the heart of lust, which is unbridled violation of others. The world is hostile and they must end up on top. They do this by controlling, intruding, bullying.
Avoids weakness	Denial: to prevent weakness from showing up in your awareness or persona, you deny any presence of it.

NINE: <u>SLOTH</u>	Nines prefer living in a state of torpor, and they are aroused to action and genuine involvement with others only with difficulty. Sloth for them is being curled up in self-forgetfulness and avoiding any unpleasantness or conflict that might prod them into a state of mental alertness. They avoid reality rather than enter into it. They want to survive without being noticed.
Avoids conflict	Narcotization: to avoid conflict you numb your feelings, wants, and preferences. You make everything the same and highlight nothing. You make molehills out of mountains.

6 THE ENNEATYPES: FROM UNREDEEMED TO REDEEMED

By now the reader of these descriptions may feel discouraged. No matter where we might find ourselves within the nine enneatypes, we come across as seriously flawed. And when we talk about flaws, we don't mean some kind of a mechanical defect as we come off the divine assembly line, but of a resistance on our part to what God wants to bestow on us. Still the bad news is overshadowed by the good news: "where sin increased; grace abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20). Each of these flaws is but the negative side of a foundational strength, a gift that God wishes to nurture in each one of us, and will do so, with His power which is made of respect, patience and compassion.

Our constitutional temperament based on the congenital constitution of our body, together with our experiences of infancy and childhood, have prompted each of us to develop a distinctive character strength to cope with the challenges of our particular environment. But as we grow older, we unfortunately find ourselves clinging to that strength and using it to excess. In this section we will discuss how to unshackle our particular character strength, use it gracefully, and allow it to bear fruit. Indeed, our greatest strength is also our greatest liability, and to be able to release that strength, from a Christian point of view, is both a difficult task and a great grace, the grace of being redeemed in the deepest part of our psyche.

Often the first step in our quest to discover our enneatype will be to take a test, like we might do to find ourselves in the Myers-Briggs classification.²⁰ The test results, however, are not designed to give us a definitive answer like "I am a One, a Two..." or whatever our enneatype might be. Their role is to suggest to us two or three enneatypes with which we can begin in our quest. This lack of pinpoint accuracy applies to all psychological tests, but even more to enneagram tests, because one is looking for a deep set and subtle pattern of behaviour which

²⁰A number of them are given in the appendix. If you are interested in going that route, better to take a number of them and compare the results.

can manifest itself in all kinds of different ways. Discovering one's enneatype is more art than science, and the key role is that of God's grace which shines into the dark parts of ourselves.

We can dispense with enneagram tests, but we cannot dispense with constant reflection on our own attitudes and patterns of behaviour. Some books offer anecdotal descriptions of behaviours and attitudes typical of each enneagram, and sometimes one or other of these will open up the terrain of self-exploration for us. At times an telling image or feeling might emerge in our exploration, an eureka-moment in which we get an unaccustomed glimpse at what how our enneatype manifests itself. In this case defensive barriers within our psyche have become permeable, and we catch ourselves in the act. In terms of classic Christian spirituality, discovering our enneatype involves an examination of conscience which penetrates beyond our usual defences and lays bare what we really don't want to see. If we are ready to face what emerges, we will be ready to seek the buried treasure which comes with our enneatype. This journey will test our patience and perseverance, which are ultimately God's gift.

There are a number of approaches we can use as we strive with God's grace to reach this state of redemption. We need an awareness of what our enneatype is and how it shapes our behaviour in negative ways, a conversion of heart, and good strategies and approaches to help us in our resolve. The approaches developed here generally apply to both our self-discovery and the resulting action. Here they are in brief form:

- ◆ to seek the still point at the centre of ourselves and dwell there;
- ◆ to rely on the many wake-up calls and challenges that come from our environment: friends, enemies, events of our lives, positive and negative;
- ◆ to observe five fundamental precepts in both our self-discovery and process of reformation: be attentive, be intelligent, be rational, be responsible, be loving.
- ◆ to systematically strive against the negative patterns of our enneatype (Ignatius Loyola uses the phrase "agere contra") so as to open ourselves to God's redemptive action in us which will release the hidden potential of our enneatype for constructive and loving behaviour.

6.1 Dwelling in our centre point:

In the first years of its popularity, enneagram work often degenerated into a parlour game, with superficial typing of oneself and others based on single character traits. Rather this work is a serious spiritual quest. It takes time and effort to pinpoint one's own enneatype and subsequently to detect negative behaviour that flows from it. To do so is to push the borders of our usual mental focus to encompass what is embedded in deeper repressed layers of our psyche. It is to engage in a subtle interior struggle, because the very compulsions and fixations we are trying to unmask have vitiated even our self-perception. We have a blind spot which makes it hard for us to detect them: our natural bent is to think there is nothing wrong because that is the way we have always been. To bring them out of the darkness into the light is a grace to be earnestly sought in prayer.

If we return to the first circle diagram which represents spirit, psyche, and body, we will recall the centre point, the spirit point, in which I am most myself, and which personalizes the rest of my total self. Each one of us is a unique spark of self-presence, of light, of being that doesn't just exist out there but exists for itself.²¹ This self-presence is the locus of our being created in the image and likeness of God. To the extent that I am able to withdraw from whatever invades and monopolizes my consciousness and move towards that centre point and simply be present to it, I touch the very source of my personal awareness which is a wholesome and genuine gift of God gift to me, a gift enhanced by the further gift of the Indwelling Spirit. That source cuts through my biases, fixations, compulsions. It makes me able to catch myself in the act of living out the distorted patterns of my own personality. That source is compassionate, objective: it is an inner witness (Helen Palmer's term) that remains calm within any storm which may be raging within me. Rather than become belligerent, attacking in a frontal way whatever attacks me, fixation or compulsion, I am simply present to it, but not in any way consenting to it. Rather than seeking to repress it, which would only deepen the turmoil within, the inner witness watches as the disordered thought or emotion arises and comes to its peak, and lets it subside. Bringing the disorder into full consciousness is the first step in healing it. Repetition of this pattern of presence into and away from the still point over a period of time increases my awareness of the faulty aspects of my personality, and little by little brings healing to them. A habit of genuine self-presence takes root in me, and helps me tap into the strengths and gifts of my own enneatype. Bringing something to the light is also to bring it to God's healing presence within.

From a Christian perspective, this ability to centre myself and be in touch with the very source of my self-reflection is tied up with God and God's grace. If I were not caught up in the effects of the sin of the world, I could with ease and on my own centre myself. But God's healing grace is there to enable me to actualize the inborn potentials of my own nature. As we saw, one of the terms used by Paul for this centre is heart. For him, the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Spirit given to us. It is in the power of that love that I am able to detach myself from this or that particular dimension of my psyche which calls for attention, whether hurt, desire, anxiety, insecurity, or anything else, and simply let it be as I compassionately observe it and let it be. I reach a state of unencumbered and life-giving alertness. Two terms from spirituality that apply to this state: a) it is akin to centering prayer where I enter the still point within in which God is present; b) it is akin to consolation in the Ignatian sense: moving into that space exposes me to an experience, at times powerful at other times quiet, of peace that surpasses all

²¹When I use this language, I am not implying that at the core of myself I am lost in the ocean of undifferentiated Being. The Christian understanding of the relation of each created spiritual being with God can be stated in this way: distinction without separation; union without absorption. I am the more closely united to God in that God respects my uniqueness and I respect God's transcendence. As Augustine tells us, God is more intimate to me than I am to myself; God is superior to the highest part of myself. This may be what some enneagram authors mean, but writing for a more general audience, they do not use this type of language.

understanding, of compassionate love. Just as God is compassionate towards me, I am called to be compassionate not only towards others but also towards myself.

6.2 Finding help from our environment:

Often the breakthrough comes when we come to the realization that we have gone astray in some way, that our lives are off the rails, that our desire for fulfillment as human persons has been thwarted and that we are confronted with emptiness, pain, disorder, an impasse that prevents us from taking charge of our lives and moving on. This moment of crisis can be a moment of grace, a real opportunity. It invites us to allow ourselves to be more open, more motivated to actually face the issues within ourselves, and ready to explore the inner recesses of our psyche. Breakthrough means seeing ourselves as we are. Rather than compiling lists of minor sins, we see the totality of our lives and the disorder that governs it. An example from outside the enneagram context would be someone addicted to alcohol for years, who ends up in destructive behaviour that imperils his own life and welfare. Like the prodigal son he comes to his senses, and is ready to seek help. This involves recourse to a higher power as he understands it, but AA offers a community within which that moment of conversion is nurtured and strengthened. Some helps from the environment:

- ◆ What we cannot see ourselves can more readily be seen by our close friends, for whom our typical behavioural patterns are far from invisible. I might consider myself taciturn and reserved in speech, but after twenty friends have told me I am garrulous, I am likely to be on the alert for what they have reported to me and begin to catch myself time and time again in the act of being garrulous.
- ◆ People we don't like may often tell us truths we would rather not hear. Our tendency would be to respond with defensiveness, but before we defend ourselves, perhaps we might seek in their hurtful comments a contribution to our own quest.
- ◆ A negative experience such as failure, sickness, sustained boredom, humiliation, conflict, or whatever occurs that upsets and really challenges us, can be the moment of breakthrough. They offer a slot of opportunity for us to delve deeper into ourselves.

In dealing with us, God rarely intervenes in a massive way: He patiently waits for those special moments where our walls of resistance can be brought down, allowing events to take place which will open the door deeper into our psyche and spirit than otherwise possible. Thus the quest for insight into oneself is not a solitary one: it takes place in individual relationships, with God and other human beings, and within communities. Real conversation – quite distinct from gossip – can be a mighty agent of healing.

6.3 Going against the grain: “*Agere Contra*”

Let us now present the virtues which we must cultivate to make effective the basic gift of our enneatype. They counter the negativity of our compulsions. In Ignatian terms: they lay out our own personal path of *agere contra* (acting against; going against the grain). These virtues are

commonly presented as the defining virtues of each enneatype; practising them helps unclench the hands that cling to the giftedness of our enneatype (expressed in the ennea-precept), turning that giftedness from a disorder that harms the community because of its excess into a genuine charisma that, in Paul's vision, together with the gifts brought by others builds up the body of Christ. From unredeemed our enneatype becomes redeemed. The diagram on the next page offers a conspectus of how that works. Here is an explanation of each column:

- ◆ **Ennea-precepts:** The neurological and physical endowments and characteristics which you were given at birth predisposed you to a certain enneatype, and they were very influential as you spontaneously engaged your human and physical environment in your earliest years. As a result you reacted automatically and without reflected experience in accord with the ennea-precept of your enneatype (first column) – which does not exclude doing so in a unique way mainly because of the environmental variants.
- ◆ **Fixations:** Presented with situations in which you needed to react quickly in self-defence or self-promotion, this default option meant that to some extent you belittled or set aside other precepts, manners of behaviour. At least to some extent – your care-givers were more or less successful and wise in the formation they gave you – you depended excessively on that ennea-precept, and ended up in the fixation defined in the second column.
- ◆ **Virtues:** Having come to some awareness of your fixation, you have the opportunity of acting against the grain, unlearning your fixation, creating space for the other ennea-precepts to play their rightful role in your behaviour. This counter-behaviour is described in the third column. When it becomes habitual, it is a virtue overcoming the fixation.
- ◆ **Charisms:** The successful outcome of this counter-behaviour is described in the fourth column. The original giftedness as intended by God for you when you came into the world is released, unshackled, and rather than a hindrance or a dead weight to the human community you are a vehicle of grace, bringing a characteristic strength and balance to the community by fully being who you are. You are able to bring this balance because you yourself are balanced, making use of all the ennea-precepts as appropriate, though with the flavour of your own enneatype.

It is very rare that we are found at either extreme, either totally enslaved by our fixation or totally free from it. Normally we are in a situation of moving from unfreedom to freedom, and we might be more closer to this objective in certain aspects of our being and certain types of behaviour than in others. This is the normal play of God's providence in our lives.

	The ENNEA-PRECEPTS	The FIXATIONS (clinging to one's own ennea-precept)	The VIRTUES (acting against the grain to overcome one's fixation, thus bringing balance to one's ennea-precept.	THE CHARISMS: how the proper use of one's ennea-precept benefits the community. The contribution each ennea-precept is:
1	Be good, be perfect	I am critical, I am resentful	Non-judgemental acceptance of reality in its messiness: SERENITY	A deep sense, tolerant and compassionate, of what is right, equitable, and perfect.
2	Be helpful, be self-sacrificing	I am manipulative, I am a flatterer	Realistic acceptance of our limitations and needs: HUMILITY	Helpfulness and self-sacrifice, authentic because they do not claim a response.
3	Be successful, be efficient	I am deceitful, I am impersonal	Penetrating our surface self-image to get to our real self: VERACITY	Success and efficiency, based on a genuine sense of self, and bereft of self-promotion.
4	Be original, be refined	I am melancholic, I am a victim	Accepting without comparisons our and others' reality: EQUANIMITY	Bringing out and treasuring the deep uniqueness and originality of each human self, including one's own.
5	Be observant, be wise	I am uninvolved, I am stingy	Letting go and trusting in the abundance of reality: GENEROSITY	Deep wisdom and wide learning made available to others in large measure.
6	Be on guard; be loyal	I am suspicious, I am indecisive	Readiness to take risks trusting in the security within: COURAGE	Caution that does not suppress action but makes it more secure in the face of obstacles and external norms.
7	Be joyful, be enthusiastic	I am superficial, I am uncommitted	Being in the present moment, be it painful or pleasurable: SOBRIETY	Enthusiasm and joyfulness, not superficial but grounded in the pain and struggle of life.
8	Be in control, be assertive	I am vengeful, I am intrusive	Seeing with fresh eyes, without anticipating enmity: INNOCENCE	Assertiveness and leadership which because respectful of others build up the community.

9	Be peaceful, be unobtrusive	I am indolent, I am inattentive	Being fully awake to the world and ourselves within it: ALERTNESS	Bringing calm and peace to conflicted situations, being an agent of reconciliation.
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To cultivate the virtues, especially the one which corresponds to our enneatype, is basically to learn how to go with the flow of life, and allow God's gift to be available for ourselves and others on God's terms rather than try to control it, own it, cling to it in a rigid and self-defeating attitude. In other words it is to have the same mind as Christ Jesus, whose gifts and status he refrained from exploiting, emptying himself out, making himself vulnerable for our sake (cf. Phil 2:5-7).²²

There is no need to reconstruct a diagram to depict the positive side of the precepts/fixations. The precept which characterizes my enneatype is the most typical path to my best action. My choice is either (1) to fixate on this precept as if it were the only one, setting aside, with harmful and self-defeating results, the necessary contribution that the other precepts should make to my behaviour, or (2) to allow this precept to incorporate and coordinate the other eight precepts so that my behaviour responses are harmonious and constructive. For example, to follow my drive to be helpful to others (Enneatype Two) without the moderating influence of the other precepts is self-defeating: I will end up manipulating others, using them as a means to my own self-aggrandisement. To be genuinely helpful requires a balanced reaction on my part. My helpfulness then becomes a gift to the community, included with all differing gifts of others. The second column in the above diagram attempts to briefly formulate what might be the constructive contribution of each enneatype.

6.4 Following the five fundamental precepts

A further approach which will help us find our real selves and behave accordingly is to observe the five fundamental precepts. They are also known as the transcendental precepts,²³ because

²²The positive side of the fixations is expressed differently in the spiritual tradition of the original enneagram teaching. There is for each enneatype a particular perception of reality known as a Holy Idea (Cf. Sandra Maitri, *The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram*, pp. 10-13). To see reality in that way is to find liberation from our fixations. The virtues are set in opposition to the compulsions, which makes eminent sense, but this does not get expressed in the diagram we presented above. This system of Holy Ideas could perhaps be adapted to a Christian world view, but to attempt this is beyond our task for the moment.

²³The first four of these precepts are formulated by the Canadian philosopher/theologian Bernard Lonergan. Some of his disciples added the fifth precept in harmony with his later thought which gave centrality to the "love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5). Tad Dunne, who has studied Lonergan extensively and written on the enneagram, is the one who to my knowledge first applied the transcendental precepts to enneagram work.

they equally apply to all humans, whatever their enneatype, their patterns of behaviour, the situations they face. We will refer to them as fundamental precepts, because they set a solid foundation for our efforts to discover and correct ourselves.

We have presented the fixations of each enneatype as the propensity to single out one of the nine ennea-precepts in accord with one's favourite self-image, and to belittle the others. The resulting behaviour is one-sided, usually hurtful, and it misses the intended mark. To re-establish the proper equilibrium in implementing the ennea-precepts, including the one that for us is especially prone to fixation, we must follow the path laid out for us by the five fundamental precepts. Following them is the key not only in achieving deep self-knowledge but also in shaping the dynamism of our behaviour in accord with the other ennea-precepts as required. Apart from them we follow the path of least resistance, and we become fixated in our favoured ennea-precept.

These fundamental precepts function in two different areas:

- ◆ inwardly (self-discovery): they will help us discover our particular compulsion-fixation
- ◆ outwardly (preparing for action): they will help us devise constructive modes of behaviour based not just on our own favoured ennea-precept, but on all of them as appropriate to the situation.

THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL PRECEPTS (<i>distinct from the nine ennea-precepts</i>)	
Be Attentive	<u>In self-discovery</u> be attentive to yourself and open yourself to the full range of your experiences of yourself in thought, feeling, and action. Without this breadth the process of self-discovery has an overly narrow base. Savour, enter deeply into your experience. One could know theoretically all the ins and outs of the enneagram teaching, but apart from that deeper experience, you will have a head-knowledge rather than a heart-knowledge. <u>In preparing for action</u> <i>be aware of all the factors that impinge on the proposed action. If the data seems insufficient, be on the alert for further data and seek them out. Seek out those factors in the situation that you know you are inclined to dismiss or pass over.</i>

Be Intelligent	<u>In self-discovery</u> the operative question is: what meaningful pattern or configuration emerges from the many strands of your self-experience? Are there patterns that apply analogously to different areas of your life?²⁴ They are the most significant ones. What links can you establish between these patterns and enneagram teachings? What insights emerge about yourself and your basic patterns? Explore them. <u>In preparing for action</u> <i>what ways of acting in a situation does the situation in all its complexity bring to mind? Do any of the ennea-precepts suggest other ways of acting that you might miss? What are they?</i>
Be Reasonable	<u>In self-discovery</u> the operative question is: Is your understanding of your experience correct? Review your insights and how they are grounded in your experience. Which one gives a better account of all the data? Which is most likely to be your enneatype? By itself an insight is just a hypothesis that needs to be verified. Bright ideas are a dime a dozen. You must take the time to make an informed judgement. At the same time you realize that as a human your judgements are probable and subject to revision. But for the time being you have to work with the best judgements available to you. <u>In preparing for action</u> <i>You need to ask the same questions, except that they are about the reasonableness of the various ways of acting that have emerged in the previous stage. Which one is right in terms of your better self and of the situation that calls for a constructive response? Are you belittling certain aspects of the situation that would make take you out of your comfort zone? Only ideas and plans based in reality can rightfully serve as the basis of your action.</i>
Be Responsible	<u>In self-discovery</u> the operative question is: Having to the best of your ability discovered your own enneatype, are you ready to commit yourself to responsible behaviour that will lead you to authentic fulfilment within that enneatype? What remedial steps can you take to loosen the hold of your compulsions/ fixations as you have identified them? In other words, how can you open yourself to radical conversion and the disciplined life it grounds? <u>In preparing for action</u> <i>What responsible behaviour do your best judgements require of you? You are not just a thinker but also a doer. You must act responsibly, taking all the relevant correct judgements into consideration.</i>

²⁴For instance, gluttony for the seven is not just a matter of food: it affects how the person thinks, reads books, deals with experiences, enjoys encounters with others. The basic thread in all of these areas is swallowing without savouring.

Be Loving	<u>In self-discovery</u> the operative question is: how can your resolve to change your life in radical conversion draw on the energy of divine love within you? How can you open yourself to God's compassion towards yourself and towards all other beings? Only this love will make your radical conversion possible. Only the love of God poured within your heart can help you come to terms with the deepest flaws of your psyche. This love is a radical gift. <u>In preparing for action:</u> <i>Are you ready to allow your chosen action to be permeated by God's love and included in God's loving plan for all of creation? Your responsibility is not that of an isolated being, but it links you with God and God's plan. Only in that way can your responsible action bear genuine fruit.</i>
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Two of these fundamental precepts play a crucial role: the first one and the last one. The first one sets the base for the upward movement by which we rise towards integration in love; the last one sets the base for the downward movement by which our efforts are already enveloped and empowered by God's grace working within us.

- ◆ **Be attentive:** the more attentive we are, the more we will gather together relevant data, and the greater the chances that the work of the next three fundamental precepts (be intelligent, rational, responsible) will be broadly based and lead to sound decisions and constructive action.
- ◆ **Be loving:** Original sin has touched each one of us deeply and, apart from God's healing grace, it leaves us powerless to know ourselves truly, to be converted, and to carry out actions that are ultimately good and fruitful. The obstacles we need to overcome in our healing are formidable. To be loving in the sense of this precept is not a self-centred and self-originating romantic feeling. It is to be in love with God, to allow ourselves to be penetrated by the energy of God's love and compassion, in such a way that what is difficult, painful, impossible to us when we act on our own will come within our reach. If our spirit is attuned to God, our psyche will be more readily attuned to our spirit in its deep quest for God, and that attunement will mean energy to better deal with our fixations and compulsions. Indeed if we really follow the precept "be loving" in this sense we need not be unduly concerned with the specifics of the ennea-precepts: the right course of action will be there for us and we will be willing to follow it. As Augustine said, "Love, and do what you will."

7 CONTRIBUTION OF THE IGNATIAN EXERCISES TO THIS PROCESS, ESPECIALLY THE TWO STANDARDS

The last section has already drawn connections between enneagram work and the Christian

spiritual journey under God's grace, especially with reference to St. Paul. This section will focus on one particular Christian spiritual path, that of St. Ignatius, and one particular meditation within his *Spiritual Exercises*, that of the two standards, which plays a crucial role in the second week.

In this meditation Ignatius presents the two dynamics, the dynamic of grace and spiritual freedom which leads to our final yes to God (eternal life), and the dynamic of sin and spiritual enslavement which leads to our final no to God (eternal death). He invites us to situate ourselves within those two dynamics, which enneagram work helps us experience more sharply. What forces of sin and of grace are at play in our own lives? By this time the one making the Exercises should have moved beyond gross and obvious temptations towards disorder and sin. But evil maintains an insidious path in which inordinate and compulsive attachments, even attachments to the authentic values and strengths that God gives us, can little by little undermine our good will and lead us down the slippery path towards final refusal of God's grace, or, at the very least cause much confusion and delay in how we progress towards God. The grace of this meditation is to unmask whatever inordinate attachments may still be lurking in us. Enneagram work is a helpful instrument in our opening ourselves to this grace, suggesting patterns that may be operative in our lives. We may not be notably attached to material goods or pleasures, but there always remains a subtle danger: undue attachment to our God-given strengths, and acting compulsively out of those strengths. Our main character defects and our greatest endowments and gifts are intimately connected. They are the two sides of the same coin.

In this Christian interpretation of enneagram work the question is whether in fear and insecurity we clench our fingers around the good qualities that God gave us, especially through our bodily temperament and the crucial experiences of coping in our earliest years. Do we protect these gifts, haunted by our own fear of losing them, making use of them according to our own will, our own designs, or are we ready to take the risk of letting go of them, entrusting them to a Higher Purpose we do not fathom? In other words do we want our talents and gifts to fructify or do we want to bury them through the illusion of our self-sufficiency?

The dynamic of sin may begin with an apparently innocent hanging on to the gifts which God has given me, using them in a disordered and anxious way, but unchecked, that dynamic will disrupt my relationship with others, and ultimately my relationship with God. My underlying insecurity would lead me to crave the recognition of others, and ultimately I would be in the situation of wanting, through what I have been able to accomplish on my own, to control God and my salvation, a far cry from the humble and contrite heart the Lord wants of me. During this life, the dynamic of sin is always lurking and seeking to get a beach-head within my psyche so that it can expand and take over. The grace of this meditation is to unmask and counteract that dynamic. It has not as yet finally overcome any of us, but it still exercises some power within our life and our behaviour, and it is a constant threat and temptation.

In this meditation Ignatius presents the two dynamics of sin and of grace. That of sin is imaged by the camp of Lucifer, the deadly enemy of our human nature, and that of grace by Christ, our supreme leader and lord and his camp. What Ignatius is presenting to us is deeply scriptural. To make the point to the people of his century he uses images from his own military and diplomatic upbringing. We are free to transpose these images, but the dynamic they present transcends Ignatius' own presentation. Here are two diagrams, the first which presents the images in which Ignatius describes this conflict of good and evil, the second which focus on the dynamic itself:

(1) THE DYNAMIC OF SIN**THE DYNAMIC OF GRACE**

The standard of Lucifer: - seated upon a throne (pride) - summons and scatters (imposition)	The standard of Christ: -standing in a lowly place (humility) -calls and sends (invitation)
The dynamic of Adam (Paul: Romans 5)	The dynamic of Christ
Making of God's gifts our own possessions that we cling to (attachment); or else trying to grab hold of them by our power rather than receive them as gifts. In the story, what Adam tried to grab for himself God wanted to give him, but at the proper moment.	Letting go of them that they might bear fruit (the attitude of <i>kenosis</i> : Phil 2:6-7): Jesus's obedience counteracts Adam's disobedience; his forgoing his prerogatives as God's equal counteracts Adam's grasping and protective attitude.
hands that clutch God's gifts, making of them riches that we seek to protect at all costs	hands that are relaxed in simply holding the gifts as gifts, that others might benefit from them
riches that we covet for our own possession	gifts received from God with gratitude
violence towards others in order to achieve and consolidate our grasp of these riches	respect of others; gentleness, humility; absorbing their violence through patience and suffering, like Jesus
juridical relations; force, imposition, which have a short-term impact	personal relations; invitation, persuasion, which win hearts, have a long-term impact
true freedom is circumvented: manipulation, fear, seduction are the tools	our true freedom is enabled and affirmed: God's grace is patient and affirms our dignity
the wages of sin are death, final separation from God	the fruit of grace is eternal life, final union with God ²⁵

²⁵Two comments on this first diagram: (1) It appears that Ignatius chooses Lucifer because in the Adam story Lucifer is the source of the temptation, and comes across as insidious, crafty, indeed diabolical, whereas Adam's sin comes across as one of weakness and ignorance and immaturity. (2) The theme of violence does not occur explicitly in the Adam story, but very soon after it emerges in the story of Cain and Abel. The best modern exponent of this theme is René Girard.

(2)

	DYNAMIC OF SIN: the path towards disintegration and dysfunction	DYNAMIC OF GRACE: the path towards integration and liberation
BEGINNING <i>(how we relate to the gifts God gives us)</i>	<u>riches:</u> we become attached to God's gifts, especially those of a spiritual nature. We seek to protect them, hang on to them; they become riches. We become fixated on them.	<u>poverty:</u> we are ready to let go of God's gifts, sharing them with others or even giving them up. We are sensitive to how to use them in a genuinely loving way. They remain gifts. We release them for the greater good of all.
MIDDLE <i>(How our attitude to these gifts leads us to relate to others)</i>	<u>honour:</u> with these riches we seek to achieve a higher status in the world, to be acclaimed. Our deep insecurity craves recognition through these riches.	<u>humiliations:</u> these gifts of God confer no status on us: with them we are ready to serve others, and in doing that to be vilified and belittled. In contemporary terms: we are counter-cultural and ready to pay the price.
END <i>(How our attitude to these gifts leads us to relate to God)</i>	<u>pride</u> :²⁶ I succumb to the illusion of my self-sufficiency. This is pride, and pride is the root of all the other vices. My relationship to God is threatened, and even ruptured.	<u>humility</u>:²⁷ I recognize that I am rooted in God. This humility is the root of all the other virtues. My relationship to God is strengthened and confirmed.

²⁶Pride in this sense is more encompassing than the pride which characterizes Enneatype 2.

²⁷Humility is a word that we might find odd at this point. The origins of the word is the Latin *humus*, which means ground or earth, and in English fertile earth with good nutrients. Humility in this Ignatian sense means being grounded in reality. We are not talking about feigned deference, humility with a hook, but humility based on truth. An example is the Virgin Mary's Magnificat.

8 ARROWS, WINGS, TRIADS

This appendix will add some notes on three points which are commonly covered in recent enneagram literature: arrows, wings, and triads.

8.1 Arrows:

You will note in the enneagram that the 9 points on the circumference of the circle are linked by arrows. Points 3 6 and 9 form an equilateral triangle. Points 1 4 2 8 5 7 are linked together in a complex way, which, in mathematical terms, is the repeating decimal that happens when you divide 1 by 7: 0.142857142857.....and so on *ad infinitum*.

This expresses the dynamic between the enneatypes as developed by recent enneagram authors. Their formulations differ somewhat. Our own treatment will be fairly general. This is one of the areas which can benefit from the further experience of those who work with the enneagram, their input, and careful statistical analysis.

There is some agreement is that to move in the direction of the arrows is to follow the natural bent, the path of least resistance, deepening the hold of our fixations and compulsions, and to move against the arrows is to take a stand which will benefit us. This is a theory which has some confirmation but needs to be more thoroughly tested through experience.

8.1.1 Let us look briefly at the dynamic meant when we move in the direction of the arrows. As we reach a state of frustration, of impasse, because the fixation and compulsion of our own enneatype cuts us off from our genuine self and authentic relations with others and with the world, we will easily find ourselves moving in the direction of the arrow that leads from our enneatype, e.g. 7 towards 1, 1 towards 4, and so on, in an effort to escape. We might think that this move will bring us consolation and relief, but this consolation is false and our impasse is intensified, because now we take on some of the disordered behaviour of the number towards which we are moving. Sometimes authors explain this in ways that make sense, but in other cases one suspects that they did not have access to convincing experiences of how this works.

An example of how it works that I can vouch for is that the unredeemed 7 typically gets caught up in beautiful plans about how things might be, and fails to acknowledge the pain and struggle of dealing with reality. At some point this leads to frustration, and the 7 will typically move into an angry space, with the resentment and criticism characteristic of the 1. You might want to explore this with your own number, using the descriptions found in various books. One that I

have found helpful is an early book by Beesing, Nogosek, and O'Leary.²⁸ A few brief hints drawn from their treatment:

- ◆ a frustrated 1 whose efforts at perfection fail can withdraw into the self-pity and victimhood of the 4;
- ◆ a frustrated 2 whose efforts to gain the appreciation of others fail can become cynical and vengeful like an 8;
- ◆ a frustrated 3 who experiences failure can fall into the indolence and avoidance of conflict of the 9;
- ◆ a frustrated 4 will to get out of his/her sense of despair about being able to manage his/her inner life can cling to others like an unhealthy 2;
- ◆ a frustrated 5 who is especially out of touch with his/her environment can fall into the false dreams and irreality of the 7;
- ◆ a frustrated 6 who is especially insecure can move into the aggressivity and vanity characteristic of a 3;
- ◆ a frustrated 7 whose plans are not working out can fall into the resentment, biting criticism, and presumption of the 1;
- ◆ a frustrated 8 whose efforts to control the situation are unsuccessful can withdraw into the isolation of the 5;
- ◆ a frustrated 9 who is caught up in his/her own paralysis can take on the insecurity and scruples of the 6.

8.1.2 Moving against the arrow is akin to moving against the grain. Some will claim that the specific compulsion and fixation of our own enneatype is grounded in the enneatype behind it, which is an even deeper and hidden dimension of our personality,²⁹ which means that working in this area would be especially liberating. Moving against the grain means deliberately to cultivate the strengths and gifts of the enneatype behind our own. This would be to complement the work we are doing directly on our own compulsive pattern, and to help us liberate the strengths and gifts that our pattern neutralizes, even shackles. Going back to the diagram on how each enneatype moves from unredemption to redemption, one might say that in addition to cultivating our own charism, we ought to also try to cultivate the charism of the enneatype which is immediately “behind” our own. Thus, again briefly and with some help from Beesing et al:

- ◆ The 1 cultivates the 7's sense of fun, going with the flow, seeing the positive side of things.
- ◆ The 2 cultivates the 4's sense of being unique, special, which includes his/her own needs.
- ◆ The 3 cultivates the 6's sense of responsibility for the community, loyalty, accountability.

²⁸Maria Beesing, Robert Nogosek, and Patrick O'Leary, *The Enneagram: a Journey of Self-Discovery*, Dimension Books, Denville, 1984.

²⁹This point is developed at length by Sandra Maitri.

- ◆The 4 cultivates the 1's sense of critical involvement with reality, honesty, directness.
- ◆The 5 cultivates the 8's sense of self-assertion, making a real difference in the world.
- ◆The 6 cultivates the 9's sense of being peaceful, of resolving inner and outer conflicts
- ◆The 7 cultivates the 5's sense of wise objectivity, of reflective awareness of what is real
- ◆The 8 cultivates the 2's sense of being helpful, attuned and reaching out to others
- ◆The 9 cultivates the 3's sense of being self-starters, making use of their own gifts

Put in the terms of Ignatian spirituality: in consolation, where the love of God is operative in us, we not only find release from the limitations of our own enneatype, but also find ourselves gifted with the strengths of the enneatype preceeding our own. Indeed if we find ourselves exercising the virtues of that enneatype, this is a good sign that our consolation is genuine. In desolation we have the tendency to move towards the compulsions and fixations of the enneagram following our own, which only increases our sense of impasse and desolation. (Rohr 199-209)

8.2 Wings:

While each person can be described within one of the enneatypes, most authors claim that persons generally would have an inclination towards either of the enneatypes on the immediate side. This gives a certain flavour to the way in which the person lives out his/her enneatype. For example, a 4 could have a 5 wing or a 3 wing, and so forth. This also adds a measure of complexity, and helps account for the range of personality types which may be found within any given enneatype. Again this is a legitimate subject for further scientific investigation. We will not develop the theory of the wings any further. An excellent source for material on this can be found in *The Wisdom of the Enneagram* by Riso and Hudson.

8.3 Triads:

One of frequent explorations in the enneagram literature has involved – and continues to involve — sorting out of the 9 enneatypes into triads. The obvious hypothesis to investigate is that the 9 enneatypes can be explained as the intersection of two triads, nine being three squared. This would offer a rough similarity with the Myers-Briggs system: the 16 types developed in that system arise out of the combination of four two-part alternatives: introvert or extrovert, intuitive or sensate, thinking or feeling, judging or perceiving. To be able to do this for the enneagram teaching would appear to give it a stronger scientific basis. Thus we would readily see that the enneatypes are not rabbits pulled out of a hat, for example out of the questionable mystical vision of one of its originators, Oscar Ichazo, but are linked with other developments within psychology in the study of character. Those who practice the enneagram are engaged in this quest, as one can readily see from enneagram sites on the internet.

riads are complex and different authors adopt different approaches to them. They invoke different triads, and sometimes explain the same triads differently. In some cases their understanding is clear and precise, in others vaguer, and yet others unsatisfactory and confusing. One triad recurs frequently: that of enneatypes 8, 9, and 1 (891 in brief) as focusing on the instinctive (gut) function of the psyche, 234 on the feeling (heart) function, and 567 on the knowing (head) function. This triad goes way back in enneagram literature. First a diagram, and then some explanation:

Ennea- types	Preferred Centre:	Brain Region:	In classical terms:	Major focus:	Underlying affect:
8 9 1	Instinctive	Root System	Gut	Survival in the world as it is here and <u>now</u>	aggression
2 3 4	Emotional	Limbic System	Heart	Recognition by others on the basis of <u>past</u> performance	shame
5 6 7	Cognitive	Neo- Cortex	Head	Finding a secure path towards the <u>future</u>	anxiety

In the earlier Gurdjieff literature pre-dating the psychological use of the enneagram we find reference to the three centers, instinctive, emotional, and cognitive. They are three functions of the psyche as we have developed them earlier in this essay. We find ourselves as knowers, feelers, or instinctive reactors.

8.3.1 The instinctive centre is the one closest to the body, and we share it with other animal creatures, though in humans instincts take on a specific coloration because the human body is instrument of a developing spiritual self-presence:

- ◆ all animals need need to survive physically in a dangerous world – with humans this need to survive is spiritual as well as physical;
- ◆ all animals need to reproduce their species – with humans this also becomes a need to relate intimately one-on-one, whether or not in a reproductive context;
- ◆ all animals need to relate to other animals of their species, e.g. dogs to a pack – with humans this means living in a social space with other humans.

Some situate this instinctive centre in one of the most primitive areas of the brain, the reptilian.

8.3.2 The emotional centre has to do with feelings of various kinds. It is commonly situated in a middle zone of the brain, known as the limbic system.

8.3.3 The cognitive centre of the brain has to do with thought, and it is situated in the frontal lobe part of the neocortex, which is more developed in humans than in animals.

8.3.4 The significant environment for each of these triads differs: for 891 instinctive reactors it is the world out there in which they need to survive; for 234 feelers it is the world of people within which they need to be recognized: for 567 knowers it is the world of unexpected events in which they need to feel secure. This triad intersects with another triad based on different ways in which the enneatypes deal with their environment. The best way of presenting this is diagrammatically, based mainly on Riso/Hudson:

	They focus outward, attaching less importance to their inner environment	They blend in with their environment, finding protection in invisibility	They focus inward, attaching less importance to their outer environment
891: instinct: their significant environment is the world out there in which they need to survive. Survival is their issue. PRESENT	8's go on the attack, trying to control their outer environment and make sure it does not harm them.	9's blend in because they blur the distinction between themselves and the world: they want to be inconspicuous. They survive by being invisible.	1's concentrate on their own inner reality and impulses, trying to survive by being perfect and agents who create perfection outside themselves.
234: feeling: their significant environment is the world of people within which they need to be recognized. Image is their issue. PAST	2's move outward in action, trying to establish themselves as helpers who deserve the gratitude and recognition of others.	3's blend in because they blur the distinction between their real self and the image of themselves as successful which they project.	4's dwell within, building a self-image that is different and original, but bemoan the fact that they are not recognized as they think they deserve.
567: thinking: their significant environment is the world of unexpected events beyond their control in which they need to feel secure. Security is their issue. FUTURE	7's move outward, escaping into activity and planning for activity, to keep their inner anxieties under control. They appear free from fear and enthusiastic, but this masks their inner anxiety.	6's blend in because they identify with outside authority offering them laws and safe ways of proceeding, thus belittling themselves as responsible agents who have to risk and make their own decisions.	5's retreat from their outer environment into their minds, preparing themselves for action by observing their environment, accumulating knowledge and skills.

A variant description of the same set of intersecting triads:

- ◆ 891: Preferred centre for functioning is the three instincts which are on the border between the body and the psyche: relation to the world, I-thou relations, we relations. The concern of the 891 is with survival within the world in all its complexity. The 9 takes a passive role of being unnoticed within the world environment, not standing out. Survival by hiding. The 8 and the 1 take on the environment, the 8 by being suspicious of it and hostile, the 1 by critiquing it and trying to set it right. These types have an orientation to the present: what is facing me in the world at the moment.
- ◆ 234: Preferred centre for functioning is the feeling/affective centre. The concern is image, being recognized within the world. Unlike the 9 the 3 appears active, but there is a failure of distinction between self and image: he/she develops an image into which he/she allows himself to be absorbed. The 2 and 4 take on a more positive role: in the first case appearing as selfless, helping, so as to evoke reactions of gratitude, love, etc; in the latter case appearing as original, elegant, nonchalant. These types have an orientation to the past: how are my past actions, accomplishments going to burnish my image and make me recognized?
- ◆ 567: preferred centre is the thinking centre. The concern is to find a path to achieve security in the presence of fears that things will go wrong. The six identifies himself with an authority figure which gives him/her the security he/she needs. The 5 and 7 do it differently, the 5 accumulating knowledge and competence that will enable him to eventually achieve his purposes without difficulty, the 7 making plans for the future and giving himself many options. These types are projected towards the future: the obstacles in the path ahead are uppermost.

8.3.5 There are other sets of intersecting triads which we will not develop at this point. We will note however that one of the triadic presentations builds on the three types developed by the psychologist Kate Horney: the dependent (which goes out towards others); the withdrawn (which withdraws from others) and the aggressive (which goes out against others). In this presentation we often find the following breakdown:

- ◆ within the instinctive reactors (891) the 8 is aggressive, the 9 withdrawing, the 1 dependent;
- ◆ within the feelers (234) the 3 is aggressive, the 2 dependent, and the 4 withdrawing
- ◆ within the knowers (567) the 7 is aggressive, the 6 dependent, and the 5 withdrawing

9 RESOURCES

9.1 GENERAL WEB SITES

There are many web-sites that offer both rudimentary explanations and detailed expansions of the enneagram teaching. Students of the enneagram can explore these on their own. At times they will find interesting speculations and theories that expand the traditional teaching, at other times they will find authors whose ideas cannot be readily brought into harmony with each other. A few sites to look at:

<http://www.enneagraminstitute.com> (Riso/Hudson site) *materials are classical, and coherent with the key books these two authors have produced. The section entitled "How the system works" gives an excellent introduction.*

<http://www.enneagram.com> (Helen Palmer site) *Each type is given a brief description with a video. Again a classic presentation.*

<http://www.enneagramspectrum.com>: *a brief test and short, well-organized descriptions of each type. This site has materials and perspectives not covered by other sites, which may or may not be a plus depending on the underlying evidence for them and its adequacy.*

9.2 BOOKS

Almaas, A.H, *Facets of Unity: The Enneagram of Holy Ideas* (Shambala, Boston, 1999)

This book develops the holy ideas for each enneatype from the perspective of an eastern non-dualistic ontology.

Beesing, Maria, Nogosek, Robert, and O'Leary, Patrick, *The Enneagram : A Journey Of Self Discovery*, (New Jersey, Dimension Books (1984)

An early book on the enneagram from a Christian spiritual perspective.

Daniels, David, and Price, Virginia, *The Essential Enneagram: The Definitive Personality Test and Self-Discovery Guide*, (HarperCollins, New York, 2000)

A brief presentation of the enneagram, which contains their self-discovery test which otherwise can be taken on-line with a fee.

Dunne, Tad, *Enneatypes, Method and Spirit: Our Nine Basic Compulsions*, (Universal Publishers, 1999).

This book is available second-hand. He offers a more theoretical and methodological perspective, has interesting perspectives on the triads, and it is from him that I got the idea of using the transcendental precepts, though I do so in a different way than he does. His book and earlier notes have been helpful to other enneagram authors.

Hurley, Kathleen, and Dobson, Theodore, *My Best Self: Using the Enneagram to free the Soul* (HarperSanFrancisco: 1993)

This book offers original perspectives, and develops the intellectual, emotional, creative centres in ways not found elsewhere. N.B.: Dobson later changed his name to Donson.

Lapid-Bogda, Ginger, *What Type of Leader are you? Using the Enneagram System to Identify and Grow your Leadership Strengths and Achieve Maximum Success*, (McGraw Hill, New York, 2007)

This book's title explains its business rather than spiritual perspective. It offers a clear and well-organized perspective on each of the enneatypes, concentrating on areas of strength and areas of development for each one.

Maitri, Sandra, *The Enneagram of Passions and Virtues: Finding the Way Home* (Tarcher/Penguin, New York: 2005)

----- *The Spiritual Dimensions of the Enneagram: Nine Faces of the Soul*
(Tarcher/Putnam: New York, 2000)

Sandra Maitri was trained by Claudio Naranjo in the first American-based group, and her perspectives are those of the gnostic-type spirituality which I have tried to transpose to some extent in my notes. Her spirituality is indebted to the diamond approach of A.H. Almaas. A wealth of keen insights, and attempts to link the enneagram with the work of Freud and Jung. The first book concentrates on the passions, the second on the fixations.

Palmer, Helen, *The Enneagram: Understanding Yourself and the Others in your Life* (New York: HarperOne, 1991)

This is a classic from one of the long-standing experts on the Enneagram. She makes excellent use of narratives provided by persons with different enneatypes.

----- *The Enneagram in Love and Work: Understanding your Intimate and Business Relationships* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1995)

In addition to a fascinating and most useful account of how the different enneatypes interact with one another in love and business relationships, there is an account of each enneatype which complements that of Helen Palmer's earlier work. This account is more succinct and organized with very helpful headings.

Riso, Don Richard, and Hudson, Russ, *The Wisdom of the Enneagram: The Complete Guide to Psychological and Spiritual Growth for the Nine Personality Types*, (New York, Bantam, 1999)

This book is still readily available, which gives us proof of its popularity. It offers a well-organized and relatively complete presentation of enneagram teaching, and valuable directions for the seeker of integration. One of its distinctive features is the distinction between levels of integration/disintegration within each enneatype.

----- *Discovering your Personality Type: The Essential Introduction to the Enneagram*,
(Boston & New York: Houghton and Mifflin, 2003)

This book will give you the full version of the Riso-Hudson Test (Riso-Hudson Enneagram Type Indicator or RHETI) for free, and is much more concise in presenting enneagram teaching. A good beginning book.

Rohr, Richard, and Ebert, Andreas, *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* (Crossroad, New York, 2011)
Offers an approach to the enneagram within the Christian spiritual tradition. Very helpful.

Wagner, Jerome, *The Enneagram Spectrum of Personality Styles: An Introductory Guide* (Metamorphous Press, Portland, OR, 1996).

This brief book is very well organized. It offers a different perspective on the significance of the arrows, and contains a insight that led to my development of the precepts, which are all available to the integrated person, but only partially available to the one acting out of his/her fixation.

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