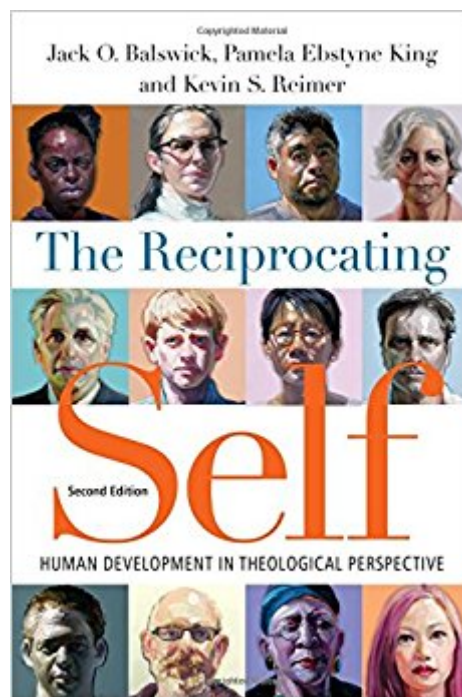




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# The Reciprocating Self: Human Development In Theological Perspective (Christian Association For Psychological Studies Books)



## Synopsis

On the basis of a theologically grounded understanding of the nature of persons and the self, Jack O. Balswick, Pamela Ebstyne King and Kevin S. Reimer present a model of human development that ranges across all of life's stages: infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle adulthood and elder adulthood. They do this by drawing on a biblical model of relationality, where the created goal or purpose of human development is to become a reciprocating self—fully and securely related to others and to God. Along the way, they provide a context for understanding individual development issues—concerns, tensions, worries or crises encountered by the self in the context of change. Awareness of these issues is most pronounced at developmental transitional points: learning to talk and walk, beginning to eat unassisted, going to school, developing secondary sexual physical features, leaving home, obtaining full-time employment, becoming engaged and then married, having a child for the first time, parenting an adolescent, watching children move away from home, retiring, experiencing decline in physical and mental health, and, finally, facing imminent death. The authors contend throughout that, since God has created human beings for relationship, to be a self in reciprocating relationships is of major importance in negotiating these developmental issues. Critically engaging social science research and theory, *The Reciprocating Self* offers an integrated approach that provides insight helpful to college and seminary students as well as those serving in the helping professions. Those in Christian ministry will be especially rewarded by the in-depth discussion of the implications for moral and faith development nurtured in the context of the life of the church. In this revised and expanded second edition, Balswick, King and Reimer have added research from developmental neuroscience and neuropsychology, which connects transitional behavior to a changing brain. They have also included a wealth of research on the moral, spiritual and religious dimensions of human development, in which they introduce the notion of reciprocating spirituality. In addition the authors engage with the burgeoning fields of positive and evolutionary psychology.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Reciprocating Self by Balswick, King, and Reimer easily gets my vote as the best book integrating human development and theology. I have been teaching human development for nearly twenty years, and it's rare to find a volume on the lifespan that synthesizes multiple theoretical frameworks and a healthy consideration of diversity and social contexts. Moreover, the motif of the reciprocating self serves to illuminate crucial dimensions of moral, spiritual, and relational development. They have grounded this work in sound research while also offering ample practical applications. This second edition offers integrative engagement with the latest developments in psychology and neuroscience and will inform much of my own teaching and research in the years ahead." (Steven J. Sandage, Albert and Jessie Danielsen Professor of Psychology of Religion and Theology, professor of psychological and brain sciences, director, the Danielsen Research Center, senior staff psychologist, Danielsen Institute, Boston University)"I was a big fan of The Reciprocating Self. It is a rare book that delivers a scientific vision of human development through the logic of the spirit, working hard to show the reader how the depth of the human developmental experience is spiritual. So you can imagine this fanboy's glee with the release of this updated second edition! If you missed it the first time, you're in for a treat. This book will broaden your vision and deepen your understanding. I think it is a must for every pastor, youth worker, and children's minister. And if you read the first editionâ •say, in a seminary classâ •now is the time to reread it. This updated version promises you and your ministry new insights." (Andrew Root, Luther Seminary, author of Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker)"Every human life originates in a relationship with another person, and humans thrive when their lives involve mutually beneficial, positive relationships with family, friends and community members. The Reciprocating Self creatively integrates developmental science and the wisdom of Christian theology to provide innovative and singularly significant insights about the nature and importance of human relationships in creating human lives marked by meaning, love and fulfillment. Professors Balswick, King and Reimer have

written a book that exemplifies the powerful contributions that can be made to understanding and enhancing human development through bridging the best of social and behavioral science and theological verities in a manner that both informs and inspires." (Richard M. Lerner, Bergstrom Chair in Applied Developmental Science, Tufts University)"In the Confucian Analects, when asked, 'Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?', the Master replies, 'Is not reciprocity such a word?' In *The Reciprocating Self*, Jack Balswick, Pamela Ebsteyne King and Kevin Reimer have given us a magisterial account of reciprocity in human development. The book reflects the best current thinking in theology and developmental science, a rare and powerful combination. This book should be read by anyone interested in the most promising directions in the study of human development." (William Damon, professor and director, Stanford University Center on Adolescence, author of *The Path to Purpose*)"All empirical and theoretical accounts of human development raise a basic normative question: What counts as maturity or developmental advance? Much contemporary social science tries to sidestep the question; this book does not. It is unique in spelling out the implications of a Christian conception of full human development for the process and nature of development at each stage in the lifespan. Even those who don't share these authors' religious convictions can benefit from seeing what it takes to stake out a particular developmental teleology and see it through. And for those who are seeking a specifically Christian perspective on development, this is a must-read!" (Anne Colby, consulting professor, Stanford Graduate School of Education, coauthor of *The Power of Ideals and Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment*)

Jack O. Balswick (Ph.D., University of Iowa) is senior professor of sociology and family development at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He has twice received an American Senior Fulbright Scholar Fellowship. He has been associate editor of the *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Family Relations*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* and *Review of Religious Research*. He has authored or coauthored articles in over seventy professional publications and has presented papers at conferences around the world. He is author or coauthor of seventeen books, including *Men at the Crossroads*, *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*, *The Gift of Gender*, *Social Problems: A Christian Understanding and Response*, *Relationship-Empowerment Parenting*, *Authentic Human Sexuality*, *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective* and *A Model for Marriage: Covenant, Grace, Empowerment and Intimacy*. Kevin S. Reimer (Ph.D., Fuller School of Psychology) is a faculty member in the School of Education; University of California, Irvine. Educated in the United States and Canada, he holds degrees in

developmental psychology, biological sciences, theology and literature.

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