



DUKE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

Department of Psychiatry

Department of Medicine

May 24, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure and privilege to write in endorsement for Prof. Niels Christian Hvidt, ThD.

I have known Prof. Hvidt since he was a visiting fellow in the spring of 2003 at the *Center for Spirituality, Theology and Faith* here at Duke University. I have come to know Dr. Hvidt as a highly intelligent, scholarly and socially gifted theologian. During his stay at our Center, Dr. Hvidt's participation in our interdisciplinary seminars was always clear and highly relevant. He gave a public presentation of his research that was open to all students and professors at Duke University that I remember most clearly because of its lucidity and relevance to our work.

Dr. Hvidt has managed in a unique way to reach out to the world of medicine, especially in its new-found exploration of the interface between religion and health. Much work is needed in this field, *especially* from the side of theologians as theological responses to this research have been scarce. Hvidt's work constitutes an important contribution in providing an overview of the various forms of spirituality that are at stake when people suffer, thus exploring the truly theological underpinnings of the faith-health-dynamism. We who have worked for decades in this field know how much we need Dr. Hvidt's contribution.

Dr. Hvidt has a fascinating background. His work on Divine action has enabled him to contribute in a unique way to the interdisciplinary research he is involved with. His command of languages is impressive as is his international network of colleagues both in psychology, medicine and theology. Dr. Hvidt's work has inspired a conference on *Faith and Health* that will take place at the University of Notre in December 2006 of which he is the main organizer. Already in such a young age, Dr. Hvidt has helped initiate cross disciplinary research projects that are most promising.

We need responsible young leaders in the dialogue between theology and medicine. I believe Dr. Hvidt is one of them. With this I do not hesitate to give my enthusiastic recommendations for Dr. Hvidt and his work. May he always be secured the best possible institutional settings so that his work may be as fruitful as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Harold G. Koenig'.

Harold G. Koenig, M.D.

Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Associate Professor of Medicine

Co-director, Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health