

Licensed Christian Psychotherapists

Because this article is about licensed psychotherapists, we first repeat what we have said in the past: One of us earned a doctorate and qualified for the California Clinical Psychologist License, but decided not to apply for it. We had come to the same conclusion as Dr. Lawrence LeShan, when president of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, who said some years after us: "Psychotherapy may be known in the future as the greatest hoax of the twentieth century."¹ It may eventually be recognized as one of the greatest heresies of modern-day Christianity.

Although this article is about the Clinical Psychologist and Marriage and Family Therapist licenses in California, the **information that we reveal in this article regarding licensure is likely to be equally true for all the other**

states. Each state licenses its own psychotherapists, but the requirements are similar state by state, and many states have reciprocal agreements. California and Connecticut were the first States to offer a license for a psychotherapist. California issued its first Clinical Psychologist license in 1958. Five years later, in 1963, California issued its first Marriage and Family Therapist license. Before that time, no church in America referred their congregants out to licensed psychotherapists, because there was no one to send them to. The only source they had was the same source used for almost 2000 years up to the psychological licensing era: The BIBLE!

Over the years we have heard about Christians who are practicing state-licensed psychotherapists and claiming to be doing "Christian counseling"

or counseling by the Bible. Some of these state-licensed psychotherapists approach pastors with their claims, advertise themselves as Christian counselors, and/or indicate likewise on their websites.

Although we knew the answers to the following two questions, we wanted it in writing from the California Department of Consumer Affairs. Our first question was: "Can psychotherapy-licensed Christians or those of any other faith, e.g., Jewish, Buddhist, etc., inject their faith system into their client sessions?" Their answer references the California "Business and Professional Codes" and the California Psychology Board's "Laws and Regulations," with the sum and substance answer being "No." There were exceptions for those who could

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Critical Review of *Wounded Spirits*

The book *Wounded Spirits* by Douglas J. Carragher is subtitled *A Biblical Approach to Dealing with the Effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*¹ [PTSD]. Although there are many Bible verses and some good information later in the book, the overall result of what Carragher teaches is biblically naive and seemingly militaristic, possibly due to his military training and experience. In spite of the many Bible verses used in the book *Wounded Spirits* is a failed attempt to deal biblically with the symptoms of PTSD and with the ones listed in the Appendix.

In his introduction, Carragher presents what his book is all about. He says:

If you or someone you love is experiencing any of the following symptoms after a traumatic or

stressful event, PTSD may be the problem: suicidal thoughts, anxiety, phobias, depression, insomnia, feelings of guilt, anger, irritability, bad dreams, flashbacks, and apathy (page 1).

Later in the book he says:

PTSD is identified by clear physical and psychological symptoms.

- suicidal tendencies
- fear, depression, sleeplessness, and anxiety
- guilt and survivor's guilt
- anger and irritability
- nightmares and flashbacks
- avoidance of conflict
- apathy (page 11).

Although one or more of the above symptoms could be involved in PTSD,

one could have all of the above symptoms and still not be diagnosed with PTSD.

Major Error

Carragher ends each of the Chapters 2-8 with an identical formula of steps to salvation. Chapters 9-10 include no similar formulas, but all have an implied promise that, as soon as one follows these steps and directions, the person can be cured of the symptoms (page 15). **Carragher fails to talk about sanctification throughout the book.** This is a serious error because spiritual conversion does not result in

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Letters

from  our Readers

Hello,

Grace and peace to you both. Thank you for your work in the world of psychoheresy. I was recently introduced to you through a YouTube video, "Biblical Care of Souls." I happened to be a broken soul, so this title got my attention.... I accepted Jesus into my heart when I was 14. Ended up in a wilderness experience of my own; deceived for 40 years. Christian psychotherapy is part of my story (I could write an epic tale). So here I am at 53; the LORD Jesus has graciously freed me from the deception. I knew it deep in my soul; things did not ring true; yet I trusted these authority figures etc... I was led astray, but my Good Shepherd left the 99 and came after me. (Glory to God!) He alone has the power to restore a soul. Anyway, I want to thank you so very much for the truth you're sharing with the world. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

email

PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries!

I'd like to thank you for your staunch Biblicism in the matters of man's inner life! We need Biblicism for all areas of life, since all areas of life are under the Lordship of God, the Creator of all, and I think your approach to psychological (by which I mean "study of the spirit, or inner man") matters is a step in the right direction!

email

bobgan@pamweb.org

Had to write again to tell you how grateful I am that the Lord led me to your ministry! I am a trained clinical counselor completing a Pastoral "Psych" Master's degree so that I can be ordained

and get out from under state licensure in order to do counseling ministry work. THANK YOU SO MUCH for making me realize how much I have to unlearn! I have combined clinical/ministry for too long! God Bless!

email

Martin & Deidre,

We have subscribed to the Awareness Letter for many years and appreciate it very much. To save postage costs, we would now like to read it online, so would you please remove us from the mailing list.

Idaho

Bobgans,

Your last letter spoke to my heart because I know someone whose mother had to take psychology tests to enter the mission field as a translator. I did not know that you had written a book on the topic.

Wyoming

Mr. & Mrs. Bobgan,

Thank you for your faithfulness to the Lord and His Word all these years. I once wanted to be a "Christian counselor" and now am thankful I am "only" a simple Christian. The Lord spared me from more deception I could have been exposed to! God bless you both!

California

Dear PsychoHeresy,

Thank you so much for your newsletter. Love to receive it and read it. Your work is surely of great value these days! I've lived 82 years and seen and heard a lot, but never have I seen mankind so vulgar and bold as they are today, with an in-your-face attitude, and don't tell them "they're wrong," as the inner Bear will show its face. Seems folks are willfully ignorant, pleasure mad, and full of self. Maybe they're just scared of the unknown, but it's ministries like yours that could and would show them the way out.

Please keep up the good work for the Lord and may you be blessed daily.

Delaware

Hi Martin & Deidre,

Ephesians 6:10 and Colossians 1:9-11 for today; AMEN!!!! As if battling heresy, pseudo-science and biblical illiteracy wasn't enough. Still, the battle remains the same even as the battle fronts change. Get out the Gospel, promote love, peace, and joy from God alone through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's our focus that must not change. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal." (2 Co 4:18 KJV)

And why? "For we know that if our earthly house of [this] tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2Co 5:1 KJV) Praise the Lord!

As we see more and more "Christians" sucked into the world's skirmishes, I am frequently reminded, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of [this] life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (2Ti 2:4 KJV) New York

Dear Bobgans,

Your July/August newsletter is so insightful. I wish the prison Board would do away with psychological tests that deem Christians as crazy. At Board I was punished for being an active witness within the prison.

Prisoner

Greetings,

I would like to thank you for your ministry. I have found your information extremely helpful, as has my father, who pastors a small church and has never referred his congregation to psychological practitioners.

email

Thank you for writing to us. We read every letter, even though we are not able to answer each one personally.



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counsel according to their religious persuasion because of being “duly ordained members of the recognized clergy or duly ordained religious practitioners.”

We then wrote, “This second question has to do with what these Christians can say in their ads. Can they state, infer, or imply that they provide Christian counseling?” The answer again refers to codes and the Psychology Board’s “Laws and Regulations.” Once more, the answer boiled down to “No,” just as we expected.

The reason many Christians who are licensed by the state to perform psychotherapy violate the two professional areas restricted by the State is because they would not be cited unless a client complaint were to be received by the State of California. In other words, a psychotherapist’s license violation will be investigated if one or more clients issue a formal complaint to the State. As far as we know, this has never happened.

Christian Psychology

Other questions arise as to “Christian” psychologists. Is there such a person as a Christian psychologist? Only if this is simply a professing Christian who practices psychology, just as one could be referred to as a Christian plumber as being a plumber who happens to be a Christian. A primary problem with this designation is that many Christians believe that Christians who are licensed psychotherapists do Christian counseling, when their license only authorizes them to therapize according to their training in psychological theories and therapies. In promoting themselves as licensed psychotherapists who do Christian counseling, they are being deceptive at the very least, unless they set aside their license and counsel for free or unless they give up their license and become ordained ministers.

Actually, there is no such recognized theory or therapy that is “Christian

psychology.” The Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) is an organization of psychologists who are professing Christians. The following was admitted at one of their meetings:

We are often asked if we are “Christian psychologists” and find it difficult to answer since we don’t know what the question implies. We are Christians who are psychologists but at the present time there is no acceptable Christian psychology that is markedly different from non-Christian psychology. It is difficult to imply that we function in a manner that is fundamentally distinct from our non-Christian colleagues . . . as yet there is not an acceptable theory, mode of research or treatment methodology that is distinctly Christian.²

Each Christian psychotherapist’s combination of counseling approaches differs from that of other Christian therapists.

Christian psychology depends on psychology itself. Because psychology is such a broad field, we want to make it clear that **when we use the word *psychology*, we are referring to psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies.**

In order to find out if there is such a uniform practice as Christian psychotherapy, we asked ourselves and then others, “What types of psychotherapeutic approaches most influence the Christian psychotherapist?” No one we contacted was able to answer that question. Therefore, we devised a simple, easy-to-answer survey form comprised of a list of ten major psychotherapies. The survey was administered to members of CAPS. Each respondent was asked to rank one or more of these

psychotherapeutic approaches that influenced his/her professional practice. Additional space was provided for participants to add other psychotherapies before ranking.

The results of the survey indicate that Christian psychotherapists or counselors are eclectic in that they are influenced by and use a variety of psychological approaches rather than just one or two. In other words, there is not just one Christian psychotherapeutic way. A great variety of approaches influence clinical practice. This survey demonstrated that, while some psychotherapies are more influential than others in the practice of Christian counseling, in general the Christian psychotherapist is both independent and eclectic in his/her approach to counseling. In addition, each Christian psychotherapist’s combination of counseling approaches differs from that of other Christian therapists.

There are licensed psychiatrists and psychotherapists who are Christians who regularly share the Gospel with a patient (psychiatrist) or client (psychotherapist) and even pray with them. They will say, “Only when it is appropriate.” However, under the circumstances, it is never appropriate! **It is both unethical and illegal.** It is unethical because of the limitations of their license and illegal unless the psychiatrists or psychotherapists are not advertising their license, the patient/client has not come to them based upon that license, and no money has been charged.

There are two things to know about psychiatry. First, ask psychiatrists how many of their patients are on psychotropic medications and they will say, “All of them.”

Second, ask them if they do psychotherapy, and they will likely say, “No.”

If one desires to have psychotherapy, one will usually be forced to go to a

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Ψ Psych Notes

Psych Notes are selected from numerous articles from professional journals and other publications. The ones used are chosen for their possible interest to readers, but not necessarily because this ministry recommends them.

Jordan B. Peterson

Editors note: In recent years many Christians have taken to reading Jordan B. Peterson and been flocking to his support. As ABC News says, “Jordan Peterson doesn’t go to church and won’t be pinned down on what he believes about God, much less the resurrection. So it seems like a strange choice to have inspired the headline in a Christian magazine, ‘Is Jordan B. Peterson the savior of Christianity?’” Peterson is a phenomenally popular Canadian clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of Toronto. The following is excerpted from an article titled “The Intellectual We Deserve.” We suggest that our readers who are interested read the following excerpt, go to the original article and decide whether or not Christians should be enthusiastic about Peterson and even bother to follow after him as many have.

“Jordan Peterson’s popularity is the sign of a deeply impoverished political and intellectual landscape. If you want to appear very profound and convince people to take you seriously, but have nothing of value to say, there is a tried and tested method. First, take some extremely obvious platitude or truism. Make sure it actually does contain some insight, though it can be rather vague. Something like ‘if you’re too conciliatory, you will sometimes get taken advantage of’ or ‘many moral values are similar across human societies.’ Then, try to restate your platitude using as many words as possible, as unintel-

ligibly as possible, while never repeating yourself exactly. Use highly technical language drawn from many different academic disciplines, so that no one person will ever have adequate training to fully evaluate your work. Construct elaborate theories with many parts. Draw diagrams. Use *italics* liberally to indicate that you are using words in a highly specific and idiosyncratic *sense*. Never say anything too specific, and if you do, qualify it heavily so that you can always insist you meant the opposite. Then evangelize: speak as confidently as possible, as if you are sharing God’s own truth. Accept no criticisms: insist that any skeptic has either misinterpreted you or has actually already admitted that you are correct. Talk as much as possible and listen as little as possible. Follow these steps, and your success will be assured. (It does help if you are male and Caucasian.)

“Jordan Peterson appears very profound and has convinced many people to take him seriously. Yet he has almost nothing of value to say. This should be obvious to anyone who has spent even a few moments critically examining his writings and speeches, which are comically befuddled, pompous, and ignorant. They are half nonsense, half banality. In a reasonable world, Peterson would be seen as the kind of tedious crackpot that one hopes not to get seated next to on a train....

“This much should be obvious from even a cursory reading of him: If Jordan Peterson is the most influential intellectual in the Western world, the Western world has lost its...mind. And since Jordan Peterson does indeed have a good claim to being the most influential intellectual in the Western world, we need to think seriously about what has gone wrong. What have we done to end up with this man? His success is our failure, and while it’s easy to scoff at him, it’s more important to inquire into how we got to this point. He is a symptom.

He shows a culture bereft of ideas, a politics without inspiration or principle. Jordan Peterson may not be the intellectual we want. But he is probably the intellectual we deserve” (excerpted from Nathan J. Robinson, “The Intellectual We Deserve,” *Current Affairs Magazine*, <https://www.currentaffairs.org/2018/03/the-intellectual-we-deserve>).

Richard Rohr and the Enneagram Secret

“The teaching of the Enneagram is so far removed from the teaching of Scripture that it becomes problematic to understand why Evangelical publishing houses would even print these New Age books, unless they are just publishing what sells and not what follows Scripture and moves the Christian to be spiritually mature. Every major Christian doctrine regarding God, Jesus, salvation, and sanctification, et al, is denied, distorted, or assaulted by this Occult religious teaching that attempts to robe itself in Christian dress. I commend Don and Joy Veinot and Marcia Montenegro for faithfully addressing and explaining this heretical departure from the Christian faith in the spirit of the Christian apologists of past centuries” (excerpted from H. Wayne House’s “Foreword” to Don Veinot, Joy Veinot, and Marcia Montenegro’s book *Richard Rohr and the Enneagram Secret*, MCOI Publishing LLC, 2020).

HBOT & the Aging Brain

“New hyperbaric oxygen therapy protocol can improve cognitive function of older adults... a peer-reviewed study has demonstrated for the first time that hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) can significantly enhance the cognitive performance of healthy older adults.

“The main areas of improvement were attention, information processing speed, and executive function, in addition to the global cognitive function, all of which typically decline with age.

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Moreover, there was a significant correlation between the cognitive changes and improved cerebral blood flow in specific brain locations. The study was published on July 15, 2020, in the peer-reviewed journal *Aging*....

“Age-related cognitive and functional decline has become a significant concern in the Western world. Major research efforts around the world are focused on improving the cognitive performance of the so-called “normal” aging population,” said Prof. Efrati. ‘In our study, for the first time in humans, we have found an effective and safe medical intervention that can address this unwanted consequence of our age-related deterioration.’

“Over years of research, we have developed an advanced understanding of HBOT’s ability to restore brain function. In the past, we have demonstrated HBOT’s potential to improve/treat brain injuries such as stroke, traumatic brain injury and anoxic brain injury (due to sustained lack of oxygen supply) by increasing brain blood flow and metabolism,’ explained Dr. Amir Hadanny. ‘This landmark research could have a far-reaching impact on the way we view the aging process and the ability to treat its symptoms.’

“During HBOT, the patient breathes in pure oxygen in a pressurized chamber where the air pressure is increased to twice that of normal air. This process increases oxygen solubility in the blood that travels throughout the body. The added oxygen stimulates the release of growth factors and stem cells, which promote healing. HBOT has been applied worldwide mostly to treat chronic non-healing wounds.

“There is a growing body of evidence on the regenerative effects of HBOT. The researchers have demonstrated that the combined action of delivering high

levels of oxygen (hyperoxia) and pressure (hyperbaric environment), leads to significant improvement in tissue oxygenation while targeting both oxygen and pressure sensitive genes, resulting in restored and enhanced tissue metabolism. Moreover, these targeted genes induce stem cell proliferation, reduce inflammation and induce generation of new blood vessels and tissue repair mechanisms.... (excerpted from “New hyperbaric oxygen therapy protocol can improve cognitive function of older adults,” *Science*, 7/15/2020, <https://sciencemag.com>).



Licensed Christian Psychotherapists Endnotes

- 1 Lawrence LeShan, *Association for Humanistic Psychology*, October 1984, p. 4.
- 2 P. Sutherland and P. Poelstra, “Aspects of Integration,” paper presented at the meeting of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies, Santa Barbara, CA, June 1976
- 3 John M. Grohol, “Psychiatry Doesn’t Do Psychotherapy Anymore,” psychcentral.com.
- 4 Gardiner Harris, “Talk Doesn’t Pay, So Psychiatry Turns Instead to Drug Therapy,” *New York Times*, March 5, 2011, newyorktimes.com.



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Quotable

“Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”—Proverbs 1:33

Come what may, God’s people are safe. Let convulsions shake the solid earth, let the skies themselves be rent in twain, yet amid the wreck of worlds the believer shall be as secure as in the calmest hour of rest. If God cannot save his people *under* heaven, he will save them *in* heaven. If the world becomes too hot to hold them, then heaven shall be the place of their reception and their safety. Be ye then confident, when ye hear of wars, and rumours of wars. Let no agitation distress you, but be quiet from fear of evil. Whatsoever cometh upon the earth, you, beneath the broad wings of Jehovah, shall be secure. Stay yourself upon his promise; rest in his faithfulness, and bid defiance to the blackest future, for there is nothing in it direful for you. Your sole concern should be to show forth to the world the blessedness of hearkening to the voice of wisdom.—Charles H. Spurgeon (1896), *Morning and Evening: Daily readings*. London: Passmore & Alabaster, Morning, July 6.



Critical Review of Wounded Spirits

Endnotes

- 1 Douglas J. Carragher. *Wounded Spirits: A Biblical Approach to Dealing with the Effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*. Murfreesboro, TN: WaldenWay Publications, 2014, 2017. Hereafter, page references to this book will be in parentheses within the text.
- 2 Carragher does not hyphenate *post-traumatic* in his subtitle or in his book. The other professionally accepted designation is *posttraumatic*.
- 3 “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder” American Psychiatric Association, https://www.psychiatry.org/Practice/DSM/APA_DSM-5-PTSD.
- 4 “The Difference Between PTSD and Stress,” <https://www.verywellmind.com/requirements-for-ptsd-diagnosis-2797637>.
- 5 Sword of the Lord Publishers, <https://www.swordofthelord.com/>.



Critical Review of *Wounded Spirits* (continued from page 1)

sinless perfection or freedom from the presence of sin. The apostle John clearly warned: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

Salvation is just the beginning of new life wherein one must grow by grace. At salvation one is justified and sanctified in the sense of being set apart by God. However, there is also a sanctification **process** of working out what God has worked and is working within the believer. This sanctification process of spiritual growth does not occur automatically or quickly after salvation. Just as sanctification, spiritual growth, and becoming more like Jesus take time, likewise, dealing with each of the possible symptoms of PTSD discussed in Chapters 2-8 and the Appendix takes time as one grows in walking according to the new life in Christ.

Carragher repeatedly and erroneously offers salvation as the only need to cure the many symptoms he discusses in Chapters 2-8 and the over 70 symptoms listed in the Appendix. Salvation is the necessary beginning of a new life in Christ, but sanctification follows. Salvation without the process of sanctification leaves the new believer in babyhood. Believers are born again to grow into the likeness of Christ by grace through faith. Spiritual growth comes with time for learning more about God and His Word and particularly times of trying circumstances.

Carragher’s **major error** is his focus on salvation as the sole remedy for the symptoms and cure described in Chapters 2-8. The symptoms are: Suicide (Chapter 2), Fear and Anxiety (Chapter 3), Guilt and Survivor’s Guilt (Chapter 4), Anger and Irritability (Chapter 5), Nightmares and Flashbacks (Chapter 6), Conflicts (Chapter 7), and Apathy (Chapter 8) (page v). Carragher declares in bold: “**PTSD is a disorder that is**

treatable and, with the Lord’s help, curable” (page 15).

This major biblical error is repeated in his Appendix where he lists Bible verses for “Put Off Sinful Behavior; Put On Godly Behavior.” After quoting Ephesians 4:22-32, Carragher gives an alphabetical list of things to be put off and put on, each with supporting verses. However, because he does not deal with the process of sanctification (spiritual growth), this Appendix of over seventy different symptoms to put off appears to be a simple, limited process as soon as one has been saved, rather than a process that normally requires time for change.

In focusing on getting rid of symptoms, one may miss the reality of relationship with Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

There are isolated instances in which, as soon as a person is saved, he is delivered from a particular behavior or symptom. But, in most cases there is a need for repeating the put off and the put on over a period of time along with spiritual growth in knowing Jesus and learning to walk in trust and obedience to Him. In focusing on getting rid of symptoms, one may miss the reality of relationship with Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. There is more to salvation than getting over certain symptoms. In the context of his book, **because sanctification is not mentioned or discussed**, each put off and put on could be reduced to a technique used in hopes of a quick cure. In contrast, in the context of the Bible, these verses of put off and put on are not intended to be a believer’s stand-alone methods absent sanctification for change. They are meant to be lived over a time of spiritual growth to be ongoing aspects of the believer’s life.

The 2014 edition of *Wounded Spirits* had only the first eight chapters of the

current 2017 Revised Edition. Chapters 9 and 10 follow a different pattern from Chapters 2-8 in two ways. First, Carragher does not repeat his boiler plate steps to salvation used in the prior chapters. Second, Chapters 9 and 10 (“Moral Injury” and “Pornography”) include more specific useful information about each of the problems than are included in the previous chapters. In Chapter 9 Carragher gives useful information about Moral Injury and raises the question: “Are Moral Injury and PTSD the Same?” He says, “More research is needed to answer this question” (page 91). This raises the question of why he added this chapter to the book. Chapter 10 on Pornography is a puzzle. The chapter is well written with some good documentation, but there is not one word about its relationship to PTSD. Since *Wounded Spirits*, according to the “Introduction,” is about PTSD, the revision’s added Chapters 9 and 10 are enigmas as to why they are even in the book.

APA and PTSD

A secondary, but important error is on page 9 where Carragher says:

The American Psychiatric Association [APA] defines post traumatic [sic]² stress disorder (PTSD) as “an anxiety (emotional) disorder, which stems from a particular incident evoking significant stress.”

The subject of *Wounded Spirits* is PTSD, but Carragher gives only a brief and out-of-date definition of PTSD from a prior edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, even though the later edition (*DSM-5*) was published prior to the publication of *Wounded Spirits*. If one is dealing with PTSD as a *DSM* disorder, it is important and necessary to have an up-to-date, comprehensive definition that includes

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both criteria and cautions regarding diagnosis. The first part of Carragher's error is the brevity of the *DSM* quote and the second part of the error is the absence of the cautions needed in applying the definition. Because Carragher's central subject is PTSD with its related symptoms and because of his unbiblical dependence on the *DSM* category as a basis for his book, the following *DSM-5* criteria from the APA should have been included in his book:

The diagnostic criteria...identify the trigger to PTSD as exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violation. The exposure must result from one or more of the following scenarios, in which the individual:

- directly experiences the traumatic event;
- witnesses the traumatic event in person;
- learns that the traumatic event occurred to a close family member or close friend (with the actual or threatened death being either violent or accidental); or
- experiences first-hand repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event (not through media, pictures, television or movies unless work-related).

The disturbance, regardless of its trigger, causes clinically significant distress or impairment in the individual's social interactions, capacity to work or other important areas of functioning. It is not the physiological result of another medical condition, medication, drugs or alcohol.³

Many details follow in the *DSM-5*, but the above criteria should have been in Carragher's book.

In addition and more serious is the fact that Carragher **fails to delineate** between PTSD and stress in his attempt to assist the reader. The following quote from an article titled "The Difference Between PTSD and Stress" reveals the differences **Carragher should have included the following information:**

Not everyone who has experienced a traumatic event will develop PTSD. After a traumatic event, it is normal to have strong feelings of anxiety, sadness, or stress. Some people may even experience nightmares, memories about the event, or problems sleeping at night, which are common characteristics of PTSD.

Wounded Spirits...will lead many individuals down the primrose path of self-psychological-searching and self-analysis to their spiritual undoing.

Information he neglected continues:

However, these symptoms do not necessarily mean that you have PTSD. Think of it this way: Headaches can be a symptom of a bigger problem, such as meningitis.

However, having a headache does not necessarily mean that you have meningitis. The same is true for PTSD. Many of the symptoms are part of the body's normal response to stress, but having them does not mean that you have PTSD.

There are specific requirements that must be met for a diagnosis of PTSD. These requirements are outlined in the 5th edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*.⁴

Diagnosing Dangers

The *DSM-5* has 265 diagnoses. The symptoms listed on pages 1 and 11 of

Wounded Spirits are found among the various diagnoses and are not solely related to the PTSD diagnosis alone. A danger here is that, without guidelines as to whether or not the symptoms experienced deserve the *DSM's* PTSD designation, a door is left wide open for individuals to naively self-diagnose or be misdiagnosed by someone else and then to go spelunking into their pasts in search of what might have been the cause of one's supposed PTSD. Any believer with any rudimentary experience ministering to others, should know that when symptoms are severe and/or very long-lasting, men and women become desperate for labels and explanations and will glibly swallow what a convincing person or book may say.

We have written much on memory and repression. Memory researchers agree that memory is malleable. The longer ago the memory, the more it is subject to malleability, which would cause it to be inaccurate and therefore untrustworthy. Once people go in that direction in search for a reason for the PTSD symptom, they will be tempted to believe memories that may have been enhanced and changed. Much damage and grief often follow this dependence upon memory.

Conclusion

Because of relating many symptoms to PTSD and using the psychological label, readers will be tempted to think of themselves as having PTSD (a psychological problem) and then needing to find out what caused it. They will see themselves as victims of circumstances, which will, in part, serve to excuse their behavior. Then using the combination of a psychological disease and a limited biblical cure based upon salvation alone, they will be focusing on themselves and ever learning without coming to the knowledge of the truth. Because Carragher uses the APA's *DSM* to describe PTSD and is attempting to

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licensed psychotherapist and not a psychiatrist. To begin with, psychiatrists are generally not well trained in psychotherapy. Also, psychiatrists, as medical doctors, are trained and licensed to dispense psychotropic medications. That is what they are most comfortable doing. Search for the article “Psychiatry Doesn’t Do Psychotherapy Anymore” on the internet.³ The reasons psychiatrists don’t do psychotherapy anymore is explained in the *New York Times* article titled “‘Talk Doesn’t Pay, So Psychiatry Turns Instead to Drug Therapy.’”⁴ As the expression goes, “Follow the money.” Doing drug therapy is a 15-minute appointment; whereas talk therapy is a 45 to 50-minute session. A psychiatrist today is typically only a “paid friend” for drug therapy.

Syncretism

There are about 500 different psychotherapies with thousands of techniques. Every one of them has its own standard of right and wrong, none of which agrees fully with Scripture, many of which contradict the Bible. For instance, many psychotherapies promote self-love as a high goal, whereas self-love is not encouraged in Scripture and even detailed as a sign of the last days before the return of the Lord and the end of civilization as we know it (2 Tim. 3:1-5). All of the theories and therapies of psychology have their own ideas of what is right and wrong. There is no universal standard among them, but many that fluctuate with the tide of human opinion. Therefore, not one of these many psychotherapies deals with the essential doctrines of human depravity and sin (hamartiology)! Not one uses the doctrine of sin and its destructive prevalence to assist a client deal with the trials, tribulations, and troubles of life.

Because of this glaring omission, in order to use any of these psychotherapies, Christian clients must compromise

the biblical doctrines of sin and salvation and thereby sink into syncretism. In doing so, they end up with an unholy mixture. They end up reading the Bible through lenses colored with psychotherapeutic notions that have been presented as factual. One example is how many Christians have turned the two commandments to love God and others into three commandments to include a commandment to love self. Self-love is then wiggled into Scripture and takes a prominent place when it is argued that one cannot love God and others until one first loves oneself.

Christians should not be practitioners (psychotherapists) or participants (clients) in psychotherapy. We call such ungodly actions *psychoheresy*.

Thus, when one moves from the church to the psychotherapist’s office, one moves from the possibility of a godly biblical approach to a secular and sometimes evil approach, e.g., Freud’s ideas of infantile sexuality. When pastors and churches refer believers out to psychotherapy, they are loudly declaring that they do not believe in the sufficiency of Scripture for the issues of life. They are proclaiming syncretism!

Conclusion

As we have often said: **Christians should not be practitioners (psychotherapists) or participants (clients) in psychotherapy. We call such ungodly actions *psychoheresy*.** These psychological theories and therapies have infiltrated Christian schools, Bible colleges, seminaries, universities, denominations, and mission agencies. Also, the psychological format of counseling has been adopted by all the leaders of the biblical counseling movement that we have examined.

(Endnotes on page 5)

Critical Review of *Wounded Spirits*

(continued from page 7)

present a salvation-alone cure for the resulting symptoms, he is locked into being problem-centered in his approach rather than Christ-centered.

Wounded Spirits is based on a mixed foundation of psychiatric/psychological categories (*DSM*) and the Bible. Although Carragher names certain symptoms listed in the *DSM* designation for PTSD that may be found in Scripture, one is better off simply dealing with the symptoms as expressions of the old nature and take a more wholistic (the whole counsel of God) approach as outlined in Romans 6-8. Otherwise one may get stuck trying to get over certain symptoms rather than focus on Christ and what He provides for both salvation and spiritual growth (sanctification). This mixed foundation of the *DSM* and the Bible carries several problems: 1) Using a limited theology of salvation without the accompanying process of spiritual growth; 2) Using Bible verses piecemeal as a sole fix for problems; 3) Linking the Bible with the *DSM*-PTSD label, category, and diagnosis; 4) Opening the door to self-diagnosing and misdiagnosing for PTSD.

Carragher’s book *Wounded Spirits*, with its lack of a whole-Bible credible approach for dealing with the symptoms mentioned and its *DSM*-PTSD connection without detailed criteria for understanding the symptoms of PTSD, will lead many individuals down the primrose path of self-psychological-searching and self-analysis to their spiritual undoing. *Wounded Spirits* was published by “WaldenWay Publications, A Division of Sword of the Lord Publications,” which claims to be “Publishing the world’s finest Christian Literature.”⁵ Carragher’s book *Wounded Spirits* is a contradiction to their claim.

(Endnotes on page 5)