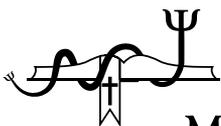


PSYCHO HERESY

REVISED & EXPANDED

THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SEDUCTION OF
CHRISTIANITY



MARTIN AND DEIDRE BOBGAN

Scripture quotations are taken from the
Authorized King James Version of the Bible

Revised & Expanded from the 1987 edition of
PsychoHeresy. Also includes excerpts from articles
and other books authored by Martin and Deidre
Bobgan.

PsychoHeresy:
The Psychological Seduction of Christianity

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1

The Psychological Seduction of Christianity

During the last sixty years much has happened to undermine the faith of those who once believed in the sufficiency of Scripture for those issues of life that are now being addressed by psychological counseling (psychotherapy). Previous to the influx of psychological theories and therapies, Christians turned to the Scriptures to understand themselves and to live accordingly. They turned to the Bible regarding attitudes and actions. They sought God regarding personal feelings and relationships. They found solid solace, strength, and guidance during difficult circumstances. Moreover, they learned the difference between walking according to the old ways of the world and walking according to the new life they had received through Christ's death, resurrection, and gift of the Holy Spirit. Much of this has been lost as Christians have been adding the ways of the world to the way of the cross.

We have witnessed this grievous transition from faith in God and His Word to faith in the psychological systems of men for nonorganic issues of life. Dur-

ing our university years we entered the scene from the side of the world, believing that psychology had much to offer mankind. Our interest increased as one of us (Martin) with two degrees in mathematics completed a doctoral degree in educational psychology, with much of the training and research being in the area of personality theory and psychotherapy. Both of us devoured books on personality theory and psychotherapy, including those by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers, William Glasser, B.F. Skinner, John Watson, Albert Ellis, Thomas Harris, Arthur Janov, and others. However, as one theoretical system seemed to disenfranchise the next we began to wonder about the usefulness of these theories and therapies. **These men all reported great results, but when we looked into the scientific research, we found out otherwise. As we discuss in detail in this book, “mild to moderate” help for those who “need it least” seems to be the best that all these theories and therapies could offer.**

As we began to lose our faith in the psychological theories of personality and psychotherapy, we started to see a great gulf between counseling psychology and the Bible: the psychological way being limited to serving what the Bible calls the “flesh” or the “old man”; the biblical way nourishing and ministering to the new life in Christ. The difference is between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light!

From the perspective of the scientific research, one would think this entire psychotherapeutic enterprise would have faded into obscurity but, instead, it captivated the culture. From the perspec-

tive of Scripture, these psychological systems with their explanations of the nature of man and how he should change should have been rejected as an alien religion but, instead, they have invaded the church. Thus we found ourselves in disagreement with many in the church who believed that one could combine the psychological ways of the world with the biblical way of the Lord.

When we first began speaking out about our concerns and then as we began putting our concerns in writing, some listened and agreed. In fact, Bethany House Publishers, Moody Press, and Harvest House published our early books. However, within just a few years we noticed that more and more Christians were turning to the psychological wisdom of men for problems of living having to do with the soul and spirit. By the time our manuscript for the first edition of *PsychoHeresy* was ready for publication, our prior publishers, as well as others, were not interested. They were already busy publishing books by many of those who were integrating psychology with the Bible, some of whom we were criticizing in the *PsychoHeresy* manuscript. Therefore we formed our own publishing company (EastGate Publishers) and began publishing our own books.

In this book we name people in reference to what they have taught or written. Our writings are not intended to judge the hearts of individuals we name, but to examine popular and influential psychological teachings in the light of Scripture, science, and logic. We have not used as many names and examples as possible, since the number is legion. The examples in this book give only a small glimpse of an almost endless list of offenders. However, we hope that this

sampling will demonstrate that there is a tremendous amount of psychologizing in and of Christianity. **By *psychologizing* we mean teaching, trusting, and promoting unscientific and unproven psychological opinions in areas where the Bible has already spoken.**

Our position in brief is that the kinds of mental-emotional-behavioral problems of living (nonorganic problems) that are generally therapized by a psychotherapist (psychological counselor) should be ministered to by biblical encouragement, exhortation, preaching, teaching, evangelizing, and fellowshiping, all of which depend solely upon the truth of God's Word, without incorporating the unproven and unscientific psychological opinions of men.

The opposing position varies from the sole use of psychology without the use of any Scripture to an integration or amalgamation of the two in varying amounts, depending upon the personal judgment of the individual. **Such integration is the attempt to combine theories, techniques, ideas, and ideologies from psychotherapy, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and their underlying theories with Scripture.** Christian integrationists use psychological opinions about the nature of man, why he does what he does, and how he can change in ways that seem to them to be compatible with their Christian faith or their view of the Bible. Nevertheless, by their integration, **they demonstrate a lack of confidence in the sufficiency of the Word of God for all matters of life and conduct.** (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4.) Instead of searching Scripture and relying solely on what God has provided through His Word, they use the secular

psychological theories and techniques in what they would consider to be a Christian way.

While an integrationist may truly admire the Bible, his reliance on psychology demonstrates a confidence in secular theories and therapies. Adding unverified psychological theories and techniques to biblical data reveals an insufficient confidence in Scripture. It broadcasts a constant signal that the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit are not enough for life and godliness. **Such integration implies that God gave commands without providing all the necessary means of obedience until the recent advent of counseling psychology.** It indirectly faults God for leaving Israel and the church ill equipped for thousands of years until psychoanalytic, behavioristic, humanistic, and transpersonal psychologists came along with the so-called necessary insights. It seems to discount the possibility of living and ministering the Christian life solely through spiritual means provided by God in His Word and through His Holy Spirit.

SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

Integrationists face the constant dilemma of defending their dual faith in Scripture and psychology. The Bible's claim to be sufficient in all matters of life and conduct contradicts their efforts. Numerous passages extol the sufficiency, power, and excellency of God's Word. For instance 2 Peter 1:2-4 says:

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto

life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The Bible is not meant to work independently from God Himself. The Bible is sufficient because the Lord Himself works through His Word. If a person tries to use the Bible apart from Christ ruling in His heart, he may claim that the Bible lacks practical answers for life's difficulties. However, it is through the Bible that God reveals Himself and works His divine power in Christians. The Bible is more than words on a page. Every word is backed by God's mighty power, His perfect righteousness, His love, His grace, and His wisdom. Thus God not only gives precious promises and instructions for living; He enables a believer to obey His Word. That is why the Bible is sufficient for life and conduct. Paul declared that he would not depend upon the wisdom of men, but on the power and wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1.) Not only is human wisdom foolishness in comparison with God's wisdom; human words lack the divine power necessary to transform a person into the likeness of Christ and to enable him to live the Christian life according to God's will. God uses the wisdom and power of the Scriptures to enable believers to please Him and bear fruit. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-8.) No psychological doctrine can even come close to that claim, nor can it add power for godly change.

While sincere integrationists believe that there are psychological theories about the nature of man and therapies for change that do not contradict Scripture, the root remains the same. Jesus was always concerned about ungodly roots and about following the traditions of men instead of the Word of God. Paul warned:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col. 2:8.)

Thus the problem always haunting the psychospiritual integrationists is the source from which they have borrowed: psychological counseling systems, recently devised by agnostics and atheists, to answer questions about the human condition without regard for the Creator and His Word.

A Christian's answer to problems of living depends on his relationship with God and obedience to His Word. If one starts with the premise of the absolute sufficiency of Scripture, then he will work out from the Bible into the world and its problems. It is a process of moving from Scripture into the world as led by the Holy Spirit. Thus, one who ministers biblically will view people and their problems through the lens of the Bible, not through the lenses of psychology. Those integrationists who use the double lenses of psychology and the Bible will only produce double vision. And how can counselors with double vision point out the right way to struggling Christians?

God does not interpret man according to such psychological ideology. Therefore the church should

not use it. Certainly God was not ignorant of these matters when He guided His servants to record His Word. Surely God does not regret that Freud, Jung, Maslow, and others did not live in the first century so that his apostles might have incorporated their notions into the Gospels and Epistles. Nor is Paul's presentation of sanctification shallow and deficient because it lacks the so-called insights of psychological theory.

The Christian psychologizers use their apologetics for integrating psychology and theology; whereas our apologetic is for "solo Scriptura." We believe in the absolute sufficiency of Scripture in all matters of life and conduct. (2 Peter 1.) Thus we regard our position as being a high view of Scripture; and we refer to the point of view we are criticizing as a high view of psychology.

Almost everywhere one turns in the church one sees psychology. The psychologizing of Christianity has reached epidemic proportions. We see it everywhere in the church, from psychologized sermons to psychologized persons. However, as we have demonstrated in our writings, **the psychologizing of the church is neither biblically nor scientifically justifiable.**

We live in an era in which those who profess faith in Jesus Christ have become followers of men just as in the Corinthian church. Therefore, to criticize one of these individuals is to put oneself in a vulnerable position. How dare anyone say anything about the teachings of such popular, influential leaders? Nevertheless, we believe that it is necessary for Christians to become discerning about what they read and hear.

There is a strong tendency to forget to be a Berean (Acts 17:11), to neglect thinking for oneself, and to receive teachings without checking with the Word of God. Rather than examining teaching with the Word of God, many Christians assume that if a particular person, whom they trust, has said something, it must be true. They often base this assumption on reputation, degrees, and institutions. Also, if a person or institution has been known for teaching correct doctrine in the past, the assumption is that current teachings must be orthodox as well. Just because a pastor or teacher quotes the Bible and says some very good things does not mean that everything said is true or biblically sound. Only the Word of God can be entirely trusted.

We often refer to research studies in our writing, because, if a case can be made for the use of psychology, it must be supported in the research. In addition, we quote various distinguished individuals, including philosophers of science, Nobel Laureates, and distinguished professors to reveal the strength of the evidence **in opposition** to the credibility of psychology and therefore **in opposition** to the integrationist stand.

However, we want to make it perfectly clear that we believe the Bible stands on its own. It does not need scientific verification or any kind of research support. Christian presuppositions begin with Scripture, and any information culled from elsewhere is answerable to Scripture, not vice versa. Therefore, we do not use results of research to prove that the Bible is right, even when they may seem to agree with Scripture. That is totally unnecessary. Scientific investigation is limited by the fact

that it is conducted by fallible humans, while the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Furthermore, as Dr. Hilton Terrell points out, “Science is irrelevant to essentially religious pronouncements about non-material concepts.”¹ We do quote scientific research to demonstrate that even here the evidence **does not** support this counseling craze.

The Bible records God’s revelation to humanity about Himself and about the human condition. It is very clear about its role in revealing the condition of man, why he is the way he is, and how he changes. Psychological theories offer a variety of explanations about the same concerns, but they are merely scientific-sounding opinions and speculations, as we shall demonstrate.

WORLDLY WISDOM OR THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Paul repudiated the use of such worldly wisdom and depended upon the power of the cross of Christ, the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the efficacy of the life changing Word of God in all matters of life and holiness. Paul’s denunciation of worldly wisdom was no mere quibble over words. He saw the grave danger of trying to mix worldly wisdom (the opinions of men) with the way of the cross. Just as it may appear foolish today to rely solely on the cross, the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit in matters of life and conduct, it certainly appeared foolish to many people back then. Paul wrote:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved

it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? **hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Cor. 1:18-21, bold added.)

No one can know God through worldly wisdom. Nor can anyone be saved that way. Yet some will say that the theories of counseling psychology are useful and even necessary for Christians in their daily lives. But, the theories and philosophies behind psychotherapy and counseling psychology were all originated by men who had turned their back on God, men who were wise in their own eyes, but foolish in the eyes of God. Christians should not trust them.

Paul relied on “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor. 1:24.) He continued his letter:

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are

not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (1 Cor. 1:25-31.)

If indeed Jesus “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,” one wonders why any Christian would desire to look in the ash heap of secular opinions posing as science. What else is necessary for living the Christian life, when His very presence provides all that we require for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? All is provided in Jesus, mediated to us by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

One sentence that may get lost in the passage quoted above is this: “That no flesh should glory in his presence.” When a believer turns to theories and therapies of worldly wisdom, there is a strong tendency to give at least part of the credit to someone other than the Lord. On the other hand, when a believer turns to God and His Word, trusts God to work His good pleasure in one’s life, and obeys God’s Word through the wisdom and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the praise, gratitude and glory go to Him.

The rise of psychological solutions to life’s problems within the church is symptomatic of the failure to follow the Lord and His way regarding the issues of life. **It is doubly dreadful that Christianity’s attachment to the psychological way is**

both umbilical and unbiblical. The attachment is umbilical in that the church has become tied to psychology and believes that it needs the nurturance of psychology to survive. The attachment is unbiblical because psychological ideas have displaced, distorted, replaced or unnecessarily augmented long-held biblical understandings and solutions for the problems of living. It is our desire to cut the therapeutic psychological cord so that the church might once again seek only the Lord and follow His Word in confronting the issues of life.

PSYCHOHERESY BRIEFS

Over the years we have been asked to provide some brief statements that our readers could quickly read and use as support for our charge of psychoheresy and, in some instances, pass on to pastors, church leaders, and others to reveal to them biblical and academic reasons to oppose the psychologizing of the faith. The following are some cogent reasons to turn away from the love of psychology, which is so strongly embraced in the church. The following do not all apply to all of the psychologizers. However, we find that the following, **some of which will be repeated later**, should be considered when reading what these psychologizers have written or listening to what they say.

Biblical Briefs

Beneath all the biblical reasons why Christians should not pursue psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies is this one fact: The use of psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies denies the

sufficiency of Scripture for the issues of life normally taken to a psychotherapist. (2 Peter 1:3-4.)

- “Sola Scriptura” for the issues of life needs no assistance from the broken cisterns of psychology. (Isaiah 55:1-3.)

- The Bible has truth about mankind, whereas psychotherapy has only the very wisdom of men about which God warns His people. (1 Cor. 1:19-21; 2:4-6.)

- One of the flagrant failures of the 20th century church and now the 21st century church is the promotion of counseling psychology and its underlying personality and therapeutic theories and techniques.²

- The words *Christian* and *psychology* (as it is used today) do not go together. They are different religions. Therefore there is no legitimate practice of “Christian psychology.”³

- People who attempt to integrate psychology with Christianity are like the Israelites adding idols to their worship of God. (Jer. 2:11:13; Eze. 6:6; 14:6-8; 20:31, 39.)

- Christians who practice psychotherapy have hijacked the true faith and used it to their financial advantage and to the spiritual detriment of themselves and others.

- For Christians there are no psychotherapies that should be used instead of the Bible or as an adjunct to the Bible because they are limited to the “old man” or the flesh, whereas born-again Christians have been given new life in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17.)

- Psychotherapy does not and cannot deal with the most important issues of life, namely sin, salvation, sanctification and glorification, and any licensed Christian psychotherapist who deals with any of these biblical doctrines during counseling is in violation of the restraints of the state license.

- Psychotherapy is “science falsely so called.” (1 Tim. 6:20.)

- No one has ever proved that psychotherapy produces better results than the biblical ministry done in the church from the day of Pentecost onward.

- Because psychotherapy is problem-centered, its conversations regularly violate Scriptural teaching.⁴

- Problem-centered counseling, which is normally done by both psychological and biblical counselors, inevitably leads to sinful, evil speaking.

- A little over 50 years ago Christians handled personal and interpersonal problems primarily in the family, with close friends, or in the church, rather than with strangers.

- Psychotherapy cannot save a person from sin or produce new life in Christ. It cannot save, justify, sanctify, or glorify. It cannot help to conform a person to the image of Christ. It is limited to the flesh or old nature.

- The Last Days’ lovers-of-self era in which we live has led to an era in which we have a plethora of personal and relational problems for which Scripture provides true spiritual answers and psychotherapy provides false fleshly answers. (2 Tim. 3.)

- It is detrimental to add psychology to God's Word or to use psychology in place of the Bible.
- The Christian psychologizer generally knows less about the Word and its application to problems of living than a pastor.
- There is almost no psychological idea that cannot be made to sound biblical.
- The Christian psychologizer often interprets Scripture from a psychological perspective rather than evaluating psychology from a biblical perspective.
- If someone is improved or delivered from his problems, competent biblical ministry could have done better.
- For every psychological solution suggested there is a better biblical solution available.
- Psychological explanations about life and psychological solutions to life's problems are not only unnecessary for Christians but spiritually detrimental.

Psychological (Psychotherapeutic) Briefs

While the Biblical reasons to avoid such secular psychological therapy are all that are needed as the Bible needs no such support, it is worth noting that the very science the psychotherapists call upon does not support their practices.

- Witchdoctors and psychotherapists have common roots for their work.⁵
- "Psychotherapy is most helpful to those who need it the least."⁶

- Psychotherapy is made up of the guesses, opinions, and unscientific theories about who man is and how he changes. It is not science.⁷

- Many of the almost 500 psychotherapeutic approaches available and thousands of techniques often contradict one another.⁸

- These different psychotherapeutic approaches seem to work (equal outcomes phenomenon), but they have only a mild to moderate effect. “Whether the magnitude of the psychotherapy effect is medium or small remains a moot point; no one has claimed that it is large.”⁹ Dr. Martin Seligman, a past president of the American Psychological Association, says that “by and large, we produce only mild to moderate relief.”¹⁰

- Detrimental effects do occur as a result of using psychotherapy to deal with problems of living with some very negative effects occurring with some very popular approaches.

- Psychological explanations about life and psychological solutions to life’s problems are questionable at best, detrimental at worst, and spiritual counterfeits at least.

- Scientific research has already debunked the popular use of psychotherapy, but not put a stop to its proliferation. Because of the research, Alexander Astin contends that “psychotherapy should have died out. But it did not. It did not even waver. Psychotherapy had, it appeared, achieved *functional autonomy*” (emphasis his). Functional autonomy occurs when a practice continues after the circumstances which supported it are gone.¹¹

- Psychotherapy is a religion in disguise that poses as science and sometimes as medicine.¹²

- The two main precursors of modern-day psychotherapy are mesmerism and Freudian psychoanalysis.¹³

- “There is no positive evidence supporting the efficacy [effectiveness] of professional psychology.”¹⁴

- “Psychotherapy may be known in the future as the greatest hoax of the twentieth century.”¹⁵

- It has not been demonstrated in the plethora of research to date that educated, degreed, licensed psychotherapists do any better at assisting those in need than amateurs.

- “Evaluating the efficacy [effectiveness] of psychotherapy has led us to conclude that professional psychologists are no better psychotherapists than anyone else with minimal training—sometimes those without any training at all; the professionals are merely more expensive.”¹⁶

- Measurement of success in psychotherapy is whether one **feels** better, but it should be whether one **lives** better.

- The popularity of psychotherapy is not due to science but rather to politics.¹⁷

- Psychotherapists live off the “spontaneous remission” rate, i.e., disappearance of symptoms without formal treatment.¹⁸

- Counseling is essentially a female-friendly activity, largely loathed by men as counselees, with the women currently being the large majority of counselors and counselees.¹⁹

- Degrees, licenses, experience, and education in the field of counseling do not make the psychologizers experts on human behavior.²⁰

- Christians who are licensed psychotherapists must follow a non-discrimination policy, which means they cannot proselytize or refuse professional service to anyone on the basis of race, gender, identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic or marital status.²¹

- What a psychologizer says is often contrary to what numerous other psychologizers say.²²

- Case histories or successful examples are not generally representative of what normally happens.²³

- Successes claimed have less to do with the counselor's psychological training, licenses, and experience than with factors in the client's own life.²⁴

- Successes claimed in counseling could easily be matched by persons not receiving psychological counseling.²⁵

- Successes in psychological counseling are often short-term.

- For every success mentioned there are many failures.

- There is definitely a harm rate for every psychological system of men.²⁶

- What the psychologizer says about human relationships and problems of living is personal opinion rather than scientific fact.^{27, 28}

- Psychotherapy is not a coherent science in principle or in theory, diagnosis, or treatment.²⁹

The Lord Himself is the Christian's source for living and for dealing with problems of living normally taken to a psychologically trained counselor. The Bible gives the only accurate understanding of why man is the way he is and how he is to change. The concerns of **how Christians are to live and change and also how to overcome the trials, tribulations, and sufferings of life are spiritual, not psychological matters.** Nevertheless Christians throughout the church look to what psychologists say about how to live, how to relate to others, and how to meet the challenges of life. On the one hand there is enough biblical and scientific evidence to shut down the secular Psychology Industry and with it the Christian Psychology Industry. On the other hand, we are not naive enough to believe that the overwhelming evidence supporting their demise will be heeded by the majority of Christians.³⁰ The roots and shoots of all of this psychoheresy with all of its variations and combinations comprise a massive seduction of Christianity. **Two very important chapters, which reveal the extent of psychoheresy throughout the church and which name individuals, churches, schools, and ministries that are guilty, are Chapter 13, "Amalgamania," and Chapter 14, "More Amalgamania."**

Notes

Chapter 1: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity

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- 2 Bobgan, *The End of "Christian Psychology,"* Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 1997.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
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- 24 Dawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 38, 52, 62, 73.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 Bobgan. *Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!* *op. cit.*, pp. 164-171.
- 27 Harvey Mindess. *Makers of Psychology: The Personal Factor.* New York: Insight Books, 1988.
- 28 Linda Riebel, "Theory as Self-Portrait and the Ideal of Objectivity." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Spring 1982), 91-92.

- 29 Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*. Bethany House Publishers, 1979, p. 63.
- 30 Bobgan. *The End of "Christian Psychology," op. cit.*