

Stop Counseling!

Start Ministering!

Martin and Deidre Bobgan

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Authorized King James Version of the Bible

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Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!

Copyright © 2011 Martin and Deidre Bobgan
Published by EastGate Publishers
4137 Primavera Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Library of Congress Control Number 2010942279
ISBN 978-0941717-22-9

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Printed in the United States of America

Table of Contents

What This Book Is All About.....	5
1. The Public Undressing of Private Lives	13
2. The Heart Is Deceitful.....	49
3. Problem-Centered Biblical Counseling	71
4. The Myth of Problem-Centered Counseling.....	97
5. Cross-Gender Counseling	127
6. Research Against Counseling	149
7. In Cahoots?	179
8. Overcoming Problem-Centeredness	203
9. Ministering Biblically	237
10. The Believer's Daily Walk.....	267
Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!	297
Notes	311

What This Book Is All About

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:10-11

Our greatest joy in ministering is to lead those who are suffering from problems of living away from sinful problem-centered conversations to a daily walk with the Lord. We emphasize the daily walk because walking closely with the Lord, spending time in His Word and prayer, and being mindful of Him during the day will serve to enable believers to know and follow God's will as difficulties occur. **We pray that this book will give you confidence to minister in such a way as to strengthen fellow believers in their daily walk with Christ.**

Throughout this book we voice a two-pronged concern about problem-centered counseling, both of which we will be describing in detail. One is what we call “sinful problem-centered counseling” during which the conversation and questions lead to sinful communication, which we call “the Jeremiah 17:9 syndrome.” The other we simply call “ongoing problem-centered counseling,” during which problems are continually discussed meeting after meeting with little or no spiritual growth through the Word of God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. **Both are sinful and they often occur together** throughout psychological and biblical counseling. The one generates sinful communication and the other continues to empower the flesh rather than nurture the new life in Christ. In place of such sinful and on-going problem-centeredness, we recommend and describe Christ-centered ministry, during which problems may be discussed, but the direction is towards Christ Himself and His life in the believer.

Stop Counseling!

Why would anyone want to stop counseling? We give reasons throughout this book as to why Christians should be opposed to counseling, literally stop it, and start ministering. We choose the word *counseling* because it is generic enough to cover both psychological (psychotherapy) and biblical counseling. This is the type of counseling where those with personal and interpersonal problems of living seek help through psychological or biblical problem-centered conversations. The problems discussed at length are those personal and interpersonal problems of living that are normally taken to one who is designated as a psychological or biblical counselor. **The commonality for both psychological and biblical counseling is that both are sinfully problem-centered!**

Our concern is what the counselee and the counselor say as they pursue the problems presented and discussed.

Start Ministering!

Central to ministering to individuals in need is to overcome their fixation on their problems, turn their attention to Christ, and encourage spiritual growth. This is not an easy task as sinful problem-centeredness is the default position of people raised in the American therapeutic culture. It is a constant battle that one who ministers will need to deal with if spiritual possibilities are to be accomplished. As one ministers biblically this battle must be won in order to spiritually enable the one in need. **As ministry increases, problem-centeredness must decrease** so that the one in need develops a solid, dependent daily walk with the Lord whereby current and future problems of life can be confronted spiritually. This book is meant to enable you to **Stop counseling!** and **Start ministering!** by helping those in need become more Christ-centered and Word-centered, equipping them with the truths of Scripture, and encouraging them **to live the daily life** that will be honoring to the Lord and beneficial for meeting life's problems.

Use of Terms

Throughout this book we use the terms *counselor*, *counselee*, and *counseling* when what we say is related to the psychological or biblical counseling movement, because these are their preferred terms. We use the terms *psychotherapist* and *counselor* to designate the person who counsels. Also, we use the terms *psychotherapy* and *counseling* to indicate the process, and we sometimes use them interchangeably. Whenever we use the term *counseling* by itself

in reference to biblical counseling, it refers to problem-centered biblical counseling, and when we use the designation “problem-centered counseling” by itself, it can refer to both psychological and biblical counseling. **We will not repeatedly use quotes around the word *biblical* when used with the word *counseling*, but let it be understood that, as we demonstrate in our writing, biblical counseling is not biblical because it is sinfully problem-centered like the psychological movement.** In addition, we use the terms *client* and *counselee* when referring to the one receiving the counseling. Finally, two terms that we use interchangeably throughout the book are *sinful* and *evil* in reference to verbal communication, as in “sinful talk” and “evil talk.” **Because counseling is essentially a female friendly activity, which we will demonstrate later, and because women comprise the large majority of the counselors and counsees, we will often use the feminine gender alone when referring to the counselors and counsees, as is the common practice today.**

Overview of Chapters

In **Chapter One** we reveal how the privacy of private lives became public and how the therapeutic mentality became ubiquitous throughout America. Early marriage education classes prior to World War II mandated a move from lives being private to a need to reveal as much as possible about one’s personal life, thoughts, and relationships in order to be helped. **It was primarily women who sought the help.** During the post-World War II era women’s magazines carried and conveyed a so-called necessity to express publicly what had previously been unexpressed and private. Also during the pre-war and early post-war periods the psychotherapeutic gospel, in which private lives are made public

to the counselor, was the leaven being infused into marriage education and women's magazines that eventually came to full loaf with licensed therapists and the therapeutic gospel permeating all of society and even the church. We briefly describe how the sinful problem-centeredness began with the psychological counseling movement after World War II and was later adopted by the biblical counseling movement.

Alongside the post-World War II counseling movement came the almost simultaneous arrival of the media driven exposure of personal lives becoming publicly proclaimed and drastically displayed in a new and unprecedented way. While men and women are both guilty of the publicizing of private lives, men were instrumental in initiating such exposure in therapy, but **women led the way and are primarily responsible for its current popularity and expansion.** Complementary to the counseling movement was the rise of media moguls like Oprah and others who capitalized on women's interests by corrupting women's strengths to their own detriment. All of this gave rise to all of life in the United States being viewed through the lens of the psychotherapeutic gospel. At the same time the media madness with its expression and often sinful practices moved into the online availability of almost everything from benign banter to devilish debauchery through such social networking sites as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace and through search mechanisms such as Google and Yahoo.

We discuss the "Jeremiah 17:9 syndrome" in **Chapter Two** and the ramifications of the deceitful heart. We reveal various ways the deceitful heart of both the counselor and counselee affect psychological and biblical counseling. Popular biblical counseling approaches are discussed in **Chapter Three** to demonstrate the sinful problem-centeredness of biblical counseling and to reveal that biblical counseling, even at its best, involves sinful conversations through its

unbiblical practice of problem-centeredness. **In spite of the fact that many biblical counselors are often very biblical in their teaching of Scripture, we reveal how unbiblical they are in what they do.**

We discuss the rise of problem-centered counseling in **Chapter Four** and reveal how it infiltrated Christian schools, Bible colleges, seminaries, Christian universities, denominations, and mission agencies. We reveal the erroneous use of Proverbs 18:13, which is the lynchpin for much of the problem-centeredness in biblical counseling. **We also demonstrate that counseling is a female-friendly environment, which is loathed by most men, who are often reluctantly forced into it.**

The unbiblical practice of cross-gender counseling, with women counseling men, men counseling women, and a woman or man counseling a married couple, was “inherited” by biblical counselors from the psychological counseling movement with little thought or challenge and is practiced throughout the church. **Chapter Five** enumerates biblical and practical reasons why this practice should be discontinued.

Although problem-centered counseling itself is **not** a scientific or biblically supported activity, it can be evaluated scientifically to test its claims of efficacy or usefulness. The predominant reasons why psychological and biblical counseling **may be** somewhat successful are found in the scientific literature. The results of the scientific examination are surprising and little known to the average person. These surprising and little-known reasons for the positive results are discussed in **Chapter Six** along with the detrimental effects of many counseling approaches.

Two major unbiblical practices in the biblical counseling movement are charging for counseling and counseling in a separated-from-the-church counseling center. These two

unbiblical practices are typically found together as community counseling centers usually charge fees for their services. In **Chapter Seven** we name some names of the many who are in cahoots with respect to either directly or indirectly supporting this practice.

One of the greatest difficulties in personal ministry in the Body of Christ is overcoming the common practice of problem-centeredness. In **Chapter Eight** we describe the unbiblical nature of psychological and biblical problem-centered counseling and suggest what can be done when it occurs. Many will not know what to do if problems are not pursued and discussed in detail. Many will **not** know what to do to avoid getting bogged down in such sinful talk. Though we have criticized problem-centered counseling as being sinful, because both the counselees and counselors converse sinfully about problems, we have made it clear in our past writings that **“We are not saying ‘Do not talk about problems.’”¹** **We do listen to problems; but the way we respond and the direction we take differ from those in the biblical counseling movement.**

Chapter Nine informs those who desire to minister biblically, but may not know what can be done absent problem-centeredness. **One of the most powerful spiritual disciplines is an intentional daily walk with the Lord and all that implies.** Lack of a purposeful daily walk with the Lord is one of the biggest shortcomings in a Christian’s life and often happens during times when one is experiencing personal and interpersonal problems. **Chapter Ten** discusses elements of the daily walk for Christians to consider as they are bombarded with the issues of life. The last chapter titled **“Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!”** gives a summation of the prior ten chapters and also includes recommendations of “Do Not’s” and “Do’s.”

Conclusion

The entire thrust of this book is to explain biblically, practically, and scientifically why Christians should Stop Counseling! and to provide suggestions for Christians who may need encouragement and guidance to Start Ministering! As a result of reading this book, we pray that you will become totally turned off to psychotherapy and contemporary biblical counseling, which are both sinfully problem-centered, and totally turned on to the traditional biblical ministry that preceded the Johnny-come-lately biblical counseling movement.

1

The Public Undressing of Private Lives

**There is a way which seemeth right unto
a man, but the end thereof are the ways of
death. Proverbs 14:12**

Throughout church history the Bible has been sufficient to minister to the personal and interpersonal problems of living without resorting to the very wisdom of man about which God warns His people (1 Cor. 2:5, etc.). How did the church move from the comfort and confidence in the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of the saints to its current condition where solutions to the issues of life are found in the unbiblical evil speaking (Eph. 4:31) that takes place in problem-centered counseling and in the public undressing of private lives? In attempting to provide something better than the world, Christians nevertheless followed the problem-centeredness of worldly counseling along with its sinful speaking. Not only have these Christians opened Pandora's Box, but apparently they believe that its evil contents of exposing the sins and failures of others are necessary in the process of helping people who are suffering from the trials of life. Like the Israelites during the time of the

Judges, they are doing what is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25).

Two main streams of influence occurred historically to promote this evil, both of which began in the secular society and eventually weaseled their way into the church. Like the proverbial camel's nose in the tent, unbiblical evil speaking became the common parlance of God's people. God's Word was first replaced by the "camel" of communication called "counseling," and then Christians went public by expressing instead of suppressing their private emotions, thoughts, and lives. The first stream is counseling gushing forth with the psychological counseling movement and followed by the biblical counseling movement, where sinful speaking became part and parcel of the lingua franca of the people of God in the counselor's office. The second and tandem stream is the progression from personal privacy regarding thoughts and lives, once considered sacrosanct and kept private from public disclosure, to public exposure with sinful speaking and its ptomaine touchy-feely talk, with grumps and grumbles rumbling beneath a facile façade of pseudo righteousness. **The publication of private lives first began in the confines of counselors' offices and eventually evolved into the broadcast blather of talk shows.** The Jeremiah 17:9 syndrome, described later, reveals the human depravity from which the sinful problem-centered mania began and is the dreadful abyss of mankind out of which the publicizing of private lives erupted.

This chapter briefly documents the movement in the United States from private thoughts about self and others being shared in the counseling office to private lives becoming publicly proclaimed with many defamed. Both of these streams will be examined in this chapter to set the stage for biblical reasons why counseling conversations have run roughshod over the "faith which was once delivered unto the

saints” (Jude 3) and corrupted biblical admonitions regarding the tongue to the contrary (James 3).

Publicizing Private Lives

Once upon a time there was no licensed problem-centered counseling as we know it today, except for psychoanalysis. There were no degreed and licensed counselors who charged money for ongoing conversations about the issues of life. That was sixty years ago. Now this sinful problem-centered counseling has become so much a part of our culture that speaking out against it, as we do, raises eyebrows and hackles. However, the problem we have with counseling is that it is problem-centered and inevitably leads to sinful speaking, which we will describe in detail later.

We begin by revealing what problem-centered counseling is. The kinds of problems we are talking about in this book are **those personal and relational troubles, difficulties, and dilemmas normally taken to a psychological or biblical counselor and discussed in detail and at length with the counselor.** They are the mental-emotional-behavioral problems of living that are normally surfaced in counseling and constitute the center of the conversation. We will reveal some of these problems later as we elaborate on what it is and what is wrong with problem-centered counseling and why it inevitably leads to evil speaking (Eph. 4:31). **While the counselees generally come in with a problem-centered mind-set, the counselors are the ones who are primarily responsible for the corrupt conversation that follows, through their questions and responses.**

Next we describe what problem-centered counseling is **not.** We are not Roman Catholics, but give the following as an example. Problem-centered counseling is **not** like a Catholic confessional in which a person comes alone as a

penitent, sorrowful about some sin or wrongdoing on her part and seeking forgiveness.¹ Note the person (penitent) is confessing **her own sin and not that of others**. Contrary to the Catholic confessional, **problem-centered counseling generally flows in the opposite direction in that the counselee is typically confessing sins of others who are usually not present, thus making public to a third party what was formerly private and at the same time violating biblical admonitions to the contrary**. The Catholic confessional does not consist of repeated meetings about problems with on-going discussions comprised of confessing the sins of others, unbiblically accusing and blaming them, and publicizing their personal and private lives. **The repentant sinner who confesses her own sins rather than those of others is the exception in biblical counseling**. While in many instances it would be beneficial if the one in need would first confess her own sins before discussing the reason for seeking help, it is unlikely to happen because we live in a 2 Timothy 3, last-days era. At least it has not happened in all the biblical counseling we have seen, heard, and read. And, it has not happened in almost forty years of our own ministry to others.

Conversations between and among people have been going on ever since the Garden of Eden. Conversation is the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and ideas by spoken communication and includes both informal and formal sharing of words. The kind of conversation to which we are referring is both. It will sound informal and casual at times. It is formal in that it is the kind of conversation that occurs when one or more persons with a personal or interpersonal problem come to a particular person known as a counselor or psychotherapist in order to receive help. The help is given within the formal framework of the counselor's particular theory, techniques, and training. **But the backdrop is that**

the counselee generally reveals confidences and confesses sins of others. The counselor enables the counselee to do so through particular learned theories and techniques, which generally expand the confidences revealed, but fails to find out the truth behind what is said. When one crosses the line from confessing one's own sins to confessing the sins of others, the fleshly tendency in such a setting will inevitably turn to revealing confidences and private matters resulting in speaking evil of others. As we describe later, the depravity of one's flesh generally takes over in such a problem-centered setting.

In future chapters we describe in greater detail what is wrong with problem-centered counseling and reveal what is unbiblical about it, with **the counselor being the one who promotes, produces, and draws forth the sinful conversation.** Here we will deal solely with the fact that, from its origin in contemporary counseling, conversations about problems of living and the people involved moved from being private, normally restricted to family and close friends, to semi-public with professional counselors, who are generally unfamiliar with the counselee, with the understanding that what is said is to remain confidential.

Pre and Post World War II

Prior to World War II only problem-centered psychoanalysis existed, along with various attempts at marriage counseling and education. Following World War II and less than sixty years ago marked the beginning of more popular and much more affordable forms of counseling. However, these various forms of counseling were all problem-centered, just as the various forms of psychoanalysis are. **This was a turning point from private lives staying private to the expectation (and so-called need) for the undressing of people's personal lives in the privacy of the counselor's office.**

The United States is the international seedbed of the evolution from maintaining privacy in thought and confidentiality in what one says to becoming public both in the counselor's office and in personal and public relationships. Our nation reached this precarious pinnacle of public exposure through a series of unusual events. The story begins strangely enough with Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1851), an Austrian physician who declared, "There is only one illness and one healing."² Mesmer thought he had discovered something entirely new, never before detected by medical science. He believed he had discovered an invisible energy or fluid that he called "animal magnetism," which when imbalanced causes illness and when rebalanced brings cure. In his book *Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls*, Robert Fuller explains Mesmer's theory: "Since there was only one cause of illness, it followed that there was only one truly effective mode of healing—the restoration of equilibrium to the body's supply of animal magnetism."³

Of interest here is how mesmerism's method of cure **evolved** into a public puffery of one's private life with a public maligning, humiliating, and vilifying of one's friends and relatives, typically behind their backs. Mesmer's method began with utilizing magnets as a means of cure and began with bodily manipulation, but evolved from concentrating on the bodily affects on the mind and on bodily manipulation to speaking, with conversation being the means of healing through the mind. This seemingly minor change was the dramatic commencement of **conversation as the medium of cure and problem-centeredness as the method of cure**. Though mesmerism at first dealt primarily with physical healing, it later expanded to spiritual and personal growth through conversation. These conversations that occurred with mesmerism became the open-sesame into the private lives and thoughts of those who sought such services.

The three main offspring of mesmerism in the United States were hypnosis, New Thought, and psychotherapy. The New Thought movement in America, also known as positive thinking and Mind Cure (including Christian Science) evolved over a period of time until as Fuller describes it:

The latter New Thought authors, sometimes referred to as the positive thinkers, attempted to systematically apply mind cure principles to the routine affairs of everyday life. In practice this resulted in an uncritical use of mind cure psychology for deriving surefire solutions to difficulties arising in home life, interpersonal relationships, and business.... In other words, mesmerism eventually evaporated into a fairly uncritical cult of the power of positive thinking.⁴

Eva Moskowitz, in her book *In Therapy We Trust*, says, “New thoughters named specific states of mind and described their psychological effects. In doing so they introduced considerable specificity to America’s therapeutic gospel.”⁵

Professor of psychiatry Thomas Szasz describes Mesmer’s influence this way:

Insofar as psychotherapy as a modern “medical technique” can be said to have a discoverer, Mesmer was that person.... Mesmer stumbled onto the literalized use of the leading scientific metaphor of his age for explaining and exorcising all manner of human problems and passions, a rhetorical device that the founders of modern depth psychology subsequently transformed into the pseudomedical entity known as psychotherapy.⁶

The book *History of Psychotherapy: A Century of Change* says:

Historians have found several aspects of mesmerism and its offshoots that **set the stage for 20th-century psychotherapy**. It promoted ideas that are quintessentially American and have become permanent theoretical features of our 20th-century psychological landscape.⁷ (Bold added.)

Problem-centered counseling was a movement from mesmerism to Freudian free-association, which required one to say to the therapist without reservation **everything** that came to mind, to later counseling approaches that encouraged counselees to say whatever they wished, without reservation and without any verification or need for any proof of what is said. **In other words, the counselee is encouraged to speak about whomever, whatever, and whenever, and the counselor regularly accepts it as true.** The mistaken idea is that in order to help someone in need it is necessary to hear extensive, detailed information about the problems and the people involved. This includes the counselor accepting as truth whatever is said, discussing it in as much detail as deemed necessary without challenging or contradicting what is said, and then applying her point of view regarding the problems and solutions. This encourages counselees to share their innermost thoughts, opinions, and accusations.

Such conversations inevitably lead to sinful speaking, which we will describe later as we document the biblical prohibitions against it. We will also demonstrate that the counselors are primarily responsible for the direction of the conversation and later we will show what can be done to help individuals in need without hearing or knowing the problems in such detail or discussing at length the problems and the people involved. Those who minister must seriously consider their responsibility as they listen to the problems

that are brought up so as not to amplify or augment the sinful talk of the one in need.

Influence of Freud

Many regard Freud as the godfather of modern psychotherapy. Moreover, his influence has significantly intruded into the biblical counseling movement regarding its problem-centered conversation. E. M. Thornton, a lay Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, says in her book *The Freudian Fallacy*:

Probably no single individual has had a more profound effect on twentieth-century thought than Sigmund Freud. His works have influenced psychiatry, anthropology, social work, penology, and education and provided a seemingly limitless source of material for novelists and dramatists. Freud has created a “whole new climate of opinion”; for better or worse he has changed the face of society.⁸

One of the legacies of Freud and psychoanalysis is the concept of repression. Repression is “the **involuntary** psychological act of excluding desires and impulses (wishes, fantasies or feelings) from one’s consciousness and holding or subduing them in the **unconscious**” (bold added).⁹ Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of repression was popular and highly influential in the thinking and writing of many. Most important was the accompanying assumption that repression was pathological.¹⁰ **The Freudian influence led many to believe that, if repression is pathological, then expression is healthful, and thus created a climate where people feel free to express their negative emotions, speak sinfully about others, and seek emotional healing through talking about their problems and the people involved.**

Even though there is a difference between Freudian repression, which is supposedly **involuntary** and **unconscious**, and the general use of the word *repression*, which means **voluntary** and **conscious**, people still assumed that any repression was harmful. Therefore, **it was concluded that it is better to express than to repress.** (See Chapter Four for evidence to the contrary.) Couple this with the fact that the patient in psychoanalysis is to “free associate,” which means to say whatever comes to mind without restraint, and you eventually end up with the express-all and tell-all environment currently prevalent both inside and outside of the counseling room. **Expression became the Siren call that set the stage for the psychotherapies and biblical counseling that followed.**

The Therapeutic Gospel

The therapeutic gospel is all about self. Eva Moskowitz’s book *In Therapy We Trust* is subtitled *America’s Obsession with Self-Fulfillment*. Her main theme has to do with the “therapeutic gospel.” She says:

There are three central tenets to this “therapeutic gospel.” The first is that happiness should be our supreme goal. Wealth, public recognition, high moral character—each of these achievements is held valuable only to the extent that it makes us happy. Success, in the final analysis, must be measured with a psychological yardstick....

The second tenet of our therapeutic faith is the belief that our problems stem from psychological causes. Problems that were once considered political, economic, or educational are today found to be psychological....

The third and final tenet of the therapeutic gospel is the most important, but it is so universally accepted, so seemingly self-evident, that we hardly notice its existence. This tenet is that the psychological problems that underlie our failures and unhappiness are in fact treatable and that we can, indeed *should*, address these problems both individually and as a society. This is the essence of the therapeutic gospel.¹¹ (Italics in original.)

Last-days lovers of self seek personal happiness as the supreme goal and the therapeutic gospel convinces people that unhappiness is “treatable.”

“Tell it down to the last detail.”

Moskowitz begins her chapter titled “Marriage: A Science of Personal Relations” by saying, “Between 1920 and 1940 experts dedicated to a **psychological vision** of marriage banded together to form the new profession of marriage counseling”¹² (bold added). Dr. Paul Popenoe, who opened the first marriage clinic in the United States, reported that **eighty percent of the time it was the wives who brought the cases to the clinic.**¹³ Moskowitz reveals that Popenoe’s approach to marriage counseling was “talking it out” and that there was a necessity of “hearing the rest of it.” According to Popenoe, the counselor needed to “get below the surface” in order to save a marriage.¹⁴ Moskowitz reports on the rising number of marriage centers early on and says:

Marriage experts founded these centers because they believed that the real problems of marriage “must be dragged out into the open.” Their private consultations were part of a fight against silence and reticence. Marriage counselors believed that frank and

open discussion of marital discord was critical if the nation was to ensure mastery over drift.¹⁵

Moskowitz says that Ernest Groves, an early marriage counselor who preceded the current counseling craze, believed that:

People could be helped simply by teaching them to face their problems. Grove's mantra became, "**Tell it, down to the last detail** which you have confided to no man, and which nearly chokes you to bring out. Don't stop with this year, or the year before, but keep digging back into your life. It will be hard. It will hurt." But Groves promised that it would be cathartic.¹⁶ (Bold added.)

Now there is no longer a need to encourage people to be cathartic, because people now do it automatically and reveal all without needing much encouragement.

According to Moskowitz, in order to attain the therapeutic gospel of happiness early marriage counselors deemed it necessary to go through the psychological labyrinth of "talking it out," "hearing the rest of it," "get[ting] below the surface," and "tell[ing] it, down to the last detail." The transparency mantra of letting it all hang out came to full bloom as a hoped-for means of achieving happiness and self-fulfillment, spread its tentacles throughout all of American society, and morphed itself into the church, both through Christian psychological counselors and biblical counselors. Moskowitz says, "It is practiced in every conceivable institution."¹⁷ Worse yet, it is practiced in nearly every conceivable Christian institution.

In her book Moskowitz describes the beginning post-World War II era of the therapeutic gospel in her chapter "Home: The Unhappy Housewife." She says:

During the era of the cold war (1945-1965) the therapeutic gospel laid claim to a new realm: the American home.... The public, but **especially American housewives**, learned an entirely new way of thinking about their lives, and a new language that went with it. Terms such as ego, inferiority complex, and self-esteem, which had been obscure before the war, became, quite literally, household words.

This domestication of the therapeutic gospel was an important episode in America's journey to the therapeutic altar. Psychological professionals, many of whom had played a key role in World War II, led the way. They sought to translate their war-time investments into peacetime dividends.¹⁸ (Bold added.)

Central to her chapter on the home is a section on "Women's Magazines and the Therapeutic Gospel." She says:

Although the champions of the therapeutic gospel during the 1940s and 1950s were many, **none were more devoted or more influential than women's magazines**. In the 1950s and early 1960s women's magazines were at the height of their cultural power. Never before or since have they been such important disseminators of mass culture.¹⁹

The circulation figures for the popular women's magazines of the post-World War II era showed a significantly greater popularity than the most popular magazines today. The magazine people knew that "**Only one market really mattered: housewives**"²⁰ (bold added).

Moskowitz asks and answers an important question about the therapeutic gospel:

But how could they reach into the home? How could they convince ordinary Americans that family life could be improved and solidified by applying psychological principles? The answer was women's magazines, which were read by the very people the mental-health establishment most wanted to reach: housewives. **The content of these magazines also dovetailed perfectly with mental-health professionals' message....** Psychological professionals could not have created a better vehicle for disseminating the therapeutic gospel.²¹ (Bold added.)

She notes:

Rather than presenting relentlessly upbeat images of women, the magazines often portrayed women as profoundly unhappy. Rather than dissuading women from considering their psychological condition, the magazines actively encouraged it.... Instead of ignoring the housewife's discontent, they devoted a great deal of attention to it. In fact, **women's magazines were in the forefront of a new campaign to raise women's consciousness about their psyches.**²² (Bold added.)

She describes how women's magazines gave women a whole new psychological vocabulary:

The women's magazines also provided women with an entirely new language for expressing their feelings of dissatisfaction, terms such as unconscious, ego, inferiority complex, psychosomatic, defensive reaction, and self-esteem. The use of these terms legitimized women's psychological inquiries and complaints.²³

Moskowitz further reveals:

The women's magazines suggested that the real danger was not having problems but *ignoring* them. **For the first time, millions of women were told that they needed to understand psychology in order to understand their feelings and behavior.**²⁴ (Italics in original; bold added.)

And what was the main message of these magazines according to Moskowitz?

The main message was quite simple: *women had the right to be happy*. Never before had this proposition been spelled out so clearly. This message was particularly evident in the marriage-advice columns, which emphasized that a woman, like a man, was entitled to judge the adequacy of her marriage based on whether it made her happy.²⁵ (Italics in original.)

The magazines' message was extremely influential and "introduced the reader to the cardinal principle of the therapeutic gospel: that unhappiness was a condition that could be—and *should* be—treated" (italics in original).²⁶

Carl Rogers' Influence in Transparency and Exposure

Psychologist Carl Rogers, the most popular psychologist of the last century, led the stampede from private lives becoming public by his exaltation of personal transparency in group therapy, which rapidly ran pandemic throughout America and much of the church. In 1960 Rogers completed his book *On Becoming a Person*. In it he promoted his view of self-actualization. Joyce Milton, in her book *The Road to Malpsychia*, describes what Rogers was promoting in his book. She says:

Rogers outlined a process of self-exploration by which the individual strips away the "false fronts"

that he has used to present himself to the world and becomes “the self which one truly is.” Anticipating the day when non-fiction would be dominated by personal narratives, he began with a chapter entitled “This Is Me.” The remainder of the volume equated “personhood” with the discovery of one’s inner, pre-socialized “me.” The search for truth, Rogers wrote, must begin and end with identifying one’s true feelings.²⁷

Milton then quotes Rogers as saying, “Neither the Bible nor the prophets—neither Freud nor research—neither the revelations of God nor man—can take precedence over my own direct experience.”²⁸

A national survey of psychotherapists, conducted in 2006 as a research project for the National Institute of Mental Health, asked the following question: “Over the last 25 years, which figures have most influenced your practice?” The *Psychotherapy Networker (PN)*, a journal for psychotherapists, reports:

Perhaps the most surprising single finding was that in both the 1982 and the 2006 survey the single most influential psychotherapist—by a landslide—was Carl Rogers. In other words, the therapist who became famous for his leisurely, nondirective, open-ended, soft-focus form of therapy 50 years ago remains a major role model today.²⁹

The journal adds:

Virtually *all* therapists today are “Rogerian” in style, no matter what their clinical or theoretical orientation, or what they think of Carl Rogers. Does any clinician not subscribe, at least in part, to the holy trinity of Rogers’s psychotherapeutic method: “unconditional

positive regard” or full acceptance of clients as they are; complete empathic understanding of clients, clearly communicated to them; and “congruence,” or being authentic, genuine, and transparently “real” with clients?³⁰

The *PN* quotes historian Christopher Lasch, who wrote *The Culture of Narcissism*, as saying: “As the founding father of humanistic psychology, the human potential movement, and the encounter group, Carl Rogers has a lot to answer for.” The *PN* goes on to say:

Lasch and other critics essentially accused Rogers of fomenting a runaway, nationwide cult of narcissism and irresponsible individualism, inventing and leading encounter groups that promoted sexual free-for-alls, undermining marriage and morality, and even causing nuns and priests—attending church-sponsored group sessions—to betray their vows (particularly celibacy) and flee the church in droves.³¹

Transparency in Groups

The 1960s saw the rise of the encounter movement based on theories and techniques of group dynamics. The encounter movement was a huge leap from private and personal unveilings in the confidentiality of the counselor’s office to public undressings in front of as many others as happen to be in the group with questionable confidentiality. Many Christians participated in the encounter movement at the time and learned the various techniques that can be used to influence individuals and groups. The encounter movement encompasses many forms of group therapies and approaches, including but not limited to T-groups, awareness groups, sensitivity training, and Gestalt. These kinds of groups have general characteristics, activities, and individual variations,

depending on the person promoting and leading the activities. Some groups, like the early encounter groups, glorify the dynamic present experience; others emphasize sharing both past and present weaknesses and hurts. These group movements find their roots in social psychology, psychological personality theories, psychotherapy, and other forms of counseling. While their popularity has appeared to rise and fall during the last fifty years and while many are called by different names, the beliefs and practices of group encounter continue to spread their leaven throughout counseling as they entice vulnerable individuals through explicit and implicit promises of personal benefits through expressing private thoughts and inner lives to others.

One of the basic assumptions of most encounter groups is that it is emotionally beneficial to be totally transparent and open. In other words, “let it all hang out,” meaning to be completely candid and straightforward, saying whatever you want and condemning whomever you wish without any need to prove anything. Self-exposure has become a therapeutic absolute in the encounter movement and influences all that is said and done. If a person in an encounter group is opposed to or resistant to acting out and speaking out, the group pressures her “to go all the way.” If she resists too much, she is rejected as up-tight, unreal, rigid, phony, and plastic.

Transparency leads to deceptive feelings of intimacy, especially when the sharing majors on personal struggles with temptations and behaviors the Bible would label as sin. Such exposure can be very enticing with its focus on self. It is like a big story-telling session about me, myself, and I and everyone else involved in my life. Experience and sharing biased stories engender emotional involvement in the group. And, in some groups sharing personal sins and the “sins” of others becomes a badge of membership.

Sharing personal struggles, hurts, and pain, typically received from others, brings acceptance, makes connection in the group very personal, and binds the group together on the basis of shared secrets. Group cohesiveness depends on the shared experience of “transparency” with accompanying emotions. As personal secrets are exposed, members become bound to one another in the kind of bondage whereby it would be difficult for someone to leave the group after having shared so much with so many.

Group transparency in sharing usually leads people to say personal things about other people who are not there to defend themselves. That often involves talebearing—spreading gossip, secrets, and biased impressions about others who are not present without any need to prove what is said. Any sharing that exposes sins, secrets, or private matters of others can usually be considered talebearing. Therefore, when the participants talk about others not present, they often reveal private matters amounting to talebearing, which is condemned in Scripture.

Women in Counseling

Even before the current counseling era and dating back to mesmerism and its mind cures, women were primarily the ones interested and the ones who participated the most. Fuller declares that **“mind cure appealed to women over men by a ratio of almost two to one”** (bold added). He explains, “Middle-class women in the late nineteenth century had much more leisure time and far fewer constructive outlets for their energies than did their male counterparts.” Thus, according to Fuller, many women:

... found themselves incapacitated by psychosomatic ailments. Mind cure provided a new outlet for their involuted energies. It got them out of their homes and

in touch with people who would listen sympathetically and then coax them into discovering interesting new things about themselves.³²

As we shall explain in chapters Four and Five, there are significant, meaningful personal differences between women and men. **Because of these personal differences, counseling is a female-friendly environment in which women easily open themselves up to being transparent and conversational about the most private matters.**

Men in Counseling

Well, what about men? Aren't men to also be blamed for this blabbing of private lives in the private offices of counselors? Initially the primary psychological theorists, therapists and counselors were men. **Therefore, men are responsible for having created this counseling mania, but women are and have been the primary participants, thus fueling the system.** Nevertheless, men generally shun being counselees. Why? **Unless the man is in the role of counselor, counseling is a dysfunctional environment for men. While most men would naturally avoid being counselees, they are often compelled to become involved and to open themselves up to being transparent and conversational about private matters they would not normally divulge in such a setting.** More about this later.

The Rise of Biblical Counseling

The biblical counseling movement (BCM) began in 1970 with Dr. Jay Adams' book *Competent to Counsel*. We were part of the BCM for years until we realized the sinful problem-centered similarity between the BCM and the psychological counseling movement that preceded it. In fact, if the psychological counseling movement did not exist, it is

doubtful that the BCM would exist in its present form. Many in the BCM have mimicked much of what is in the psychological counseling movement. The problem-centered format of biblical counseling mimics psychological counseling and mandates lifting the personal veil to private lives. **It is the problem-centeredness of both psychological and biblical counseling that is their most common egregious and serious fault as it inevitably involves personal transparency that leads to unbiblical evil speaking about others at the encouragement of the counselors.**

A Western Phenomenon

Problem-centered counseling and its penchant for sinful speaking is a Western phenomenon. Moskowitz reveals the contrast between “Americans’ proclivity for the couch” and other contrasting nations world-wide. She says:

Though we recognize the therapeutic gospel’s grip on our culture, we have little idea how we came to this point. Perhaps this is because the therapeutic has snuck up on us. Perhaps it is because we are only dimly aware that America has not always been obsessed with the psyche. But our therapeutic faith is neither timeless nor universal. Our nation has not always been so preoccupied with personal dilemmas and emotional cures, nor are other nations so preoccupied today. The citizens of Asia, Africa, and Europe do not share Americans’ proclivity for the couch. There are fewer psychological professionals in China, Israel, and Korea combined, for example, than there are sex and art therapists in America.³³

Although corrupt-talk counseling is a Western activity, other countries are beginning to adopt it because of Western influence. While it is on the increase, there has been little

of this counseling and public “undressing” in East Asian countries. One major reason it is almost non-existent there is because East Asians have typically **not** been **self-oriented**. They have typically been **we-oriented**, while Westerners are typically **me-centered**. Also, the culture and tradition of East Asians has been to regard the family as sacred. Therefore one would not blame family or parents for one’s present life.

One specialist writing on “psychotherapy in Japan” refers to the “family’s sacrosanct character” and the reluctance to blame “a parent or parent’s role in a patient’s neurosis or, especially, the ways in which a maternal figure may not be all-loving and good.” The article says, “A Japanese, instead of investigating his past, romanticizes it: Instead of analyzing his early childhood, he creates fictions about it.” The contrast to Western individualism is seen in the following: “Even for [Japanese] adults, expressions of individuality are often considered signs of selfish immaturity.”³⁴

This is changing for two major reasons. First, many East Asians attend American universities and learn about clinical psychology and psychotherapy, change their major, get their degree in it, and then go back to their own countries to teach in higher education institutions or go into private counseling practice. Second, American missionaries who are indoctrinated through their schooling or mission agencies promote the counseling mindset and the “American way” of communicating personal transparency about one’s private life.

Many Latin American cultures also represent a contrast to the Western “me” culture. While there are some regional differences, Latin American cultures are generally “we” cultures. Mexican writer Octavio Paz describes this tendency:

I am another when I am, my actions are more mine
if they are also everyone’s. So that I can exist I must

be the other, I must leave myself to look for myself among the others, those who would not exist if I did not, those who give me my own existence. I am not, there is no I, **always it is we.**³⁵ (Bold added.)

In comparing the aspect of collectivism/individualism between Spanish Speaking South Americans (SSSAs) and English Speaking North Americans (ESNAs), Skye Stephenson says that for SSSAs, “the opinions of others are often given significant weight in evaluating personal behavior and deciding upon appropriate actions” and that the “focus on others’ opinions, especially for self-evaluation, is encouraged in most SSSAs from a very young age” and is shown in the way children are scolded.³⁶ **SSSAs are encouraged not to shame the group, while, in contrast, ESNAs are encouraged to follow their own personal beliefs.**

Geert and Gert Jan Hofdsted describe collectivism, in contrast to individualism, as “societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.”³⁷ They say that “in a collectivist environment” family and group ties are very strong, “it is immoral *not* to treat one’s in-group members better than others,” and shaming is used to correct bad behavior because it makes the family or group look bad (*italics theirs*).³⁸ So we see a similarity to East Asian culture in many Latin American cultures where the group and family are sacred and where focusing on the self and condemning the group or family are discouraged. Without North American influence, such Latin American cultures are not naturally fertile territory for psychotherapy and counseling.

The Age of Show and Tell

There was a time in America during which private lives were private and public talk did not reveal the underbelly of human living. That time was prior to World War II. Since that time, counseling conversations, in which private lives are made semi-public (shared with a counselor who is to keep it all confidential), have been paralleled by the rising transparency of private lives becoming open to all, both personally and publicly. This public purging to purportedly purify a person was absent a little over sixty years ago and is not even found today in some segments of American society or in many other cultures as we have just shown. The therapeutic gospel was the catalyst that catapulted private lives into public display.

Showtime Silliness

In his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, author Neil Postman contrasts George Orwell's view of the future in *1984* with Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. In describing the current situation in America, Postman says that, rather than Orwell's prediction of Newspeak, where one thing is said in the guise of its opposite, what we are actually experiencing is Huxley's idea that, instead of misrepresenting lies as truth and visa versa, "All that has happened is that the public has adjusted to incoherence and been amused into indifference." Postman says of Huxley:

He believed that it is far more likely that the Western democracies will dance and dream themselves into oblivion than march into it, single file and manacled. Huxley grasped, as Orwell did not, that it is not necessary to conceal anything from a public insensible to contradiction and narcotized by technological

diversions. Although Huxley did not specify that television would be our main line to the drug, he would have no difficulty accepting Robert MacNeil's observation that "Television is the soma of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*." Big Brother [warned about by Orwell] turns out to be Howdy Doody.³⁹

In other words, Huxley was right and Orwell was wrong in their predictions.

Postman also contrasts Orwell's view of a "Ministry of Truth" and "Big Brother" with Huxley's view and says:

As Huxley more accurately foretold it, nothing so crude as all that is required. Seemingly benign technologies devoted to providing the populace with a politics of image, instancy and therapy may disappear history just as effectively, perhaps more permanently, and without objection. We ought also to look to Huxley, not Orwell, to understand the threat that television and other forms of imagery pose to the foundation of liberal democracy—namely, to freedom of information.⁴⁰

In describing the historical evolution of reading and viewing, Postman says, "For countless Americans, seeing, not reading, became the basis for believing."⁴¹

How did America arrive at the post World War II psychological pandering to the show-time silliness and sinfulness of "baring one's bottom" in public? How did America move from the privacy of private lives to the attention-getting public proclamation of what used to be inviolate personal territory? How did America move from a legitimate journalism mentality to a tabloid journalism mindset that concentrates on sensational and lurid news, in which "the devil is in the details"?

The Age of Oprah

The prototype for the public purging of private personas was played out first through individuals in the confines of the counselor’s office, then into group counseling, and finally into the public arena. There are many additional avenues one can pursue to answer the above questions. However, the most fertile area is that of the media and primarily television. In 1967 Phil Donahue moved his Dayton, Ohio, radio call-in show to local TV. *The Phil Donahue Show* “laid the foundation” for the tabloid television talk shows that would follow.⁴² University professor Janice Peck describes the rise of this genre of tabloid talk show in her book *Age of Oprah*:

Donahue made political and social issues a focus of his program. Bringing the studio and home audience into the discussion, he laid the foundation for a new genre of talk TV that violated convention by tackling political topics with a **primarily female audience** when it was widely assumed in the television industry that women had no interest in politics.... In 1973 Donahue moved to Chicago and went national. Blending his passion for politics, his **focus on female viewers’ concerns**, and his instincts as an entertainer, he won a large, loyal audience and a reputation for being sympathetic to feminism.⁴³ (Bold added.)

Peck describes Oprah Winfrey’s arrival on the scene by saying:

When Winfrey was hired in 1984 to host *A.M. Chicago*, a half-hour program airing opposite Donahue’s show, he was the undisputed ruler of daytime talk TV. Although Winfrey was initially nervous about competing head-to-head with the “titan of talk,” her fears were quickly dispelled as she proceeded

to beat Donahue in the Chicago market within three months.⁴⁴

Peck adds:

In 1987, upon receiving the first of what would become many Emmy awards, she credited [Donahue] with demonstrating that “women have an interest in things that affect their lives, and not just how to stuff cabbage.” Without his example, she said, “my show wouldn’t be possible” (Adler 1997, 52). From the beginning, however, Winfrey differentiated herself from Donahue. In contrast to his more intellectual, journalistic, issues-oriented approach, she emphasized emotional intimacy, self-revelation, and her ability to identify with her female viewers’ experiences.⁴⁵

Peck further declares, “If Donahue was the architect of the fusion of public issues and private problems that came to define the genre, it was Winfrey who moved it fully into **therapeutic** territory” (bold added).⁴⁶

Others followed Winfrey to the point that Vicki Abt, a researcher from Pennsylvania State University, declares:

TV talk shows offer us a world of blurred boundaries. Cultural distinctions between public and private, credible and incredible witnesses, truth and falseness, good and evil, sickness and irresponsibility, normal and abnormal, therapy and exploitation, intimate and stranger, fragmentation and community are manipulated and erased for our distraction and entertainment.⁴⁷

Just as counselors think that private details are necessary to help people, talk show hosts think they must bring out such sordid details to truly help both the guests and the audi-

ence. Abt says that the “need to educate and inform the audience is the voiced rationale for getting the so-called guests to give ever more titillating details of their misdeeds, or of the misdeeds done to them by family or friends (often not on the show).”⁴⁸

Peck notes that guests “often find themselves revealing things they would not imagine telling anyone, much less a national TV audience. It is the talk show as group-therapy session.”⁴⁹ Abt reveals one reason why guests on the shows are so willing and eager to reveal so much private information about their lives. She says:

The underlying assumption—that most social pathology is the result of a medical problem beyond the control of the so-called “victim”— encourages, at least indirectly, people to come on to these shows confessing outrageous stories of anti-social behavior to millions of strangers. Rather than being mortified, ashamed, or trying to hide their stigma, “guests” willingly and eagerly discuss their child molesting, sexual quirks, and criminal records in an effort to seek “understanding” for their particular disease.⁵⁰

It is revealing to see how what really goes on in psychotherapy and counseling is exposed on these talk shows. While these may look exaggerated on TV and less dramatic in the counseling room, the same undressing of private lives goes on with its talebearing about others and its varied exoneration of the one who bares it all. The prying and exposing on these shows are a reflection of the counseling room, and, depending on the types of counseling and the counselor, the reflection may not be too distorted after all. Add to this the following: “In the ‘therapy talk show,’ topics are cast in psychological terms, the majority of guest experts hail from

some sector of the mental health industry, and solutions are framed within a self-help ethos.”⁵¹

Moskowitz describes the extent to which Oprah promoted the therapeutic gospel by saying:

With the help of representatives from the mental-health industry, Oprah preaches the therapeutic gospel. The show establishes the virtues of revelation and the sins of keeping secrets. Not only is talk cathartic but it cleanses the soul.⁵²

Just as counseling and group therapy opened the door to therapy-style talk shows, the openness and public exposure of the talk shows further encourages people to think it’s right and good to spill it all out and reveal whatever—the more bazaar, the better.

In her chapter “The Therapeutic Enterprise and the Quest for Women’s Hearts and Minds,” Peck reveals the popularity of the therapeutic mentality among women and how eagerly women are willing to bare their hearts and souls publicly and to open themselves up like Pandora’s Box. This is quite pathetic. From the beginnings of psychotherapy and counseling, led by men, women were not only placed in an inferior, weak position, but were enticed to reveal themselves fully. After all, men were the primary psychological theorists and therapists and women were the primary clients from the very beginning. Peck says: “Assumptions about the natural basis of male power and independence and female dependence and weakness were firmly entrenched in the therapeutic professions by the mid-twentieth century.” She further says:

This obsession with women’s psychological deficiencies was organized along two interrelated axes: women were charged with producing weak, dependent male offspring who grew into feminized men and, conversely, with valuing their own indepen-

dence over their family obligations and becoming masculinized women.⁵³

She notes that the therapeutic enterprise has “progressively claimed a powerful grip on the hearts, minds, and bodies of women” and that “women are diagnosed as depressed by a rate of two to one over men.” She adds:

In the early 1980s, women comprised nearly two-thirds of adult clients of community mental health facilities, psychiatric hospitals, and outpatient clinics, and **an estimated 84 percent of private psychotherapy patients were female.**⁵⁴ (Bold added.)

Peck further notes that, from its inception and into the 1990s, “Winfrey’s program was organized around the ‘dysfunctional self’ associated with the ‘recovery movement,’”⁵⁵ with women assuming the imposed role of codependent enablers, struggling to change themselves and the members of their family and to find answers to their unhappiness. It’s no wonder that women felt desperate and grateful to Winfrey for bringing their private lives out into the open. They believed her when she said such things as, “I ask this question not to pry in your business but to educate parents in our audience.”⁵⁶ And, of course the more women saw this on their favorite daytime TV talk shows, the more acceptable it seemed for them to turn their lives into public exhibitions and to expose themselves and others in the counselor’s office.

Excuse the mixed metaphor, but this historical and even hysterical transformation from privacy to personal publicity is like the proverbial “frog in the kettle” that ends up “cooking someone’s goose.” Gradually and unnoticeably the frog gets fried in the kettle and ends up “cooking” or ruining someone’s hope for real help. In other words the gradualism from no talk to trash talk evolved slowly, but once it arrived

it countermanded the very hope for help that people originally had and the fallout affected the lives of those who were verbally trashed.

Interestingly, Winfrey herself got out of the trash-talk business and into a mix of New Age spirituality before several well-known government leaders “joined forces in their ‘Empower America’ campaign to rid the airwaves of the ‘cultural rot’ of talk shows, which they charged had ‘mainstreamed trashy behavior.’”⁵⁷ In fact in 1995, a year after she began distancing herself from the “trash talk” TV, Winfrey told *Redbook* magazine, “I cannot listen to other people blaming their mothers for another year.”⁵⁸ Nevertheless, counselors continue to listen to these kinds of things as counselees shell out the money and expose whatever the counselor seems to be looking for in hopes of solving problems, finding happiness, and gaining self-understanding.

All of this is done in the context of unrestrained self-revelation while publicly and verbally trashing others. Both verbal self-flagellation and feisty flogging of others by guests egged on by the media moguls became sucked up by the primarily female audiences, eager to see a fleshly verbal fist fight, like spectators at a modern day coliseum gladiator-like “duel to the death” with evil speaking participants. Likewise, in the private counselor’s office everything said about self and others can be brutal and requires no proof. The public proclamation of television tabloid talk about others likewise became the standard to such an extent that the group of popular media productions majoring in this miserable miasma became known as the “trash pack.” These two concomitant movements in America, counseling and TV talk shows that expose private lives, have succeeded and been popular primarily because of women. **While women are not entirely to blame for the rise of trash talk, they have certainly led the way and thus are primarily responsible**

Publicizing Private Lives Online

Publicizing one's own private life is now open to every person who has access to a computer. Search mechanisms such as Google and Yahoo enable people to search and find almost anything they want publicly displayed for anyone to see. Not only can people find nearly everything; they themselves can post nearly whatever they want by creating their own web pages, developing blogs, and using sites such as Twitter and any of the various social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. All one has to do is sign up on a social networking site, present oneself exactly as one pleases through photos and self-descriptions, and publicize one's own private thoughts, activities, and emotions. To further the possibilities of publicizing their private lives, individuals can post videos for public consumption on such sites as YouTube, which is very popular with an estimated ten percent of all Internet traffic going to that site.

Various sites provide opportunities for everyone to be the center of attention and the star of their own show through written messages and shared photos. People may choose to what extent they want to reveal themselves and within their self-revelation may come sinful communication about other people who may be problems in their life. For some people, the social networking sites are simply used for "Friends" (people who have permission to interact on a person's page) to keep in touch. For others these sites serve the therapeutic gospel as people openly share their problems in such a way as to appear to be the innocent victims while casting a bad light on the deeds of others who are not Friends in the network. They obtain sympathy and support from any number of Friends. However, if any criticism is posted, the owner of the page may quickly erase it and cast aspersion on the Friend who did not act like a "Friend." In fact, when people do not conform to the expectations of others they can be

“defriended.” Or individuals may no longer want to participate on someone’s Facebook page because of what is posted and end up doing the defriending. As one person describes the process, “On Facebook, that person you barely know or no longer can put up with is there, all the time, taking up space on your home page, filling you in on all the mindless minutiae.”⁵⁹ Worse than that would be talebearing and evil speaking about others on the site. Unfortunately, for some people being defriended can be very emotionally upsetting as if they themselves have been rejected rather than just their Facebook page.

People can post or withhold whatever personal information desired, and, although the companies providing these social networks have staff to monitor the content, some obscene verbal and visual material comes through. However, some people may not realize just how public their own private space may be on the Internet. Even when they use what is called an “avatar,” which is the “incarnation of one’s personality in the digital world,” or some other form of anonymity by using screen names (other than their own legal names) and personal passwords, they may be “unmasked by tracing IP addresses and other identifiers through the Internet.”⁶⁰ In fact, because of such public exposure of personal privacy, Dr. Kent Norman of the University of Maryland says:

It is recommended that cyberspace designers convey a greater sense that one is in a public space, that one’s behavior is in full view of the whole world, and that one should take personal responsibility for one’s words and actions.⁶¹

It has been reported that many divorce petitions referred to Facebook, especially when spouses found out about a part-

ner's flirty messages, explicit sexual chats, and badmouthing them to others.⁶²

In a society that is "becoming increasingly exhibitionistic... the Internet has witnessed, under the cloak of anonymity, a flood of episodes of self-exposure and public confession in blogs and vlogs" (video logs such as YouTube).⁶³ **Thus the Internet provides the penultimate of the publicizing of private lives and serves as an ever expanding setting for expressions of the Jeremiah 17:9 syndrome (described in the next chapter) with an audience which may be far beyond the environs of one's own networking circle.**

Conclusion

We have now sketched two tandem and complementary streams of events having to do **first** with the rise of psychotherapy in America with its private lives openly talked about in a private office with a counselor and **second** with the public confession of private lives to whomever, whatever, and whenever. **The publicizing of private lives is umbilically tied to the psychologizing of the American public and began primarily by corrupting the strengths and virtues of women as a conduit through which private lives became publicly exposed and emotively displayed.** Peck says:

Epstein and Steinberg suggest that therapy, as a "language of self and interpersonal relationships, and even as a way of life," had become so pervasive in late-twentieth-century American culture "that it is virtually impossible to live in the United States without being interpellated into the therapeutic experience in some way."⁶⁴

These kinds of talk shows should be renamed as "therapy talk shows" because that is what they are. Such talk show

conversations, almost regardless of the topic, are framed in the psychotherapeutic ethos of the current culture.

The United States has privately and publicly become a therapeutic society where private and public trash talk, which was first led by men counselors and later mainly by women counselors, was primarily fueled by female inclinations and interests. These new private and public personas for women have overshadowed traditional women's roles. Men are being cajoled or cudged into the counselor's office in greater numbers than ever before, and in the process they are being brainwashed to think womanly thoughts and to learn that, to save their marriages and salvage their other relationships, they "have to become a woman."⁶⁵ **If women were not in counseling as counselees, the men would not be there and the whole counseling mania would disintegrate.** As to the public puffery of the privacy of personal lives by women, men were later enticed to join the melee of media voices, but to this day the public undressing of private lives is female friendly territory and a dysfunctional environment for traditional men. However, the online era has dramatically expanded such therapeutic interchanges to include men in the social networking and the public exposure of private lives and appears to be the penultimate era prior to the Lord's return. **While these streams of discourse have seriously affected the church, we will primarily pursue the curse of problem-centered counseling and the reasons why it should be stopped.**

Notes

What This Book Is All About

1 Martin and Deidre Bobgan. *Christ-Centered Ministry versus Problem-Centered Counseling*. Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 2004, p. 80.

Chapter 1: The Public Undressing of Private Lives

1 Phone call to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 202-541-3200.

2 Robert C. Fuller. *Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982, p. 1.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

5 Eva S. Moskowitz. *In Therapy We Trust: America's Obsession with Self-Fulfillment*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. 22.

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8 E. M. Thornton. *The Freudian Fallacy*. Garden City: The Dial Press, Doubleday and Company, 1984, p. ix.

9 www.wikipedia.org.

10 Karin G. Coifman et al, "Does Repressive Coping Promote Resilience? Affective-Autonomic Response Discrepancy During Bereavement," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2007, Vol. 92, No. 4, p. 745.

11 Moskowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 77

15 *Ibid.* pp. 81-82.

16 *Ibid.* p. 83.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 161.

- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 162.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 169.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 173.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- 27 Joyce Milton. *The Road to Malpsychia: Humanistic Psychology and Our Discontents*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002, 2003, p. 135.
- 28 Carl Rogers, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 135.
- 29 “The Most Influential Therapists of the Past Quarter-Century,” *Psychotherapy Networker*, March-April, 2007.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
- 33 Moskowitz, *op.cit.*, p. 8.
- 34 Sudhir Kakar, “Western Science, Eastern Minds,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. XV, No. 1, p. 114.
- 35 Skye Stephenson. *Understanding Spanish-Speaking South Americans: Bridging Hemispheres*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., p. 47.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
- 37 G. Hofstede and G.J. Hofstede. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2005, p. 76.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- 39 Neil Postman. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1985, pp. 110, 111.
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