

PROPHETS OF PSYCHOHERESY I

Part One: Can You Really Trust Psychology?

by

Martin and Deidre Bobgan

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Published by EastGate Publishers
4137 Primavera Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

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Part One from *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I*

CAN YOU REALLY TRUST PSYCHOLOGY?

Introduction

Dr. Gary R. Collins, formerly a professor of psychology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois and past president of the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC) is a prolific writer and promoter of integrating the psychological wisdom of men with Christianity. Anyone who has read his books would not be surprised by his answer to the question posed in the title of his book, *Can You Trust Psychology?* What is different about the book is that it attempts to answer the Christian critics of psychology. Although the attempt was to give a balanced response, Collins' strong commitment to integrating psychology into Christianity is loud and clear.¹

We have had no public dialogue with Collins. Opportunity was provided in the past to Collins, as well as others, for interchange. Collins and the rest refused. We are still most happy to meet publicly or in the media with any of the individuals we critique. We believe it must be public because we are discussing what these men write and say at the public level. If they had raised these issues privately, we would request to meet with them privately. We believe that open dialogue is the biblical way to address these issues and that the church would benefit from such an interchange.

As in our earlier book, we use the term *psychoheresy* because what we describe is psychological heresy. It is heresy in that it is a departure away from absolute confidence in the biblical truth of God and toward faith in the unproven, unscientific psychological opinions of men.²

When we speak of psychology we are **not** referring to the entire discipline of psychology. Instead we are speaking about that part of psychology which deals with the very nature of man, how he should live, and how he should change. This includes psychological counseling, clinical counseling, psychotherapy, and the psychological aspects of psychiatry.

Our position on the matter of psychology and the Bible is more fully stated in our book *PsychoHeresy*. We believe that mental-emotional-behavioral problems of living (nonorganic problems) should be ministered to by biblical encouragement, exhortation, preaching, teaching, and counseling which depends solely upon the truth of God's Word without incorporating the unproven and unscientific psychological opinions of men. Then, if there are biological, medical problems, the person should seek medical rather than psychological assistance.

The opposing position varies from the sole use of psychology without the use of any Scripture to an integration of the two in varying amounts, depending upon the personal judgment of the individual. Integration is the attempt to combine theories, ideas, and opinions from psychotherapy, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and their underlying psychologies 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. They may quote from the Bible, utilize certain biblical principles, and attempt to stay within what they consider to be Christian or biblical guidelines. Nevertheless, they do not have confidence in the Word of God for all matters of life, conduct, and counseling. Therefore they use the secular psychological theories and techniques in what they would consider to be a Christian way.

Books by Collins present apologetics for the integration of psychology and theology; ours are an apologetic 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.

We admit that our position is a minority position that seems to be shrinking in support as Christians seek to confront the problems of life. 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 earlier books, the psychologizing of the church is not biblically or 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 men 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 of what they read and hear.

There is a strong tendency to forget to be a Berean, to neglect thinking for oneself, and to receive teachings without comparison with the Word of God. Rather than examining teaching with the Word of God, many Christians assume that if a particular man, whom they trust, has said something, it must be true. They often base this assumption on reputation, degrees, and institutions. Also, if a man 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 teacher quotes the Bible and says some very good things does not mean that everything he says is true or biblically sound. Only the Word of God can be entirely trusted.

In our past writing we have often referred to research studies, because if a case can be made for the use of psychology, it must be supported in the research. In addition, we quoted 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 integration stand. Our reason for quoting researchers is because therapists, according to Dr. Bernie Zilbergeld, “tend to forget unsuccessful cases or pretend they weren’t failures.”³

In addition, Zilbergeld adds, “Therapists rarely have systematically collected and controlled information about their own cases from which to draw reliable conclusions about effectiveness.”⁴ He says, “Very few therapists do any follow up evaluations.”⁵ Researcher Dr. Dorothy Tennov says, “A recent review of psychotherapy research revealed that in twenty-five years, only fifteen studies had employed a private practice setting.”⁶

In an article in *Science* magazine titled “Psychabuse,” the author compares the results of research with the actual practice of psychotherapists. He gives examples of discrepancies between what therapists do and what scientific research reveals. He refers to these differences as abuses, thus the name of the article. He concludes by saying,

“One distressing conclusion that can be drawn from all of these abuses is that psychotherapists don’t care much for results or for science.”⁷

The point we are making is that private practice therapists generally do not do research and when they do, it is not generally reliable. We stress this point because Christian professional counselors who write books and speak refer to their own personal approaches as if they are successful, when, as a matter of fact, either unreliable research or no research has been conducted to indicate the efficacy of their work. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the academic researchers instead of accepting the testimonies of Christian professional counselors, unless backed up by reliable research. That is one reason why we quote research in our work.

We want to make it perfectly clear, however, 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 the environment 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 such as libido.”⁸ (Emphasis his.)

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.

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. And just as today, it appears foolish to rely solely on the cross, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit in matters of life and conduct, it certainly appeared foolish 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 Corinthians 1:18-21.)

No one can know God through worldly wisdom. Nor can anyone be saved. 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 turned their back on God, men who were wise in their own eyes, but foolish in the eyes of God.

Paul relied on “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 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 Corinthians 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.

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 or something 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 his life, and obeys God’s Word through the wisdom and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the praise, gratitude and glory go to the Lord.

Paul was well-educated and well-acquainted with the wisdom of the Greeks. However, he refused to use anything that would detract from the testimony of God. This is what he said about his determination to teach only the testimony of God:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. **And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.** (1 Corinthians 2:1-5.)

The psychological way unnecessarily brings man’s wisdom into the church. Testimonies of the Lord working sovereignly through His Word and His Holy Spirit in the trials of life are becoming more and more scarce, while honor and praise are being given to those who give forth worldly psychological wisdom. Faith is ever so subtly being shifted from the power of God to a combination of God and the wisdom of men. And when it comes to the more serious problems of living, the shift is so great that God is left out almost altogether.

Paul had no use for the wisdom of the world. On the other hand, he understood that wisdom from God comes as a gift. It cannot be reduced to formulas or techniques or anything controlled by human beings.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: **yet not the wisdom of this world**, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But **we speak the wisdom of God** in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Corinthians 2:6-8.)

However, as James reminds us, wisdom only comes to those who trust Him:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. (James 1:5-8.)

Perhaps the wisdom of God is scarce these days because of the confidence being placed in the wisdom of men. Thus, rather than asking in faith and waiting on God for wisdom, believers are wavering. Or worse yet, Christians are asking psychologists in faith and expecting them to perform miracles. Thus they are caught in a web of double-mindedness, which is a very applicable description of the integration of psychology and the Bible.

The apostles and the early church would be horrified to see what is replacing the pure work of God through His Word and His Holy Spirit throughout the church today. They would wonder if Christians have forgotten the great promises of God and the blessed truths of their present inheritance. They would wonder if the Holy Spirit has been shoved into a corner and ignored in the daily course of Christians' lives. Paul briefly describes the tremendous resources for Christians in contrast to the feeble wisdom of man:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. **Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth**, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:9-13.)

Since we have received the Spirit of God, since we have the written Word of God, and since He leads us into wisdom in our daily affairs, it is foolishness to look for answers to the problems of living in the wisdom of men. He gives spiritual discernment. In fact, Paul declares that "we have the mind of Christ."

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (2 Corinthians 2:14-16.)

But if we continue to listen to the world's philosophies and psychologies to understand the condition of man, why he is the way he is, and how he is to live, we will lose spiritual discernment. We will drown out the pure doctrine of the Word of God and fail to know the mind of Christ.

When Christians are asked to explain why they turn to psychology, they give a variety of answers. However, the umbrella, "All truth is God's truth," seems to encompass most of the reasons given. The idea underlying this statement is that God is the author of all things and that His truths exist in the world, whether in Scripture or in the natural world. As we address the teachings gleaned from psychology, we need to discern what is being embraced under that umbrella: the wisdom of God or the wisdom of men.

Rather than discussing Collins' other books, we will focus on *Can You Trust Psychology?* in which he gives reasons for integrating psychology and the Bible. Collins superficially raised numerous issues in that book, which would take volumes to answer in depth. Therefore, we will concentrate on a limited number of themes, all of which deal with the serious issue of integration.

Collins prefers to lump all of psychology together as he attempts to answer the criticisms aimed at clinical psychology, psychotherapy, psychological counseling, and their underlying theories and therapies. On the other hand, the critics of the integration of psychology and Christianity and the psychologizing of the church have limited their criticism to those psychological theories and therapies which deal with the human condition and the why's and wherefore's of behavior. Therefore, it is important to remember that Collins' arguments are often from the perspective of the broad meaning of psychology. This can be somewhat confusing. He uses details from research psychology when he seeks to give scientific status to the whole field of psychology, which also includes the unscientific, unproven theories which attempt to understand people and change behavior.

Notes

1. Gary R. Collins. *Can You Trust Psychology?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988, p. 129.
2. Martin and Deidre Bobgan. *PsychoHeresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity*. Santa Barbara: EastGate Publishers, 1987, pp. 4, 7.
3. Bernie Zilbergeld. *The Shrinking of America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983, p. 121.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
6. Dorothy Tennov. *Psychotherapy: The Hazardous Cure*. New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1975, p. 71.
7. Bernie Zilbergeld, "Psychabuse," *Science* '86, June 1986, p. 52.
8. Letter on file.

Part One from *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I*

CAN YOU REALLY TRUST PSYCHOLOGY?

COMMENTS by Ed Payne, M.D.

These chapters level another devastating argument against psychologists who are Christians in general and Dr. Gary Collins in particular. The argument is thorough, as it counters psychology on its basis as science, its claim to truth, its integration with Scripture, its being religion, its effectiveness, and its humanism (self-centeredness). While I have some familiarity with the psychological literature, the amount of research **against** psychology is amazing and **from people in their own camps**. It is fascinating that while the federal government is willing to subsidize almost anything today (except conservative Christians), there is insufficient evidence of efficacy for a Senate subcommittee to “justify public support” of psychology (Chapter 5).

I find the supposed attempt at the “integration” of psychology with Scripture to be the most arrogant and serious claim of Collins and others. With all the warnings in Scripture of “being in the world, but not of the world” and the separation of God’s truth from all other claims represented as darkness and light, the impossibility of integration of avowedly pagan psychologists with Scripture seems obvious. One begins to wonder whether these promoters of psychology have any biblical discernment.

In fact, discernment seems to be exactly what Christians most want to avoid these days. For all the focus on spiritual gifts over the past decade, how often does any organization seek those with discernment? Evangelists, teachers, seminar leaders, and those with the gift of “helps” are actively sought, but few seek the prophets to discern truth and error. Modern Christians treat those with discernment no better than the prophets of the Old Testament. They are not stoned, but they are effectively isolated from key positions and from most Christian publishers.

With so many concepts contrary to Scripture and all the arguments against psychology, one wonders why it continues to be so widely accepted among conservative Christians. The only conclusion seems to be that psychological concepts appeal to man’s sin nature. Why else would Christians choose a way that was contrary to God’s way? Indeed, Adam and Eve were enticed away from God by Satan’s lie that they would be “like God.” Ironically, the concept of “self-esteem” that is advocated by so many Christians in psychology is consistent with this sinful appeal.

Psychologists who are Christians are not primarily at fault. Church leaders must bear the guilt of the invasion of psychology into the church. These are the people who are ordained of God to guard the minds of their sheep. Instead, they have invited wolves into the fold. Christian publishers are guilty as well. The “profit margin” has become the most important consideration for them. In reality Christian publishing ought to be under the authority of the church, so even in this area church leaders are at fault.

No greater issue faces the modern, true church than this Trojan horse of psychology. It has a stranglehold that will not be easily loosened. I applaud the scholarly efforts herein along with the few others who attempt to free the church of the religion of psychology.

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Chapter One

THE SCIENTIFIC POSTURE

The word *science* has special appeal in the twentieth century. Many believe that if something is scientific it must be factual and true. In fact, any human endeavor that can be labeled “science” or “scientific” gains immediate merit in the Western world. Therefore it is understandable that those people who wish to integrate psychology with Christianity assign a scientific status to this type of psychology. The appeal of science has drawn many Christians into a maze of psychological opinion accepted as fact. Since science bears this high stamp of approval, it serves as a Shibboleth for psychological theories to gain entrance into the church. Therefore, we must determine the scientific status of psychology.

Collins continually refers to the kind of psychology that is to be integrated with Christianity as *science*. However, in considering the question, “Is Psychology Really a Science?,” Collins lists some characteristics of “What all good science attempts to accomplish.”¹ He says that scientists “observe data,” “classify data,” “explain data,” and finally “predict and even control how their subject matter will respond in the future.”²

What does Collins mean when he says that scientists “observe data”? Does he mean visual observation of behavior or does he include other ways of gathering information? Most of what psychological studies call “observation” is not visual or objective, but rather verbal and subjective forms of personal revelation. In other words, rather than gaining their data through observation, they gain it through verbal means, such as interviews, conversations, and questionnaires. Thus, a subject reveals his own perceptions to a listener or reader rather than performing an act that can be observed. Self-reporting or descriptions of others cannot be fully objective. Therefore, the practice of observation—especially as related to the psychologies that underlie psychotherapies or psychological counseling—is generally the practice of gathering subjective information. This does not mean that such information lacks all accuracy. However, there is a great possibility for inaccuracy in the very basics of data gathering in this field.

The second activity he lists is “classify data,” but he does not mention that classifying data can be as objective as classifying blood types and as subjective as classifying personality or astrological types. The third activity, “explain data,” gets even stickier, especially in the area of clinical psychology, psychotherapy, psychological counseling and the psychologies that underlie these activities. Is the psychologist going to explain the data according to a Freudian, Jungian, Skinnerian, Adlerian, Maslovian, or Rogerian point of view? What theoretical, philosophical influences will determine how the data is explained? Will it be psychoanalytical, behavioral, humanistic, or transpersonal?

When we reach Collins’ requirement for science to “predict and even control,” we come to one of the primary well-known failures of psychotherapy as a science. In physics and chemistry the scientist can predict what will happen under given circumstances. He can even talk about the probability of certain events occurring.

However, in psychotherapy the system breaks down at the level of prediction. It is not known why some people get better and some worse; nor can one even predict which people will get better and which ones will deteriorate.

Much research on clinical judgment and decision-making reveals that the experts substantially lack the ability to predict. Einhorn and Hogarth say that “it is apparent that neither the extent of professional training and experience nor the amount of information available to clinicians necessarily increases predictive accuracy.”³ It is shocking that in spite of the great fallibility of professional judgment people seem to have unshakable confidence in it.

The American Psychiatric Association admits that psychiatrists cannot predict future dangerous activities of their patients. In a court case involving a person who committed murder shortly after having seen a psychiatrist, the APA presented an *amicus curiae* brief, which stated that research studies show that psychiatrists are unable to predict future potential dangerous behavior of a patient.⁴ To circumvent their inability to predict behavior, some have called psychotherapy a “post-dictive science.” One psychologist admits, “Since the days of Freud, we have had to rely on post-dictive theories—that is, we have used our theoretical systems to explain or rationalize what has gone on before.”⁵

Psychotherapists are unable to predict the future mental-emotional health of their clients with any confidence. They can merely look into a person’s past and guess why he is the way he is today. However, psychotherapy should not even be labeled “post-dictive,” because the explanation of behavior and its relationship to the past is subjective and interpretive rather than objective and reliable.

Collins varies his requirements for whether a discipline is or is not a science. When he discusses parapsychology he says:

Science must be able to observe facts carefully and accurately, find cause-effect relationships and explain events in accordance with naturalistic laws.

Parapsychological research has trouble complying with these requirements.⁶

As we shall show, psychological theories regarding the nature of man, why he behaves the way he does, and how he changes have trouble complying with these requirements as well. And the warning he sounds about psychic phenomena applies equally to those psychological theories and therapies:

The human mind has a remarkable ability to let preconceived notions bias the way in which information is interpreted and remembered.⁷

On the other hand he is more generous in his requirements for psychology to be considered a science:

If by *science* we mean only the use of rigorous, empirical and experimental methods, then it must be concluded that the broad field of psychology is not a science. . . . If, in contrast, we think of science as a careful, systematic observation and analysis of data-----including data coming from outside the laboratory, from the humanities and from divine revelation—then psychology can be considered a science.⁸

Such a definition of science opens the door to all forms of study, whether they be objective or subjective, or whether they be fact or opinion.

Although psychological theories and their therapies have indeed adopted the scientific posture, they have not been able to meet the scientific requirements. In a herculean attempt to evaluate the status of psychology, the American Psychological Association appointed Dr. Sigmund Koch to plan and direct an extensive study involving eighty eminent scholars. After assessing the facts, theories, and methods of psychology, they published their results in a seven volume series entitled *Psychology: A Study of a Science*.⁹ Koch's words bluntly address the delusion under which our society has been suffering in reference to psychology as a science:

The *hope* of a psychological science became indistinguishable from the fact of psychological science. The entire subsequent history of psychology can be seen as a ritualistic endeavor to emulate the forms of science in order to sustain the delusion that it already *is* a science.¹⁰ (Emphasis his.)

Koch also says: "Throughout psychology's history as 'science,' the *hard* knowledge it has deposited has been uniformly negative."¹¹ (Emphasis his.)

In a book titled *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, psychology professor Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen demonstrates "that the apprenticeship of psychology to natural science . . . does not work."¹² Psychiatrist Lee Coleman in his book about psychiatry, *The Reign of Error*, argues that "psychiatry does not deserve the legal power it has been given" and contends that "psychiatry is not a science."¹³ He says:

I have testified in over one hundred and thirty criminal and civil trials around the country, countering the authority of psychiatrists or psychologists hired by one side or the other. In each case I try to educate the judge or jury about why the opinions produced by these professionals have no scientific merit.¹⁴

In spite of the fact that psychotherapy as science has been seriously questioned over the past thirty-five years, both Christian and non-Christian psychotherapists persistently claim that they are operating under scientific principles and continue to consider themselves solidly scientific. Research psychiatrist Jerome Frank says that most psychotherapists "share the American faith in science. They appeal to science to validate their methods just as religious healers appeal to God."¹⁵

Dr. Karl Popper, considered by many to be the greatest twentieth-century philosopher of science, has examined psychological theories having to do with understanding and treating human behavior. He says that these theories, "though posing as sciences, had in fact more in common with primitive myths than with science; that they resembled astrology rather than astronomy." He says, "These theories describe some facts but in the manner of myths. They contain most interesting psychological suggestions, but not in testable form."¹⁶ Psychologist Carol Tavris says:

Now the irony is that many people who are not fooled by astrology for one minute subject themselves to therapy for years, where the same errors of logic and interpretation often occur.¹⁷

Research psychiatrist Jerome Frank also equates psychotherapies with myths because “they are not subject to disproof.”¹⁸ One can develop a theory for explaining all human behavior and then interpret all behavior in the light of that explanation. This not only applies to psychology but to graphology, astrology, and other such “ologies” as well.

For an area of study to qualify as a science, there must be the possibility of not only refuting theories but also predicting future events, reproducing results obtained, and controlling what is observed. Lewis Thomas says, “Science requires, among other things, a statistically significant number of reproducible observations and, above all, controls.”¹⁹

When one moves from the natural sciences to the “behavioral sciences,” there is also a move away from refutability, predictability, reproducibility, and controllability. Further-more, the cause and effect relationship, so evident in the natural sciences, is ambiguous or absent in the “behavioral sciences.” Instead of causation (cause and effect), psychotherapy rests heavily upon covariation (events which appear together which may not necessarily be related).

Because of the subjectivity of psychotherapy, there is a great temptation to assume that when two events occur together (covariation) one must have caused the other. This is also the basis of much superstition. For example, if one walks under a ladder and then has “bad luck,” a cause and effect relationship is assumed and one then avoids walking under ladders for fear of “bad luck.” This type of superstitious relationship occurs often in the “behavioral sciences.” And the superstitious nonscientific illusions of psychotherapy are many.

Scientific Facade.

If the type of psychology we are discussing does not meet the rigors of scientific inquiry and yet continues to claim scientific status, we must wonder if it is indeed pseudoscience. The dictionary definition of *pseudoscience* certainly seems to fit: “a system of theories, assumptions, and methods erroneously regarded as scientific.”²⁰ Pseudoscience or pseudoscientism uses the scientific label to protect and promote opinions which are neither provable nor refutable.

Numerous critics in the field recognize the pseudoscientific nature of psychotherapy. In his book *The Powers of Psychiatry*, psychiatrist-lawyer Jonas Robitscher, says this about psychiatrists in general:

His advice is followed because he is a psychiatrist, even though the scientific validity of his advice and recommendations has never been firmly established.²¹

He further states, “The infuriating quality of psychiatrists is . . . their insistence that they are scientific and correct and that their detractors, therefore, must be wrong.”²² Research psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey’s words are even more blunt:

The techniques used by Western psychiatrists are, with few exceptions, on exactly the same scientific plane as the techniques used by witch doctors.²³

Torrey also says, "If anything, psychiatric training may confer greater ability to rationalize subjective conviction as scientific fact."²⁴

Walter Reich refers to "the sudden recognition among psychiatrists that, even as a *clinical* enterprise, psychoanalysis and the approaches derived from it are neither scientific nor effective."²⁵ Reich warns of "the dangers of ideological zeal in psychiatry, the profession's preference for wishful thinking to scientific knowledge, and the backlash that is provoked, perhaps inevitably, when the zeal devours the ideology and the wish banishes the science."²⁶

Psychotherapy escapes the rigors of science because the mind is not equal to the brain and man is not a machine. Psychotherapy deals with individuals who are unique and make personal choices. Interaction in a therapeutic setting involves the individuality and volition of both the therapist and the person being counseled. Additionally, variables of time and changing circumstances in the lives and values of both therapist and counselee may have more to do with change than the therapy itself. Scientific endeavor is extremely useful in studying physical phenomena, but is at a loss in studying the psyche, because the deep thoughts and motivations of humanity escape the scientific method. Instead, the study is more the business of philosophers and theologians.

Dave Hunt addresses this issue in his book *Beyond Seduction*:

True faith and true science are not rivals, but deal with different realms. . . . To mix faith with science is to destroy both. . . . The God who created us in His image exists beyond the scope of scientific laws. Therefore, human personality and experience, which come from God and not from nature, must forever defy scientific analysis. No wonder psychotherapy, which pretends to deal "scientifically" with human behavior and personality, has failed so miserably! No human being has the power to define from within himself, much less dictate to others, what constitutes right or wrong behavior. Only God can set such standards, and if there is no Creator God, then morality is nonexistent. This is why psychology's "scientific" standards for "normal" behavior are arbitrary, changeable, meaningless, and inevitably amoral.²⁷

The actual foundations of psychotherapy are not science, but rather various philosophical world views, especially those of determinism, secular humanism, behaviorism, existentialism, and even evolutionism. With its isms within isms, psychotherapy penetrates every area of modern thought. Its influence has not been confined to the therapist's office, for its varied explanations of human behavior and contradictory ideas for change have permeated both society and the church. And, unfortunately the major emphasis in psychology that is generally taught at most seminaries (such as in pastoral counseling classes) is that part of psychology which is the least scientific.

To support his position that this type of psychology is science, Collins fails to mention one philosopher of science, one Nobel Laureate, or one distinguished professor

who supports his subjectively held personal view, which is propagated by fiat rather than fact. Yet he continues to refer to such theories as “scientific conclusions.”²⁸

Notes for Chapter 1: The Scientific Posture:

1. Gary R. Collins. *Can You Trust Psychology?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988, p. 139.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.
3. Hillel J. Einhorn and Robin M. Hogarth, “Confidence in Judgment: Persistence of the Illusion of Validity.” *Psychological Review*, Vol. 85, No. 5, 1978, p. 395.
4. American Psychiatric Association, *Amicus Curiae* brief, *Tarasoff v. Regents of University of California*, 551 P.2d 334 (Cal. 1976).
5. Arthur Janov. *The Primal Scream*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc. 1970, p. 19.
6. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
9. Sigmund Koch, ed. *Psychology: A Study of a Science*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959-1963.
10. Sigmund Koch, “The Image of Man in Encounter Groups,” *The American Scholar*, Autumn 1973, p. 636.
11. Sigmund Koch, “Psychology Cannot Be a Coherent Science,” *Psychology Today*, September 1969, p. 66.
12. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982, p. 91.
13. Lee Coleman. *The Reign of Error*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, p. xii.
14. *Ibid.*, p. xv.
15. Jerome Frank, “Mental Health in a Fragmented Society,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, July 1979, p. 404.
16. Karl Popper, “Scientific Theory and Falsifiability,” *Perspectives in Philosophy*. Robert N. Beck, ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1975, pp. 343, 346.
17. Carol Tavris, “The Freedom to Change,” *Prime Time*, October 1980, p. 28.
18. Jerome Frank, “Therapeutic Factors in Psychotherapy,” *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, Vol. 25, 1971, p. 356.
19. Lewis Thomas, “Medicine Without Science,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1981, p. 40.
20. *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1974.
21. Jonas Robitscher. *The Powers of Psychiatry*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980, p. 8.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
23. E. Fuller Torrey. *The Mind Game*. New York: Emerson Hall Publishers, Inc., p. 8.
24. E. Fuller Torrey, “The Protection of Ezra Pound,” *Psychology Today*, November 1981, p. 66.
25. Walter Reich, “Psychiatry’s Second Coming,” *Encounter*, August 1981, p.68.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
27. Dave Hunt. *Beyond Seduction*. Eugene: Harvest House, 1987, p. 96.
28. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

Chapter Two

TRUTH OR CONFUSION?

Collins says, “Based on what we know thus far, it is . . . irresponsible to dismiss psychotherapy as a pseudoscience riddled with contradictions and confusion. Such a conclusion is clear bias, not supported by research.”¹ In another place, he refers to “the science of human behavior.”²

In spite of Collins’ label of “irresponsible” for those who “dismiss psychotherapy as a pseudoscience riddled with contradictions and confusion,” any person familiar with the research must admit that psychotherapy is rampant with conflicting explanations of man and his behavior. Psychologist Roger Mills, in his article “Psychology Goes Insane, Botches Role as Science,” says:

The field of psychology today is literally a mess. There are as many techniques, methods and theories around as there are researchers and therapists. I have personally seen therapists convince their clients that all of their problems come from their mothers, the stars, their bio-chemical make-up, their diet, their life-style and even the “kharma” from their past lives.³

Instead of knowledge being added to knowledge with more recent discoveries resting upon a body of solid information, one system contradicts or disenfranchises another, one set of opinions is exchanged for another, and one set of techniques is replaced by another.

As culture and life styles change, so does psychotherapy. With over 250 separate systems, each claiming superiority over the rest, it is hard to view so many diverse opinions as being scientific or even factual. The entire field is amassed in confusion and crowded with pseudo-knowledge and pseudo-theories resulting in pseudo-science.

The contradictions are not simply minor variations. The contradictions within this kind of psychology are both pervasive and extensive. At a gathering of more than 7000 psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, described by its organizer as “the Woodstock of psychotherapy,” well-known and highly respected behavioral psychologist Dr. Joseph Wolpe confessed that “an outside observer would be surprised to learn that this is what the evolution of psychotherapy has come to-----a Babel of conflicting voices.”⁴ Whereas, the question used to be, “What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem?” the question we must now raise is, “What hath Babel to do with the Bible?”

If psychotherapy had succeeded as a science, then there would be some consensus in the field regarding mental-emotional-behavioral problems and how to treat them. Instead and contrary to Collins’ objections, the field is filled with many contradictory theories and techniques, all of which communicate confusion rather than anything approximating scientific order.

More Confusion.

Collins engages in a number of confusions that are typical among Christians who are enamored of psychological counseling and its underlying psychologies. He says, “In mathematics, medicine, physics, geography, marine biology and a host of other areas there is much truth that is not mentioned in the Bible.”⁵ Collins uses this statement to add to his continual analogy of science and psychology. It is understandable that real science is useful in revealing the physical universe to us. The Bible is not a physics book nor a chemistry book, but rather a book about God and man. It is the only book that contains uncontaminated truth about man, whereas psychology provides only opinions.

Collins continues this error in logic when he equates using psychology with using modern technology, such as the radio and antibiotics. He argues that Jesus and Paul didn’t use modern technology, not because it was wrong, but because it was not available, with the implication that the only reason Jesus and Paul did not avail themselves of psychology is because it was not available then.⁶ Elsewhere, however, Collins admits that Jesus and Paul would not have used psychology even if it had been available. Of Jesus he says:

If psychology had been taught at the universities when he walked on the earth, Jesus probably would not have taken a course because he didn’t have to. His knowledge of human behavior was infinite and perfect.⁷

Jesus’ knowledge is still infinite and perfect. That is why a biblical counselor will rely on Jesus dwelling in him and guiding the counseling process through His Word. In reference to Paul, Collins admits:

Paul, in contrast, did not have Jesus’ infinite understanding, but he was a well-educated intellectual who understood many of the world’s philosophies. He rejected the notion that these could give ultimate answers to human questions. Instead he built many of his arguments on Scripture and insisted that the scholars of his time repent. Surely the apostle would have presented a similar message to psychological scholars if they had existed when Paul was alive.⁸

And, indeed, Paul would have opposed the inclusion of psychological explanations of man. Psychology evolved out of philosophy and Paul warn against using the vain philosophies of men. (Colossians 2:8.) Nevertheless, in spite of this admission, Collins asks:

Does it follow, however, that the modern disciple of Christ and reader of Paul’s epistles should throw away psychology books and reject psychology because it was not used centuries ago?⁹

We would have to answer a strong **yes**, because they did not use it centuries ago for the same reasons they would not use it now. Are we to change the intent of Scripture simply because we are living in a different century?

Confusion between Science and Opinion.

Collins attempts to justify psychology as if it were a science with proven, objective, verifiable evidence (which it grossly lacks) by arguing, “*Even though the Bible is all true, it does not follow that all truth is in the Bible.*”¹⁰ (Emphasis his.) He then cites the use of mathematics, medicine, and physics to justify the use of psychology as if the Bible were not explicitly written to tell us who we are and how to live. The Bible was not written as a science text on physical aspects of the universe. Rather, it was written for the express purpose of revealing to man what he needed to know about living in relationship to God and to others. Within that revelation comes the knowledge of the fall, the sinful condition of unredeemed man, God’s provision for salvation, and how a redeemed person is to live in relationship to God and man through the new life in Jesus. Between the Bible’s covers lie “exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). The Word of God is revealed truth about mankind, with no error or bias.

The confusion between what is observed in science and what is done in psychology continues as Collins declares:

Some critics of psychology seem to argue, however, that God has not allowed human beings to discover any truths about interpersonal relations, mental health, counseling techniques, mental disorders, personal decision making or any other issues related to stress management and daily living. Such a view maintains that God has allowed human beings to discover truth in almost every field of human study except psychology.¹¹

The problem with such a statement is two-fold. First, accurate observation and reporting may indeed be helpful. However much of what is reported is subjective, rather than objective, and is therefore unreliable, especially in that part of psychology which we are discussing here. And what may be accurate in observation loses any scientific objectivity by the time it is explained and theorized into over 250 different systems of psychotherapy.

Confusion of Psychotherapy with Medicine.

Collins says of the Christian counselor,

When such a person does counseling, he or she may use techniques that some consider secular—just as the Christian physician uses “secular” medical techniques, the Christian banker uses “secular” banking methods, and the Christian legislator uses “secular” approaches to lawmaking.¹²

Collins constantly creates a parallel between the psychological and the medical. However, one is in the realm of science (medical) and the other is not. Equating the practice of medicine with the practice of psychology shows little sensitivity to the gross

errors involved in this mistaken logic. The error is compounded throughout Collins' book.¹³

By comparing the practice of psychological counseling with medicine, psychologists often use the medical model to justify the use of psychotherapy. By using the medical model, many assume that "mental illness" can be thought of and talked about in the same manner and terms as medical illness. After all, both are called "illnesses." However, in the medical model physical symptoms are caused by some pathogenic agent, such as viruses. Remove the pathogenic agent and the symptom goes as well. Or, a person may have a broken leg; set the leg according to learned techniques and the leg will heal. One tends to have confidence in this model because it has worked well in treating physical ailments. With the easy transfer of the model from the medical world to the psychotherapeutic world, many people believe that mental problems are the same as physical problems.

Applying the medical model to psychotherapy originated with the relationship between psychiatry and medicine. Since psychiatrists are medical doctors and since psychiatry is a medical specialty, it seemed to follow that the medical model applied to psychiatry just as it did to medicine. Furthermore, psychiatry is draped with such medical trimmings as offices in medical clinics, hospitalization of patients, diagnostic services, prescription drugs, and therapeutic treatment. The very word *therapy* implies medical treatment. Further expansion of the use of the medical model to all psychological counseling was easy after that.

The practice of medicine deals with the physical, biological aspects of a person; psychotherapy deals with the spiritual, social, mental, and emotional aspects. Whereas medical doctors attempt to heal the body, psychotherapists attempt to alleviate or cure emotional, mental, and even spiritual suffering and to establish new patterns of personal and social behavior. In spite of such differences, the medical model continues to be called upon to support the activities of the psychotherapist.

Additionally, the medical model supports the idea that every person with social or mental problems is ill. When people are labeled "mentally ill," problems of living are categorized under the key term *mental illness*. Dr. Thomas Szasz explains it this way: "If we now classify certain forms of personal conduct as illness, it is because most people believe that the best way to deal with them is by responding to them as if they were medical diseases."¹⁴

Those who believe this do so because they have been influenced by the medical model of human behavior and are confused by the terminology. They think that if one can have a sick body, it must follow that one can have a sick mind. But, is the mind part of the body? Or can we equate the mind with the body? The authors of the *Madness Establishment* say, "Unlike many medical diseases that have scientifically verifiable etiologies and prescribed methods of treatment, most of the 'mental illnesses' have neither scientifically established causes nor treatments of proven efficacy."¹⁵

Myth of Mental Illness.

In discussing the topic "Is Mental Illness a Myth?" Collins says:

Have you ever felt trapped by some habit you couldn't shake—perpetual procrastination, nail biting, overeating, masturbation, lustful thoughts, worry, overusing credit cards or others? We might try to dismiss these as myths that are of no consequence or as “nothing but spiritual issues.”¹⁶

We know of no one who would call any of the above habits “myths.” Collins mentions Dr. Thomas Szasz and his book *The Myth of Mental Illness*. The problem which Collins seems to have missed is that the above are wrongly referred to as “mental illness.” That is the point that Szasz is making in his book! Contrary to what Collins would have us believe, “Perpetual procrastination, nail biting, overeating, masturbation, lustful thoughts, worry, overusing credit cards” are **not** mental illnesses. And that's no myth!

Collins gives an example of a friend who “flunked out” of college. Collins says the problem “appears to have a psychological root.”¹⁷ The remedy? The man never learned time management or study skills. This displays a confusion on the part of many psychologists between psychological problems and educational problems. Time management skills and study skills are used by educators to help students. This is not therapy; it is education. Some psychologists claim the field of education and broaden the confusion that already exists.

Psychotherapy deals with thoughts, emotions, and behavior, but not with the brain itself. Psychotherapy does not deal with the biology of the brain, but with the psychology of the mind and with the social behavior of the individual. In medicine we understand what a diseased body is, but what is the parallel in psychotherapy? It is obvious that in psychotherapy mental illness does not mean brain disease. If brain disease were the case, the person would be a *medical* patient, not a *mental* patient. Szasz very sharply refers to the “psychiatric impostor” who “supports a common, culturally shared desire to equate and confuse brain and mind, nerves and nervousness.”¹⁸

It is necessary to understand this distinction to appreciate the difference. Although the brain is a physical entity and may require physical/chemical treatment, the mind and the soul are nonphysical entities. Whereas the former can be studied through scientific investigation and can become physically ill; matters of the psyche and the soul are studied through philosophy and theology. And, indeed, those aspects of psychology which attempt to investigate and understand the mind and the soul resemble religion more than science. We suggest that one examine the differences between incisions and decisions and between tissues and issues. This will get at the difference that many Christian psychologists fail to recognize.

Confusion of Body, Soul, and Spirit.

Collins says, “There is abundant evidence that all human problems have three components: physical, psychological and spiritual.”¹⁹ We as Christians know that man is physical and spiritual. However, what is the psychological part of man? Is psychological a third part of man somewhere between the physical and spiritual? This third part of man has been spoken of by philosophers and scientists. Dr. Barbara Brown, who is an experimental physiologist and researcher, discusses this third part of man in her book *Supermind*. She refers to this third part of man not as psychological, but as mind. She

says, “When science speaks of mind, it means brain; when the average person talks about the mind, he really means the mind.”²⁰

Does Collins’ *psychological* mean brain or mind or some interaction between the two? If Collins means *brain*, then it becomes a medical, biological, or physiological problem. If by *psychological* Collins means mind. Then what is mind? Dr. Brown has come to the conclusion that mind is more than brain. She says:

I believe that the scientific consensus that mind is only mechanical brain is dead wrong. . . the research data of the sciences themselves point much more strongly toward the existence of a mind-more-than-brain than they do toward mere mechanical brain action.²¹

Does Collins mean by *psychological* a “mind-more-than-brain”? If so, what is the difference between the “mind-more-than-brain” and the *spiritual* to which he refers? Sir John Eccles, winner of the Nobel prize for his research on the brain once referred to the brain as “a machine that a ‘ghost’ can operate.”²²

Sir John Eccles and Sir Karl Popper, and other great thinkers of our time as well as others from the past have attempted to grapple with explaining the mind of man. The opinions vary from mind is brain to mind is more than brain. In other words, this third part of man is not simply resolved by naming it “psychological” or “mind.”

The Bible refers to the soul of man. The words *psychological* and *psychology* are derived from the Greek word *psyche*, which means soul. It is the invisible aspect of man which cannot be observed. The study of the soul is thus a metaphysical endeavor. Furthermore, any attempt to study or know about the intangible part of man is limited by subjectivity and conjecture. Psychological counseling therefore is religious and/or metaphysical rather than scientific and/or medical. Thus psychology has intruded upon the very same matters of the soul which the Bible addresses and for which the Bible should be the sole guide.

Regardless of the terminology used or the remedies offered, we eventually need to look to the source of these solutions. There are also many other descriptions and remedies for man outside of psychology. There are sociological, philosophical, and literary descriptions and remedies. Each of them may be just as valid as the psychological descriptions and solutions. And each of them could, for the same justifications that underlie psychology, be licensed professions. But, what is the source of these? The source for all of them is the opinions of men. This type of psychology is not science; it offers only the many conflicting opinions of men. In contrast, the Bible provides the truth of God.

Collins’ view is simply that “we can view human beings from a spiritual, psychological or physical perspective. Each gives a slightly different viewpoint. Each is partially right, but none give the complete picture.”²³ Why he limits it to these three is not clear. However, what is clear is that he has confidence in psychology as being partially right (and from the above statement, his confidence in the spiritual perspective in the Scripture must also be partial). Which psychology is partially right and why Scripture is not entirely right is not clear. We can only infer it from the example given of depression in his following statement:

Depression, for example, may have a strictly physical cause; it may be a biochemical reaction to illness or some other body malfunction. Other depression may come as a reaction to stress such as the loss of a loved one or failure in a job. As we have seen earlier, depression can also come from sin. The complexity of depressive reactions shows the inaccuracy of concluding that psychological problems are nothing but spiritual problems.²⁴

Collins obviously believes that “reaction to stress” is a psychological and not a spiritual problem. Since he uses the example of depression we will pursue this. In addition to physical causes of depression, there are various psychological explanations. These explanations have competed with one another for years with none being victorious over the others. There are literally thousands of Christian psychologists who follow many conflicting and contradictory approaches. The fact that there are so many systems based upon so many opinions of their founders ought to be reason enough to avoid them.

Collins’ choice of depression as an example is a good one because depression is one of the most often mentioned problems by individuals who seek help. One of the many popular writers who is followed by many Christian psychologists is Dr. Aaron T. Beck. Beck has described what he calls the “cognitive triad of depression.”²⁵ He says that “depressed patients typically have a negative view of themselves, of their environment, and of the future.” Beck goes on to describe the hopeless view that these individuals have and how to help them.

The method used by Beck to help depressed people is a common psychological approach. Many Christian psychologists use this psychological approach. Unfortunately their psychological training and commitment often blinds them to the spiritual implication of each part of the “cognitive triad” formula. While Collins may disagree, this is definitely a spiritual, not a psychological problem. The “negative view of themselves, of their environment, and of the future” can all be addressed either psychologically or spiritually. However, should one use the truth of God or the multitude of the the opinions of men?

Either 2 Peter 1:3-4 is true or it is not.

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.

To use psychology, which is based upon the opinions of men, rather than the Bible, which is the truth of God, communicates a highly unwarranted view of psychology and a less than high view of Scripture. The vast amount of confusion in the field of psychological theories and therapies hardly indicates clarity, vision and truth. Confusion is darkness, while the Gospel brings light, clarity, and life. “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33.)

Notes Chapter 2: Truth or Confusion?

1. Gary R. Collins. *Can You Trust Psychology?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988, p. 28.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
3. Roger Mills, "Psychology Goes Insane, Botches Role as Science," *The National Educator*, July 1980, p. 14.
4. Joseph Wolpe quoted by Ann Japenga, "Great Minds on the Mind Assemble for Conference," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1985, Part V, p. 16.
5. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 90, 94.
14. Thomas Szasz. *The Myth of Psychotherapy*. Garden City: Doubleday/Anchor Press, 1978, pp.182-183.
15. Franklin D. Chu and Sharland Trotter. *The Madness Establishment*. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974, p. 4.
16. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Szasz, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
19. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
20. Barbara Brown. *Supermind*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980, p. 8.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
22. Louisa E. Rhine. *Mind Over Matter: Psychokinesis*. New York: MacMillan, 1970, pp. 389-390.
23. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
25. Aaron T. Beck and Jeffrey E. Young, "Depression." *Clinical Handbook of Psychological Disorders*. David H. Barlow, ed. New York: The Guilford Press, 1985, p. 207.

Chapter Three

PSYCHOLOGICAL CULTS

Psychology, with its false facade of respectability, science, and medicine, has already enticed many Christians. Under the guise of so-called Christian psychology, the teachings of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Eric Fromm, Alfred Adler, Albert Ellis, and many other non-believers and anti-Christians have corrupted the faith once delivered to the saints. Because of the false scientific cloak of psychology, many Christians do not see that its major theories (of why people are the way they are and how they can change) are simply faith systems.

Psychology and Religion.

When Collins says, “Some have elevated psychology to the status of a new religion,”¹ he does not seem to realize that this type of psychology has not been elevated to “the status of a new religion”; it already is religion. In his book *Psychology As Religion: The Cult of Self Worship*, Dr. Paul Vitz extensively addresses the issue of the basic religious nature of psychology.² He especially delves into the problems of humanistic psychology. However, psychoanalysis and behavior therapy are also religious in nature. Both attempt to understand man and to tell him how he should live and change.

Psychotherapy and its psychologies involve rituals, values, and morals. The focus is on the soul (*psyche*) and even the spirit of man. Therapists often deal with religious questions and yearnings from an anti-biblical point of view, and they incorporate a deity and priesthood of some kind or another. While Collins continually claims that psychology is science, he quotes Everett Worthington, Jr., who says that one study indicated that “psychotherapy may have its greatest effect on attitudes of a philosophical nature dealing with ethics and religion.”³ The implications of this statement are extremely important. Psychotherapy is not science, but religion and philosophy. Even when combined with Christianity, basic unbiblical presuppositions maintain subtle influence on the counseling and on the person receiving counsel.

Values.

Collins’ chapter title “Should a Christian Ever Go to a Non-Christian Counselor?” illustrates that counseling is by nature value-laden. In this chapter he tells about a lady who called him about her teenage son who “professed to be a Christian and attended church regularly,” but was “heavily involved with drugs.”⁴ The values of both the therapist and the client come into play as can be seen by the family decision and Collins’ response. Collins says,

When all things were considered this Christian family chose to admit the young man to a secular residential treatment program. I don't think their decision was wrong.⁵

The very questions of why the young man would want to be free of drugs, how he will accomplish that, and what he will do with his life following recovery are all value issues. The decision to "admit the young man to a secular residential treatment program" is wrong not only from a biblical perspective-----sending a Christian to a secular program to deal with spiritual issues-----but it is wrong from a research perspective.

In spite of the fact that in the same chapter Collins says, "Sometimes the problem has little or nothing to do with values,"⁶ values play a highly significant role in all counseling situations. In fact, **there is a world view with a set of values within every theory having to do with psychotherapy.** A person's views of life and his values will influence his life and behavior.

A counselor's philosophical view of life and his concept of man and the world will affect every aspect of his counseling. Many researchers agree that one cannot counsel without a value system. Research psychologist Dr. Allen Bergin contends:

Values are an inevitable and pervasive part of psychotherapy.⁷

There is an ideology in everyone's therapy.

Techniques thus become a medium for mediating the value influence intended by the therapist.

A value free approach is impossible.⁸

Bergin warns that sometimes the therapist or counselor assumes that what he does "is professional without recognizing that [he is] purveying under the guise of professionalism and science [his] own personal value [system]."⁹ Elsewhere he says, "It will not do for therapists to hide their prejudices behind a screen of scientific jargon."¹⁰

Dr. Hans Strupp says, "There can be no doubt that the therapist's moral and ethical values are always 'in the picture.'" ¹¹ Dr. Perry London believes that avoidance of values is impossible. "Every aspect of psychotherapy presupposes some implicit moral doctrine."¹² Further, "Moral considerations may dictate, in large part, how the therapist defines his client's needs, how he operates in the therapeutic situation, how he defines 'treatment,' and 'cure,' and even 'reality.'" ¹³ Morse and Watson conclude, "Thus values and moral judgments will always play a role in therapy, no matter how much the therapist attempts to push them to the background."¹⁴

Because morals and values play such a crucial role in counseling, it is quite important for the counselor and the counselee to share the same basic view of man and similar values. The counselee should at least be aware of a counselor's view of life and his values when he seeks counseling. If the counselee would like to adopt the same view and values as the counselor there would be no conflict. However, if there is conflict or confusion in this area, the counselee should find another counselor.

Even Collins says, “Counselees are more likely to get better and to experience personal growth when their values are similar to those of the therapist.”¹⁵ More significantly, the religious and moral values of a therapist will often affect those of the counselee. This has deep implications when secular therapies are used by Christians, because all therapies are value-laden and culture-bound. Nevertheless Collins sees the value of Christians incorporating therapies of non-Christians with different values into their own practices. Surely those secular values seep through and affect his counseling.

Counseling Nonbelievers.

Because of the inherent religious nature of psychological counseling, the question of counseling non-Christians must be addressed. And the question must involve both whether to counsel and what to counsel. In attempting to address this question, Collins quotes an example of a man who says,

I tell the person who comes for help that I don’t even want to hear about the problem until we deal with a basic spiritual question: Have you been born again? If the counselee is a believer, we go on to the problem. If not, I present the gospel and state that I don’t help people unless and until they have committed themselves to Jesus Christ.¹⁶

Collins wonders “how many people had been turned away by his insensitive and rigid approach.”¹⁷

There are really two issues here rather than one. The two issues addressed and confused as one by this example are the individual’s theological position and his means of expressing it. One can criticize the way the man expressed himself and thereby avoid the real issue. Although this man’s description sounds abrupt, he realized that the primary goal of counseling unbelievers is for them to be saved and born anew of the Spirit by faith in Christ. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36.) Jesus ministered to the people for a greater purpose than any temporal needs or desires. In reality, the man in Collins’ example may be leading many to Christ and fulfilling the Great Commission in a way that few counselors do.

Collins goes on to say, “Bringing people to Christ is the essence of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), but from this it does not follow that Christian counselors should offer help only to believers.”¹⁸ However, “bringing people to Christ” is offering help to the nonbeliever at his greatest point of need. Furthermore, if a nonbeliever finds his help through secular theories and therapies rather than through Jesus, he may remain in the flesh and never really know what it is to walk in the Spirit.

Collins raises two points from Scripture to support his position. The first point he makes is that “Jesus helped nonbelievers.”¹⁹ To prove this point, he says “Jesus was willing to reach out and help nonbelievers. Shouldn’t his followers do the same?” Jesus primarily ministered to the Jews. Whenever he ministered to non-Jews it was on the basis of their faith. In fact, even when He ministered grace and healing to the Jews faith was involved. Jesus is indeed our example. Not only is He our example; He is the very

One who does minister in counseling that seeks to glorify Him and encourage faith in Him. Therefore, we must follow Him—all the way.

Thus, we must ask ourselves, “What was Jesus’ purpose in ministering to wayward Jews, the Roman centurion, the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the Samaritans?” His purpose was to bring people to God. Jesus’ speaking, healing, counseling, driving out demons and teaching were all to bring people into a right relationship with God. Yes, Jesus was willing to reach out and help those who were not walking with God, but for the sole purpose of bringing them to God. The entire ministry of Jesus is a testimony against the very thing that Collins is trying to justify. Can you imagine Jesus being “willing to reach out and help nonbelievers” without revealing the Father?

Collins goes on to say:

Jesus spent time with sinners, healed a Roman centurion’s slave, counseled a hated tax collector, drove demons out of a heathen pig rancher, and freely taught anyone who would listen. Jesus was willing to reach out and help nonbelievers.²⁰

Let’s examine the examples Collins gives.

“Jesus spent time with sinners.” He knew they needed to know the Lord. Therefore He did not waste time by giving them the opinions of men to help solve their problems of living. Instead He ministered the truth and grace of God to them. (Luke 5:27-32.)

Jesus “healed a Roman centurion’s slave.” The centurion obviously knew who Jesus was and demonstrated greater faith than the Jews. Therefore there was no need for evangelism. In fact, Jesus recognized the faith and said, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” (Luke 7:9.)

Jesus “counseled a hated tax collector.” Jesus tells us his purpose of going to Matthew’s house, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Matthew 9:13.) Jesus also told Zaccheus, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10.)

Jesus “drove demons out of a heathen pig rancher.” Even the demons recognized who Jesus was for they said, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God?” (Matthew 8:29.)

Jesus “freely taught anyone who would listen.” And indeed, Jesus did teach. But, He did not teach the ways of men. He taught and demonstrated the ways of God. He did not offer the counsel of men, but the counsel of God. He did not borrow from the world, but went against the mind-set of the world. He had a greater purpose than to dress up the flesh or to instruct the flesh how to live more successfully and how to feel better about oneself. Jesus knew that the flesh was of no avail and said to Nicodemus,

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (John 3:5-7.)

Even when Jesus ministered to nonbelievers, he ministered according to the ways of God and not according to the current, popular wisdom of men. In each and every case He was revealing God to them and **not** teaching the ideas of men.

Collins' second point is that "The Scriptures do not instruct us to limit our helping to believers."²¹ To prove his point he quotes Galatians 6:9-10, which includes Paul's admonition, "Therefore as we have opportunity let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." In the context of all Scripture, why would Christians do good to all people? For at least two reasons: First, to show forth Christ in their lives, and second, to win them to Christ. What would show forth Christ more, their example of Christ in them or a discussion based on someone's psychological opinion? What is lacking in Collins' argument is an example from Scripture where Jesus or the disciples ministered the opinions of men rather than God's truth, or where they failed to use the circumstance to follow the Great Commission.

The biblical counselor must present the claims of Christ. For the psychologist to present the claims of Christ at the financial expense of a client, though they are more valuable than gold, could be unethical and not consistent with his professional role as a psychologist. In other words, to proselyte at the expense of a client during time that he has paid for psychological services would be taking undue advantage of him. It is often difficult for a Christian to see this, because we know that the Bible is true. However, imagine going to a psychologist, expecting psychotherapy and being proselyted according to the Buddhist religion during time that costs fifty-plus dollars an hour.

The man in Collins' example certainly had a desire to bring people to Christ. His way of expressing it may seem "insensitive and rigid," but he certainly had the right idea. Furthermore, one cannot tell from his words the manner or tone of voice he used. Perhaps he has not only led many to Christ, but has effectively disciplined them according to the ways of the Lord rather than through the "insights" borrowed from Freud et al.

The Gods of Psychology.

Not only are morals and values involved, but this kind of psychology has its own gods, priesthood, and means of salvation. These are most obvious in the transpersonal psychologies, which include various combinations of Eastern religions, shamanism, astrology, and other occult practices. To miss the fact that much psychology is influenced by Eastern ideas is to have a very shallow understanding of the relationship between Eastern religion and Western psychology. Dr. Daniel Goleman, former editor of *Psychology Today*, has written a book titled *The Meditative Mind*, which addresses this very issue.²²

Collins says, "It would be unfair to blame this rise of humanistic heresy solely on the works of psychoanalysts and psychologists."²³ Nevertheless, the religious nature of psychotherapy and the underlying psychologies can easily be seen in their support and clear identification with the religion of secular humanism, which has fed into the new age mentality. New agers embrace these psychological systems and see them as giving people what they need to save themselves and their society. In his article "What is the New Age?" in the publication *Guide to New Age Living*, Jonathan Adolph says:

Perhaps the most influential ideas to shape contemporary new age thinking were those that grew out of humanistic psychology and the human potential movement of the '60s and '70s. The fundamental optimism of new age thinking, for example, can be traced to psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham

Maslow, who postulated that when basic needs are met, people will strive to develop themselves and find meaning in their life, a concept Maslow called self-actualization.²⁴

Humanistic psychology is basic to new age thought. Such thinking strips Jesus of His unique personhood and godhood and bestows divine potential upon mere humans. With such divine potential, humans are considered to be capable of redeeming society through their own personal transformation, which comes from a divine spark which supposedly resides within each person.

Humanistic psychology has embraced transpersonal psychology, occultism, and Eastern religion. The move from humanistic to transpersonal psychological theories is no surprise to the initiates. Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, predicted that humanistic psychology would be an important stepping stone to transpersonal psychology. In his book *Toward a Psychology of Being*, which was published in 1968, he wrote:

I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology to be transitional. A preparation for a still higher fourth force psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization and the like.²⁵

Although he seems to be referring to some kind of god, he certainly was not talking about the God of the Bible. Instead, his self-actualization was just a step away from pantheism and self-deification.

Psychological ideologies combined with paganism are the heartbeat that throbs beneath the scientific facade of psychotherapy. And that heartbeat has begun to throb in the church. On the heels of that heartbeat is the hoofbeat of the white horse in Revelation 6. The rider, wearing a crown and carrying a bow, deceives the nations with the appearance of goodness and purity. He is the deceiver who shoots his arrows into the minds of men and conquers them through false ideologies and psychologies combined with idolatry and paganism. The psychological cults have been erected with the wood, hay, and stubble of the opinions of men. Beneath a veneer of pious platitudes they hide their true foundations of evolutionism, determinism, agnosticism, atheism, secular humanism, transcendentalism, pseudoscience, mesmerism, and other anti-Christian "isms." These religions include the psychoanalytic, the behavioristic, the humanistic, and the transpersonal psychologies mixed and blended with whatever beliefs and practices may appeal to an individual. Their catalog of choices is ever expanding, and psychological evangelists hawk many other gospels.

These psychological religions are not only in the world; they are blatantly standing in the church and offering numerous combinations of theories and therapies. They are readily accessible to Christians, especially when they are whitewashed with Bible verses and given top billing in Christian bookstores and on Christian media. Rather than guiding people to the strait gate and along the narrow way, too many Christian pastors, leaders, and professors are pointing to the wide gate made up of over 250 different psychological systems combined in thousands of ways. Rather than calling the people to come out of the world and to be separate, they have brought the worldly psychologies

right into the church. Rather than open altars, there are wide gates. And, it is almost impossible to avoid the wide gate and the broad way—especially when disguised as the strait gate and the narrow way.

Notes Chapter 3: Psychological Cults.

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2. Paul C. Vitz. *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self Worship.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977.
3. Collins, op. cit., p. 31.
4. Ibid., p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 33.
6. Ibid., p. 32.
7. Allen E. Bergin, "Psychotherapy and Religious Values," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 1980, p. 97.
8. Allen E. Bergin, "Psychotherapeutic Change and Humanistic Versus Religious Values," BMA Audio Cassette, #T-301. New York: The Guilford Press, 1979.
9. Bergin, "Psychotherapy and Religious Values," op. cit., pp. 101-2.
10. Allen E. Bergin, "Behavior Therapy and Ethical Relativism: Time for Clarity," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. Vol. 48, No. 1, 1980, p. 11.
11. Hans Strupp, "Some Observations on the Fallacy of Value-free Therapy and the Empty Organism," in *Psychotherapies: A Comparative Casebook*. Steven Morse and Robert Watson, eds. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1977, p. 313.
12. Perry London. *The Modes and Morals of Psychotherapy.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964, pp. 1-40, 6.
13. Ibid., p. 5.
14. Steven Morse and Robert Watson. *Psychotherapies: A Comparative Casebook.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1977, p. 3.
15. Collins, op. cit., p. 29.
16. Ibid., p. 74.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., pp. 74-75.
19. Ibid., p. 75.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Daniel Goleman. *The Meditative Mind.* Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1988.
23. Collins, op. cit., p. 118.
24. Jonathan Adolph, "What is the New Age?" *The 1988 Guide to New Age Living*, published by New Age Journal, 1988, pp. 11-12.
25. Abraham Maslow. *Toward a Psychology of Being.* Princeton: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968, pp. iii-iv.

Chapter Four

INTEGRATION OR SEPARATION?

Those who attempt to integrate psychology and Christianity hope to bring together the best of both. Their faith rests in a combination of one or more of the many psychological systems of men's minds along with some form of Christianity. Collins says that Christian therapists have goals that are different from secular therapists.¹ Nevertheless they use theories and methods borrowed directly from approaches devised by secular psychologists whose systems have underlying presuppositions that are antithetical to the Bible.

Collins admits that Christians cannot trust all of psychology. However, in answer to his title *Can You trust Psychology?* Collins says, "It all depends on the psychology and the psychologist."² Then he gives his criteria of acceptance. He says:

When a psychologist seeks to be guided by the Holy Spirit, is committed to serving Christ faithfully, is growing in his or her knowledge of the Scriptures, is well aware of the facts and conclusions of psychology, and is willing to evaluate psychological ideas in the light of biblical teaching—then you can trust the psychologist, even though he or she at times will make mistakes, as we all do. If the psychology or psychological technique is not at odds with scriptural teaching, then it is likely to be trustworthy, especially if it also is supported by scientific data.³

This is a constantly recurring theme throughout his entire book.

Now let us try to apply this criteria. At the present time there are over 250 competing and often contradictory therapies and over 10,000 not-always-compatible techniques. To determine methodological systems used by Christians who practice psychotherapy, we conducted a survey with the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS), a national Christian organization composed of numerous practicing therapists. In our survey we used a simple questionnaire in which we asked the psychotherapists to list in order the psychotherapeutic approaches that most influenced their private practices. We listed only ten approaches, but provided blank spaces at the bottom of the sheet for adding others before final ranking. The results indicated that Client-Centered Therapy (Rogers) and Reality Therapy (Glasser) were the two top choices, and that psychoanalysis (Freud) and Rational Emotive Therapy (Ellis) followed closely behind.

One especially interesting result from the survey is that many of the psychotherapists listed a variety of approaches at the end of the form as well as checking and ranking many of the approaches listed. Their doing so indicates that they have a highly eclectic approach to counseling. In our conclusion we had this to say:

If this survey constitutes a representative sample, it is probably fair to say that there is not just one Christian psychotherapeutic way. There is a great variety in the approaches influencing the clinical practices of CAPS members. This survey seems to demonstrate that, while some psychotherapies are more influential than others in the practice of Christian counseling, in general the Christian psychotherapist is both independent and eclectic in his approach to counseling.⁴

Each Christian practicing psychotherapy has his own conglomeration of approaches. That is not surprising. Researcher Dr. Morris Parlof observes, “Most psychotherapists are eclectic either by intent or default.”⁵

If one were to ask the numerous Christian psychologists if they met Collins’ criteria, we would venture to guess that they would say that they do. But then we have to ask why it is that the numerous Christian psychologists who would say that they meet Collins’ criteria come to contradictory conclusions about what therapeutic systems to use and which techniques to apply. There must be a lot of prooftexting going on, to say the least.

Collins makes the constant point that there is a variety of approaches to Christian counseling, which is true. However, the basis for biblical counseling is the truth revealed by God, while the basis for psychological counseling is the opinions of men. No matter how much one attempts to biblicize psychology or proceed to use psychology because it does not **seem** to contradict Scripture (which is apparently okay with Collins), it is still the opinions of men. Even after supposedly finding a certain psychology in Scripture or failing to find it in Scripture, it is still made up of the opinions of men. We cannot think of one of the over 250 approaches to psychotherapy or one of its underlying psychologies that cannot somehow be rationalized biblically. But rationalizing it biblically does not make it biblical. It is still the opinions of men.

For example, Carl Rogers is probably the name best known among Christian psychologists. In the CAP’s survey of Christian psychologists mentioned earlier, Rogers was listed in first place. Rogers said once that his crowning discovery after a lifetime of counseling is that of love.⁶ However, love for Rogers means “love between persons.” But what does Rogers mean by “love between persons”? First of all, Rogers is only speaking about human love. While human love is an admirable virtue, it does not compare with divine love. Human love without the divine is merely another form of self-love. Divine love, on the other hand, encompasses all the qualities listed in 1 Corinthians 13. Second, Rogers is only speaking of love between persons. He ignores the great commandment to “love the Lord thy God.” Third, he never mentions God’s love for man, which is demonstrated throughout the Bible.

Rogers’ crowning discovery is a limited human love between persons, which excludes the love of God and the love for God. In excluding God, Rogers sets up the me, myself, and I as the evaluator and prioritizer of all experiences. The self, rather than God, becomes the center of the universe, and love apart from God becomes only a self-rewarding activity. In leaving out God, Rogers ends up with a “love between persons,” which is hardly more than a feeble extension of self love. The important ideas about love did not originate with Rogers. They have always existed. Rogers merely found out something about the importance of love, but ignored the depth of God’s love.

One Christian psychologist will depend upon Rogers’ nondirective approach, another on the Freudian unconscious determinants of behavior, another on Glasser’s reality,

responsibility and right-and-wrong, and another on Ellis's Rational Emotive Therapy. And, numerous other Christian psychologists, all "willing to evaluate ideas in the light of biblical teaching," will use other mutually conflicting systems and multifarious contradictory techniques.

To confuse matters even more, think about the fact that the Christian *critics* of psychology also claim to meet Collins' criteria. We will substitute in Collins' criteria the words "critic of psychology" for the word "psychologist" as follows: "When a [critic of psychology] seeks to be guided by the Holy Spirit, is committed to serving Christ faithfully, is growing in his or her knowledge of the Scriptures, is well aware of the facts and conclusions of psychology, and is willing to evaluate psychological ideas in the light of biblical teaching—then you can trust the [critic of psychology], even though he or she at times will make mistakes, as we all do."⁷ Or, is Collins suggesting that the critics are not "guided by the Holy Spirit," etc.?

What is a Christian to do? The psychologists claim to be following God; the critics claim to be following God. The psychologists who claim to follow God often use contradictory systems; the critics of psychology also end up, at times, using different systems. However, the critics of psychology use the Bible as their first source, while the psychologists use psychology as their first source.

Collins says, "If you don't know your psychology, find a committed believer who can help you decipher what is valid and what may be counterfeit."⁸ But here again, what's a Christian to do? The Christian critics of psychology say that the over 250 competing and often contradictory systems are all counterfeit. The Christian psychologists claim that the therapies they use are authentic and in harmony with Scripture. Once more, the critics of psychology who recommend biblical approaches go first to the Bible, while the psychologists begin with psychology.

It is interesting to note that the originators of the psychological systems, which are taught and used by Christians, were not believers. The originators of these often competing systems did not begin with Scripture; nor did they ever compare what they concluded with Scripture. They devised their systems out of their own fallen opinions about man.

In her article "Theory as Self-Portrait and the Ideal of Objectivity," Dr. Linda Riebel clearly shows that "theories of human nature reflect the theorist's personality as he or she externalizes it or projects it onto humanity at large." She says that "the theory of human nature is a self-portrait of the theorist . . . emphasizing what the theorist needs," and that theories of personality and psychotherapy "cannot transcend the individual personality engaged in that act."⁹

Dr. Harvey Mindess has written a book titled *Makers of Psychology: The Personal Factor*. The thesis of his book can be seen in the following quotes:

It is my intention to show how the leaders of the field portray humanity in their own image and how each one's theories and techniques are a means of validating his own identity.¹⁰

The only target I wish to attack is the delusion that psychologists' judgments are objective, their pronouncements unbiased, their methods based more upon external evidence than personal need. Even the greatest geniuses are human

beings, limited by the time and place of their existence and, above all, limited by their personal characteristics. Their outlooks are shaped by who they are. There is no shame in that, but it is a crime against truth to deny it.¹¹

The field as a whole, taking direction as it does from the standpoints of its leaders-----which, as I will demonstrate, are always personally motivated-----may be regarded as a set of distorting mirrors, each one reflecting human nature in a somewhat lopsided way, with no guarantee that all of them put together add up to a rounded portrait.¹² (Emphasis his.)

The enigma of human nature, we may say, is like a giant Rorschach blot onto which each personality theorist projects his own personality characteristics.¹³

The conclusions we should reach about the field as a whole, however, must begin with a recognition of the subjective element in all personality theories, the limited applicability of all therapeutic techniques, and proceed to the relativity of psychological truth.¹⁴

This is truly a case of the opinions of nonbelieving psychologists being used by Christian psychologists on the basis of whether or not they seem Scriptural. Is it not strange that these conflicting personal opinions by these non-Christians are to be evaluated on the basis of the testimony of Christians who claim to fulfill Collins' criteria?

Collins says, "If the psychology or psychological technique is not at odds with scriptural teaching, then it is likely to be trustworthy, especially if it also is supported by scientific data."¹⁵ The criteria of "not at odds with scriptural teaching" as a means of being "trustworthy" is strange. Apparently the psychologist who meets Collins' criteria up to this point only needs to make sure that the psychology used is "not at odds with scriptural teaching." The intent and purpose of Scripture is not to be either a support or framework for worldly wisdom in the area of who man is and how he should live. Of course all must be evaluated in terms of Scripture, but that does not mean that a theory or opinion that is not in Scripture is therefore "not at odds with scriptural teaching" simply because it is not mentioned. Anyone who seeks to evaluate the wisdom of men in the light of Scripture must immerse himself more in the Bible than in the wisdom of men. There should be a biblical bias rather than a psychological bias.

How about using another criteria, such as "Only if it is not at odds with other psychological systems?" (Of course that would eliminate all of them.) Or, "only if it is not addressing problems already addressed in Scripture?" The "not at odds with scriptural teaching" criteria is open to individual interpretation and this is why so many Christian psychologists have so many different, often-contradictory systems that they use. In addition, does this criteria for psychology not open Pandora's box? For examples, graphology, use of the Hindu chakras, hypnosis, and levitation could all be rationalized to be "not at odds with scriptural teachings" by some Christians (not us!). But should a Christian use them? The last part of the sentence "especially if it also is supported by scientific data" should, in all fairness, read "*only* if it also is supported by scientific data." Else, why would one want to use an unproven and unsupported psychology or psychological technique?

Collins says, “Some psychological conclusions cannot be trusted and must not be accepted.”¹⁶ However, Collins nowhere distinguishes between what can and what cannot be trusted. Nor has he instructed the reader as to what “cannot be trusted” and “must not be accepted.” For example, if a number of Christian psychologists who meet Collins’ criteria and are claiming “to be guided by the Holy Spirit” come to obviously contradictory conclusions as they often do, which one or ones “cannot be trusted and must not be accepted”?

Partially quoting us, Collins says, “One recent Christian book makes the valid criticism that some secular therapists are ‘long on promises, but short on independent scientific research.’ These systems are based on therapists’ ‘own say-so and not upon independent research and followup.’”¹⁷ He goes on to say,

The Christian authors of this book apparently fail to see that the same criticism applies to their own approach to counseling. Because they are built on biblical teachings, Christian approaches rarely get tested but are assumed to be right—even when they disagree with other biblically based methods of counseling.¹⁸

Collins is right about Christian approaches rarely being tested. He must include in this concern the vast array of integration approaches as well. Most of the research studies on counseling are conducted at universities with staff therapists rather than with private-practice therapists. We would like to know if there are any carefully conducted, controlled studies of discretely defined integration approaches. Since Christian integrationists believe they are using science, they should submit to scientific investigation.

Collins says, “But if we are to be consistent and fair, we must test our approaches carefully and with the same rigor that we demand of the psychotherapists whose theories we so quickly criticize.”¹⁹ He evidently does not realize that if a person is claiming scientific validity and that what he is doing is based on science, he must be open to being tested. If, on the other hand, psychotherapists admitted that they are promoting the opinions of men and practicing religion rather than science, we would not require proof any more than we require proof for the efficacy of Buddhism or the Moslem faith.

Biblical counseling is based on faith, rather than science. We make no other claim than that which the Word of God declares. Collins demands proof for the practices of biblical counselors, but God’s truth is true whether biblical counselors apply it rightly or not. But, man’s opinions (psychology) are just that until they become scientifically formed, tested, and proven. In addition, would Collins ask for proof that the Bible is effective in the lives of believers just because there are various Christian denominations? We need to keep in mind that in psychological counseling we are dealing with a questionable source (Carl Rogers, William Glasser, Sigmund Freud, Albert Ellis, et al); in biblical counseling we are dealing with truth (the Bible).

Collins refers to “our current pressure-filled age”²⁰ as the justification for the amalgamation of clinical and counseling psychology. What he neglects to mention is that many of the modern principles of stress management originated in ancient occult practices of visualization and self-hypnosis. Apparently the Bible was sufficient to answer the problems of the early church but is not sufficient for our present complex society.

Collins lists several kinds of problems that people bring to counselors which he contends “are never discussed in the Bible.”²¹ He says, “It could be difficult to find scriptural principles to guide in all the sample problems we have listed.”²² His first examples of problems brought to a counselor have to do with decision making:

“I’ve been accepted by two Christian colleges. I can’t decide which one to attend.”

“Should I get married now, or wait until I am well launched on my career?”²³

Aren’t these matters of seeking God’s will through prayer as well as through gathering necessary information (i. e. about what the colleges offer, their possible influence on the person, the demands of the job or career, etc.) and thinking through godly priorities? Would not the principle of “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” be essential in these considerations? There is no need for psychological theories and therapies to assist a person with such questions.

How can a psychologist help any more than a person who is walking with the Lord and who is gifted in godly counsel with the next problems Collins lists?

“I know God has forgiven me for my past sins, but what do I do now that I’m pregnant?”

“How can I stop eating so much?”

“I am really depressed. The doctor says there is nothing physically causing this, and I can’t think of any sin in my life that might be pulling me down. What should I do?”²⁴

Often people think that if there is not a specific verse or formula that the Bible does not speak to an issue. We must always remember that the Lord works together with His Word, with His Holy Spirit, and with members of the body of Christ. The Lord does give victory in these areas. And even when sin is not involved, there may be a misunderstanding of who the Lord is and/or a lack of knowledge concerning His purposes in an individual’s life.

Collins’ next example, “Can you help me? I’ve got AIDS,”²⁵ shows a lack of understanding of the Gospel message of hope and of the purpose of the body of Christ to bear one another’s burdens. Psychological theories and therapies cannot give him true hope or eternal life. Nor can they give the kind of love that goes beyond words.

The examples continue. However, in each instance, except for the one which is an educational, school problem of failing math, these are matters which have to do with life and faith. Each is one that can motivate a person to move closer to God and find Him sufficient, or that can tempt a person to move away from God and to look for answers in the world. Psychological theories and therapies could very well lead a person further out of the will of God. The point is not which way works. The point must be: Which way pleases the Father? Nevertheless, because Collins continues to believe that psychological theories are based on scientific discovery and are therefore gifts from God, he insists:

Surely there are times, many times, when a sensitive, psychologically trained, committed Christian counselor can help people through psychological techniques and with psychological insights that God has allowed us to discover, but that he has not chosen to reveal in the Bible.²⁶

Since all of the psychologies have been contrived by non-Christians, it is strange that God has given those “psychological insights” to them, especially in light of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians where he says:

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? . . . the foolishness of God is wiser than men But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise 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. (1 Corinthians 1:19, 20, 25,29, 30.)

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:14-16.)

And, since there are so many often conflicting “psychological insights” used by professing Christians with no real agreement or research evidence for support, it certainly raises a whole lot of questions about Collins’ position.

Are the “psychological insights” used by Collins any better than those used by other professing Christians, such as psychiatrist M. Scott Peck, pastor-turned-psychologist H. Norman Wright, psychologist Lawrence Crabb, psychiatrists Paul Meier and Frank Minirth, Morton Kelsey or any one of a number of other professing Christians? But which one of the many systems used by professing Christians from the Freudian Oedipus Complex to the Jungian Archetypes are “psychological insights that God allowed us to discover, but that he has not chosen to reveal in the Bible”? There are many Christians who practice psychological therapy who still believe in the Oedipus complex.

Collins answers the question, “Can Secular Psychology and Christianity Be Integrated?” in the affirmative. Collins says,

For the Christian psychologist, integration involves a recognition of the ultimate authority of the Bible, a willingness to learn what God has allowed humans to discover through psychology and other fields of knowledge, and a desire to determine how both scriptural truths and psychological data can enable us better to understand and help people.²⁷

Collins evidently trusts more in a Christian psychologist's understanding of the Bible than a theologian's in this regard, for he says that criticisms of professional therapy "could be dismissed had they come from a journalist or a theologian writing as an outsider."²⁸ How can a theologian be an "outsider" when psychotherapy and counseling psychologies deal with the soul of man? How can he be an "outsider" when so-called integration involves the Bible? Collins says, "Psychological conclusions that contradict biblical principles certainly cannot be integrated with Christianity."²⁹ Yet, who would know better than a biblical scholar and theologian indwelt by Christ? One does not have to be a psychologist to see the contradictions.

Collins then goes on to restate his constant theme, "It is important, therefore, that integration be done carefully, selectively, tentatively and by individuals who seek to be led by the Holy Spirit."³⁰ We receive much information from individuals who have been therapized by Christian professionals, from Christian therapists who have left the profession, and from numerous others about whether or not Collins' theme is played out in practice. In addition, the Christian practitioners who participated in our survey of CAPS, described earlier, would certainly believe that they are being led by the Holy Spirit, in spite of the fact that they follow a widely divergent variety of theories and practices. There is about as much agreement among them as among their secular counterparts. In fact, some who claim to be led by the Holy Spirit use techniques from est, the Forum, LIFESPRING, and even from Eastern therapies with their emphasis on visualization and spirit guides.

Collins is correct when he says, "There are no formulas."³¹ There are also no consistent and dependable differences between professing Christian therapists and secular therapists. The picture of Holy-Spirit-led therapists coming to conclusions and having practices much different from their secular counterparts is a false one. In fact, at one of the CAPS meetings the following statement was made:

We are often asked if we are "Christian psychologists" and find it difficult to answer since we don't know what the question implies. We are Christians who are psychologists but at the present time there is no acceptable Christian psychology that is markedly different from non-Christian psychology. It is difficult to imply that we function in a manner that is fundamentally distinct from our non-Christian colleagues . . . as yet there is not an acceptable theory, mode of research or treatment methodology that is distinctly Christian.³²

Collins believes that "Integration is not always avoidable." He says, "It would be convenient if all counseling could be divided neatly into 'the psychological way' and 'the spiritual way' with no overlapping goals, methods or assumptions."³³ He then adds,

Even those who try to dichotomize counseling into psychological versus biblical approaches have to admit that there is overlap. Listening, talking, confessing, accepting, thinking and understanding are neither purely psychological nor exclusively biblical activities.³⁴

Again we would disagree with him. To us anyone who bases his counseling in the Word of God is using the spiritual way; and anyone who is using the psychological opinions of

men is using the psychological way. The fact that both kinds of counseling use listening, talking, and so forth is not the point. The point is upon what foundation is their listening, talking, etc. based?

Collins continues, “Even love, hope, compassion, forgiveness, caring, kindness, confrontation and a host of other concepts are shared by theologians and psychologists.”³⁵ When he wants to make a case for similarities so that he can accuse biblical counselors of integration, he admits that biblical counselors are caring and compassionate. However, in other places he constructs a straw-man biblical counselor who is rigid, uncaring, and limited in his understanding of people and problems. The problem seems to lie in the assumption that if anyone can relate to people or understand them he is using psychology, for he says:

The person who wants to understand and help others cannot avoid at least some overlap and integration of psychological and Christian principles.³⁶

This begs the question, “Could anyone understand and help anyone before the so-called science of psychology?” What Collins and others who want to justify the intentional use of psychology do not seem to grasp is that the Bible provides greater depth and breadth for understanding and helping people. The great difference between biblical/spiritual counselors and those who integrate with psychology is whether the reliance is on the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit or on a combination of the opinions of men and elements of the Christian faith.

Collins claims, “The various secular and Christian approaches overlap and use many of the same techniques.”³⁷ He blurs the differences between biblical and psychological counseling by continually referring to similarities that are not real similarities and overlaps that are not real overlaps. It’s like an atheist friend of ours who says that all world religions are the same because they all use prayer and worship a deity.

Collins persists in the error of looking at superficialities rather than substance. The argument is something like this: Medical doctors speak to their patients and psychologists speak to their patients. Therefore there is an overlap between medical and psychological practices and it cannot be avoided. However, friends talk to one another. If we follow the logic, that means they are practicing medicine and psychology.

As a further example of this confusion, Collins says of the two approaches, “Both emphasize listening.”³⁸ Listening in biblical counseling is about as similar to psychological counseling as Christian prayer is to Hindu prayer. It would be difficult to think of one profession which deals with people that does not emphasize listening. Doctors do it, teachers do it, lawyers do it, salespersons do it and lots of others. But that doesn’t mean those professions are all alike. Superficial similarities do not cause equalities by any means.

Collins says:

I once read a humorous and overstated story about a man who refused to wear gloves, celebrate Christmas or use toothpaste because secular humanists did all of these. We couldn’t survive if we avoided everything used by nonbelievers. In the same way, we couldn’t counsel if we rejected all helping methods used by non-Christians.³⁹

While biblical counselors and psychological counselors may seem to do the same things, such as talk and listen, the basis is different. The biblical counselor's source is Scripture, not psychology. Whatever seems to be the same is accidental, not intentional. If the biblical way seems to involve similar activities, it should never be because it was borrowed or learned from the psychological world. When these activities are conducted to conform to a psychological model of man and a psychological methodology of change, they become identifiable tools of that therapy. Conversation influenced by the psychological way cannot fully fulfill biblical goals of walking in the spirit rather than according to the flesh.

On the other hand, there may be some overlap when a psychologically trained counselor is also trying to counsel according to the Bible. Collins' description of a Christian counselor⁴⁰ would definitely describe certain aspects of biblical counseling. However, any true overlap would be because a psychologist is attempting to use some of the biblical way along with the psychological way.

Although a biblical counselor may avail himself of any scientifically established data, he would be careful not to dip into the theoretical systems which attempt to explain why man is the way he is and how he should and can change. Though there may be elements of truth, they are too bound to the ungodly systems to be used. And, those isolated elements which superficially appear to agree with Scripture are based upon philosophies which deny the Lordship of Christ.

A more extreme example of the integrationist position is found in Dr. John Carter and Dr. Bruce Narramore of Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology, who say in their book *The Integration of Psychology and Theology*, "Both the Bible and psychology have a great deal of subject matter in common. Both study the attitudes and behavior of the human race."⁴¹ This in essence equates the Bible and psychology as both being a "study . . . of the human race." However, the Bible is not merely a "study . . . of the human race"; it is the **truth** about the human race! In fact, the Bible is the only fully dependable, trustworthy **truth** about man; while psychology is merely the **opinions** of men about man. Furthermore, psychology consists of the **opinions** of godless men about man.

Think of all the psychological theorists, such as Freud, Jung, Adler, Rogers, Ellis, et cetera. Do you know of any major psychological theorist who is a Christian? In contrast to this, the Bible provides the complete and only unchanging explanations and answers from God about men; whereas psychology is a constantly changing chameleon-like catechism of cure. Dr. Charles Tart, a prolific speaker and writer in the field of psychology, admits that the prevailing popular psychotherapeutic systems merely reflect the current culture.⁴² We know that the truths of Scripture are eternal. but, which psychological "truths" are eternal?

The results of a study of 177 articles having to do with integration indicated that most Christians practicing psychology do **not** use theology as a filter to retain only that which is biblical.⁴³ Approximately one third use a form of integration which stresses compatibility. This is much like Collins' idea of overlap. However, the researchers are quick to add:

Psychological and theological facts may appear on the surface to be saying the same thing, but a more comprehensive understanding of each may prove that

there are significant differences between the secular and Christian concepts identified as parallel.⁴⁴

The predominant mode was that of “active reconstruction and relabeling,” either by “reinterpreting psychological facts from the perspective of theological facts” or “reinterpreting theological facts from the perspective of psychological facts.”⁴⁵

The integration approach, while complimentary of psychology, often ends up being derogatory of the Bible. As we have shown, it gives psychology a status not confirmed by philosophers of science and other experts on the subject. Thereby it denigrates the Bible in a subtle and almost unnoticed way. According to a study conducted by E. E. Griffith, the psychological counseling done by those who describe themselves as operating within a Christian framework actually consists mostly of secularly derived techniques.⁴⁶

Collins concludes his chapter by saying, “But it is confusing, potentially harmful and invalid to propose that there is one psychological way that deals with the ‘cure of minds,’ one spiritual way that deals with the ‘cure of souls,’ and no overlap.”⁴⁷ More confusing and potentially **spiritually** harmful is the focusing on superficial similarities in order to establish equalities. Biblical counseling is deeper and more complex than that.

After all of his arguments in support of integration, Collins’ final conclusion about integration is quite puzzling. He says, “It is too early to answer decisively if psychology and Christianity can be integrated.” This begs the question: If the conclusion of Collins is correct, then why does he recommend integration?

Notes Chapter 4: Integration or Separation?

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37. Ibid., p. 58.
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39. Ibid., pp. 72-73.
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43. James D. Foster et al, "The Popularity of Integration Models, 1980-1985." *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1988, p. 4, 8.
44. Ibid., p. 8.
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46. E. E. Griffeth quoted by Everett L. Worthington, Jr., "Religious Counseling: A Review of Published Empirical Research." *Journal of Counseling and Development*, Vol. 64, March 1986, p. 427.
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Chapter Five

EFFECTIVENESS

Does psychotherapy or psychological counseling really help people? Given the numbers of Christians seeking psychological help and the numbers of Christians who have chosen psychological counseling as a profession and the numbers of pastors who refer people to professional psychologists, the answer must be “yes.” But is it? Or perhaps a better question is this: Does anyone really know if psychological counseling works?

Three eminent researchers in the field of outcomes in psychotherapy declare that “the urgent question being pressed by the public—Does psychotherapy work?—goes unanswered.”¹ The American Psychiatric Association published *Psychotherapy Research: Methodological and Efficacy Issues*, which indicates that a definite answer to the question, “Is psychotherapy effective?” may be unattainable. The authors conclude, “Unequivocal conclusions about causal connections between treatment and outcome may never be possible in psychotherapy research.”²

In a review of that book, *Brain-Mind Bulletin* says, “Research often fails to demonstrate an unequivocal advantage from psychotherapy.” Here is an interesting example from the book:

. . . an experiment at the All-India Institute of Mental Health in Bangalore found that Western-trained psychiatrists and native healers had a comparable recovery rate. The most notable difference was that the so-called “witch doctors” released their patients sooner.³

Researcher Dr. Allen Bergin, whom Collins quotes in support of psychological therapy, also admits that it is very hard to prove things in psychotherapy.⁴ Psychological researcher Dr. Judd Marmor says that there is a “paucity of sound research in this area” because of the difficulties involved.⁵ Two other writers indicate that “the paucity of ‘outcome’ data leaves the profession vulnerable to the familiar charge that it is not a science at all, but rather a ‘belief system’ that depends on an act of faith between the troubled patient and a supportive therapist.”⁶

In presenting his case for the effectiveness of psychotherapy, Collins quotes Bergin’s comments about some earlier work done by Dr. Hans Eysenck. Bergin is a well-known psychologist and co-editor with Dr. Sol Garfield of the *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change*.⁷ Eysenck is regarded as one of the world’s leading psychologists. After examining over 8000 cases, Eysenck concluded that:

. . . roughly two-thirds of a group of neurotic patients will recover or improve to a marked extent within about two years of the onset of their illness, whether they are treated by means of psychotherapy or not.⁸

Eysenck found little differences in results (in the subjects he examined) between those treated and those not treated. Since his study failed to prove any advantage of psychotherapy over no formal treatment, he remarked:

From the point of view of the neurotic, these figures are encouraging; from the point of view of the psychotherapist, they can hardly be called very favorable to his claims.⁹

Eysenck's statement is overwhelming. But what is really shocking is the vast amount of referral to psychological counseling when research does not seem to support it.

Bergin has disagreed with Eysenck's conclusions and does not believe that the research supports Eysenck's position. However, this is not a simple matter. The controversy has been raging ever since 1952 over whether there is any difference between counseled and not-counseled persons. In 1979 the symposium "The Outcome of Psychotherapy: Benefit, Harm, or No Change?" Eysenck reported the results of reviewing the history of cures for mental patients in the hospital in which he works. He discovered that as far back as the late seventeenth century (1683-1703) about two-thirds of the patients were discharged as cured. In spite of the fact that psychotherapy did not exist at that time, the improvement rate was about the same as it is today. The so-called treatment consisted of the use of fetters, cold baths, solitary confinement, and even extraction of teeth for extreme punishment.

During his presentation Eysenck gave additional evidence for his earlier discovery that indicated that about the same number of individuals will improve over a two-year period of time whether or not they receive therapy. He confirmed, "What I said over 25 years ago still stands."¹⁰ Then in 1980 Eysenck wrote a letter to the *American Psychologist* supporting his original position.¹¹ In recent years Eysenck has even more strongly supported his original position.¹²

Nevertheless, Collins says that "there is now a consensus that psychotherapy is more effective than no therapy."¹³ The word *consensus* usually means general agreement or unanimity. We will let the evidence speak for itself. Let us begin by quoting Bergin, the same person quoted by Collins. Bergin says:

... it is disheartening to find that there is still **considerable controversy** over the rate of improvement in neurotic disorders in the absence of formal treatment.¹⁴
(Emphasis ours.)

In reviewing a large number of research studies, Smith and Glass came to some conclusions that encouraged psychotherapists, because at first glance their conclusions seemed to indicate that psychotherapy was more effective than no treatment at all. Because of the vast amount of research reviewed and the sophisticated statistical methods used by Smith and Glass, many who read the conclusions thought that finally, once and for all, the proof for psychotherapy had been established. However, at the annual meeting of the American Psychopathological Association, psychiatrist Dr. Sol Garfield criticized that conclusion which is based upon the approach used by Smith and Glass called meta-analysis. Garfield says that "instead of resolving forever the perennial controversy on the efficacy of psychotherapy, meta-analysis seemingly has led to an increased crescendo in the argument."¹⁵

Researcher Dr. Morris Parloff summarizes all of the conclusions of Smith et al and others in an article in *Psychiatry*. Parloff admits that one overall "disconcerting finding" is that "all forms of psychotherapy are effective and that all forms of psychotherapy appear to be

equally effective.”¹⁶ However, this result raises the question about whether this conclusion is a testimony for or against psychotherapy as opposed to any other form of help. One must also ask whether or not it is the therapeutic techniques and therapists’ training that help. Perhaps change comes from other factors, such as the belief that help is forthcoming or the sense that someone else cares or even the decision to begin working on the problem.

If top researchers are unable to assert with great confidence that psychological counseling works, why do Christians exhibit such great faith in psychology? If it is so difficult to perform studies and prove things in psychological counseling, why do Christians believe that psychological counseling is necessary for people suffering from problems of living? If both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychopathological Association give mixed reports about efficacy, why do Christian leaders promote the promises of the psychological way? And if there is little sound research, why are Christians so eager to substitute theories and therapists for the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit? Why has the church permitted the cure of souls ministry to be replaced by the cure of minds?

Researchers have determined that positive results from therapy have more to do with the counselee’s desire to change¹⁷ and on the warmth of relationship¹⁸ than on the therapeutic theory or technique or experience of the therapist.¹⁹ The factors which seem to be the basis for improvement exist both in and out of counseling. Therefore the idea that all seem to work equally well does not really support the incorporation of psychology into the church, especially since other studies indicate that untrained helpers do as well as trained and experienced therapists.²⁰ Furthermore, placebo studies indicate that almost any interesting activity (such as listening to music, being in a current affairs discussion group, reading plays) can be substituted for therapy with equal results.²¹

The all-work-equally-well idea applies to the transpersonal, religious therapies which have discarded the usual theories and techniques. Some of these incorporate astrology, meditation, and shamanic techniques. One example is Dr. Leslie Gray who at the end of her clinical fellowship in psychology at Harvard, found her own help through a Cherokee shaman rather than through her own psychotherapeutic training. She admitted that she did not get into shamanism for religious reasons, but rather because she was looking for a therapy that works. She says:

I use what I call “core shamanism”—techniques that are not culture-bound. For example, sonic driving—drumming, rattling, chanting—enables people to reach an altered state of consciousness wherein they can have access to information that ordinarily wouldn’t be available to them. . . . Unlike psychotherapists, I do not depend on interpretation and analysis. . . . I don’t interpret his or her experience, or delve into the past, or look for determinants in childhood. My work is educational and spiritual; I teach shamanic techniques. . . . Neither do I give advice; I set things up so that clients get advice directly from their guardian spirits.²²

According to the general conclusions of the Smith et al study, Leslie Gray’s therapy would evidently work “equally well.”

Dr. Gray’s repudiation of psychotherapeutic theories and techniques and her commitment to shamanic techniques should speak volumes to Christians who embrace psychology rather than put their whole trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas Gray relies solely on shamanic beliefs and techniques, many Christians are not relying upon the Word of God, the work of

the Holy Spirit and the cross of Christ. Why can't Christians trust counseling from the Word of God as much as Gray trusts in shamanism? Even Collins quotes Everett Worthington, Jr., who says, "The only good studies show secular and religious counseling to be equally effective with religious clients,"²³ and those studies are done from a psychological perspective.

The controversy over whether or not psychological counseling really helps people continues to rage in spite of the increase in research.²⁴ Garfield concludes a review of the research activities in psychotherapy by stating:

Admittedly, we have a long way to go before we can speak more authoritatively about the efficacy, generality, and specificity of psychotherapy The present results on outcome, while modestly positive, are not strong enough for us to state categorically that psychotherapy is effective, or even that it is not effective Until we are able to secure more definitive research data, the efficacy of psychotherapy will remain a controversial issue.²⁵

Dr. S. J. Rachman, Professor of Abnormal Psychology, and Dr. G. T. Wilson, Professor of Psychology, in their book *The Effects of Psychological Therapy*, point out the many serious errors and violations of sound statistical procedure in the Smith and Glass report. They say:

Smith and Glass are naive in prematurely applying a novel statistical method to dubious evidence that is too complex and certainly too uneven and underdeveloped for anything useful to emerge. The result is statistical mayhem.²⁶

After evaluating the Smith and Glass review as well as other disagreements with and criticisms of Eysenck, Rachman and Wilson support Eysenck's original position that there is no advantage of treatment over no treatment. Eysenck cited a study done by McLean and Hakstian which used a variety of treatment methods for depressed patients. One conclusion of their study was that, of the treatment methods used, psychotherapy was the least effective.²⁷

For any form of psychotherapy to meet the criteria for efficacy, that therapy must show that its results are equal to or better than results from other forms of therapy and also better than no treatment at all. It must meet this criteria through standards set by independent observers who have no bias towards or against the therapy being examined. The study must also be repeatable and thereby confirmed to indicate whether a therapy can be said to be helpful.²⁸

Professor of psychiatry Dr. Donald Klein, in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Health of the U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Finance, said, "I believe that, at present, the scientific evidence for psychotherapy efficacy cannot justify public support."²⁹ As a result of the hearings, a letter from Jay Constantine, Chief, Health Professional Staff, reports:

Based upon evaluations of the literature and testimony, it appears clear to us that there are virtually no controlled clinical studies, conducted and evaluated in accordance with generally accepted scientific principles, which confirm the efficacy, safety and appropriateness of psychotherapy as it is conducted today.

Against that background, there is strong pressure from the psychological and psychiatric professions and related organizations to extend and expand Medicare and Medicaid payment for their services. Our concern is that, without validation of psychotherapy and its manifest forms and methods, and in view of the almost infinite demand (self-induced and practitioner-induced) which might result, we could be confronted with tremendous costs, confusion and inappropriate care.³⁰

After summarizing a variety of research studies, Nathan Epstein and Louis Vlok say:

We are thus left to conclude with the sad and paradoxical fact that for the diagnostic category in which most psychotherapy is applied—that of neurosis—the volume of satisfactory outcome research reported is among the lowest and the proven effectiveness of psychotherapy is minimal.³¹

The following statement from Rachman and Wilson, after extensive review of the research on the effects of psychotherapy is both revealing and shocking:

It has to be admitted that the scarcity of convincing findings remains a continuing embarrassment, and the profession can regard itself as fortunate that the more strident advocates of accountability have not yet scrutinized the evidence. If challenged by external critics, which pieces of evidence can we bring forward? . . . The few clear successes to which we can point, are out-numbered by the failures, and both are drowned by the unsatisfactory reports and studies from which no safe conclusions can be salvaged.³²

These authors conclude their book by saying:

. . . it is our view that modest evidence now supports the claim that psychotherapy is capable of producing some beneficial changes—but the negative results still outnumber the positive findings, and both of these are exceeded by reports that are beyond interpretation.³³

Can Psychological Counseling Be Harmful?

In addition to the concern about the effectiveness of psychological counseling, there is the concern about the harm rate. Michael Shepherd from the Institute of Psychiatry in London summarizes the outcome studies in psychotherapy:

A host of studies have now been conducted which, with all their imperfections, have made it clear that (1) any advantage accruing from psychotherapy is small at best; (2) the difference between the effects of different forms of therapy are negligible; and (3) psychotherapeutic intervention is capable of doing harm.³⁴

Collins claims, “There is evidence that the people who are harmed by therapy most often are the severely disturbed or those with counselors who themselves are maladjusted.”³⁵ It is also true that psychological therapy is the most helpful to those people who need it least.³⁶

People often hear and read about the possible help given by psychotherapy, but they rarely hear or read about its potential harm. Richard B. Stuart's book *Trick or Treatment, How and When Psychotherapy Fails* is filled with research that shows "how current psychotherapeutic practices often harm the patients they are supposed to help."³⁷ After surveying the "best minds in the field of psychotherapy," one group of researchers concludes:

It is clear that negative effects of psychotherapy are overwhelmingly regarded by experts in the field as a significant problem requiring the attention and concern of practitioners and researchers alike.³⁸

There is a growing concern among the researchers about potential negative effects in therapy. Many researchers are noting this danger zone in therapy. Bergin and Lambert say that "ample evidence exists that psychotherapy can and does cause harm to a portion of those it is intended to help."³⁹ Dr. Morris Parloff, chief of the Psychosocial Treatments Research Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health, declares:

In my view, it seems fair to conclude that although the empirical evidence is not firm, there is now a clinical consensus that psychotherapy, if improperly or inappropriately conducted, can produce psychotoxic effects. Most studies do not contemplate the possibility of negative effects.⁴⁰

Dr. Carol Tavris warns:

Psychotherapy can be helpful, especially if the therapist is warm and empathic, but sometimes it slows down a person's natural rate of improvement. In a small but significant number of cases, psychotherapy can be harmful and downright dangerous to a client. Most of the time it doesn't accomplish much of anything.⁴¹

The average harm rate is about ten percent.⁴² This calls for a *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) warning to prospective patients. Dr. Michael Scriven, when he was a member of the American Psychological Association Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility, questioned "the moral justification for dispensing psychotherapy, given the state of outcome studies which would lead the FDA to ban its sale if it were a drug."⁴³

Even after considering the most recent research on the subject, Scriven still refers to psychotherapy as a "weak possibility."⁴⁴ If psychotherapy can be harmful to one's mental health, some written warning (equivalent to the one on cigarette packages) ought to be given to potential buyers. When one considers the research which reveals detrimental effects of psychological counseling, one wonders if the overall potential for improvement is worth the risk.⁴⁵

Many therapists are reluctant to publicize and advertise anything but the positive results of psychological counseling. We agree with Dr. Dorothy Tennov, who says in her book *Psychotherapy: The Hazardous Cure*:

. . . if the purpose of the research is to prop up a profession sagging under the weight of its own ineffectiveness in a desperate last-ditch effort to find a rationale for its survival, we might prefer to put our research dollars elsewhere.⁴⁶

Bergin once accused two well-known writers in the field of being too concerned about harming the image of psychotherapy in the eyes of government, insurance companies, and consumers. He said:

The implication is that “harmful effects” will impinge upon our pocketbooks if we are not more careful about publishing evidence on therapy-induced deterioration.⁴⁷

We wonder to what extent money, academic rank, and vested interests in training programs influence the outlook and reaction of therapists to research detrimental to the psychological way.

Professionals vs. Nonprofessionals.

In discussing professional versus lay counseling, Collins says, “Professionals know the ease with which counselors—especially inexperienced and untrained counselors—can misinterpret symptoms, give insensitive guidance or advice, be manipulated by counselees, or fail to understand the complexities of abnormal behavior.” Though he admits that professionals can also make such errors, he says that “the trained counselor is more alert to spotting and avoiding such dangers.”⁴⁸ No research is provided for the foregoing statement and no footnote used to enable one to find the research upon which his statement is founded.

We mentioned earlier that the research has not confirmed the efficacy of psychotherapy, but has confirmed its ability to harm. In addition, research supports the results produced by amateurs over professionals! In comparing amateurs and professionals with respect to therapeutic effectiveness, Dr. Joseph Durlak found in 40 out of 42 studies that the results produced by the amateurs were equal to or better than by the professionals!⁴⁹ In a four-volume series called *The Regulation of Psychotherapists*, Dr. Daniel Hogan, a social psychologist at Harvard, analyzed the traits and qualities that characterize psychotherapists.⁵⁰ In half of the studies amateurs did better than professionals.⁵¹ Research psychiatrist Dr. Jerome Frank reveals the shocking fact that research has not proven that professionals produce better results than amateurs.⁵²

Eysenck declares:

It is unfortunate for the well-being of psychology as a science that . . . the great majority of psychologists, who after all are practicing clinicians, will pay no attention whatsoever to the negative outcome of all the studies carried on over the past thirty years but will continue to use methods which have by now not only failed to find evidence in support of their effectiveness, but for which there is now ample evidence that they are no better than placebo treatments.

He continues:

Do we really have the right to impose a lengthy training on medical doctors and psychologists in order to enable them to practice a skill which has no practical relevance to the curing of neurotic disorders? Do we have the right to charge patients fees, or get the State to pay us for a treatment which is no better than a placebo?⁵³

According to Dr. Donald Klein, New York State Psychiatric Institute, and Dr. Judith Rabkin of Columbia University, one must determine whether the helping factors are specific or general. They say that “specificity usually implies that the specific technique is necessary so that the particular outcome simply cannot be accomplished without it.”⁵⁴ They say:

A core, covert issue in the specificity debate is the uncomfortable realization that if all psychotherapies work about the same then all of our elaborate psychogenic etiological hypotheses are called into question.⁵⁵

And, if all hypotheses are called into question, then there is no reason why the body of Christ cannot minister to one another as effectively as those who are trained in psychological theories and techniques.

Dr. Joseph Wortis, State University of New York, plainly declares, “The proposition of whether psychotherapy can be beneficial can be reduced to its simplest terms of whether talk is very helpful.” He goes on to say, “And that doesn’t need to be researched. It is self evident that talk can be helpful.”⁵⁶ What a simple yet profound statement! Why can’t ordinary Christians share their faith with one another through love and truth rather than looking for professional psychological help?

Researcher Dr. James Pennebaker, an associate professor at Southern Methodist University, indicated a relationship between confiding in others and health. He demonstrated that lack of confiding is related to health problems. One could conclude from his research that, to paraphrase an old adage, the conversation of confession is good for the soul—and apparently for the body too.⁵⁷

The research comparing the results produced by amateurs versus professionals seriously challenges the fees charged by the professionals. After examining the specificity issue, Dr. Robert Spitzer, Columbia University and New York State Psychiatric Institute, gives a hypothetical example by supposing that a “mental health aide” can perform an equally effective service for \$6 per hour rather than \$30 or \$50 or \$120 normally paid to a psychological therapist. He concludes by challenging his colleagues on how they would feel about a mental health aide providing the service for \$6 per hour rather than the higher paid psychotherapist.⁵⁸

In discussing lay counselors and professionals, Collins says, “Well-trained nonmedical counselors who understand psychopathology are aware of physical issues and more inclined to encourage counselees to get competent medical examinations and treatment.”⁵⁹ Collins provides no research for his statement. However, it does raise a question about diagnosis of mental-emotional-behavioral problems.

Our book *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way* includes research that shows that psychological diagnosis is a disaster. Not only do professionals make massive errors, but nonprofessionals are as good or better at diagnosis than professionals.⁶⁰ Psychiatrist Dr. Hugh Drummond admits, “Volumes of research have been done to demonstrate the absolute unreliability of psychiatric diagnosis.”⁶¹ Additional studies have shown that the

psychological system cannot be relied upon to distinguish the sane from the insane in either civil or criminal matters.⁶²

Dr. George Albee tells how therapists from different countries will disagree when presented with the same individuals. He discusses the usual psychiatric disagreements on the mental fitness of identical defendants in court cases. The psychiatrists for the defense predictably have different opinions from those for the prosecution. Furthermore, people who are considered affluent are generally given more favorable diagnoses than those who are poor. Albee says, "Appendicitis, a brain tumor and chicken pox are the same everywhere, regardless of culture or class; mental conditions, it seems, are not."⁶³

Collins says, "It has often been suggested that there would be no need for professional counselors if church members were consistently bearing one another's burdens. In theory this is true."⁶⁴ He goes on to say that in practice "many churches are not caring or therapeutic."⁶⁵ After speaking at various churches and to numerous pastors, it seems to us that the reason the church is not a caring community is mainly because of what we refer to elsewhere as "the psychologizing of Christianity."⁶⁶ The myth that psychology has something to offer Christians with problems of living better than what the church has always had has disabled and disarmed first the clergy and then the congregation. Christians have been convinced that the best thing they can do for a suffering friend is to encourage him to get counseling, and by that they mean professional psychological counseling.

The faith in professional counselors over lay counselors is uncorroborated in reality and unsubstantiated in research. The church needs to return to caring for human problems as it did from its inception. God's Word declares:

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. (2 Peter 1:3, 4.)

Rather than looking to psychologically trained "experts," we need to grow in our knowledge of the Lord, learn to walk in His love and His Word, and bear one another's burdens.

The question for the Christian to ask is not simply, "Does it work?" The question for the Christian is: which way honors and glorifies the Lord? Which way will cause us to draw closer to Him and learn to walk after the Spirit rather than according to the flesh?

Notes Chapter 5: Effectiveness.

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Chapter Six

THE SELF-CENTERED GOSPEL

Jesus' challenge to His disciples to be in the world but not of the world is only faintly heard today. The continual temptation for merging the visible church with the culture has reached astronomical proportions, so much so that the church has been nearly swallowed up by popularized versions of existentialism, humanism, and various psychologisms. Rather than Christ being the center of communion, self and self's so-called **needs** have become the focus.

That we have reached this peak of self-centeredness is not surprising when we look back at the influences of the nineteenth century. Under the influence of the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, man's personal experience and perception became the source of theology rather than the Word of God.

Faith in Scripture as an authoritative revelation of God was discredited, and human insight based on man's own emotional or rational apprehension became the standard of religious thought.¹

Thus man's mind became the ultimate evaluator of all truth. His choice of personal experience over written revelation became the foundation for today's liberal theology. Moreover, this emphasis on man more than on God Himself influenced the shift from God-centered theology to man-centered theology, which has infiltrated even the most evangelical, fundamental elements of the twentieth-century church.

The shift was subtle and gradual. Just as the starting point for Schleiermacher's theology was anthropological rather than theological, the doctrines of man began to precede the doctrines of God in theology texts. The philosophy of existentialism developed by Soren Kierkegaard further influenced theological thought. Dr. Paul Brownback, author of *The Danger of Self-Love*, says,

. . . the bottom line of existentialism is philosophical selfishness. People have always been selfish, but existentialism provided a philosophical justification for it.²

At the same time, psychology was emerging from philosophy as a separate discipline. Its association with medicine in the treatment of insanity and so-called neuroses soon gave it a prestigious "scientific" status. While conservative elements of the church recognized its anti-biblical philosophical roots, the liberal church embraced much of the new psychological "discoveries." After all, the liberal church was already moving in the direction of existentialism and humanism over divine revelation.

More and more Christians, in their faith in psychology as science, incorporated teachings of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and others. The shift from God to self ran parallel to psychology in its emphasis on man's needs above its

emphasis on God's will. The change in emphasis from knowing and obeying God to understanding and meeting the needs of self has captured the pulpits, the altars, and the hearts of men. Rather than man being created for God, God is reduced to being a need supplier. Rather than being accountable to God as the Sovereign creator and ruler of the universe, modern Christians look to God as a big psychiatrist who will see to it that all of their so-called needs to feel good about themselves are met. Indeed, He is the source of all physical necessities as well as of love, joy, peace, faith, hope, and life itself. However, Jesus clarified the direction of intent when he said: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33.)

In every instance of the shift from a Christ-centered Gospel to a man-centered gospel there is a change in priorities. There is also a shift in the order of things. God must be preeminent in all things. He is both the beginning and the end. His Word must take precedence over human experience. This does not mean that there are not any needs to be met or that Christianity is not personal. But the switch in emphasis from God to self, from God's purposes to self's needs, from our serving Him to Him serving us permeates every fiber of church life.

These distinctions may seem small, but it is a matter of direction. Two sets of train tracks that run parallel to each other in a train station may appear alike. However they may go in opposite directions. And that is exactly what happens when the emphasis moves from Christ to self in preaching, teaching, counseling, thinking, and acting. Historically, evangelical thinking has been God-centered, while humanistic psychology has been centered on self. However, as the church has embraced theological, philosophical, and psychological thought which does not put God at the center, it has had the audacity to put God at man's right hand.

Psychological Understanding of Scripture.

Because of the great emphasis on understanding man and meeting his needs, Christians are becoming more psychological in their thinking than biblical. Unfortunately, psychology has become the twentieth-century tool for understanding the Word of God. This makes logical sense, because if man's mind is the evaluator of experience above the Word of God, then man's mind becomes the evaluator of the Bible. Therefore, if the mind of man is the ultimate authority in the understanding of Scripture, then those psychological "experts" of understanding people become the new authorities in biblical exegesis.

Rather than understanding the people of the Bible through the context of Scripture, psychologists see them through the lenses of their own favorite psychological theories. For instance, in his book *The Magnificent Mind*, Collins gives new psychological "insight" into the suffering of Job. In his discussion of Andrew Weil's theory that "all illness is psychosomatic" and that "causes always lie within the realm of the mind," he proposes that perhaps Job's boils were from great duress and that they went away "only when his mind was pointed heavenward and he was able to 'see' God with his eyes."³ He uses this in support of the use of mental imagery, which is both a psychological and occultic technique. By explaining Scripture with psychology, he gives greater credence to psychology than to the Bible.

Examples abound. A well-known Southern California Christian college president used Carl Jung's analysis of the Apostle Paul's zeal as a major point in his sermon. Peter, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joseph, and the rest have been psychologically analyzed as well. Not only are

Bible saints analyzed; biblical doctrines are trivialized and verses are yanked out of context to support whatever theory or technique is to be justified.

There is also a great confusion of terms. The word used by a psychological theorist may have an entirely different meaning from its ordinary usage. The word may carry an entire theoretical framework. For instance, when Gordon Allport uses the term *becoming*, he has an entire theory of selfhood invested in the word. His theory of becoming is from the secular humanistic perspective. The becoming self is moving in directions similar to what Maslow termed “self-actualization.” There is absolutely no way that Gordon Allport would use that word in reference to becoming like Jesus. Nevertheless, in his attempt to integrate psychology and the Bible, Collins says:

In spiritual growth and psychological maturity each believer should be in the process of what psychologist Gordon Allport has called “becoming.”⁴

With the confusion of terms and meanings, psychological and spiritual maturity suddenly become equivalent. This is the concern of Don Matzat, who says of Collins’ arguments in *Can You Trust Psychology*:

Collins falls into the same trap that ensnares many who look to psychology as a means for changing lives and developing character. Accepting the form of Scripture as being the correct description of the quality of the Christian life, they ignore the substance or supernatural material of Christianity which is the life of Christ himself. Viewing Christian growth as being the positive development of the human personality into “Christlikeness,” they feel justified to borrow from the techniques of psychology to accomplish that end. So they boast, “we can help produce Christlike people!!” While they acknowledge the “what” of Christian living, they ignore the “how.” They therefore end up with what St. Paul calls “the form of godliness,” and for all practical purpose, deny the power that produces it.⁵

Through the influence of psychology, the Christian walk is reduced to a form of human accomplishment rather than divine enablement. The source for growth and change becomes understanding the self rather than knowing God.

Because of the influence of psychology, self-esteem is a primary concern throughout the church world. Not only is it touted as the answer to the ills of mankind; it is justified through interpreting the Bible with psychological theories. The roots of self-esteem are not found in the Bible, but rather in psychology. The great emphasis on self-esteem was mainly introduced into the twentieth century through psychologist William James. His study of the self centered on self-feelings, self-love, and self-estimation. He used the word *self-esteem* to indicate positive self-feelings as contrasted with negative self-feelings. Self-esteem and self-love theories were further developed by humanistic psychologists, such as Erich Fromm, Alfred Adler, and Abraham Maslow.

Self-Esteem.

Self-esteem theories are based on faith in the autonomous human being. According to the humanistic scheme, everyone is born perfect and the final authority and measure of all

things is the self. Self is therefore the god of humanistic psychology. And as self relates with itself, the therapists are the priests. The shift in emphasis from God to self has come into the church through the incorporation of such humanistic ideas as self-esteem, especially by those who embrace the teachings of humanistic psychologists.

Society's move from self-denial to self-fulfillment revealed a new inner attitude and a different view of life. Self-actualization is its major focus and self-fulfillment its clarion call. And, self-fulfillment, with all its accompanying self-hyphenated and self-fixated variations such as self-love, self-acceptance, self-esteem, and self-worth, has become the new promised land. Then as the church became psychologized, the emphasis shifted from God to self.

In his chapter, "Is an Emphasis on the Self Really Harmful?" Collins supports his position on self-esteem by quoting the secular humanist Nathaniel Branden:

Currently being attacked as "a religion of self-worship," the movement's exponents are charged with being self-centered, self-indulgent, infantile. And . . . critics imply that a concern with self-realization entails indifference to human relationships and the problems of the world

Admittedly, there is a lot about the movement that is foolish, irresponsible, even obnoxious—some people's notion of self-assertiveness, for instance. . . . But individualism, self-esteem, autonomy and interest in personal growth are not narcissism—the latter being a condition of unhealthy and excessive self-absorption arising from a deep-rooted sense of inner deficiency and deprivation. . . .

I do not know of a single reputable leader in the human potential movement who teaches that self-actualization is to be pursued without involvement in and commitment to personal relationships. There is overwhelming evidence, including scientific research findings, that the higher the level of an individual's self-esteem, the more likely that he or she will treat others with respect, kindness and generosity.⁶

Collins says, "This is a perspective that critics of selfism rarely report." The reason why we, the critics of selfism, do not report this statement is because it is not true. For example, Branden says, "I do not know of a single reputable leader in the human potential movement who teaches that self-actualization is to be pursued without involvement in and commitment to personal relationships." Who is Branden speaking of? Himself? He was involved in an adulterous relationship with Ayn Rand. Is he referring to Carl Rogers? Or Abraham Maslow?

Carl Rogers has said:

The man of the future . . . will be living his transient life mostly in temporary relationships . . . he must be able to establish closeness quickly. He must be able to leave these close relationships behind without excessive conflict or mourning.⁷

Dr. William Kirk Kilpatrick says of Rogers' statement, "A statement like this raises the question of how close a relationship can be that is gotten in and out of with so little cost."⁸

Adrienne Aron critiques Abraham Maslow's theory of self-actualization as it was lived in the hippie movement. She says:

In the hippie pattern Maslow's dream of a compassionate, reciprocal, empathic, high-synergy scheme of interpersonal relations gets lost behind a reality of human exploitation. Where the theorist prescribed self-actualization the hippies produced mainly self-indulgence. Yet, I shall argue, the hippie result is not alien to the Maslovian theory.⁹

It really is dangerous to give recognition and status to these psychologists because it leads many Christians into false teachings and false theologies.

Daniel Yankelovich, a pollster and analyst of social trends, wrote a book entitled *New Rules: Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down*. In it he documents changes that have occurred in our society. He describes "the struggle for self-fulfillment" as "the leading edge of a genuine cultural revolution." He claims, "It is moving our industrial civilization toward a new phase of human experience."¹⁰ In describing the new rules, Yankelovich says:

In their extreme form, the new rules simply turn the old ones on their head, and in place of the old self-denial ethic we find people who refuse to deny anything to themselves.¹¹ (Emphasis his.)

The cover of the book states:

New Rules is about that 80 percent of Americans now committed to one degree or another to the search for self-fulfillment, at the expense of the older, self-denying ethic of earlier years.¹²

The new formula for society has become faith in a cause and effect relationship between a high amount of self-love, self-esteem, etc., leading to health, wealth, and happiness and a low amount to just the opposite. One can see in *New Rules* that humanistic psychology is the narcissism of our culture. Even well-known humanistic psychologist Rollo May says of Yankelovich's conclusions, "I can see he is right."¹³

A research study supported by the National Institute of Mental Health attempted to find a relationship between self-esteem and delinquent children. The researchers found that "the effect of self-esteem on delinquent behavior is negligible."¹⁴ The researchers confess, "Given the extensive speculation and debate about self-esteem and delinquency, we find these results something of an embarrassment."¹⁵

In his book *The Inflated Self*, Dr. David Myers points out how research has revealed people's self-serving bias. While church leaders now claim that people need ego boosting and self-esteem raising, Myers' research led him to conclude:

Preachers who deliver ego-boosting pep talks to audiences who are supposedly plagued with miserable self images are preaching to a problem that seldom exists.¹⁶

A research project at Purdue University compared two groups of individuals, one with low self-esteem and the other with high self-esteem, in regard to problem solving. The results of the study once more explode the myth that high self-esteem is a must for mankind. One of

the researchers says, “Self-esteem is generally considered an across-the-board important attitude, but this study showed self-esteem to correlate negatively with performance.” He concludes by stating that in that particular study, “The higher the self-esteem, the poorer the performance.”¹⁷

A study designed to determine underlying causes for coronary heart disease showed that frequent self-references on the part of the subjects were implicated in coronary heart disease. Self-references were measured by the use of “I,” “me,” “my,” and “mine.” In contrast, the researchers mention that “it is interesting to note that the Japanese, with the lowest rate of coronary heart disease of any industrial nation, do not have prominent self-references in their language.”¹⁸ The researchers conclude:

Our central thesis, stated in a sentence, is that self-involvement, which arises from one’s self-identity and one’s attachment to that identity and its extensions, forms the substrate for all the recognized psychosocial risk factors of coronary heart disease.¹⁹

Collins readily uses the vocabulary of humanistic psychology. He both adopts it and adapts it with biblical explanations. He attempts to explain how the “Bible does not condemn **human potential**,” how God “molds us into new creatures with reason for **positive self-esteem**,” and how “the Supreme God of the universe enables us, through Christ, to find **real self-fulfillment**.”²⁰ (Emphasis added.) Self-fulfillment is not the same as fulfillment through serving God. The first is the autonomous self and self-will being fulfilled. The second is a person fulfilling God’s will and purpose through dying to self and living unto God. Temporary pleasure may come from fulfilling the self, but true joy comes from fulfilling His call on our lives by His grace.

Why would anyone want to borrow vocabulary from humanistic psychology, which is based upon a secular humanistic view of humanity and which does not even recognize the Supreme God of the universe? Many psychologists would say it’s because these terms can be explained biblically. However, human potential, positive self-esteem and self-fulfillment all evaporate when one reads the following verses:

And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. (Luke 9:23.)

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. (2 Timothy 3:1-4.)

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10.)

Do these sound like human potential, positive self-esteem and self-fulfillment? Collins says, “We have dignity, value and purpose.”²¹ However, the Bible says:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
(Jeremiah 17:9)

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6.)

Collins says, “We have dignity, value and purpose . . . because the God of the universe created us and declared that his creation was good.”²² Dignity has more to do with how one behaves than intrinsic worth. However, because Jesus said that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, we are to treat one another with dignity. Although the image of God has dignity, value and worth, humanity has frightfully tarnished that image. For us to attempt to bolster ourselves up with self-worth and intrinsic self-value is pointless when our old self is counted crucified, dead, and buried (Romans 6) and our new self is “not I, but Christ.” (Galatians 2:20.) Dignity, value, and purpose for the Christian are **in Christ**, rather than in self. In other words, He is our dignity, value, and purpose, just as He is our righteousness.

Humanistic psychology clouds the issues so drastically that the new life in Christ becomes blurred with self-enhancing terms, when it is to be no longer I, but Christ. Rather than majoring in humanistic psychology and selfism, Christian counselors must major in walking in the Spirit in an eternal love relationship with Christ (Romans 8). When Christian psychologists define psychological vocabulary in biblical terms it is confusing at least and heretical at worst.

Notes Chapter 6: The Self-Centered Gospel.

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Chapter Seven

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Where do we go from here? The church has lost its moorings in the Gospel of Christ, the Word of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Unless Christians sink their anchor into the Solid Rock they will continue to drift into the sea of psychological theories and slip right into New Age mythologies. The bigger and better always seem to be on the horizon and the very thought of going back to the basics seems narrow minded and shortsighted.

General revelation (what can be discovered in nature through scientific endeavor) has risen to the same level as the special revelation of the Word of God. General revelation is God's grace to let us learn about our physical world through scientific endeavor. It is also strong enough to let us know that God exists (Romans 1:20). However, general revelation has become the primary excuse for the proliferation of unscientific opinions masquerading as science. Thus, the cry of "All truth is God's truth" is used to bring opinions, distortions, and deceptions into the church of God. Indeed, all truth does come from God. Furthermore, truth is more than simply a selection of individual facts or truths. It is a whole entity with no contradiction or error. God's truth as revealed in Scripture is based upon His own character and personhood. Who He is is fundamental in the entire truth of His Word. As well as being true in every aspect, His Word is true in its unified whole. Psychology can never reach that point of truth. It is filled with distortions of whatever truth might be perceived, and when it is all put together it is merely an elaborate fabrication of men's minds.

On the one hand, Collins recognizes the superior position of the Word of God when he says, "The Bible is the inspired, valid, true Word of God," and when he declares, "All truths discovered by human beings must be tested against and proved consistent with the revealed Word of God."¹ However, what he has adopted and adapted from psychology has not been consistent with his intention to remain faithful to the Word of God. Collins is not alone in this regard. Christians who practice psychology do not intend to distort or diminish Scripture. They have found what they believe to be true and helpful in psychology and adopt and adapt Scripture. In the process the Bible, in both specific verses and as a whole, becomes adapted to the psychological perspective. What generally happens is that the psychologies influence the interpretation so that they **seem** to pass the test of Scripture.

The specific revelation of Scripture has to do with what God desires mankind to know about Himself, about humanity, and about relationship. Those who rely on the Word of God as being the only sure guide for walking in faith are often accused of putting the Word of God in a higher position than God Himself. However, those who love the Word do so because they love the Lord whose Word it is. Those who follow the Word do so because of the life of Christ within them. The Word of God is the external revelation for knowing God in the intimacy of relationship. It is the only external, sure guide and measure of godly living. The Word of God works in harmony with the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of truth" and the Word of God is the Word of truth.

In his concern over psychology, Don Matzat says, “What is being potentially undermined via the integration of psychology and theology is not the sufficiency of Scripture, but the sufficiency of Christ!!”² (Emphasis his.) We would say that both are being undermined. The Lord Jesus Christ cannot be separated from His Word. In fact, the identification of Christ with the Word comes across very clearly in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, where Jesus Himself is called the Logos. However, Matzat is making a strong point. Psychology greatly undermines the very nature of Christianity, which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Christianity depends on Jesus’ life within the believer; it is not fleshly conformation to the written Word of God. Faith functions through a life, but if a person is looking to the ways of men to conform to certain principles of the Bible, that will only be a counterfeit. The fruit of the Spirit cannot come through psychological inquiry or understanding. It is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit living in the believer.

Although many Christians who practice psychology believe that there is more depth of understanding in psychology, the exact opposite is true. Psychology can only touch the flesh or what is left of that which must be crucified. Psychological theories and therapies will not be able to perform the work of the Spirit in a person’s life. Therefore, if believers are to walk even as Jesus walked, they must return to His ways, which are engraved upon the hearts of believers and expressed in His written Word. Rather than majoring in the psychological opinions of men, Christians need to major in Christ and His Word.

Nevertheless, Collins encourages students to pursue psychological studies if they want to counsel. His rhetorical question boldly asks, “Who is better equipped than a Christian psychologist to teach students how to keep the faith in the midst of psychological challenges?”³ Just the opposite occurs. They are taught how to juggle the two and how to try to fit them together either by changing the theory to make it biblical (which is less often the case and which would annul the need for psychotherapy in the first place) or by interpreting the Bible through psychological theories.

Furthermore, Collins gives scant warning about what happens to professional therapists as a result of their counseling. Those who focus on the self through psychological theories rather than on God through His Word and Jesus Christ dwelling within them are bound to suffer. There are negative consequences to practicing psychotherapy. One survey of psychiatrists indicated:

73% reported experiencing significant problems with anxiety, and 58% reported problems with moderate to severe depression. These emotional difficulties were partially attributed to their work as psychotherapists.⁴

Another study revealed:

. . . more than 90% of the psychiatrists surveyed felt they were experiencing a wide variety of special emotional problems as a result of conducting psychotherapy.⁵

This matches with other research that has reported alarming rates of suicide, alcohol abuse, sexual dysfunctions, poor personal relationships, marital problems, divorce, family problems, and so on.⁶ Although the research indicates that interpersonal skills are of utmost

importance in counseling, researchers found that therapists' own personal relationships suffered. They proposed:

A lack of genuine relatedness, resulting from prolonged participation in "as if" relationships, may very well carry over into the therapist's relationships outside of therapy. The patient's idealization of the psychotherapist may cause the therapist to feel superior and consider himself or herself an "expert." These feelings of superiority may create a sense of distance from others.⁷

Another survey indicated that "50 percent of clinical psychologists no longer believed in what they were doing and wished they had chosen another profession."⁸ Indeed young Christians who enter the field of psychotherapy and psychological counseling will be learning the ways of the world rather than the way of the Lord.

In his criticisms of those who are untrained in psychology and yet would dare minister to people with problems, Collins has failed to footnote statements that would seem to require it. For example, he says, "Satan is blamed for everything that goes wrong, including most illnesses. New, threatening or unfamiliar ideas (including psychological ideas) are labeled 'demonic' and quickly rejected."⁹

In spite of the fact that Collins encourages training in psychological principles and even provides that training through his own teaching and writing, he does admit: "Professional mental health education, training, and experience do not appear to be necessary prerequisites for an effective helping person."¹⁰ While he confesses that "there is no solid evidence to guarantee that this training will make [a person who wants to counsel others] a better counselor," he nonetheless recommends that people become psychologically trained.¹¹

Misuse or Abuse?

Collins says, "We do not throw out all psychology simply because some misuse it, any more than we would discard all science or education because some abuse these fields or see them as the only hope for mankind."¹² First, there is an attempt by no one we know to throw out "all psychology." Collins constantly stretches objections critics have to a part of psychology to include all of psychology. By paralleling "all psychology" and "all science" in the same sentence he leaves the impression that this type of psychology is science when in fact it is not.

Collins gives the impression that the objections to psychology are based solely upon "misuse" or "abuse." However, the objections to psychology are directed at the use of it as well as the misuse and abuse. If there were no misuse or abuse, it would not change the critics' basic position at all. It is clear in our writing that we are not objecting solely to the misuse or abuse of psychotherapy, but to its use altogether. In addition, one Christian's use of psychotherapy is another Christian's misuse or abuse. For example, Dr. Joseph Palotta is a Christian psychiatrist and hypnotherapist. He combines hypnosis and the Freudian psychosexual stages of development into a system he calls "hypnoanalysis." He says, "The universal conclusion that little boys and little girls make is that somehow the little girls have lost their penises and have nothing." He goes on to describe how "little girls feel that they have been castrated, that their penises have somehow been cut off" and that little boys "fear

that they will lose their penises.” He says, “The little girls develop what is termed penis envy.”¹³ Is that use, misuse, or abuse? Obviously it depends on whom you ask.

Collins warns that one must “study psychology with a constant awareness that the *science* of human behavior could be both **powerfully effective** and **subtly dangerous**.”¹⁴ (Emphasis ours.) Part of what he says is not true of psychotherapy, psychological counseling, or the psychologies which attempt to explain why people are the way they are and how they change. These are **not** science and **not** powerfully effective. However, Collins is absolutely right when he says that they are “subtly **dangerous**.” Indeed, they are dangerous, not only to a person’s mental health, but to his spiritual life as well.

The Psychological Way or the Spiritual Way?

Collins correctly quotes us as saying, “For almost two-thousand years the church did without the pseudoscience of psychotherapy and still was able to minister successfully to those burdened by the problems of living.” In the next paragraph he correctly quotes us as saying, “We are not opposed to, nor are we criticizing, the entire field of psychology.” He then erroneously includes us with a group of authors by stating, “These authors instead are distressed with those parts of psychology that propose to help people using ideologies that appear to contradict Scripture.”¹⁵ This statement contrasts with what Collins says earlier in the book about our position. He says earlier that our “book argues that psychotherapy—the psychological way—is an ineffective, false, antibiblical, destructive, deceptive, pseudoscientific new religion filled with ‘unproven ideas and abstract solutions.’”¹⁶ This earlier statement on the part of Collins contradicts his conclusion about where we stand and requires some explanation on his part.

When we wrote our first book, *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*, we were warned that we would be regarded as reactionaries and that the current demand was for books that amalgamized psychology and Christianity. Therefore, our book would not be in great demand. That warning was true.

When we completed our fourth book, *PsychoHeresy*, we were told by publishers to whom we submitted the manuscript that the names would have to be removed because of the popularity of the authors mentioned. We found out later that the more popular one becomes in the Christian world, the more protection one receives from Christian publishers. After all, if a publisher publishes a book that criticizes a famous (which always means bestselling) author, that author may not want to publish with that publisher in the future. As one of our friends wryly put it, “It’s easier to criticize the apostle Paul than to criticize one of these bestselling psychological authors.”

Psychiatrist Thomas Szasz has said of the psychotherapies that “all such interventions and proposals should . . . be regarded as evil until they are proven otherwise.”¹⁷ Szasz said when he endorsed our book *The Psychological Way/the Spiritual Way*, “Although I do not share the Bobgans’ particular religious views, I do share their conviction that the human relations we now call ‘psychotherapy,’ are, in fact, matters of religion—and that we mislabel them as ‘therapeutic’ at great risk to our spiritual well-being.”¹⁸ Szasz, though not a Christian, recommends that mental health care be taken away from the professionals, such as the psychiatrists and psychologists, and given back to the church.

Psychologist Bernie Zilbergeld, in his book *The Shrinking of America*, discusses much of the research related to the practice of psychotherapy.¹⁹ He has said:

If I personally had a relationship problem and I couldn't work it out with my partner, I wouldn't go and see a shrink. I would look around me for the kind of relationship I admire. I wouldn't care if he was a carpenter or a teacher or a journalist . . . or a shrink. That's who I would go to. I want somebody who's showing by [his] life that [he] can do it.²⁰

Psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey recommends spiritual counseling. He says, "For people with problems of living who share the Bobgans' spiritual world view, their approach would be the most effective."²¹

When Jesus was entering Jerusalem on a colt, people cried out saying, "Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." (Luke 19:38.) And some of the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Master, rebuke thy disciples." (Luke 19:39.) Jesus said to them, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:40.) When non-Christians and atheists have joined the Christian critics of psychology, it does raise many questions.

Two researchers, Orlinsky and Howard, who support the use of psychotherapy and yet realize the problems associated with that decision liken themselves to the optimistic little boy who was found happily digging his way into a pile of horse manure. When asked why he was so gleefully doing the task, he replied that with all that horse manure "there must be a pony in there somewhere."²² We disagree. What you see is what you get.

Psychology is a leaven that has come to full loaf in the church, so much so that Dr. J. Vernon McGee said,

If the present trend continues, Bible teaching will be totally eliminated from Christian radio stations as well as from TV and the pulpit. This is not a wild statement made in an emotional moment of concern. Bible teaching is being moved to the back burner of broadcasting, while so-called Christian psychology is put up front as Bible solutions to life's problems.

He also refers to "so-called Christian psychology" in magazines and books and says, "So-called Christian psychology is secular psychology clothed in pious platitudes and religious rhetoric."²³ Elsewhere he says, "I see that this matter of psychologizing Christianity will absolutely destroy Bible teaching and Bible churches."²⁴

We agree with Collins' statement at the end of his book. He says, "How we handle psychology and how we relate it to the Christian faith are issues" of great importance.²⁵ Joshua said:

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15.)

Christians need to decide whether they will serve the false gods of psychology or the true and living God of the Bible.

Notes Chapter 7: Where Do We Go from Here?

1. Gary R. Collins. *Can You Trust Psychology?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988, pp. 94-95.
2. Don Matzat, "The Great Psychology Debate." *The Christian News*, June 20, 1988, p. 6.
3. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
4. Looney et al, cited in James D. Guy and Gary P. Liaboe, "The Impact of Conducting Psychotherapy on Psychotherapists' Interpersonal Functioning." *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1986, p. 111.
5. Guy and Liaboe, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112, and Bernie Zilbergeld. *The Shrinking of America: Myths of Psychological Change*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, p. 164.
7. Guy and Liaboe, *op. cit.* p. 112.
8. Ruth G. Matarazzo, "Research on the Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapeutic Skills." *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change: An Empirical Analysis*. Allen E. Bergin and Sol Garfield, eds. New York: Wiley, 1971, p. 910.
9. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
13. Joseph Palotta. *The Robot Psychiatrist*. Metairie: Revelation House Publishers, Inc., 1981, p. 400.
14. Collins, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
17. Thomas Szasz. *The Myth of Psychotherapy*. Garden City: Anchor/Doubleday, 1978, p. xxii.
18. Martin and Deidre Bobgan. *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1979, back cover.
19. Bernie Zilbergeld. *The Shrinking of America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983.
20. Bernie Zilbergeld quoted by Don Stanley, "OK, So Maybe You Don't Need to See a Therapist." *Sacramento Bee*, 24 May 1983, p. B-4.
21. Bobgan, *op. cit.*, back cover,
22. D. E. Orlinsky and K. E. Howard, "The Relation of Process to Outcome in Psychotherapy" in *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior change*, 2nd Ed. Sol Garfield and Allen E. Bergin, eds. New York: Wiley & Sons, 1978, p. 288.
23. J. Vernon McGee, "Psycho-Religion-----The New Pied Piper," *Thru the Bible Radio Newsletter*, November 1986.
24. J. Vernon McGee letter on file, 18 September 1986.
25. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 165.