

PROPHETS OF PSYCHOHERESY I

by Martin and Deidre Bobgan

Comments Regarding Part Three for the Web

The book *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I* has been out-of-print for some time now. However, there have been numerous requests for this book, which included a critical analysis of the work of Dr. Paul Meier and Dr. Frank Minirth in Part Three. Because their work continues to be promoted, used, and trusted, we decided to post Part Three of *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I* on our web site as a service to Christians concerned about the integration of psychology and Christianity and to those caught in its deception.

Here we include a condensed version of the original introduction to the entire book, introductory comments by Dr. Hilton P. Terrell, a brief introduction to Part Three titled “Fellowship with Freud,” and chapters 16 through 21 of *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I*. (Part Two of *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I*, which critiques the writings of Larry Crabb, has been expanded and updated in the book titled *Larry Crabb’s Gospel*. See Books.)

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Prophets of PsychoHeresy (Introduction)

by Martin and Deidre Bobgan

Throughout the original *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I* book we attempted to reveal the source of the wisdom behind the psychologies that are being made palatable and promising to Christians. We did this to encourage believers who truly love God to turn away from the wisdom of men and once again rely solely on the Lord and His Word in matters of life and conduct. For some readers, this section of the book, which critiques the writing and speaking of Paul Meier and Frank Minirth, will be a confirmation of their suspicions. For others it will be an encouragement to be steadfast in the faith. For still

others it will be a difficult challenge. And yet others, we fear, will simply take a stronger stand for integration and all it implies.

The title *Prophets of PsychoHeresy* may require some explanation. We use the word *prophet* according to the dictionary definition which says, "A spokesman for some cause, group, movement, etc." These men are spokesmen for the use of the types of psychology that underlie what is known as psychotherapy or psychological counseling. 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.

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 books *PsychoHeresy* and *The End of "Christian Psychology."* 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 demonstrate 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.

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 ours 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 other 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. 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.

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 (1 Cor. 1:18-21). Just as it may appear to be foolish to rely solely on the cross, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit in matters of life and conduct today, it certainly appeared foolish then.

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. However, 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.

If indeed Jesus “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30), 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 in accordance with the written Word of God.

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 (1 Cor. 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. 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 had 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. 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. 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.

Next - Part Three Comments

PART THREE COMMENTS

by Hilton P. Terrell, M.D.

The fondness of Christians for the prolific spawn of popular psychotherapies should be a cause for embarrassment and admonition from Church leaders. Instead, Christian psychiatrists and psychologists who rework alien dogmas into facsimiles of biblical truth are immunized against needed criticism. The vaccine is composed of their undeniable personal zeal for Christ, a generous use of Bible passages (albeit of dubious relevance to their desired points) and the Church's ignorance of the true nature of psychotherapy. A Trojan horse full of dangerous psychofantasies has been professionally prepared for us by Christian psychiatrists and psychologists. The hollow idol has been dragged into the Church by non-professionals, whose eagerness to have the world's psychological teachings accounts for their acceptance more than does the professional's handiwork.

In our early post-Christian culture Christians are increasingly required to stand apart. It is uncomfortable. We want someone to lower our profile by "Christianizing" competing secular doctrines the way Darwinism was managed. We tell ourselves that Christians should use the best knowledge available in Christ's service. Apologists for the syncretism of biblical truth and psychological "truth" often say, "All truth is God's truth." The issue is precisely there. In *Happiness Is a Choice*, Drs. Minirth and Meier presuppose that their discipline offers some truth regarding the hidden, non-material aspect of human nature and that their psychotherapy offers a legitimate means of fleshing out biblical truth for application. It is not so. Whereas observational sciences can build upon biblical presuppositions to our aid, observation offers no brief on issues of the inner man. Only the trappings, the lingo, the aura of science attend psychoanalytic practices. Frequent references to "health" or biochemistry do not verify medical pronouncements on matters of the spirit. At base, such therapies stand upon dogma, not scientific observations, and the dogma is the odious one of Freud and his followers who were some of the century's most anti-Christ teachers.,

No amount of well-intentioned refinement of deadly doctrines will make them clean for use by Christians. Though gems are occasionally found in coal mines, Christians who go fossicking for gems of God's truth in psychoanalytic coal mines will usually emerge empty-handed and filthy. Professional and non-professional Christians of discernment should avoid the dangerous system completely.

PART THREE: FELLOWSHIP WITH FREUD

by Martin and Deidre Bobgan

Psychiatrists Dr. Paul Meier and Dr. Frank Minirth are well-known for their best-selling books, nation-wide radio and television programs, and clinic, which is one of the largest private psychiatric clinics in America. In addition, they have taught for years at Dallas Theological Seminary. They are certainly among the ranks of the most popular psychologizers of Christianity in the contemporary church.

In this critique we examine Meier and Minirth's writing and speaking. Although some of what they have written has been coauthored with others, we do not refer to them, since

we are only critiquing Meier and Minirth in this section. We assume that (even if one of the other authors had written what we quote) it represents Meier and Minirth's view or they would have rejected it. Also, we assume that since the radio program features both Meier and Minirth, if one speaks on a subject the other is in agreement unless a contrary opinion is given. Thus, in this critique, when we quote Meier from a radio broadcast, we assume that Minirth is in agreement.

We quote from their earlier books as well as their most recent ones, since we do not see a significant change in their teaching. In fact, they have repeated much of the content of their earlier books in later books, tapes, and recent broadcasts. For example, their very popular book *Happiness is a Choice* was copyrighted in 1978. However, the tape series with the same title, which is based on that book and which contains much of the same teachings, was copyrighted in late 1986. They also promote many of the same themes on their radio and television programs and continue to promote their earlier books.

Because Meier and Minirth have written so many books together and individually and also because of their extensive media work and public speaking, it is not possible to critique all that they have said and written. For example we do not address their unbiblical position on self-esteem, self-image, and self-worth. (We may do that in a future volume.) Much more research and exegesis of Scripture could have been included on each of the topics in this section. However, we wanted to include just enough to build our case. The footnotes provided will give more exhaustive research information for those who are interested.