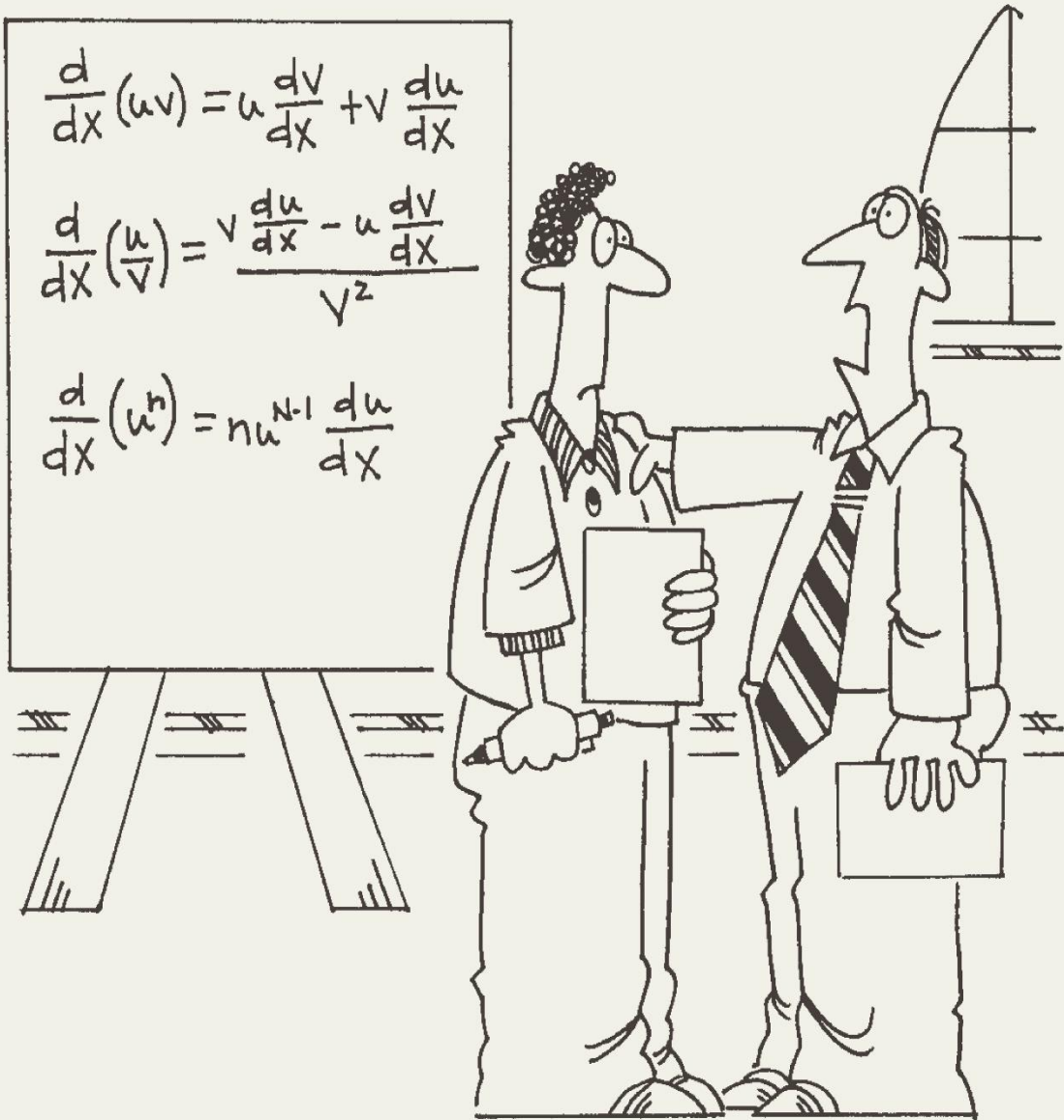


CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

by David Lee Burris



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“Ted, as your pastor, I admit that your particular problem may be too complex for my expertise.”



www.bible.ca

DAVID
HAWKINS

“Some say the church is too reliant upon psychology. How does that make you feel?”

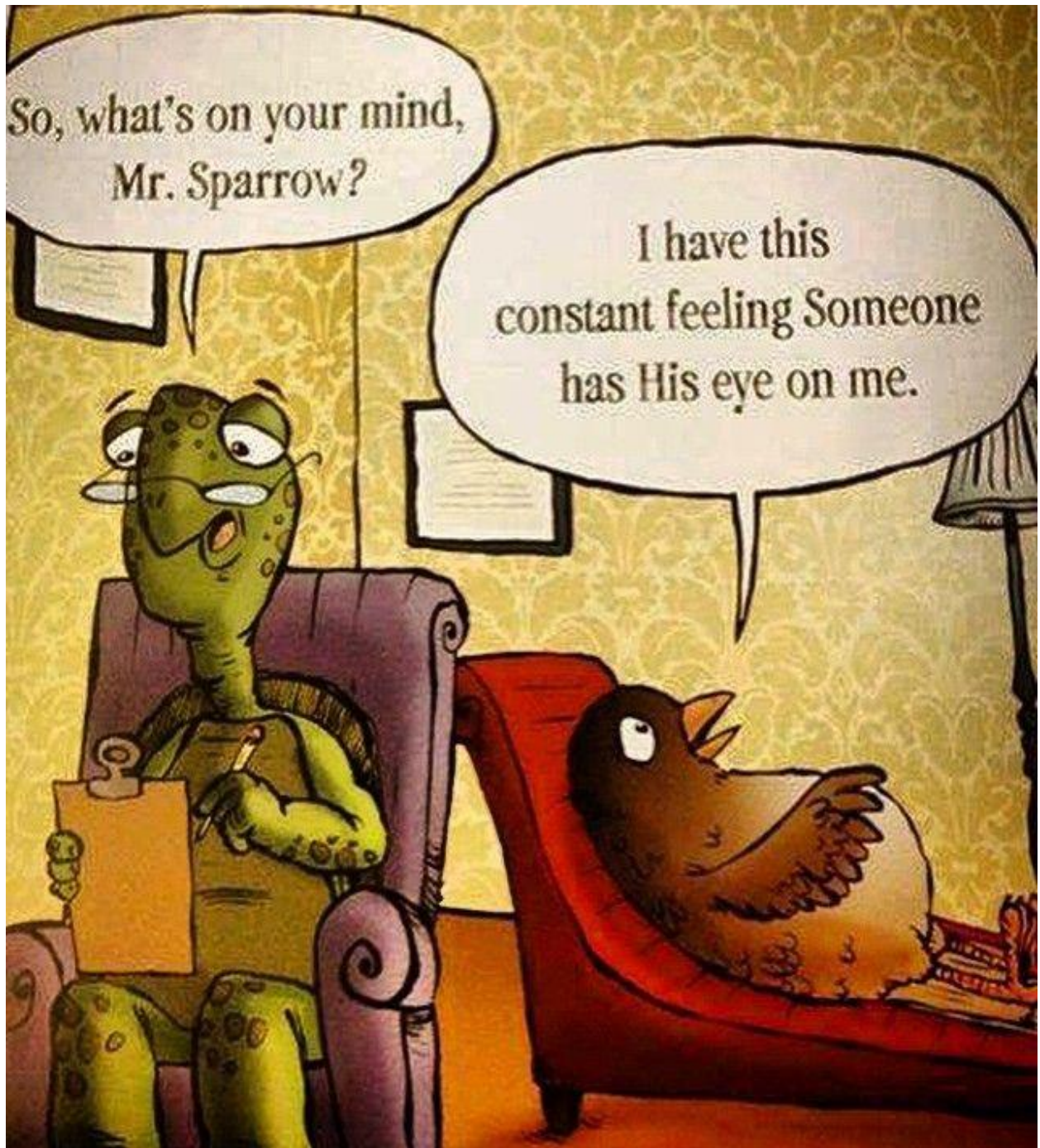




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"I can't stand to listen to anyone else preach.
You reckon that means the Lord is calling
me to the ministry?"





A COMPARISON OF PSYCHOLOGY WITH BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

by Peggi Klubnik

Postmodernism's emphasis on that which is relative, relational and relevant makes many eager adherents of the practices of psychology. Claiming to be a science, psychology uses scientific principles for the observation of human behavior. Yet the evaluation of data is often relative and non-scientific.

Psychology is not a theology, yet it attempts to define both God and man. The existence of God is denied & man is perceived as basically good, without sin. Therefore, there is no need for judgment or atonement of sin. Christ's death for sinful man becomes meaningless and unnecessary.

Christian psychologists and psychiatrists who claim psychological theories and therapy are necessary to deal with human issues ignore the fact that for thousands of years, the Bible has been sufficient. The inspired Word of God is as relevant and useful today as when it was written.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)^L).

The purpose of psychology appears to be "know thyself" with a goal to the betterment of mankind. Most psychological theories seek to explain *why* people do what they do & how they can become *whole*. There is an emphasis on self-help and a specially trained, insight-oriented therapist.

Psychology depends upon relationships and self-introspection. It is problem oriented. Needs become paramount in one's life. However, in direct contrast is the biblical admonition to know and love the Lord God, creator of self.

	PSYCHOLOGY (relative)
GOALS	Socialization/actualization of an individual to become normal or whole
ORIGIN OF MAN	Evolution
CHARACTERISTICS OF MAN	Body, soul (psyche), no spirit
NATURE OF MAN	Innocent or good
CONTROL OF MAN	By self - cognitive therapy By others - behavior modification By our past - unconscious
DESTINY OF MAN	Uncertain, or none; no hope

Secular humanism is gaining access into Christianity through the profession of psychology. Hypnotism, recollection, dream therapy, meditation, visualization, human solutions to spiritual problems, emphasis on the self (self-image), higher consciousness, primal therapy, focus on experience, and a lack of absolutes are all elements of psychology.

Christians are acquiring the terminology of psychology, i.e., sin is labeled as dysfunction. Psychology's solutions and remedies are often unquestioned when they are accompanied by Scripture verses. For example, a good self-image becomes acceptable & even desirable if it's acquired through a focus on the work of Christ. Relationships are encouraged as an solution to emotional problems. Psychological theory and techniques are be merely human solutions to spiritual problems and tend to mask the genuine issues. There is a danger of accepting human rather than supernatural methods of dealing with problems in our lives. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must accept the challenge of Scripture to compare every teaching with Scripture ([Acts 17:11](#)).

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,

Neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

So are My ways higher than your ways,

And My thoughts than your thoughts” ([Isa. 55:8](#)).

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY?

Hunt & McMahon

An excerpt from the Introduction of the book, [Psychology](#) and the Church: Critical Question, Crucial Answers

The only possible justification for the existence of “Christian” [psychology](#) in the church would be if the Bible didn’t contain all of the counsel, wisdom & guidance that Christians need for living sanctified lives pleasing to God in today’s modern world. **For thousands of years, both Old and New Testament believers found God and His Word more than sufficient in every way.** At least this is what the Bible tells us of those who triumphed by faith over every trial and circumstance that Satan could bring against them. Some of their lives are summarized briefly in Hebrews chapter 11.

The heroes and heroines of Bible history all triumphed by faith in God and in His promises. They neither had nor needed any help whatsoever from any “Christian [psychology](#),” which didn’t even exist in their day. Wouldn’t faith in God and His Word, which has been proved thousands of times through the ages to be more than sufficient in every conceivable circumstance and in the deepest trials, be sufficient for Christians today, no matter what their trials and challenges might be? What could possibly persuade a Christian to look to [psychology](#), invented by anti-Christians, for help in living a life pleasing to God?

Of course, Christian psychologists claim to have a firm faith in the inerrancy of Scripture. **But no matter how firmly a psychologist adheres to the inerrancy of Scripture, they all must deny its sufficiency.** This is the only way to justify their profession. If any part of the Bible is in error, however, then where can the line be drawn? If the Bible has not given us all we need to live the Christian life, that fact alone would be enough to make all of it suspect in view of the many places where it claims to be sufficient for living triumphant lives pleasing to God.

How and why would [psychology](#), invented by atheists and anti-Christians as a substitute for God, the Bible, and Christianity, provide new insights into the Bible unknown to (and obviously unneeded by) millions of believers over the last four thousand years or more? And why would we need it now? There is neither a biblical nor rational answer to that logical question.

“Christian” [psychology](#) is not a recognized classification in this field. Textbooks and reference manuals list hundreds of psychologies (Freudian, Jungian, Rogerian, humanistic, etc.), each named after its founder or its founder’s chief theory. But there is no school of [psychology](#) that was founded by a Christian and is therefore called “Christian” and recognized as such in university libraries.

[Psychology](#) is in fact anti-Christian. It doesn't come from the Bible but is simply an attempt to integrate the theories of atheists into the Bible in order to supply missing essentials for daily living that the Holy Spirit apparently failed to include. [Psychology](#) wasn't even well known in the secular world until after Freud and Jung popularized it in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Nor did it enter religious life until after World War II. For nineteen hundred years, Christians triumphed over the world, the flesh, and the devil by faith in Christ alone and obedience to His Word. If the great men and women of God throughout history did not need need [psychology](#), why would anyone need it today?

How did [psychology](#) get into the church? The man greatest responsible for the intrusion of that Trojan Horse was none other than Norman Vincent Peale. Peale declared on national TV on the Phil Donahue show, "It's not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine. I found eternal peace in a Shinto shrine. God is everywhere." Shocked, Donahue responded, "But you're a Christian minister; you're supposed to tell me that Christ is the way and the truth and the life, aren't you?" Peale replied, "Christ is one of the ways." Among his many other heresies were the following:

Who is God? Some theological being...? God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized! Prayer power is a manifestation of energy. Just as there exist scientific techniques for the release of atomic energy, so are there scientific procedures for the release of spiritual energy through the mechanism of prayer....

Prayer...is a procedure by which spiritual power flows from God...releases forces and energies...one must learn step by step the formula for opening the circuit and receiving this power. Any method through which you can stimulate the power of God to flow into your mind is legitimate...

So how did this secular [psychology](#) metamorphose into Christian [psychology](#)?

In 1937, Peale established a clinic with Freudian psychiatrist Dr. Smiley Blanton in the basement of the Marble Collegiate Church.... The clinic was described as having "a theoretical base that was Jungian, with a strong evidence of neo- and post-Freudianism."

It subsequently grew to an operation with more than 20 psychiatric doctors and psychologically-trained "ministers," and in 1951 became known as the American Foundation for Religion and Psychiatry. In 1972, it merged with the Academy of Religion & Mental Health to form the Institutes of Religion and Health. Indeed, Norman Peale pioneered the merger of theology and [psychology](#) which became known as Christian [Psychology](#). [Emphasis added] Peale said, "through prayer you make use of the great factor within yourself, the deep subconscious mind [which Jesus called] the kingdom of God within you.... **Positive thinking is just another term for faith.**"

DSM Incongruence: Religion Delusional

“The bible of psychiatric diagnosis exempts religion from “delusions”, even though it’s one...

I have always been curious about how we arrive at a belief, or how we believe. Mike Shermer’s ‘The believing brain’ is excellent at explaining the evolutionary reasons on why/how we believe. I want to focus on two that come to my mind. One way is, I believe, you are, as a child, through a form of indoctrination, in which a belief is implanted in you through a method of conditioning vis a vis “Religion,” that forms a type of internal consistency which shapes your worldview that determines your behavior. If you will notice. The other way a person arrives at a belief is through external reality based on empirical evidence (when he/she gets older and is able to make choices on his/her own).

One’s personal beliefs and the certainty with which one holds them is an unreliable measure of truth, because they are largely determined by one’s culture and the faith of one’s parents — both largely accidents of birth. The DSM of psychiatry, explained in excerpt below, defines delusions in such a way that religion is one of them. But then it exempts religion from the psychiatric diagnosis of “delusion” *because it is widely held.*

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), is the single most important text used by clinicians. It is *the* diagnostic rulebook. Currently, the DSM handbook grants religious delusion an exemption from classification as a mental illness. The following is the DSM-IV's definition of delusion:

*“A false belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained despite what almost everyone else believes and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary. **The belief is not one ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture or subculture (not an article of religious faith).** When a false belief involves a value judgement, it's regarded as delusion only when the judgment's so extreme as to defy credibility. Delusional conviction occurs on a continuum and can sometimes be inferred from an individual's behavior. It is often difficult to distinguish between a delusion and an overvalued idea (in which case the individual has an unreasonable belief or idea but does not hold it as firmly as is the case with a delusion)”* (2000, p. 765).

Why does Religion get a pass? Why should someone's belief be a delusion only if it's held by a minority of people? In the important respect of being “an incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained,” and one that “defies credibility,” religion *is* a delusion.

But if you notice how religious faith is specifically exempted. Further, religious behaviors do indicate a delusional conviction (falling on one's knees talking to an imaginary friend, eating wafers etc.).” – *Adam Qureshi*

We are convinced that most Christians do not fully understand the true nature of secular psychology. Modern psychology is clearly anti-Christian. It rejects God, ignores sin, “deifies” man, and frequently castigates Christianity, Christ, and Bible as irrelevant or dangerous. Many of the most respected and influential pioneers in American psychology discovered it as the ideal means for them “scientifically” to discredit their own Christian upbringing.²⁵

Indeed, “empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests that psychology still attracts and encourages more persons indifferent to or hostile to religion *than any other physical or social science.*”²⁶

In fact, what psychiatrist Thomas Szasz says about medical psychiatry is true for secular psychology in general: “... medical psychiatry is not merely indifferent to religion, it is implacably hostile to it. Herein lies one of the supreme ironies of modern psychotherapy: it is not merely a religion that pretends to be a science, it is actually a fake religion that seeks to destroy true religion.”²⁷

Any philosophical movement that seeks to destroy faith in God and His Word is not something that will ever be helpful to people with problems or to society at large, especially if it causes more problems than it solves. In *Psychology As Religion*, NYU psychology professor Paul Vitz makes several dramatic statements about humanistic psychology, including the fact that “psychology as a religion is deeply anti-Christian. Indeed, it is hostile to most religions.... Psychology as a religion has for years been destroying individuals, families and communities.”²⁸

One reason for this destruction can be seen in Donald Campbell’s presidential address to the American Psychological Association. He stated that modern psychology was more hostile to religiously based moral views than could be justified. Arguing that people’s behavior does in fact need restraint, he pointed out that modern “psychology and psychiatry, on the other hand, not only describe man as selfishly motivated, but implicitly or explicitly teach that he ought to be so.”

Dr. Campbell further commented, “It is certainly my impression, after 40 years of reading psychology, that **psychologists almost invariably side with self-gratification over traditional restraint.**”²⁹

If one examines the major founders, schools, and great thinkers of modern psychology, one usually discovers an anti-Christian bias which has colored almost all of the respective subsequent psychology. As Jacob Needeman pointed out, **modern psychiatry and psychology “arose out of the vision that man must change himself and not depend for help upon an imaginary God.”**³⁰

In psychoanalysis or depth psychology we have founders Freud and Jung. Freud hated religion, especially the Christian religion, and he actively sought to destroy people’s faith in the Christian God. For him, Christian faith was a personal neurosis and a social evil. He said, “I regard myself as one of the most dangerous enemies of religion.”³¹ **Freud considered religious beliefs illusions and referred to religion as “the obsessional neurosis of humanity.”**³² Professor of psychiatry Thomas Szasz contends, “One of Freud’s most powerful motives in life was the desire to inflict vengeance on Christianity for its [alleged] traditional anti-Semitism.”³³

Like Freud, psychologist Carl Jung resented historic Christianity and especially its God.³⁴ For him it was **a myth sought after by neurotics.** “All neurotics seek the religious,” he said,³⁵ and “all talk of God [is] mythological,” and therefore, “the Protestant theologian” should “abandon his alleged knowledge of God through faith and admit to the layman that he is mythologizing.”³⁶

Jung saw biblical Christianity as hollow, irrelevant, and harmful. He regarded the church as a place of “not life... but death.”³⁷ Once he said, “They would’ve burned me as a heretic in the Middle Ages.”³⁸

Perhaps the most respected leader of humanistic psychology was the late Carl Rogers. He observes that he was raised as a Christian but that after 50 years as a psychologist his personal belief system “is now almost the *antithesis* of what I was taught—and believed—in my youth.”³⁹ He became a leader in humanism and eventually turned to mysticism—which he hoped would be incorporated into our educational system.⁴⁰

Atheist Albert Ellis is the founder of the highly popular Rational-Emotive system of psychotherapy. He is convinced that “all true believers in any kind of [religious] orthodoxy are disturbed, since they are obviously rigid, fanatic, and dependent individuals.” He even argues that “devout belief, dogmatism & religiosity distinctly contribute to, and in some ways are equal to, mental or emotional disturbance.”⁴¹

The above attitudes and beliefs of Freud, Jung, Rogers, and Ellis are repeated almost endlessly within modern psychology. As psychology critic Dr. Ed Bulkley points out, “Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, and most of Freud’s other successors carried the same fanatical hatred of religion that Freud revealed in his writings. These men are representative of the general attitude which psychologists have of scriptural authority and validity.”⁴³

Even psychological testing frequently has a bias against the Christian faith. For example, the Rorschach ink block test generally scores any religious symbols as abnormal. In *Rorschach Interpretation: Advanced Technique*, the authors assert, “Religion contents are virtually never present in the records of normal. [Religion] responses are common mostly among schizophrenics, particularly patients with delusions.”⁴⁵

Regrettably today, for millions of people, psychology has become a major factor in their rejection of Christianity. One wonders if it could be otherwise given, the philosophical premises of psychology and the antagonistic attitudes of the leading founders and modern giants in the profession—all of whom are required reading for psychology students. Isn't modern psychology composed largely of materialists, rationalists, skeptics, atheists, and humanists?

Yet the study of the mind is hardly anti-Christian by definition. *Modern psychology's premises force it to an anti-Christian position in both philosophical and practical matters.* As Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at Boston College William Kirk Kilpatrick states in *Psychological Seduction*, **“Psychology and religion are competing faiths. If you seriously hold to one set of values, you will logically have to reject the other.”**⁴⁶

Perhaps this explains why psychiatrist Thomas Szasz observes in *The Myth of Psychotherapy* that there is the “implacable resolve of psychotherapy is to rob religion of as much as it can, and to destroy what it cannot....”⁴⁷

When Christian scholars drink from wells of thought that are anti-Christian and then bring these concepts into the church, it should surprise no one that a controversy might erupt.¹

¹ Ankerberg, J., & Weldon, J. (2011). [*The facts on self-esteem, psychology, and the recovery movement.*](#) Chattanooga, TN: ATRI Publishing.

Nervous Christians - Have No Witness!

The Nervous Christian Has No Testimony

The Bible tells us that Christians are the “light of the world,” which is manifested by the fruit of the Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Does the Christian in bondage to self, in bondage to his nervousness, show forth love? No! He is all taken up with self; his self-centered interest will not let him show love for others. He does not even have love for God. He will complain, “No use praying to God; He does not answer my prayer. I can’t read the Bible; it holds no interest for me.”

Does his life show joy? No! He moans and bewails his oppressed state, from which he claims he wants deliverance.

Does he have peace? No! He runs to and fro in the world, hoping to find a remedy for his nervous symptoms. He portrays a confused, doubtful, fearful mind, being agitated by a soul that is out of fellowship with God.

Does the emotionally unstable Christian demonstrate an attitude of long-suffering? No! He is extremely short in long-suffering. He is short-tempered, short in patience, short in tolerance with others, short in everything that does not gratify self. The man who is all taken up with self is very sensitive. The old self, ego, “I,” cannot bear criticism. In the sight of his fellow man he must be approved; he cannot let them think that he is peculiar for Christ’s sake.

What about the spirit of gentleness? Can he show gentleness and kindness, help others, and do things for others? No! The sufferings of others seem to annoy him. He will say, “I can’t be around them; they make me nervous with their talk.” This by interpretation means that their talk interferes with “my thoughts about myself.”

Can he show goodness? No! He is like the natural man; his thoughts of self-interest will not let him do things for others. He says to himself, "How will that help me? I will do things for others when I get over this nervousness, but right now I don't want to visit people or talk to them. It is too strenuous. It makes me nervous, because I wonder, while talking to them, what they are thinking of me. I am afraid they will see that there is something wrong with me. It makes me nervous to go to church. I get short of breath and tight all over if the preacher talks loud."

Does he show meekness? Surely he is not surrendered. He believes that his suffering is a cross which he is bearing for Christ, yet there is no sacrifice or glorification of God in the suffering. How can it be, when he accuses God of unfaithfulness, when he could not be emptied of self? After all, one of the greatest contributing factors to nervousness in the Christian is that self has not been crucified with Christ, leaving a struggle between the Spirit and the flesh because the patient does not walk in the Spirit, but makes provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14).

And what about temperance? Does he have self-control and restrain himself from "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"? He makes the excuse that he cannot control himself, because he is nervous. But there was a time when he had the choice of controlling his will for Christ or for the flesh. Apparently, he let himself be overcome by doubts, anxieties, and cares of this world.

Suppose you were unsaved and had convictions that you needed salvation. Would you turn to a doubtful, fearful, anxious, nervous Christian? I am sure that you would not, because he has nothing that would make you desirous of anything that he has in his life. He could not and would not talk to you about Christ. In the first place, he is not interested in Christ, and he is not concerned about you. His only concern is self.²

² Little, G. (2013). [*Nervous Christians*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

SO-CALLED NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

Tschaikowsky, the great composer, suffered much during his lifetime. On one occasion, after a thorough medical examination, he wrote thus to a friend: "The doctors say there is nothing wrong with me; it is just my nerves. But what are nerves?"

The diagnosis, which was puzzling and apparently very unsatisfactory to Tschaikowsky, has bewildered many suffering patients. If there is nothing wrong, and it is just nerves, then why all the suffering, the patients want to know.

The rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, men and women from every walk of life, have succumbed to this mysterious malady, the so-called nervous breakdown.

If someone were to ask you what a nervous breakdown is, what would your answer be?

My patients say that a person with a nervous breakdown "goes to pieces," "can't control his thoughts," "can't control his mind," "becomes unglued."

When they come to me for help, their chief complaints run something like the following:

"I worry all the time. I can't stop it! If it keeps on, it will wear out my nerves, and they are so bad already."

"People don't believe me when I say I'm nervous. They don't believe I am ill."

"I am hanging on by a thread."

"On the inside I feel like a watch spring ready to go 'boom!'"

"If I just had a broken leg, or an operation, people would see that I am suffering. Now they think I am imagining I am ill."

These and thousands of other complaints express the perplexity of patients who want to know, "What are nerves?"

They Are Misunderstood

The patient wants sympathetic understanding when he presents himself with this complaint, "The doctors say there is nothing wrong with me. Now my friends and relatives say it is all in my head—just imagination."

Nervous patients are the most misunderstood of all sufferers because of the false ideas that are associated with nervousness. The general attitude of disdain for suffering nervous patients has caused them to hide the fact that they have been diagnosed as nervous. Thousands of patients cling to a minor physical ailment or search for one that can be treated medically or surgically in order to avoid the stigma of being labeled "neurotic." Because there is nothing physically wrong, they are called "neurotic"—as though they loved to be sick, or just imagined an illness to get attention or escape some responsibility. The patient with a neurosis suffers alone because he is not considered ill.

In their desperation to be understood they may secretly, if not openly, express hope for a serious illness or surgery that might lead to death. One patient, suffering from a neurosis most of her life, said, "I was glad to go to the hospital for the operation. Not that I wanted the operation. They assured me that the operation would cure me. I knew it would not, but I had a legitimate excuse to go to the hospital. Furthermore, if I am not going to get well, it would have been a good time to die, as I never could commit suicide."

Nervous patients do not deliberately or willfully conjure up symptoms of fear and anxiety. The patient in the throes of fear and anxiety had a basis for the onset of these symptoms, which did not come on suddenly, nor were they created by a crisis in the patient's life; but the symptom complex developed over many years. Sometimes it has its origin in childhood.

The reason we associate a so-called nervous breakdown with a crisis, such as the death of a loved one, financial reverses, loss of position and prestige, etc., is because the added emotional stress is too much for the personality that is already overloaded with emotional complexes. We blame the breakdown on the stress which is most prominent in the patient's life at the time; however, that is only the added "straw that broke the camel's back."

Every individual wants to be considered mentally normal. We are reminded of the modern psychiatric dictum: All nervous patients have much about them that is normal, and normal people have much about them that is abnormal. Nervous patients are not mentally weak. Some of our greatest intellects are suffering from nerves.

False Conceptions About Nervous Breakdown

The term "nervous breakdown" has a fearful meaning, suggesting breaking down, wearing out, or degeneration of brain cells and nerve tracts of the body. The term is unscientific and very misleading, because emotional, so-called nervous patients do not suffer from nerves that are breaking down, and their minds will not eventually snap.

In fact, the nerves of a so-called nervous person who has suffered emotionally for many years do not show any evidence of disease. This false conception, however, has caused much fear, because anxious patients anticipate brain changes as they become engrossed in their own thinking and lose capacity to control their thoughts.

Immediately this question will arise in the minds of some of my readers: "Can't the mind become diseased, or sick?" The brain is not diseased in patients suffering from emotional symptoms—cares, doubts, anxiety, fears, and worry. Organic brain diseases account for only a small part of mental diseases in or out of our mental institutions.

Insane Over Too Much Religion

Satan definitely has a hand in creating this illusion. He does not condemn religion, but he teaches that you can get too much religion and "go overboard." However, all his followers have a religion. Religion is man's philosophy of life. Every uncivilized heathen has his religion, which is compatible with his thinking and way of life, and Satan drives him to fanaticism. Likewise, he drives the cultured heathen to be loyal to his religion.

Satan does this by teaching that the way of the cross of Calvary is foolish, absurd, and unreasonable to normal intellect. Therefore, Satan gets people to frown on those who walk according to the teachings of the Son of God, as if they were immature for needing someone to lean on, instead of standing on their own rights and privileges.

Satanic influence blocks the attempts of the Holy Spirit to draw unsaved ones to God by showing them how unliked by the world they would be if they became Christians. They have no incentive, therefore, to investigate Christianity for fear of losing their standing among men.

It is not uncommon to find mentally disturbed (insane) patients talking incoherently about religion. Many of these patients spent considerable time in religious talk and ritual before their final state of mental confusion and incoherence. Therefore, it is only natural for unsaved people to conclude that they went insane over devoting too much time to religion.

Before these patients became incoherent, they were probably misguided into bloodless creeds, which did not satisfy their souls, but confused them; and they are trying to find peace through their religious rituals.

Admonishing patients who supposedly went insane over too much religion not to talk religion and taking the Bible from them is not the remedy for their confusion. They have not had an overdose of the Word of God. They need guidance in understanding what the Bible says about the Way to peace for their troubled souls.

No man ever went insane over Christ, or too much reading of God's Word, or because of communion with Him. God earnestly desires that we think and meditate on His Word, and He promises to answer prayer on the ground that "ye abide in me, and my words abide in you" (John 15:7).

God's Word does not say that if you have your mind all wrapped up in spiritual things, you will become confused and go insane over too much spiritual meditation; but "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season" (Ps. 1:3).

What is the fruit? Fear and confusion? No! It is love, joy, and peace (Gal. 5:22).

This is just another of Satan's lies, propagated by his own, who hate to hear about the blood shed for sinners. It is the adults, not the children, who are afraid of the blood.

Satan will do anything and use any means to hinder the teaching of the shed blood of Christ on Calvary for the remission of sins.

The Christian's problem is spiritual, and Christian patients cannot make an adjustment to the world and be at peace.

Christians who desire to make an adjustment to the world turn with their problems to counselors who will confirm their way of life, so that they will not feel guilty for turning from Christ to the psychologies of man. The worldly Christian may experience some relief by means of sedatives, diversions, and other forms of man-devised treatment; but as long as the agitating factor, feeling of guilt, remains, it continues to build up emotional tension until the body suffers.

Confessing for the sake of releasing pressure is comforting at the time, but this can become a habit. Many patients use the psychiatrist as a "spillway" when there is too much pressure dammed up.

Christian patients, however, have a repugnance toward hashing and rehashing unpleasant, sinful incidents of childhood.

The Christian cannot get by with transposing his cares, worries and anxieties, and guilt and fear from the heart to the unconscious mind, or to a mysterious subconscious, so that he can resort to mind treatments of forgetting and covering up.

These thoughts and feelings are more than mind deep. SO-CALLED NERVOUS BREAKDOWN IS A MISNOMER FOR EMOTIONAL CHAOS IN THE SOUL OF MAN.³

³ Little, G. (2013). [*Nervous christians*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

THE PSYCHO-THERAPY OF DREAM INTERPRETATION

The assumed rationale for Christian dream work is found in four areas: 1) in the claims of secular psychology; 2) in the divine use of dreams in Scripture; 3) in the interest in dreams in church history; 4) in the current use of dreams by some Christian therapists and psychologists, largely dependent on the findings of secular psychotherapy. We question if any of these areas necessarily justify Christian dream work. To explain why, we will give a brief summary evaluation covering the four points mentioned above. Then we will cite six reasons why we believe Christian dream work should be questioned.

The claims of secular psychology. Neither secular nor Christian psychology has established a legitimate case for the value of dream analysis, or even a credible defense for secular psychotherapy in general.

Dreams in the Bible. The use of dreams in Scripture is distinct from the use of dreams in psychotherapy. It is true that dreams may come from the hand of God; but scripturally they appear to come at His bidding, not ours. And, when they come from God they are revelation events, not normal dreams. And nowhere in the Bible are we told to attempt to manipulate dreams for our own purposes or even our own self-insight. Granted, we are never told not to, but whether we do dream work or not should be based on valid reasons for pursuing the practice.

Dreams in church history. We do not believe the appeal to practices in church history are relevant because we think that the practices of dream exploration in church history are more questionable than convincing. No one denies that dream exploration can be both innocent and interesting, but in many ways it is simply unimportant. If God wishes to speak to us in a dream, He will, without our help. But both biblical data and church history reveal that this is relatively rare. If "problem" dreams are thrusting themselves upon us, then we may wish to pray for guidance as to the reason, or to see a qualified Christian counselor who respects biblical authority and whose practice is not contaminated by the anti-Christian premises of secular psychotherapy (2683). If dream work or dream therapy were truly important to our spiritual wellbeing, we would expect God to have commanded it in Scripture.

Christian dream therapy. Christian psychotherapy and dream work reveal a sometimes appalling lack of discernment when it comes to secular and even New Age thinking Christians who are interested in exploring their dreams need to realize that even secular dream work can be tied to psychic exploration. We should also remember that merely because a practice is labeled Christian, as in "Christian" dream work, does not mean that it is either biblically wholesome, safe, or genuinely Christian. A large number of churches, groups, and individuals call themselves "Christian," yet reject clear biblical teachings and standards, and they may even experiment with the psychic realm.

Some Christians who are involved in dream workshops perhaps do not realize that the sources of interpretation derive from the dream work materials of secular psychologists, and even spiritists. Such information taints the dream program with unbiblical premises, philosophies, or practices.

In general, we think that the importance of dreams is often exaggerated and that time spent in exploring them is often more profitably spent elsewhere. Throughout human history, most people have lived well without attending local dream workshops or having their dreams analyzed in therapy.

Six Concerns

Below we list six general concerns with so-called "Christian" dream work.

1. Christian dream work often overemphasizes the value of dreams in proportion to their significance. If the legitimacy of dream analysis is unsubstantiated, of what value is the therapy? And some Christian dream work gives dreams a spiritual task they carry only rarely. That is, it makes a rare event (God communicating through dreams) a normal or universal event (dreams per se are communications from God).

This belief that God communicates to us regularly, directly, and personally by dreams makes dreams become normal vehicles for supernatural activity (allegedly divine communication), rather than **normal byproducts of consciousness** that most are. One unfortunate result of this belief is when dreams become divinatory or vehicles for occult revelations. They can supposedly warn of future events, bring spiritual enlightenment, assist physical and mental healing, or guide in making daily decisions. In this role, they can become an actual replacement for the guidance of the Bible. Because they can allegedly function as a form of divine revelation, some Christian dream promoters even advocate dreams as a new means for interpreting Scripture.

2. Christian dream work manuals may endorse communication with "dream figures" or psychic exploration through dreams, both of which can lead to outright spiritism.

3. There are a host of problems inherent to the nature of dreams and Christian dream work. We already mentioned the seemingly unresolvable problem of how one accurately interprets dreams. Furthermore, when placed into a secular or New Age context, dreams often become a means to justify personal New Age beliefs and lifestyle. There is also the problem of unjustified suppositions; for example, that dreams are incomplete without dream work, that dream work fosters personal holiness, that dreams deepen our relationship with God.

4. Christian dream work may assume that dreams per se can be the means toward a relationship with God *apart* from Jesus Christ. In this regard they obviously assume too much: that everyone merely by virtue of dream work can establish a personal relationship with God, irrespective of their faith in Christ. The premise here is that a preexisting relationship of human and divine consciousness is *already* present, and that dreams merely amplify, expand, or otherwise help sanctify that already-existing relationship. Such a premise, however, leads to false assumptions about the nature of our relationship with God apart from regeneration (Ephesians 2:1-3), and about salvation (John 3:16,36; Ephesians 2:4-10), and true spirituality (John 17:3).

5. Christian dream work may allege the relationship of dreams to "divine energies," which are defined far too loosely and may in fact be occult energies. People may therefore fall prey to occult practices under the disguise of "divine" activity.

6. In Christian dream work, both secular and so-called Jungian-Christian ideas are too often accepted without critique on the part of those who employ them. One only need read the reviews of Jungian texts in Christian psychology periodicals to see this. Indeed, a number of periodicals attempting the integration of secular psychology and Christian theology have carried positive articles on Jungian interpretation of dreams and modern dream work.

All in all, Jung's influence within liberal and even within some conservative Christian theology is significant; however, few, if any, are making serious attempts to sift the issues involved biblically. In *Inner Healing*, Pastor Don Matzat has cited many concerns about Christian therapists who use Jungian methods.

When Jung psychologizes and normalizes occult theories and internalizes spiritistic phenomena, how can the therapists who trust his theories sift the normal functions of human consciousness from spiritual deception, where spirits deliberately seek to mask their own activities under psychological constructs? How does the therapist who endorses lively inner conversations with one's alleged "archetypes" or "dream figures" know that their patient is not really conversing with a spirit guide, who is using the idea of archetypes or dream figures to enter a person's life? The Jungian therapists we have talked with, such as Karen Hamaker-Zondag, a European Jungian therapist specializing in astrology, confess they cannot always, or ultimately, distinguish archetypes from spirit guides. How then does a Christian therapist? And are Christian therapists who use Jung's technique of active imagination familiar with the attendant dangers of the process that even lifelong Jungian therapists warn about?

To the degree that such cautionary sifting is neglected, Christian promoters of Jungian dream work and related methods may be responsible not only for encouraging spiritual confusion, but for potentially opening the doors to occultism in the lives of believers. Regardless of the label "Christian," **if biblical authority is rejected and biblical concerns discarded, a variety of pagan influences can easily creep into dream work, with the attendant spiritual consequences.**⁴

⁴ Ankerberg, J., & Weldon, J. (2012). [*Knowing the facts about dream work*](#). Chattanooga, TN: ATRI Publishing.

Nervousness: Soul Sickness

CAN PSYCHIATRY SOLVE SOUL PROBLEMS?

Psychologies of Man

Is it any wonder that anxious and fearful patients become frantic when they find themselves ensnared in their own lusts? They have no hope; their souls are in despair. What can they do? What will they do? Like the great masses of the world, they will continue to look to the world, where the evil spirits, governed by “the prince of the power of the air,” will continually offer them diversions, hobbies, and amusements, attempting to alleviate fears and anxieties. When this fails, they turn to psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis.

Just because the world is worshiping at the modern shrine of psyche does not prove that God’s program is failing to give peace to the hearts and minds of those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus. It simply shows that Satan is battling for the minds of men through his gigantic psychological propaganda, denying that man has a soul and placing therapeutic emphasis on the mind as the seat of fear, anxiety, worry, maladjustment, and nervousness. Only the born-again Christian can understand the diabolic deception in such treatment. It is a bold attempt to wipe out all need for Christianity and force man to believe in his own power

Of course, the world cannot see either the folly or the deception of this line of reasoning, because it does not believe God’s Word, which says that “thoughts and intents” (Heb. 4:12), “imagination” (Gen. 6:5), “meditation” (Ps. 19:14), and deceit (Acts 5:4) are conceived in the heart.

Without the presence of the Holy Spirit, man formulates a philosophy of life, consistent with the unregenerate heart, which can never give him salvation or peace. When dissatisfied with himself and his philosophy of life, he can only hope to substitute another philosophy, devised by his unregenerate heart, which cannot bring him any nearer to peace than the former. In this state unregenerate patients are helpless to change their thoughts, because Satan controls the meditations of their unregenerated hearts.

Christ Is the Answer

God has given us the remedy for all soul problems. This may seem contrary to what you have believed; nevertheless, we cannot be saved by the moral rules made up by ourselves. Some will say, “How can that relieve me of my nervousness? How can that take away my worries about myself?” You overcome the evil influences of doubt, fear, anxiety, nervousness, and worry by trusting and meditating on God’s Word and by walking each day, step by step, in the Spirit, not fulfilling the desires of the flesh. When doubts come—and they will—turn them aside by looking at the cross of Calvary, where Christ overcame Satan and all his hosts who oppress and torment us.⁵

⁵ Little, G. (2013). [*Nervous Christians*](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

“FOR GOD HATH NOT GIVEN US THE
SPIRIT OF FEAR; BUT OF POWER,
AND OF LOVE, AND OF A SOUND

MIND.”

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

His divine power has
granted to us **ALL**
things that pertain to
LIFE &
GODLINESS,
THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM
who called us to his
own glory and
excellence,

2 PETER 1:3

Modern Psychology and the Bible

By **Wayne Jackson**

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For the past several decades, “psychology” has been a popular theme in American society. Countless students become “psychology majors” as they matriculate through school. The Yellow Pages of the phone book are filled with listings for psychologists and psychiatrists. For many, it is the “in” thing to have a therapist. Exactly what is “psychology,” and how does this area of interest relate to the Bible?

Psychology Defined

Psychology may be defined in two very different ways — depending upon whether or not one is approaching the topic from the biblical vantage point, or from the humanistic viewpoint. The humanist, i.e., one who considers man to be the measure of all things, with no need for belief in a supreme Being, suggests that psychology is “the study of human & animal behavior.” “Psychiatry,” a related discipline, specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological problems.

The term “psychology” actually derives from the Greek root, *psyche* (soul), and pertains, therefore, to a study of the soul (or spirit) of man.

One may affirm with confidence, that no “psychological” theory can benefit man that fails to consider the “soul” aspect. This would include such issues as:

1. Does the human being have a soul?
2. If so, whence the origin of that soul?
3. What is the nature of the human soul?
4. What is the purpose of man’s soul?
5. Finally, what lies ahead as the ultimate destiny of the soul?

Man, the Soul Creature

There is a vast, unbridgeable chasm that exists between valid psychology and that which proceeds from a humanistic ideology. Let us probe some of the various questions just raised.

First, does the human being possess a soul? Logic demands, and the Bible affirms, that there is an entity within each human that sets him or her apart from all other biological creatures. This entity is the soul.

One atheist, Julian Huxley, has authored a book entitled, **The Uniqueness of Man**, in which he acknowledged that, since the days of Darwin, when mankind was viewed strictly in animalistic terms, the “man-animal gap” has been “broadening” (Huxley, 3). By that he meant that it is becoming increasingly difficult to view human beings as mere animals.

Another writer says that “...the very fact of human personality carries metaphysical overtones. Man’s psychological nature suggests something transcendent of which the psyche is but a partial reflection” (Progoff, 256).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote:

“Either we have an immortal soul, or we have not. If we have not, we are beasts; the first and wisest of beasts it may be; but still beasts. We only differ in degree and not in kind; just as the elephant differs from the slug. But by the concession of the materialists we are not the same kind as beasts; and this also we say from our own consciousness....it must be the possession of the soul that makes the difference” (Mead, 416-17).

Second, if we have a soul, what is its nature? Those who accept the Scriptures as the Word of God are bound to acknowledge that human beings possess an inward essence (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16) known as the “soul.” Initially, let us observe that the term “soul” is found in at least three senses in scripture.

“Soul” is sometimes employed as a synecdoche (the part for the whole) to designate the entire person. Eight “souls” were saved in Noah’s ark (1 Pet. 3:20). Every “soul” should submit to the civil authorities (Rom. 13:1), when such are not demanding a compromise of Christian principles (cf. Acts 5:29).

Additionally, the “soul” can denote biological life. In the Old Testament, all living creatures are said to possess “soul” (Gen. 1:30. *Nephesh* is the Hebrew term; the Greek equivalent is *psyche*, LXX). During a dangerous shipwreck en route to Rome, Paul informed his shipmates that though the vessel would be destroyed, there would be no loss of “life” (*psyche*). He was referring to their physical lives.

Finally, and most significantly, is the use of *psyche* to designate that part of the human being that is in the very “image” of God (Gen. 1:26). In this instance *psyche* is the same as “the spirit” (*pneuma*). To this component of mankind various qualities are attributed. Consider, for example, the following:

1. The “soul” cannot be destroyed by the termination of physical life. “And do not fear them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul...” (Mt. 10:28). Similarly, the “spirit” is said to be characterized by an “incorruptible” nature (1 Peter 3:4).
2. The psyche is capable of possessing knowledge. David declared: “I will give thanks unto you; for I am fearfully & wonderfully made: Wonderful are your works & that my soul knows right well” (Psalm 139:14). In the New Testament, Paul rhetorically asks: “For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man, which is in him” (1 Cor. 2:11).
3. The psyche is an entity of emotion. In one of his defenses, the suffering Job argued that “[his] soul grieved for the needy” (30:25). Similarly, the prophet Daniel declared: “My spirit was grieved in the midst of my body” (7:15). As the Lord Jesus once contemplated the prospect of his impending death, he said: “Now is my soul troubled” (John 12:27). Later, the apostle John would write: “[H]e was troubled in the spirit...” (13:21).

In modern humanistic “psychology,” however, none of these matters are considered, and therein lies the worthlessness of the system. Humanism sees the universe as consisting solely of matter; soul does not exist.

Can one be a true “psychologist” who does not even believe that human beings have souls? It is not without significance that the founders of modern psychology were men whose chief interests were in material or physical phenomena, e.g., chemistry, physics, and physiology (Cosgrove, 28).

Responsibility to the Creator

One of the underlying tenants of modern psychology is a skepticism about the existence of a supreme Being to whom man ultimately is accountable. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), known as the founder of psychoanalysis, was a tremendously significant figure in the field of psychology. His influence permeated the educational field in many ways. Freud was an atheist who contended that religion is but an “illusion.” He argued that early man did not understand the material forces of nature. Hence, out of that frustration, our ancestors felt “the need to make tolerable the helplessness of man.” As a result, they “personified the forces of nature,” and endowed them with qualities that reflected a “father-longing” (30,32,38).

Other leading dignitaries in the field also had atheistic inclinations. John Dewey (1859-1952), who exerted a vast influence over several disciplines (including psychology), and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990), a leading advocate of “behaviorism,” both were signatories of the most infamous **Humanist Manifestos**, which utterly repudiated faith in God. Carl Rogers (1902-1987), prominent for “client-centered” therapy, was quite religious in his early years; eventually, though, he leased his brain to skepticism.

Here is a very important point. When men repudiate an awareness of the very Creator who designed them, they cannot possibly have a view of mankind that is normal and conducive to mental soundness. Humanistic psychology (which is the basis of virtually all modern psychology) is, therefore, bogus.

And yet many, who profess a reverence for Christianity, are mesmerized by theories of these men. One writer, for instance, in glowing language, says: “Carl Rogers seems to have brought God’s truth to light by discovering some of God’s principles for healthy human behavior” (Kirwan, 60).

Evolutionary Presuppositions

As we mentioned earlier, modern psychology is generally defined as the study of “human and animal behavior.” This very definition should be a “red flag” signal we are talking about a school of thought that is grounded in evolutionary dogma. Dr. Paul W. Leithart has written: **“All traditional psychiatry rests on two errors: 1) The acceptance of evolution; 2) Secular humanism” (8).**

This point can be amply demonstrated; Charles H. Judd wrote:

“If ... psychology is to gain a complete understanding of human nature, it must take into account the findings of the science of biology, which traces man’s bodily structures and some of his traits back to remote origins in the lower forms of animal life” (15).

One writer, in a book titled, **Apes, Men, and Language**, stated: “Darwin has provided the basis for a paradigm that might explain both human psychology & human behavior in terms of man’s continuity with the rest of nature...” (Linden, 41).

After much research regarding this matter, Professor Raymond Surburg concluded:

“The evolutionistic influence on modern psychology must be traced back to Darwin’s genetic approach to psychological problems or to his argument that man evolved from lower animal forms. It was his suggestion that many human expressions of emotion are merely continuations of actions useful in the animal, e.g., the sneer is a continuation of the animals’ preparation to bite. A lengthy comparison of the mental powers of man and lower animals was made by Darwin, who believed animals showed evidence of imitation, curiosity, imagination, and even of reason. Darwin’s genetic approach was extended to the study of animal, child, and racial psychology by a number of psychologists...” (184).

If modern humanistic psychology is grounded in Darwinism — and clearly it is — then the various theories that arise from this presupposition are as false as the doctrine of evolutionism itself.

Human Conduct

Psychological theory plays a significant role in either:

1. explaining man's conduct, or,
2. in recommending human activity.

And herein lies one of the dangers.

Reflect for a moment on these two points.

First, for example, Sigmund Freud, and those who were influenced by him, argued that the “sex drive” is the primary force of all emotional life. This suggests that man is but a biological machine driven by the sex urge, which implies that such a dominating “instinct” leaves little, if any, room in man for the exercise of will and the expression of moral choices.

This is why, more and more, we are hearing the refrain that human beings personally are not at fault for their aberrant conduct. We simply can't help what we do, it is alleged. For a further consideration of this point, see my book, {glossSub (“Courier Publications”, “The Bible & Mental Health”)} (89-96).

Second, modern psychology not only attempts to rationalize mankind's behavior with mechanistic suppositions, frequently, it actually encourages wrong activities.

Earlier we mentioned the name of Carl Rogers. Rogers was a leader in the “humanistic revolution” in psychology. He became popular for his “client-centered” approach to therapy. Observe the following quotation, and how radically at variance it is with biblical morality.

“It has seemed clear ...that when the counselor perceives and accepts the client as he is, and when he lays aside all evaluation and enters into the perceptual frame of reference of the client, he frees the client to explore his life and experience anew, frees him to perceive in that experience new meanings and new goals. But is the therapist willing to give the client full freedom as to outcomes? Is he genuinely willing for the client to organize and direct his life? Is he willing for him to choose goals that are social or antisocial, moral or immoral? If not, it seems doubtful that therapy will be a profound experience for the client To me it appears that only as the therapist is completely willing that any outcome, any direction, may be chosen — only then does he realize the vital strength of the capacity and potentiality of the individual for constructive action” (48-49).

Anyone remotely cognizant with New Testament ethics can perceive how destructive the Rogerian method is.

A Summary

As we conclude this brief survey of humanistic psychology, surely it has become evident to every reader who regards the Bible as a divine revelation, that there is a vast difference between modern, humanistic “psychology,” and the wholesome mental health principles that abound in the Bible. Think about some of the vivid contrasts.

1. Humanistic psychology alleges that the personhood of man can be explained solely in terms of a materialistic substance. But both the Bible and common sense affirm that there is more to man than matter. His self-awareness, conscience, emotions, ability to reason, aesthetic sensitivity, etc., all argue that “humanness” is far more than mere molecules in motion.
2. Modern psychology asserts that human conduct is the result of impersonal forces (environment) that have acted upon our species over eons of time. We are the products of time and of chance. Ultimately, Ultimately, therefore, there is no such thing as “good” or “evil.” Traditional psychology is committed to “utter neutrality” in matters of morality (Liebman, 180-81).

The Humanist Manifestos I, II asserts: “Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction” (17). This means that man is subject to no higher moral law than what he himself determines. Were that the case, there could never be a “situation” during which one could do wrong! That is precisely the position argued by atheist Jean Paul Sartre. He contended that whatever one chooses to do is right; value is attached to the choice itself so that “...we can never choose evil” (279).

By way of vivid contrast, the Bible teaches that human conduct is the result of the exercise of man’s free will, and that bad choices, i.e., a violation of the law of God, as made known in the objective revelation of sacred scripture, have resulted in the numerous problems that afflict the human race today. “God made man upright; but they have sought out many devices” (Eccl. 7:29).

3. Traditional psychology contends that man’s religious inclination (which, incidentally, is universal) is merely the result of an ignorant personification of the inexplicable forces of nature, endowing them with the “father” symbolism. But, the Bible teaches that there is a real Heavenly Father (Mt. 6:9), who genuinely cares for the human family, and who desires to rescue it from the consequences of its rebellion (Jn. 3:16).
4. Modern psychology declares that since man is an evolved animal, the key to understanding his personality is to be discovered by way of studying animal behavior. In opposition, the Bible affirms that mankind is separate entirely from the animal kingdom, and only humans possess personhood.
5. Secular psychology suggests there’s no objective or higher source of information to define the nature of human difficulties, and to address the remedy for these problems. The answers to mental ills, it is said, lie within the person. But, the Bible contends the way of man is not within himself; it is not in man to direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23).

Moreover, the objective source of remedy is the divine revelation of scripture (1 Corinthians 2:6ff), amply documented by a wide variety of evidences. These inspired documents are able to satisfy completely every genuine need of the human mind (2nd Timothy 3:16-17).

Conclusion

The fact of the matter is this: reputation of humanistic psychology/psychiatry these days is somewhere between that of the alchemist and the snake-oil salesman.

Sometime back, **TIME** magazine carried a major article they titled: "Psychiatry's Depression." Dr. E.F. Torrey, a psychiatrist, has written a book dubbed: **The Death of Psychiatry**. Thomas Szasz, Professor of Psychiatry at the State University of New York, has authored the shocking volume: **The Myth of Mental Illness**, and Hobart Mowrer, an atheist who served as President of the American Psychological Association, produced a work called: **The Crisis in Psychology and Religion** in which he challenged the entire field of psychiatry for its dependence upon Freudian premises (see Adams, xvi).

The more one reflects upon the presuppositions of humanistic and modern psychology, the more he is inclined to think that Lucy, of the Charlie Brown comic strip, was overcharging when she gave counseling sessions for five cents!





**ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN
BY INSPIRATION OF GOD,
AND IS PROFITABLE FOR
DOCTRINE, REPROOF,
CORRECTION, AND FOR
INSTRUCTION IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

