

# Psychoheresy Briefs

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Editors' Note: The following article is excerpted and updated from Chapter 1 of *PsychoHeresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity* (Revised & Expanded).[1]

We plead with believers to consider the following cogent reasons to turn away from the love of psychological counseling theories and therapies, which are so strongly embraced in the church. The following do not all apply to every single psychologizer. However, we find that the following should be considered when reading what they have written or listening to what they say.

## Biblical Briefs

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Beneath all the biblical reasons why Christians should not pursue psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies is this one fact: **The use of psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies denies the sufficiency of Scripture for the issues of life normally therapized by a psychotherapist.**

- “Sola Scriptura” for the issues of life needs no assistance from the broken cisterns of psychology. (Isaiah 55:1-3.)
- The Bible has truth about mankind, whereas psychotherapy has only the very wisdom of men about which God warns His people. (1 Cor. 1:19-21; 2:4-6.)
- One of the flagrant failures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century church and now the 21<sup>st</sup> century church is the promotion of counseling psychology and its underlying personality and therapeutic theories and techniques.[2]
- The words *Christian* and *psychology* (as it is used today) do not go together. They are different religions. Therefore, there is no legitimate practice of “Christian psychology.”[3]
- People who attempt to integrate psychology with Christianity are like the Israelites adding idols to their worship of God. (Jer. 2:11:13; Eze. 6:6; 14:6-8; 20:31, 39.)
- For Christians there are no psychotherapies that should be used instead of the Bible or as an adjunct to the Bible because they are limited to the “old man” or the flesh, whereas born-again Christians have been given new life in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17.)
- Psychotherapy does not and cannot deal with the most important issues of life, namely sin, salvation, sanctification and glorification, and any licensed Christian psychotherapist who deals with any of these biblical doctrines during counseling is in violation of the restraints of the state license.[4]
- Psychotherapy is “science falsely so called.” (1 Tim. 6:20.)
- No one has ever proved that psychotherapy produces better results than the biblical ministry done in the church from the day of Pentecost onward.[5]
- Psychotherapy involves fleshly communication, is generally problem-centered, and its conversations regularly violate Scriptural teaching.[6]

- Problem-centered counseling, which is normally done by both psychological and biblical counselors, inevitably leads to sinful, evil speaking.[7]
- Over 60 years ago Christians handled personal and interpersonal problems primarily in the family, with close friends, or in the church, rather than with strangers. [8]
- Psychotherapy cannot save a person from sin or produce new life in Christ. It cannot save, justify, sanctify, or glorify. It cannot help to conform a person to the image of Christ. It is limited to the flesh or old nature.[9]
- The Last Days' lovers-of-self era in which we live has led to an era in which we have a plethora of personal and relational problems for which Scripture provides true spiritual answers and psychotherapy provides false fleshly answers. (2 Tim. 3.)
- It is sinful to add psychology to God's Word or to use psychology in place of the Bible.
- The Christian psychologizer generally knows less about the Word and its application to problems of living than a pastor.
- There is almost no psychological idea that cannot be made to sound biblical.
- The Christian psychologizer often interprets Scripture from a psychological perspective rather than evaluating psychology from a biblical perspective.
- Psychological explanations about life and psychological solutions to life's problems are not only unnecessary for Christians but spiritually detrimental as they are made up of a plethora of fleshly guesses replacing spiritual sanctification.

### **Psychological (Psychotherapeutic) Briefs**

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While the Biblical reasons to avoid such secular psychological therapy are all that are needed as the Bible needs no such support, it is worth noting that the very science the psychotherapists call upon to support their practice is loaded with conflicting and contradicting ideas, theories, and studies presented as evidence.

- Witchdoctors and psychotherapists have common roots for their work.[10]
- "Psychotherapy is most helpful to those who need it the least." [11]
- Psychotherapy is made up of the guesses, opinions, and unscientific theories about who man is and how he changes. It is not science.[12]
- Many of the almost 500 psychotherapeutic approaches available and thousands of techniques often contradict one another.[13]
- These different psychotherapeutic approaches seem to work (equal outcomes phenomenon), but they have only a mild to moderate effect. "Whether the magnitude of the psychotherapy effect is medium or small remains a moot point; no one has claimed that it is large." [14] Martin Seligman, a past president of the American Psychological Association, says that "by and large, we produce only mild to moderate relief." [15]
- Detrimental effects can occur from using psychotherapy to deal with problems of living with some very negative effects occurring with some very popular approaches. [16]
- Psychological explanations about life and psychological solutions to life's problems are questionable at best, detrimental at worst, and spiritual counterfeits at least.[17]

- Scientific research has already debunked the popular use of psychotherapy, but not put a stop to its proliferation. Because of the research, Alexander Astin contends that “psychotherapy should have died out. But it did not. It did not even waver. Psychotherapy had, it appeared, achieved *functional autonomy*” (emphasis his). Functional autonomy occurs when a practice continues after the circumstances which supported it are gone.[18]
- Psychotherapy is a religion in disguise that poses as science and sometimes as medicine.[19]
- The two main precursors of modern-day psychotherapy are mesmerism and Freudian psychoanalysis.[20]
- “There is no positive evidence supporting the efficacy [effectiveness] of professional psychology.”[21]
- “Psychotherapy may be known in the future as the greatest hoax of the twentieth century.”[22]
- It has not been demonstrated in the plethora of research to date that educated, degreed, licensed psychotherapists do any better at assisting those in need than amateurs.[23]
- “Evaluating the efficacy [effectiveness] of psychotherapy has led us to conclude that professional psychologists are no better psychotherapists than anyone else with minimal training—sometimes those without any training at all; the professionals are merely more expensive.”[24]
- Measurement of success in psychotherapy is whether one **feels** better, but it should be whether one **lives** better according to biblical standards.
- The popularity of psychotherapy is not due to science but rather to politics.[25]
- Psychotherapists live off the “spontaneous remission” rate, i.e., disappearance of symptoms without formal treatment.[26]
- Counseling is essentially a female-friendly activity, largely loathed by men as counselees, with the women currently being the large majority of counselors and counselees.[27]
- Degrees, licenses, experience, and education in the field of counseling do not make the psychologizers experts on human behavior.[28]
- Christians who are licensed psychotherapists must follow a non-discrimination policy, which means they cannot refuse professional service to anyone on the basis of race, gender, identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic or marital status.[29]
- Licensed psychotherapists are prohibited by their license from evangelizing their clients in reference to any religious faith, including Christianity.[30]
- Licensed psychotherapists are prohibited by their license from inferring or implying that they provide any religious counseling, including Christianity.[31]
- What a psychologizer says is often contrary to what numerous other psychologizers say.[32]
- Case histories or successful examples are not generally representative of what normally happens.[33]
- Successes claimed have less to do with the counselor’s psychological training, licenses, and experience than with factors in the client’s own life.[34]

- Successes claimed in counseling could easily be matched by persons not receiving psychological counseling.[35]
- Successes in psychological counseling are often short-term.[36]
- Success and failures both occur in psychotherapy.[37]
- There is definitely a harm rate for every psychological system.[38]
- What the psychologizer says about human relationships and problems of living is personal opinion rather than scientific fact.[39] [40]
- Psychotherapy is not a coherent science in principle or in theory, diagnosis, or treatment.[41]

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

[1] Martin & Deidre Bobgan. *PsychoHeresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity* (Revised & Expanded). Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 2012, Chapter 1, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/psychoheresy-preview.pdf>.

[2] Martin & Deidre Bobgan. *The End of "Christian Psychology."* Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 1997, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ECP-ebk.pdf>.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

[4] Martin & Deidre Bobgan, "Licensed Christian Psychotherapists," *PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter*, Vol. 28, No. 5, Sept-Oct, 2020, <https://pamweb.org/christian-psychology/licensed-christian-psychotherapists/>.

[5] Bobgan, *The End of "Christian Psychology," op. cit.*

[6] Martin & Deidre Bobgan. *Person to Person Ministry: Soul Care in the Body of Christ*. Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 2009, Part Two, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PPM-ebk.pdf>. Martin & Deidre Bobgan. *Stop Counseling! Start Ministering!* EastGate Publishers, 2011, Chapter 3, [https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Stop-Start\\_ebk.pdf?pdf=Stop-Start](https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Stop-Start_ebk.pdf?pdf=Stop-Start).

[7] See *Biblical Counseling Reviews*, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Biblical-Counseling-Reviews-for-web.pdf>.

- [8] Bobgan, "Licensed Christian Psychotherapists," *op. cit.*
- [9] *Ibid.*
- [10] E. Fuller Torrey. *Witchdoctors & Psychiatrists: The Common Roots of Psychotherapy and Its Future*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986.
- [11] Personal letter from Dr. Hans Strupp, Distinguished Professor, Vanderbilt University.
- [12] Martin and Deidre Bobgan. *The End of "Christian Psychology."* *Op. cit.*, Chapter 2, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ECP-ebk.pdf>.
- [13] *Ibid.*, Chapters 7-16.
- [14] APA Commission on Psychotherapies. *Psychotherapy Research: Methodological and Efficacy Issues*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1982.
- [15] Mary Sykes Wylie interviewing Martin Seligman. "Why Is This Man Smiling?" *Psychotherapy Networker*, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 51.
- [16] Bobgan. *The End of "Christian Psychology," op.cit.*, pp. 66-68, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ECP-ebk.pdf>.
- [17] *Ibid.*, pp 16-20, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ECP-ebk.pdf>.
- [18] Alexander W Astin, "The Functional Autonomy of Psychotherapy," *The Investigation of Psychotherapy: Commentaries and Readings*. Arnold P Goldstein and Sanford J. Dean, eds. New York: John Wiley, 1966, p. 62.
- [19] William Epstein, *Psychotherapy as Religion: The Civil Divine In America*, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006.
- [20] Thomas Szasz. *The Myth of Psychotherapy*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978, Chapters II and III.
- [21] Robyn Dawes. *House of Cards: Psychotherapy Built on Myth*. New York: The Free Press/Macmillan, Inc., 1994, p. 58.
- [22] Dr. Lawrence LeShan. Association for Humanistic Psychology, October 1984, p. 4.
- [23] Bobgan, *The End of "Christian Psychology," op. cit.*, pp. 84-87, <https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ECP-ebk.pdf>.
- [24] Dawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.
- [25] Rogers H. Wright and Nicholas A. Cummings, eds. *The Practice of Psychology: The Battle for Professionalism*. Phoenix, AZ: Zeig, Tucker& Theisen, Inc., 2001.
- [26] Hans J. Eysenck, "The Outcome Problem in Psychotherapy: What Have We Learned?" *Behavioral Research and Therapy*, Vol. 32, No. 5, 1944, p. 477.

[27] Bobgan. *Stop Counseling! Start Ministering! op. cit.*, Chapter 1, [https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Stop-Start\\_ebk.pdf?pdf=Stop-Start](https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Stop-Start_ebk.pdf?pdf=Stop-Start).

[28] Dawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 38, 52, 62, 73.

[29] American Psychological Association, "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct," 2010 Amendments, [www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx?item=3](http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx?item=3); American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, "Code of Ethics," [www.aamft.org/imis15/content/legal\\_ethics/code\\_of\\_ethics.aspx](http://www.aamft.org/imis15/content/legal_ethics/code_of_ethics.aspx).

[30] Martin and Deidre Bobgan, "Licensed Christian Psychotherapists," *PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter*, Vol. 28, No. 5, <https://pamweb.org/christian-psychology/licensed-christian-psychotherapists/>.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] Martin and Deidre Bobgan, "Psychotherapeutic Methods of CAPS Members," *Christian Association for Psychological Studies Bulletin* 6, No. 1, 1980, p. 13.

[33] Elizabeth F. Loftus and Melvin J. Guyer. "Who Abused Jane Doe? The Hazards of the Single Case History," Part 1. *Skeptical Inquirer*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 24, 25.

[34] Dawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 38, 52, 62, 73.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Bobgan, *The End of "Christian Psychology," op. cit.*, Chapter 4.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Bobgan, *Stop Counseling! Start Ministering! op. cit.*, pp. 164-171, [https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Stop-Start\\_ebk.pdf?pdf=Stop-Start](https://pamweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Stop-Start_ebk.pdf?pdf=Stop-Start).

[39] Harvey Mindess. *Makers of Psychology: The Personal Factor*. New York: Insight Books, 1988.

[40] Linda Riebel, "Theory as Self-Portrait and the Ideal of Objectivity." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Spring, 1982, pp. 91-92.

[41] Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *The Psychological Way/The Spiritual Way*. Bethany House Publishers, 1979, p. 63.