

absolve the Lord of whatever we have harbored. ... It is the only way you will ever be entirely free. ... Corrie ten Boom forgave an SS guard who shared responsibility for the deaths of her family member. Surely we can forgive the King of the Universe Who sent His only Son to die as an atonement for our sin” (from *When God Doesn't Make Sense*).

This is blasphemy. And this book was endorsed by R.C. Sproul and J.I. Packer, leaders of the “Reformed” bandwagon. Let us who are Christians have nothing to do with the blasphemy, perversion, and self-worth-ship of the so-called “Christian Psychology” movement.

- by Marc D. Carpenter

True Gospel Publications
P.O. Box 995
West Rutland, VT 05777
U.S.A.

www.outsidethecamp.org

Is “Christian Psychology” Christian?

The so-called “Christian Psychology” movement is by far the most popular movement among professing Christians today. Just check out your local “Christian” bookstore to see how much space is given to it. This heresy is being embraced by tens of thousands of professing Christians who claim to believe in the inerrancy, validity, and sufficiency of Scripture. “Christian” psychologists are enjoying a papal-like authority. Instead of analyzing what these men say according to Scripture (Acts 17:11), professing Christians come in droves to witness the next great insight — how to overcome addictions, co-dependency, depression, or neurosis; how to deal with your children, spouse, or parents; or how to heal your “wounded inner child” ... and the list of buzzwords goes on and on. The Promise Keepers movement is, at its heart, a “Christian Psychology” movement.

Just the fact that the prominent psychologists and counselors in this movement are Arminians should be enough for the true Christian to discern that they are wicked and are to be avoided. But there are some who call themselves Reformed who are involved in and advocate “Christian Psychology” and who integrate the theories of pagan psychologists into their philosophies and approaches.

I can hear it now: “But isn’t all truth God’s truth?” What this questioner fails to realize is that the issue is not about the origin of truth. Instead, the issue is this: What truth about the human condition and the remedies for the soul can an ungodly man comprehend? It takes only a brief perusal through the works of the fathers of psychology to see the following facts: (a) The concept of sin (as the Bible portrays sin) is nonexistent. (b) The concept of God (as the Bible portrays God) is nonexistent; thus, the concept of the biblical relationship of man to God is nonexistent. © The concept of law, or absolutes, is nonexistent; thus morality becomes relative. (d) The true gospel of salvation conditioned on the blood and imputed righteousness of Christ is nonexistent. If secular psychologists start from ungodly premises, how then can a “Christian” psychologist use this tainted insight in finding the causes and cures for any of the ills of the soul such as rebellion in teenagers or interpersonal problems or

every person's hunger for glory. ... Why would love-needing persons resist, rebel against, and reject beautiful love? ... Deep down we feel we are not good enough to approach a holy God. ... It is precisely at this point that classical theology has erred in its insistence that theology be 'God-centered,' not 'man-centered.' ... [Original sin] could be considered an innate inability to adequately value ourselves. Label it a 'negative self-image,' but do not say that the central core of the soul is wickedness. If this were so, then truly, the human being is totally depraved" (in *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*).

He went on to say the following in *Christianity Today* (8/10/84): "I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and, hence, counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition."

Does James Dobson, the leading "Christian" psychologist and darling of the evangelicals, oppose Schuller's heretical teaching? Here are some quotes:

"Feelings of self-worth and acceptance ... provide the cornerstone of a healthy personality. ... What is the primary motive that would cause a husband or wife to 'cheat' — to even risk destroying their homes and families for an illicit affair? ... I have observed the most powerful influence to emanate from ego needs" (from *Dr Dobson Answers Your Questions*).

"If I could write a prescription for the women of the world, I would provide each one of them with a healthy dose of self-esteem and personal worth ... I have no doubt that this is their greatest need" (from *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women*).

Paul warned Timothy that "*in the last days ... men will be lovers of self*" (2 Tim. 3:1-2). Jesus said that the Kingdom of Heaven is for those who are poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3). Look up "pride" in your concordance or topical Bible to see what the entirety of the Word says. Would you conclude that the problems of the world stem from too little self-esteem or too much of it?!

A common rationalization takes the form of the following: "If

Wounded Woman that also put forth the incestuous sexual attraction view. The reader will see that Wright and others such as the ones quoted below promote the view that a quasi-incestuous relationship between fathers and daughters is a normal, non-sinful part of human existence. Here is Wright:

"It is true that a woman's sexuality develops over her entire lifetime, but it is definitely encouraged — or retarded — by her early interactions with her father. ... Your father was the first man you flirted with, the first man to cuddle you and kiss you ... Her femininity is encouraged by his smile or wink when she bats her eyelashes at him ... [There exists] an initial courtship experience with her father ... A woman's sexual self-image is partially molded by her father's response to her. ... Fathers are sometimes bothered by the sexual effect their daughters have on them or the effect they may have on their daughters. ... Unfortunately, some fathers are ... uncomfortable ... [and thus] tend to be absent when she displays her charms ... The results of these rejections will be seen in a young woman's insecurity and doubt about her ability to attract a man."

[The reader should note that many professing Christians think that there is nothing wrong with "flirting" with someone of the opposite sex. In fact, they even jokingly attribute the sin of flirting to little babies when they tell another adult of the opposite sex, "he's flirting with you" or "shame on you for flirting with a married man," as if this were not utterly sinful. So, too, many professing Christians imbibe the so-called "Christian romance novels" and the worldly dating scene in which flirting and lust are condoned.]

"Christian" psychologist David Stoop, in *Making Peace With Your Father*, says this:

"The beginning of adolescence is marked by what is called the Oedipal conflict. ... [It] is often used to describe the emerging adolescent who, as his or her sexuality begins to emerge, falls in love with the parent of the opposite sex and competes with the same-sex parent in an effort to 'win over' the object of his or her love. In its strong form, the incestuous overtones of this psychological model may seem repulsive. Yet it is generally accepted that all of us go

worry?

The examples of “Christian” psychologists’ using secular theory are innumerable; because of space limitations, I will offer only a few examples. Just take a look at the books in the “Psychology” or “Men’s/Women’s Issues” or “Family Issues” sections in your local “Christian” bookstore (and be prepared with one of those air-sickness bags).

Freud: Sexual Perversion

For those of you who are not familiar with the “big daddy” of psychoanalysis, here’s an extremely condensed primer on Sigmund Freud: Freud was obsessed with sex. He described human development in terms of how the individual received sexual pleasure. He interpreted dreams as attempts to resolve underlying sexual conflicts. He saw the phallus, or phallic symbol, in everything. Freud admittedly lusted after his own mother, and he concluded that the first sexual attraction in all humans was for the parent of the opposite sex. He said that the young child’s unconscious sexual longings for the parent of the opposite sex (in the “Oedipal Stage”) explained the later outward hostility toward the same-sex parent during the teen years because of jealousy (called the “Oedipal Conflict”).

What do the perverted sexual theories of Freud have to do with Christian Psychology? To answer this question, I will simply provide the reader with direct quotes from several leaders in the movement. To let you know that these are not from the fringes of the movement, I will introduce the first quote: it is from *Always Daddy’s Girl* by H. Norman Wright, a best-seller when it was released because of the large amount of publicity given it by James Dobson. The book also quotes as authorities on father-daughter relationships various humanistic and overtly wicked sources such as the Freudian book *Modern Woman: Her Psychology and Sexuality* that includes a section written by Dr. Leon Hamner, who says that fathers give daughters sexual pleasure. Other sources used by Wright include Suzanne Fields’ *Like Father Like Daughter* and Linda Leonard’s *The*

Jesus came down to earth to shed His blood for us, then there must be some inherent worth in us.” However, Scripture clearly tells us that God saved His elect not because of anything that was worth saving in us, but purely by His grace (Rom. 5:6,8; Eph. 2:8-9). Instead of reacting to God’s grace by looking to ourselves as worthy, we must react by glorifying the sovereign God who loved the unlovable and who came for the sin-sick and not for the “self-esteeming” healthy (Matt. 9:12-13). Paul said, “*For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*” (1 Cor. 4:7)

The story of the tax gatherer and the Pharisee illustrates the point perfectly: “*The tax gatherer ... was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified*” (Luke 18:13-14).

Which one had the high self-esteem – the Pharisee or the tax gatherer? We have a good idea of what Dobson would say to the tax gatherer. In his book *Hide or Seek*, he responded to a woman who felt worthless in this way: “Jesus did not leave his throne in heaven to die for the ‘worms’ of the world.”

Dobson’s “jesus” didn’t die for the worms of the world. But my Jesus died for the worms and wretches — those who know they have no worth and who are saved by the worthiness of their substitute.

Is the reader still not convinced that Dobson is wicked? If the following quote won’t do it, nothing will:

“There is only one cure for the cancer of bitterness, that is to forgive the perceived offender. Once and for all, with God’s help, as strange as it seems, I am suggesting that some of us need to forgive God for those heartaches that are charged to His account. You’ve carried resentment against Him for years. Now it’s time to let go of it. Please don’t misunderstand me at this point. God is in the business of forgiving us, and it almost sounds blasphemous to suggest that the relationship could be reversed. He has done no wrong and does not need our approbation. But the source of bitterness must be admitted before it can be cleared. There is no better way to get rid of it than to

through at least a mild form of this experience as we arrive on the doorstep of adolescence.”

The February 16, 1993 edition of the “Minirth-Meier Clinic” radio program affirmed these twisted views by saying that every child goes through an Oedipal Stage where the child becomes attached to the parent of the opposite sex and has a resulting conflict with the same-sex parent. If you listen to that program, you will find more of the same twisted thinking. They rationalize sin as those awful “co-dependencies” or “addictions,” and they encourage callers to “work it out” with “professionals.”

In a book entitled *The Masculine Journey*, which is endorsed by Promise Keepers and was handed out to all Promise Keepers attendees, Robert Hicks uses his “stages of manhood” theory to condone sin and even to blaspheme. One of the stages he puts forth is the *Zakar* stage, which is a phallic stage. He says, “The phallus has always been the symbol of religious devotion and dedication” [referring to pagan sexual rites] and that every man has “the deep compulsion to worship with our phallus.” He says that a teenager’s first sexual sin should be thought of as a “rite of passage” and says that “we usually give the teenagers in our churches such a massive dose of condemnation regarding their first experiences with sin that I sometimes wonder how any of them ever recover.” He then says this about Jesus Christ:

“I believe Jesus was phallic with all the inherent phallic passions we experience as men. But it was never recorded that Jesus had sexual relations with a woman. He may have thought about it as the movie *The Last Temptation of Christ* portrays, but even in this movie He did not give in to temptation and remained true to His messianic course.”

This is blasphemy. Yet it is not beyond the thinking of most professing Christians, who think that mere “attractions” and “passions” outside the marriage bond are not sinful, as long as they are not consummated. How many times have you heard a professedly Christian person comment on how “good-looking” or “sexy” a person of the opposite sex is? This is wickedness. To demonstrate this,

here is a quote from another “Christian” counselor, Michael R. Saia (from *Counseling the Homosexual*), who says that a homosexual attraction is not sin:

“The dilemma here is that many people may assume that a man is sinning just because he is attracted to another man. ... [The attraction] is not something for which the person is morally culpable. As one gay man told me, ‘Nobody in his right mind would choose to be homosexually oriented if he had a choice in the matter.’ Before a counselor has comprehended and accepted the involuntary nature of the homosexual sexual preference, he may speak tremendous condemnation into the life of a counselee. Constant, subtle insinuation that a person is responsible for his sexual attractions can be a terrible psychological pressure.”

I hope the reader sees that if one believes that a heterosexual attraction outside of marriage is not sin, then it follows that a homosexual attraction is not sin.

Me Me Me: Self-Esteem

The other principle part of the “Christian” psychology movement is the focus on self-esteem and self-worth. The secular psychologists most famous for this approach were Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Their view was that psychological ills stem from a self-evaluation that is too low and that counselors should work at improving people’s evaluations of themselves.

There are two prominent leaders of the self-esteem movement in Christendom. One is the pastor of a professedly Reformed congregation in a professedly Reformed denomination, and the other is a semi-Pelagian. Both are wicked. They are Robert Schuller and James Dobson.

The following are some quotes from Schuller: “Prayer, worship, and well-thought-out sermons will not produce morally strong and spiritually exciting Christians if they fail to produce self-confident, inwardly secure, nondefensive, integrated persons. What we need is a theology of salvation that begins and ends with a recognition of