

WORKGROUP



BACK TO THE BIBLE

Kampen, translation Dutch letter nr.32 d.d.1 june 2007

Dear brothers, sisters, pastors and elders,

As we promised in our last letter nr.31, we will now go on with the subject: "How does psychology relate to the Bible?" We will start directly and put down the content:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Short life story of Sigmund Freud**
3. **Short life story of Carl Jung**
4. **History about Jesus of Nazareth**
5. **Jesus Christ the Sun of God**
6. **German philosopher Friederich Nietzsche and his influence**
7. **Greek philosopher Socrates, schools of philosophy and Paul**
8. **"Except a man be born again"**
9. **The essence of psychology**
10. **Probing questions**

1. Introduction

"Jesus is the best Psychologist" dr.Peter Roelofsma from the Christian University Amsterdam (VU) told John Bos, reporter of the magazine Challenge dd. 14 february 2003. The unbeliever will rather criticise this statement, but the believer from the moment almost certain shall assent what the professor the magazine told. In many books and magazines psychology is used without any hesitation to defend and to confirm spiritual matters. In a number of cases one speaks of Christian psychology. This is used in the explanation of Scriptures from the pulpit and in counselling courses. As workgroup we therefore asked ourselves if this is allowed in the light of the Bible. In doing so we immediately came across the question if Christian Psychology consists, if one can speak of Christian Psychology against non-Christian Psychology. In our former letter (nr.31 d.d.25-02-07) we wrote comprehensively about the problem of the self-esteem of men. Is it possible to improve this self-image, when we reflect this to the Bible? And must our self-image be corrected or teaches the Bible a different way? In the course of this letter we will come back on this. First we will look at the above cited quote: "Jesus is the best Psychologist".

We do this by resembling Jesus with known psychologists, for if He is the best than there are others of his level that are just not the best. In doing so we come to the row with names like: Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and others. Although these psychologists from the first hour do not live any more, their teachings are regularly quoted in modern times. In connection with the 150th birthday of Freud in 2006, this became clear in the following articles:

- 1...Quiz "What do you know about Freud?" win a free weekend to Wien! Article in the magazine Psychology d.d. May 2006
- 2..."Jung, Guru without God, therapist, dreamer and discoverer of the unconsciousness is more popular than ever." Article in a known Dutch daily Paper d.d15 July 2006
- 3..."Freud, the unconsciousness keeps a firm grip on us." Article in magazine Philosophy d.d. May 2006.
- 4...Though there are also arguments that hold against the theories of Freud, as we can read in an article in the Dutch daily paper Trouw d.d.24 February 2006. In this article with the heading: "Seven reasons why Freud is out" the last of the seven reasons concludes: "Freud is not pass off".

After this short introduction we want to go to our subject: "the Bible and /or psychology". We have not chosen for long debates in which we use many specialist terms, which are strange to most of us. In public libraries there are many handbooks with psychological expressions and concepts sometimes with 725 pages. This might tempt you to put the letter aside thinking the content is too difficult. No, from now on you get the possibility to choose which part of this letter you want to read and which part you want to pass over. The intention of the writers is that you do not need to read everything. If you have no interest in some parts, or if you know already some parts, just jump to another for you more interesting part. We as writers of course have to put everything down, because all parts form one letter and we refer regularly to these parts. With this explanation and advice at the background, we will now start with the first part.

2. Short life story of Sigmund Freud

In 1856 he saw the daylight in the Tjechian town Freiburg within a great Jewish family. When he was three years old his parents moved to Wien, where he grew up and studied at the University. His field of study interest covered biology, philosophy and medical science. Freud loved to experiment and did this per example by hypnotise his patients. When he started his own practice in Wien, he stopped hypnotising, because he discovered that his patients could not tell him their experiences afterwards. He was very enthusiastic about the use of cocaine and thought he had found a panacea against psychological illnesses. Personally he used cocaine as a cheer up and recommended it to his family and friends. To one of his best friends this became fatal and he died from a coke psychosis. Freud was bitterly shocked and this incident damaged his reputation.

His psychoanalysis on psychiatric patients made him very famous in his medical field. He asked them for this reason to take place on a sofa, while they told him about their problems. Freud himself was present but out of sight for the patients to give them free utterance. The original red sofa is shown in his museum in London. His daughter often was used as an example. Later she became a psycho therapist herself special in the realm of children. Another feature of his theories is the excessive contribution of sexual influences on the situation of the patients. He brought almost everything they went through in their lives in connection with sexual behaviour.

Freud is also known from his theory about the influence of the unconscious of men in life. In his philosophy a part of men, which is unknown to him plays an important role in him or her life. This is what Freud calls the unconscious.

Concerning his private life he was initially faithful to his wife who gave him six children. Later on he lost his interest for her and took another. His inner life was not free from problems. When he was in his forties he suffered from many psychosomatic illnesses; he also was utterly afraid from death and had to fight with different phobias.

When he lived and practised in Wien he came in contact with another known psychiatrist, Carl Jung, who lived in Switzerland. In the beginning they were friends, but later on their friendship changed in a strained relationship of jealousy and hatred. It is possible that Freud's Jewish background irritated Jung, who was not favourable to Jews. This all happened in the period before the second world war. Though Freud had sworn of his Jewish religion, he decided to flee from the continent to London because of the hatred from Hitler towards the Jews. There he became ill, cancer in his mouth, which after a long period of suffering made him to decide to take his own life in 1939.

3. Short life story of Carl Jung

In 1875 he was born in Switzerland as a child of a minister family. His faith in God he said farewell when he was 25 years and he start searching in different other religions. The following row he searched during his life and did take part in them: I Tjing's Miracles Book, alchemy, mythological world, interpretation of dreams, philosophy, reincarnation, contact with eastern religions. During his voyages of discovering in Africa he did not hesitate to take part in occult tribe rituals.

In his personal life he had set out his own free norms. He was married and has stayed with his first wife during his life. But he had also a "mistress" in this same life. This lady he had met during his adventures in Africa and Jung was very fond of her. He forced his wife to allow the "mistress" to be part of the family at certain times. On his deathbed in 1961, when his wife had already died, she was present with him.

His main profession was psychiatrist in a clinic in Switzerland. Like Freud he did many experiments with patients from the clinic. Besides this he gave lectures about his experiences in USA, England, and France. In this period he got contact with Freud, who also was experimenting in the same field as Jung did. Later this contact changed in a relation of jealousy and hatred. Just like Freud he studied the unseen part of men the unconsciousness, but Jung went farther than Freud in this field. He found fellow-sufferers in the unconscious parts of other men. He called this discovery the collective unconsciousness.

Jung found it difficult to think positive about the Jews. He never wrote good from them. His anti-semitism he sometimes could not keep secret during the second world war. The German writer Thomas Mann, who had fled at that time to America, said: "he always was half a nazi". Even in 1951 Jung called avarice " the fate of the Jews".

His popularity in Europe and America was great, which caused a certain pressure on his private life. He therefore bought a small castle in Bollingen in Switzerland. Here he could practise his hobby, being wood cleaving for the stoves in the castle.

The biographer Ronald Hayman writes: "Jung is the most successful heathen prophet since two thousand years".

4. History about Jesus of Nazareth

In the year zero in the small village of Bethlehem in Palestine a little boy was born. This boy should be of great importance in the history of the world. His father and mother, Joseph and Maria called him Jesus. Soon they had to flee to Egypt because of murderer king Herode. After keeping shelter for a while they went back to Palstine, knowing Herode had died. The family settled down in Nazareth, where Jesus grew up with his brothers and sisters. He worked with his father in the carpenter business till he was about thirty years old. Up till that age there was not much extraordinary to mention.

The big change came when he during a family wedding feast heard from his mother that there was great shortage of wine. He helped the embarrassed couple by making a complete new supply of very good wine just by changing water into wine. From that happening in Kana many great miracles followed. Specially in the field of healing he became well known. Beside

doing these miracles he also started to preach to the crowds. His way of preaching differed greatly from the preaching of the existing religious order. He was very strait forward and did not mince his words. If necessary he gave the Jewish Pharisees and scribes what for. He reproached them their patronising way of explaining the Jewish Law, while they taught wrongly about the real content of the Law. Jesus summarised the Law in two main commandments: You must love God with everything that is within you and you must love your neighbour as you love yourself.

This way of preaching was highly estimated by the listeners, it had a kind of authority. He attracted crowd's of listeners especially because he always healed the sick which were brought to him. All this attention of men caused also hostility from the existing Jewish order. They did not agree at all with this modernist and they were very jealous because of the many people who believed in him.

Therefore they hatched plans to murder him by means of one of his disciples. This disciple called Judas told the Jewish counsel of Elders and Pharisees about the most suitable time and place to imprison Jesus. The representative of the Roman Empire Pontius Pilates, found Jesus not guilty. But to please the Jews he gave permission to crucify him on the hill Golgatha, just outside the wall of Jerusalem. He was buried in a new grave in the rocks nearby.

His disciples were horrified about his death. But afterwards they found his grave empty. According to their story this was a wonderful sign, because they met Jesus as a living person on different occasions and on different places. They told everyone that Jesus after being in the grave for three days was risen from the dead. During a period of forty days after his resurrection Jesus and his disciples met regularly and he gave them instructions about how to spread his new teachings. After that time he left his disciples and disappeared in the sky. Jesus promised to send from heaven the Holy Ghost to them to assist them in their task. On the day of Pentecost his promise was fulfilled and since then the Christian teaching, as this was called later on, was spread around the globe.

5. Jesus Christ the Son of God

The God of the Bible is a triune God. In the liturgy of the church one speaks of the Holy Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost appear separate from each other, but They also appear together in the stories of the Bible. (see letter nr.29 d.d.27-03-06) This gives us an indication that the above mentioned Jesus not only historical is, but also belongs to the Holy Trinity. This fact gives a complete other image of the person Jesus. He is not only just a person from the Jewish history, but in reality a godly creature. God the Father called him his Son. Just like the Holy Spirit He lived with his Father in heaven and together they formed the Holy Trinity.

For a short while his presence in heaven was interrupted: *"You made him a little lower than the angels"* (Hebr.2:7) It fitted in Gods plan to let Jesus descend to earth , where He could make redemption for the people of their sins. For this reason Jesus had to become an ordinary man first. Therefore He was conceived by the virgin Mary, when the Holy Ghost overshadowed her: *"How will this be, Mary asked the angel, since I am a virgin? The angels answered : the Holy Ghost will come upon you, and the power of the most High will overshadow you. So the Holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."* (Luk.1:34,35) This all happened when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. In the daily life Mary and Joseph were the mother and father of Jesus

The Bible gives comparatively little details about his childhood. He was an obedient son and was interested in religious affairs on early age. (Luk.2:40-52) The environment of his youth respected him for his behaviour: *"And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and men."* (Luk.2:52)

God knew that the incarnation of his Son would be difficult to believe for men. He therefore did everything to make this plain and acceptable to them. Already in the first verses of the Bible in Gen.3:15 He says: *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* (Gen.3:15) In this way God predicts the coming of his Son, the Saviour. This verse is in theological circles known as the Pre-Gospel. During Jesus' time on earth He speaks very often about and from the Old Testament and gave his listeners indications about his coming on earth. After his resurrection when He is debating with the men on the road to Emmaus, He says: *"How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"* (Luk.24:25,26)

Besides the things which are written in the Old Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Jesus himself testified about his godly offspring. God the Father also found it necessary to convince the people that Jesus is God, by let Him do many, many miracles. These miracles varied from walking on water, making wine from water, healing many serious illnesses, casting out of demons till raising some persons from the dead. God knew that a number of persons would believe that Jesus was as well human and as godly at the same time, while others would not believe. He wrote the following in John3:16,17 : *"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."* God is very serious about this matter. Though the Bible is full of the love of God for the world, the Bible also speak clear language against them who do not want to believe. In extension of the above quoted texts we read: *"Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son . This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."* These evil deeds of men were the main reason why Jesus came out of heaven down to earth. When He preached this theme was very clear and often the topic.(see letter nr.27 dd. 15-03-05) He explained that because of these evil deeds, because of these sins a human being had to die as punishment. This man had to be sinless just like the lam of the Passover, a lam without blemish. At that point in his preaching He expounded that He Himself should be the burn offering in accordance to the prophecies of the Old Testament. This explanation nobody believed and nobody agreed. When Jesus was crucified and the prophecies were fulfilled, everybody, especially his nearby followers thought that this was the definite end of all. But to their great surprise and to their great joy it was not the end.

On the contrary little by little the followers discovered, who it was who was with them in those years, Jesus the Son of God. During a period of forty days after his crucifixion and resurrection Jesus taught them everything they ought to know. It all became clear to them now and the followers were capable to pass on the gospel to others.