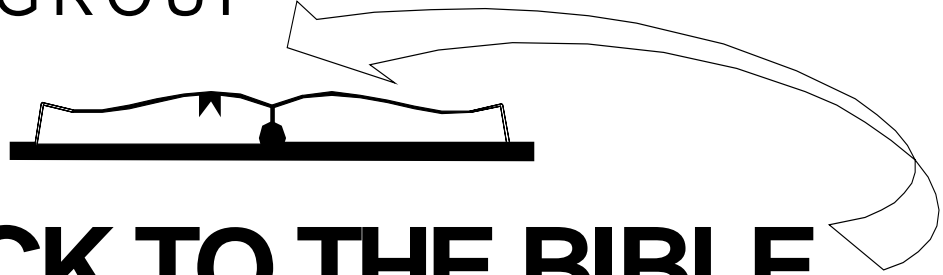


# WORKGROUP



# BACK TO THE BIBLE

Translation Dutch letter nr.33 dd.10 October 2007

Dear brothers, sisters, pastors and elders,

As we promised in our last letter nr.32, we will go on with the subject: "How does psychology relate to the Bible?" We first give a short summary of the preceding two letters. Letter nr.31 dd. 8 February 2007 gives us the content of the book "Improving the Self-Image...Freedom or Bondage?" written by Anita Simpson from Cork, Ireland.

Letter nr.32 dd. 1 June 2007 deals with the problem of the founders of psychology and philosophy. We repeat the content of this letter:

1.Introduction; 2.Short life story of Sigmund Freud; 3.Short life story of Carl Jung; 4.Historical story of Jesus Christ of Nazareth; 5.Jesus Christ the Son of God; 6.German philosopher Friedrich 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.Pressing questions.

In the last letter we finished up wondering why the church, despite the dubious and atheistic sides of the foundations of psychology, nevertheless started to use its principles. We will try to explain this, while using some examples.

As usual we start with the content:

- 11. Breakthrough-training**
- 12. God the Holy Spirit in man here on earth**
- 13. Upgrading the self-esteem**
- 14. Present day psychologists as pastors in our midst**
- 15. Psychiatry, volunteer aid and pastoral counsellors**
- 16. Opposition out of the ranks of the psychologists**
- 17. End conclusion and pastoral advice**
- 18. Bibliography**

## **11. Breakthrough-training**

About two years ago the workgroup was confronted for the first time with a complaint about this training. At the end of March the Nederlandse Dagblad (ND) was the first newspaper, that gave much attention to this training. In the mean time we had collected much material via foreign publications, magazines, workbook and internet. Enough to get a complete and balanced idea about this course. It also fits in our subject: psychology and the Bible.

*"In this course all we learned about the Bible is turned upside down",* a complaint of one of the participants.

The N.D.dd.24 March 2007 had this headline: *“Turned around in four days, the steady advance of the Breakthrough-course among Christians”*. On the follow-up page it says: *“Is this God's intervening or the box of tricks of the trainer?”*

After that the paper published some reactions on this article. *“Turning round in four days is not unreal”*. *“The Breakthrough-course, an approach for character-development and discipleship can work out a positive change. The picture, painted in the paper, too sceptical and one sided.”* According to Peter de Graaf, a professional adviser from Arnhem.

Criticism by psychiatrists and pastors: *“Turning round of character in four days is harmful”*. *“Absolute nonsense”*. *“Harmful and mutilation of the personal integrity”*.

Now we reach the centre of this part of our letter. Most of you, unless you have read the mentioned article in the ND, will wonder what on earth we are talking about. What is a Breakthrough-training and what is so special about it?

### **11.1 Content Breakthrough-training.**

The word breakthrough means the breaking through of the character of a person. People who are discontent about their character and are struggling to change their lives are asked to apply. The brochure says the following:

*“The Breakthrough-training assumes that God has created us to live useful and valuable lives, regardless of circumstances, happenings and difficult times we all know in our lives. Our present culture tells us we have the power to determine the direction of our lives ourselves. Now that is true. The question is how we will use the freedom God has given us. Which direction do we choose, looking at the limitless number of roads, that are open to us? Do we choose the way of living of today: to live for ourselves or do we choose His way: live for others? He clearly calls us up to obey and follow His way. Not because He needs us, but in the end this will prove to be the best, most rewarding choice we can make”*.

Up till now the purpose of the course is not yet very clear. With the course goes a workbook that every participant must have read before application. It is an American book, available in the bookshop, with the title: *“Killing the Victim before the Victim kills you, building relationships through keeping promises”*. The writers are two psychologists with a Christian pastoral ministry. They believe people can and must change to be able to live a better life. An important purpose of change is keeping promises made to other people. To arrive at this purpose, a person has to better get to know him/herself. To reach this point of self knowledge several psychological methods are used. For some participants these methods cause surprising, even bad experiences, others pass through them easily and tell that to them it has been useful. The methods are among others: very loud music, light effects, role play, group discussions, during which one tells the other the truth, being shouted at by the trainer, do lines, when one does not live up to the claims of the trainer, it is forbidden to walk out during the training, etc. The training sessions look much alike to the well known management trainings for business men. The training is very strict. When somebody wants to leave during the four days, then also his buddy (comrade) has to go. At the beginning of the course every participant has had to choose such a person out of his colleagues. So, when somebody does not agree with or cannot emotionally handle the course, he/she can feel compelled to go on because of the buddy.

Although the above mentioned workbook is not very clear (see for example the title), we understand the trainers take for granted that the participants must be convinced they are victims of themselves. During the four days they must work themselves up above this idea and change in conquerors. Then they will be more able to keep their promises to other people

and so a better world comes into being. Writing this causes pain to our hearts and we wonder how this course can be given disguised as a Christian course. Promoter for the Netherlands is Youth with a Mission. The workbook is warmly recommended on the backside by dr. Bruce Thompson, head of the International University of Youth with a Mission.

## **11.2 Conclusion**

We could write much longer about the breakthrough-course, but we will not do that, because that does not quite fit in the subject of our letter. Again we notice that the Christian person turns away from the biblical principles of sanctification and turns to the worldly psychological ideas. Man in this context is considered to be central and the sinful nature of man, is not taken into account. The apostle Paul writes about this in Rom.7:18-25: *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do is not the good I want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

*So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God- through Jesus Christ our Lord!”* So Paul does not at the end give the advice to conquer the problem by listening to the wise men of his day and visit their schools. (see letter nr.32 point 7) No, he points to the only solution of the problem, the person Jesus Christ. He who died on Golgotha for the sin of men, only He can change our character. Again it is Paul who points out the way we have to follow. He explains, e.g. in the letter to the Galatians we have to consider ourselves crucified with our Saviour and says: *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* (Gal.2:20)

In the Breakthrough-course the Bible is not used and the psychological principles are not founded biblically. That would be hardly possible, for the course has been made for believers as well as non-believers. The trainers are not bothered by that at all. So by application it is not necessary to tell if one is a believer or not, if one is an atheist or following whatever other belief. There is another phenomenon: the participant has to sign a paper stating they will not hold the organisation responsible for any emotional damage caused to him/her during or after the course. This means the trainers take into account damage possibility and they want to cover themselves against it. All in all we do not find much if any spiritual value in the Breakthrough-course. We advice Christians who get confronted with it not to get associated.

Remark: In the past we analysed a false movement called: “the American Moral Government Theology”. Some years ago this movement was successful in the youth movement Youth with a Mission. (see letter nr.24 dd. 08-04-02) Here the emphasis was clearly laid on the improvement of the morale, while the meaning of sanctification by the death on the cross by Jesus Christ stayed very much in the background. Now again we find elements of this false movement in the Breakthrough-course.

## **12. God the Holy Spirit in man here on earth**

During his youth on earth Jesus was already in contact with the Jewish religious leaders. He spoke and debated with them and came to the conclusion that the people around Him tried to live good lives, but were not very successful. Their leaders compelled them to live according to the law, lives they could not even live up to themselves. And when Jesus taught new

spiritual ways, his audience was surprised and very happy. This teaching was completely different, it did not pull them down and they did not fall in all kind of pitfalls.

Jesus drew huge crowds, because they said: He speaks with authority. *"They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority."* (Luke 4:32)

Also for his disciples this teaching was a relief. They also were brought up under the yoke of the law and were taught by the Jewish religious leaders. But when Jesus was nailed on the cross by the same leaders and buried by his followers everything seemed lost. It seemed everybody had to take up again the yoke of the teaching of the Jewish leaders. He came out of the tomb. He arose from the grave. And then what happened to the teaching?

Jesus started to teach his disciples in forty days how to move on. And after that He said that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would come to the earth in his place. He would live with the believers and even in them. The Holy Spirit would teach them and explain everything that Jesus had taught them during his days on earth, before as well as after his crucifixion. And so it happened. At Pentecost Jesus fulfilled his promise and the Holy spirit was poured out on the believers in Jerusalem. And as promised by Jesus, He never left again. Because not only the first disciples received the Holy Spirit. All disciples after them received the same divine Person. And even now, this is happening!

Nicodemus, one of the few Jewish religious leaders, who wanted to know more about the teachings of Jesus, visited during the night and Jesus told him the following: *"I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying: You must be born again"*. (John 3:5-8)

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the divine Trinity. He is also God. (see letter nr. 29 dd. 27-03-06) Like God the Father and God the Son, He has great empathy with humanity and because He lives here on earth in the believer. He is intensively occupied with the believer. As His name makes clear, the holiness of God is very important to Him. In Peter 1:14-16 it says: *"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy because I am holy."* The writer of Hebrews says: *"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no-one will see the Lord."* Paul is emphasising the sanctification of the Christian. In Gal.5:13-26 he spends much time on the walk of the Christian. There are, he says, two possibilities: either we walk in the flesh, or we walk in the Spirit. The result are works of the flesh, or the fruit of the Spirit. We mention them both here: *"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like"*. The result of the in-living Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit: *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"*. *Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passion and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit"*.

#### **Conclusion workgroup:**

Psychologists and philosophers who are trying to improve the conduct of men, are to be praised. They follow the attempts of the biblical writers. But the difference is coming out in the practical outworking of the matter. Here they fail because they do not reckon with the sinful nature of man. Also they cannot compete with the in-living God, the Holy Spirit. He is able to do so much more than we pray for or realise. The Holy spirit works together with the born-again Christian, to attain his sanctification. No psychologist or philosopher can compete with that!

### 13. The self-esteem upgraded

After the end of the second world war in 1945 very much was changed in the western world. An enormous rebuilding program started of destructed buildings, big expansions of cities were started, sciences developed fast, in the medical world one discovery and development followed the other, etc. Together with all this change, science and practice of the psychology was also developing itself. Steve Salerno, a well-known American free-lance journalist/writer, specialised himself in the development of the psychology in his country. Steve Salerno, not a Christian, in 2004 wrote about the result of his research an interesting book with the title: SHAM (Self-Help and Actualisation Movement).

In his foreword he comes out with the sensational fact that a big part of his fellow-Americans have become spiritual invalids and look for help to organisations, therapists, important psychological tv-programs, seminars, books etc. Also he made a rough estimation, about how much money (partly paid by the insurance) the Americans have to pay for this “spiritual help”. His conclusion is: in 2008 the amount will rise to twelve billion dollar. Of course this amount is not an exact one, but the man who wrote this book is an experienced researcher and we must take notice of him.

...13.1 One of the things Steve Salerna mentions, is the influence of the so-called self-esteem movement. He specially gives attention to the American education level. He says that since the teachers changed the accent on the performance-level of the students to the feelings of the students, the education level has gone down. Before a student who performed well was openly praised in the classroom. Now this is forbidden, because students with lower performance might feel hurt and that could prove bad for their self-esteem. Self-esteem is considered more important than a good performance. On a primary school in Alabama, the reading results of the children were not too good. Instead of working a bit harder to reach the desired level, the personnel put up a big mirror at the entrance of the building. Every time the pupils went in, they could read the following above the mirror:

*“You are looking at one of the most special people of the world.”*

...13.2 The self-esteem movement originated in the non-Christian world by means of the American psychologist Napoleon Hill. Next to him there were diverse other persons who stimulated the movement. They used the motto: Believe it, achieve it and made the movement grow to the level of today.

... 13.3 In the Christian world it is rev. Schuller who brought the movement in the church. The title of his first book is: “Self-esteem: the New Reformation” 1982. Since that time he has worked out this theme in his sermons and up till now we find this back in his sermons in the Crystal Church (Hour of Power). Mr Schuller has replaced the gospel by the psychological dogma of the self-esteem movement. He says in his book: *“I believe nothing worse has ever been done in the name of Jesus than the often raw, clumsy and not-Christian strategy to try to make people conscious of their sinful state. This has proved to be devastating for the personality of men and so is unfruitful for evangelisation.”* (see also our letter nr. 16 dd. 13June 1999)

...13.4 In the Netherlands Walter Trobisch and his wife, a Swiss couple, promoted the self-esteem theory in the Christian world. Their book “Love Yourself” 1976 has been read by many people and declared to be a new truth. The couple organised many seminars to promote the message. The basis-proposition was founded on the words of Jesus in Matth 22:36-40: *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”* Many Christians still think in this direction. Well, they say: it says in the text: You will love your neighbour as yourself, so it also says: you will love yourself. They seem to be right and the fact is not disputable. But

Jesus does not say here that you have to love yourself. On the contrary, linguistically Jesus only says here that next to God we must also love our neighbour.

We will split up the text in two parts to interpret rightly. *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* The first part tells us what God expects from us: *"You will love the Lord your God"*. In the second part He speaks about the intensity of this process: *"with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* Now we take the following text and split this one also in two: *"You will love your neighbour as yourself."* In the first part it says: *"You will love your neighbour"* That is what God expects us to do. Then in the second part He speaks about the intensity wherewith we must love our neighbour. Jesus is very level-headed in this matter. He says :love one another as you love yourself. He does not give any further explanation about how we have to put this into practice. He takes for granted we all love ourselves and care for ourselves in a normal way. There is another similar incident. He tells us the parable of the good Samaritan. Here also Jesus does not say the Samaritan must love himself first. Nowhere in the Bible Jesus encourages us to especially love ourselves. He is interested in two commands: Love God and love your neighbour.

...**13.5** Fortunately there are psychologists who start having doubts: is the self-esteem-movement going in the right direction? A Dutch Christian paper, Het Nederlands dagblad from 28-02-07 has printed an article with the heading: *"Psychologists in U.S. concerned about results self-esteem movement. American students are getting more ego-centric every day."* Jean Twenge, professor psychology on the University of San Diego tells us to stop telling our children: "You are special". Together with four other psychologists she did extensive research with young students about the I-feeling. The research covered their answers over the period 1982 till 2006. (Narcistic Personality Research NPI)

The research showed that students scored highly in the realm of excessive self-love, that means they have a narcissistic personality. In 2006 the students scored 30 percent higher then in 1982. Jean Twenge advised to do something about this. Let us start in the first group of the primary school and stop teaching them the song: "I am special, I am special, look at me." In Holland we use the well-known tune of: father Jacob, father Jacob

#### **14. Present day psychologists as pastors in our midst**

...**14.1** In America tv-personalities are very popular and have great influence on the every-day life. During these last years Oprah Winfrey has been a well-known tv-personality. Her programs are penetrating and millions of Americans are fascinated. Also in the Netherlands she is on tv regularly. For some years already she was chosen as the most influential woman of America. Only a few Christians know she is a fanatical follower of the New Age Movement and makes openly propaganda for this movement in her shows. Also she "discovered" several persons who now make furore as well. One of these persons is dr. Phil McGraw who now has his own tv-followers: 6 million watchers! In our country dr.Phil also is often on tv. He is a psychologist who in a practical way gives advise to his clients (his viewers). In 2006 he gave his personal testimony in the Hour of Power Christmas paper of rev. Schuller and according to that testimony he is a Christian. He says he gets his wisdom in his shows from God.

...**14.2** Rick Warren, the man who became well-known because he made use of an easy attainable method to lure outsiders into his church, has become good friends with Ken Blanchard. This man is a well-known business man who organises courses in management. Rick Warren being in need of a businesslike approach in his church, works closely together with the leader of the course. In his field Ken Blanchard has already written a few things, but in 2005 he also wrote a book with a Christian edge: "The Generosity Factor." He did this

together with the founder of the chain of Chicken restaurants in America. To our amazement the evangelical publisher Gideon brought this book on the market as a Christian book. We consider the evangelical value of the book to be minimal.

...14.3 In 2002 two psychologists dr. Henry Cloud and dr. John Townsend wrote a bulky book with the title: "How people grow". The readers offer good judgement about it and as workgroup we recognise the good parts in it. So we could suffice with a "Gloria". But next to the Gloria we must put a comment. Because in this book we read, however subtly put, the conviction of the writers that, next to the Bible, the content of this book are a necessity. The Bible does not give sufficient advice and test material. They write the following: "*Some growth-groups believe this: When you just know the Bible and believe their specific idea's, you will grow up and reach adulthood. We do agree a good knowledge of the ways of God are most important, but the Bible itself teaches us that knowledge of the truth is not sufficient.*"

We believe the writers are fundamentally mistaken. Nowhere in the Bible it says that knowledge of the Word of God is not sufficient for the life of the Christians. While defending their standpoint the writers quote James 1: 22-25. But the periscope of this bible part starts in verse 19. So we will start there: "*My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-he will be blessed in what he does."*

Here is not spoken about knowledge of the of the truth, as dr. Henry Cloud and dr. John Townsend suggest, but a deep study of the Word of God and sins that must be put away. The expressions: "*the word planted in you*" and "*who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do so*" show us the importance of the Bible for living a holy life.

They also make clear to us how to reach spiritual growth.

...14.4 In 1977 there were two American professors in clinical psychology on the Colombia University in New York City who according to their own words, were in need of a mental change. Neither of them was happy about the imperfect way they treated each other and their desire for acknowledgement and status in the world they lived. After a few months of hesitation they decided to take a new direction. This lead to the joint writing of a study book with the title: A Course in Miracles. The way this work came into being is really spectacular. During the night professor Helen Schueman received the words offered to her by the Voice. During the day-time she passed them on to her colleague orofessor William Thetford, who typed out everything his colleague had received during the night from the Voice. This teamwork lasted for about seven years, then the content was printed and published as a study book. This book of 1383 pages is on the market and gets media attention. (published by Ank-Hermes bv. Deventer)

The composers write in the foreword about the purpose of the book: "*This book is not meant to form the basis of a new cult or sect. It is just meant to offer some people a way to find their own inner Teacher. "...The material offered by the course has been put together in a careful way and is explained step by step, in a theoretical as well as in a practical way. It emphasises application instead of theory and experience instead of theology. It emphasises the thesis: A universal theology is an impossibility, but a universal experience is not only a possibility, but even a necessity. Tough Christian in formulation, the Course deals with universal spiritual themes. It emphasises this is only one version of the universal learning track. There are many others and this one only differs from them in form. In the end they all lead to god."*

Among other things the indirect publicity of Oprah Winfrey during her tv-shows, is one of the reasons for the fame of the course. It is also used in the Netherlands. While reading the above-mentioned quotes you will probably start to surmise that this course has New-Age links. And that is true. The book has not been written especially for this movement, but the movement certainly has embraced the book. It is even called the New Age bible. This could be correct, because it contains many theological concepts, that can also be found in the Bible. But these theological concepts have completely different meanings.

Most of them are even squaring with the meanings we know from the Bible. So the definition of sin is lack of love, it needs to be corrected instead of being an evil that must be punished. The Holy Spirit, the Voice, must help us escape out of the dream world, by turning our mind and unlearning our mistakes. The word crucifixion is used, but not for the crucifixion of Jesus, but for the pain and suffering that the student has to undergo when he is badly treated by other people. We can go on like this, it is a complete “paradigma shift”, compared with what the Bible teaches us.

## **15. Psychiatry, volunteer aid and pastoral counsellors**

...15.1 Foreword. A woman is very confused. She is acting very strangely and says she is hearing hostile voices in her head. In the end she is admitted to the psychiatric department in the hospital. The elders of the church she belongs come together and after consideration decide to visit the sister. But the hospital does not agree. Then they decide to have a special private prayer meeting. During this meeting fiery prayers are made and the devil is ordered to set the spirit of this Christian woman free. The elders are convinced that the devil keeps this woman a prisoner and that is the reason she hears those hostile voices in her head. But the voices do not leave. Fortunately she gets medication and therapy, she recovers and is able to live normally again. But the confusion and voices in her head repeat themselves.

Another lady, not a born again Christian acts so strangely that her doctor has her admitted to the psychiatric department of the hospital. This woman suffers of bad attacks of fear. She does not want to have visitors, not even family. After a while things get better and she is allowed to go home again. Medication, therapy and counselling help her to function reasonably in her surroundings. She is difficult to get on with and must continue using medicines.

Both cases are examples from the practice, seen by bystanders. This gives us some idea about what one meets in the field of psychiatry. Psychiatry is the medical name of the study and treatment of illness of the soul. The term psychic handicapped clients is used. Most of our readers will recognise the above mentioned situations or have been involved even. This is the field of the mentally ill. For persons who are mentally handicapped and for them who take care, especially the so-called volunteer-aid persons, these are very difficult and complex experiences. They experience sadness about the situation, while common sense wonders how all this is possible, how and why this has come to pass. But for many people it is part of their daily life. You cannot pass it by. Also for believing and serious Christians it is the same. They have no choice. They just have to accept the sad facts. As workgroup we cannot write any more about this, as we do not have enough knowledge and insight in this area. So we mention just a few matters we have noticed in the past few years.

...15.2 Some Christians mean they have the solution for mental illness. Contrary to the psychiatrists, they mean the devil is behind it all. They assume a certain amount of the mentally ill are occupied territory, occupied by the devil. And that, in spite of the fact that the persons are born-again Christians. That is why they pray with the sick Christians and they pray fiercely to drive out the demons. Now this prayer hardly ever is successful and that causes nervous confusion in the mentally ill patient. After some time, when the patient regains quietness, he/she may start feeling guilty. Also for the surrounding caretakers, this kind of praying is a frustration, it gives more problems than being helpful. As workgroup we certainly

believe the devil is able to influence the patient by his whisperings, but he does not have this person in his grip. We believe in the freedom of the born again child of God. His belief in the Lord Jesus Christ has set him/her free. No demon or even the devil himself is at liberty to curtail this freedom. Deliverance-movements think different and attribute this power to the devil. We keep ourselves to the liberating gospel of the Bible and keep our distance from the deliverance movements.

...15.3 There are very many grades (levels) in mental illnesses. They vary from very serious, when admittance to an institution is necessary, to a light defect, when the person lives normally and functions reasonably in society. The first category as well as the last one appear in churches and evangelical meetings. The elders are confronted with it and will need much wisdom. The other members of the church will act wisely and pray much for them and the ill people, because this is not the easiest part of the task of the elders. Also the members must have empathy for the ill people, who are not always able to tackle the problems of daily life.

...15.4 There is a big difference between psychiatry and psychology. For example: only a psychiatrist is allowed to prescribe medicines and advise about admittance, if necessary. But there are also similarities. That often happens with therapies of treatment. A psychiatric patient suffering of behaviour disorders may need the same treatment as a psychological one. Freud as well as Jung were psychiatrists, while they both are known as founders of psychology. For some Christian volunteer helpers and pastoral workers this often is very confusing. And when the above mentioned codependency, enforcing or experiencing a feeling of guilt, plays a part, the situation is getting even more difficult. We would advise these volunteer aids to keep their distance from the therapies and to refuse the personal codependency. (joint feelings of guilt)

## **16. Opposition out of the ranks of the psychologists.**

...16.1 In 1998 the non-Christian Canadian Tana Dineen, doctor in the psychology a book with the strange title: "Manufacturing Victims, what the Psychology Industry is Doing to People". She caused a lot of upheaval with this book, in Canada as well as in America. She posed the proposition that the vast amount of people, needing psychological help, is produced by the psychologists themselves. Hence the bizarre name: psychology industry. On the backside of the book are eight reactions of well known magazines and colleagues. Here follows one of them: "*Dineen is mocking her own profession. She accuses psychologists to influence the self-image of people in such a way that they become the victim of endless treatments of dubious quality*" Vancouver Sun.

Right through her book we find her conviction that most people who according to psychologists need help, are well able to manage their own business in life. A visit or even an admission to a psychological therapist can make them unsure and to a certain level dependant. This uncertainty is brought about by literature of psychologists, advertisements of psychological clinics, by psychological seminars and workshops etc. Here the psychologists make clear by which problems people can be tormented in their daily lives. They also claim that even when a person is not conscious of problems, they may still be tormented or influenced by them. In this way the psychologists cultivate a potential feeling of uncertainty and make a great amount of people wonder if perhaps they need therapeutic help.

For years dr. Tana Deen worked in the research of her field. Also she worked for years as head of the section treatment of a big psychic clinic in Ontario. Between 1981 and 1993 she had a private clinic for psychiatry in Toronto. In the mean time she wrote several books. She gives lectures and travels a lot, among others through Middle- and South-America. In her above mentioned book she mentions nearly fifty colleagues who also give critical reactions by way of their books.

...**16.2** Dr. Martin Bobgan has four university titles, one in Educational Psychology. For years he was a psychological therapist, but got more and more dissatisfied in his profession. According to him all the different methods of treatment were actually self-invented methods all the time more and more “solutions” turned up. The absence of proof that the methods worked and the absence of results made him decide to stop in the end. He and his wife decided at about 1990 to start a foundation with the name: Psycho Heresy Awareness Ministries. Because both of them are born-again Christians they became very well known in the Christian world in America. Not always in a positive way, because they speak up frankly, when it concerns facts in the Christian psychological world. We followed their work by reading their monthly magazine. Also they wrote books, most of them you can download via internet as e-mail book for free. We mention three books:

Book: “James Dobson’s Gospel of Self-Esteem & Psychology”.

Book: “Larry Crabb’s Gospel”.

Book: “Twelve Steps to Destruction, Codependency Recovery Heresies”.

The first two books concern two Christian writers, also known in the Netherlands. In them Martin Bobgan warns because the influence of psychology on the content is so very clear. The third book we mention is a warning against the psychological method of codependency of shared guilt. The concept codependency has become broad and much concerning. Two examples:

Example 1: Somebody’s husband turns out, during marriage, to be a drunkard. The woman has a terrible life and turns for help to a psychologist. She feels guilty about the drunkenness of her husband, because maybe she did not care for him well enough. The psychologist, instead of reassuring her and telling her this is nonsense, affirms her in this feeling of guilt. He says she is codependent and must follow the group therapy with her husband, to learn to handle this problem in the right way.

Example 2: (not in the book). A young man has troubles in his life and tries to commit suicide. This is not successful and he goes into therapy. The psychologist contacts also the parents. The upright unsuspecting couple is told they are joint-guilty to the suicidal behaviour of their son. The therapist advises them to start therapy as well because of their codependency.

...**16.3** In 1993 Jim Owen brought a book on the market entitled: “Christian Psychology ‘s war on Gods Word, the Victimization of the Believer”. Jim worked for many years in the field of alcohol-addicts and youth-criminality. By means of his experiences he came to his rather shocking conclusion, as we read in the title of his book. In short he comes to the following objections:

*“...Christian psychology gives us a view of sin, as sin caused by illness.... Christian psychology goes against the biblical view of human nature.*

*...Christian psychology treats people as victims.*

*...Christian psychology cherishes the idea that people need psychological intervention to stop sinning.*

*...Christian psychology undermines the trust of the believer in the Lord.*

*...Christian psychology denies the all-sufficiency of Christ and His Word.*

*Jim Owen calls the believers back to the fullness of Jesus Christ. He urges them to put their trust completely in Christ, the power of the resident Holy Spirit and the guaranteed leading of the infallible Word of God”.*

These words are on the back side of the book. Also it informs us he teaches history at a university and serves a church as a pastor.

## **17. End conclusion and pastoral advice**

One evening a theological student rang us. He had detected our website, read some articles and was rather shocked. Sir, what of all things taught in the evangelical world can I still believe? You literally disapprove of nearly everything! Personally, I am a born again child of God seeking my way in this evangelical world. We had a rather long conversation and were able to explain to him that certainly not everything is wrong in the evangelical world. As work group we only write about matters that we mean differ from the Bible, hence the name: Back to the Bible.

For example we do not name all the good things that are happening in the evangelical churches, we leave it to others to tell about the church growth of the past ten years. In nearly every village and town we find an evangelical church. Neither do we write about the way music is used in these churches. We take notice of the rather new “phenomenon” of worship in personal prayer, but leave the positive way of writing about it to others. So we can write much more about all the thing that are good but do not belong to our subjects.

We advised the “telephone-student” to see the situation of the evangelical churches as Jesus saw it in Revelation. Jesus walks among the seven golden lampstands (chapter 2 and 3) and He sees everything that is wrong in the seven churches. He does not weigh His words carefully but mentions many atrocious matters happening in the churches. Had these things happened in our own churches, maybe we would have taken our leave and looked for shelter in other churches. But as a result of this walk of Jesus He does not advise us to take our leave. On the contrary, Jesus challenges the church members to undertake action against these abuses. After every report Jesus ends up by saying: “He who overcomes,.....” followed by a specific promise. So He expects us to do our best to solve the problems He detected. Now we will leave the phone call of the theological student alone, but we keep this story in our minds as an example.

Now we suppose there are some of you who after reading about our subject: the Bible and Psychology, do not feel happy. Perhaps they were just now content with the help of the psychological therapist. Or perhaps just now the elder has sent a “hopeless” church member to a psychological help institution. Or perhaps, after some struggling, you agreed with the fact the therapist sees you as co-guilty with your husband who is an alcoholic and now treats you as a patient too. Or maybe you are shocked about the list of facts about the Breakthrough-training, because you took part in it yourselves. All in all everything may seem rather chaotic. We advise you to keep panic outside your door and leave your situation for what it is worth. Then you will be able to reflect more quietly about this and the two preceding letters. As far as your contacts with the psychologists go you may, when things maybe change in the future, use our letters as a guideline. These can help you choose what is or is not biblically sound. Since we function as a workgroup we receive many reactions of our readers, via a letter, the phone or an e-mail. Also now we will be available for all questions concerning the subjects we dealt with. We will set ourselves to treat them all with discretion, as is our custom. If we cannot answer some of the questions, we will be honest about it. If necessary we will ask advice from other people. Our pastoral experience and knowledge will be at your service to help you to do what Jesus said in Revelation: “To him who overcomes.....” That is His challenge. Let us then notice that Jesus uses splendid symbolism in this part about the churches. He gives them the name lampstands, groups of people who shine out light, His light. The climax is He calls them golden lampstands. This means He esteems them highly.

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