

Counsel the Word

THE INSTITUTE OF SOTERIC COUNSELING

Fall 2006

The Word Within

By J. R. Ensey

A while back I ate a particularly spicy meal of Italian food, which I normally enjoy without follow-up problems. This time, however, there was considerable discomfort. I turned to a favorite (probably out of date) over-the-counter liquid for relief. It quickly coated my esophagus and stomach with welcomed remission. Within a few minutes the problem was a rapidly fading memory and soon things were back to normal. I may again eat something too spicy for my system and the same symptoms return. If that happens, I know what to do.

The experience reminded me of Paul's admonition to the church at Colosse: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16). One translator rendered that line, "Let the word of Christ settle down in you." He had been teaching them about spiritual maturation—"Set your affections on things above...mortify your members which are upon the earth [carnal expressions]...lie not one to another...put off the old man with his deeds...put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him...forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...above all put on charity...let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (vv. 2-15). What a tremendous bit of counsel they were receiving from the apostle's pen! This was truly the "word of Christ" (I Corinthians 14:37) and wisdom from above (James 3:17).

Interpersonal problems are bound to crop up once in a while. Families and/or couples find themselves at odds. Colleagues on the job can falsely accuse one another. Finances can take a disastrous downturn. Circumstances can change one's entire life in the time it takes to receive a phone call. A trusted Christian friend may say hurtful things in a moment of frustration. For the child of God such events can easily become troubling spiritual dilemmas, soiling the mind with questions and confusion. Coldness and backsliding may ensue. A feeling of "depression" can even be experienced.

Some time ago a friend of our family was betrayed by her husband. He was discovered to be guilty of ongoing gross sin. A separation came and then divorce papers were filed. On her way home from the attorney's office, she stopped by her family doctor's office to have him treat an ingrown toenail. The last few days had been especially traumatic for her and her children. The visit to the attorney's office was a step that would sever a years-long relationship. The stress of the day was not easily masked. While treating the nail, the doctor noticed this and suggested that he prescribe

“something” for her stress. You guessed it—Paxil and Xanax. And when your doctor says, “Here, take this,” most people will figure that he knows best and will do as he suggests. As you might imagine, the “cure” (and chemical treatment of spiritual problems is never a cure) was worse than the malady. Think about it—she went in to be treated for an ingrown toenail and she walked out with a prescription for antidepressants.

Should one not expect to have feelings of disappointment and melancholy when relationships fall apart? Should such feelings be considered a “disease” to be treated with synthetic chemicals? Christians instinctively know better. However, it has become popular for many in the medical field to prescribe antidepressants and psychotropics for virtually any negative feeling. Countless well-intentioned believers have succumbed to the standard line of the psychology saturated media and culture. The overall results for our generation have been disastrous.

The alternative: Paul’s counsel—“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” In other words, let it settle down in you like a liquid coating over an excess of internal acidic action. The Word of God can cover human hurts and pain with a spiritual antidote. It can be a soothing potion that puts out the fires of anger, vengeance and a hundred other carnal expressions. Problems that flare up like too much acid in the stomach and be addressed by the Word of God. When they are—while the circumstances of life that we have encountered may not totally disappear, relationships suddenly reattached, or pennies begin to fall from heaven—we are equipped to handle the negative circumstances without resorting to means that may actually exacerbate them. The Word of God is a healing potion. Paul tells us we should use this healing potion to help others—“teaching and admonishing one another.”

So let the Word of Christ settle down in you, providing a soothing relief that cannot be duplicated by the world’s ways. David told us in his shepherd psalm that the blessed man delights in the law of the Lord, and “in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:2). The Hebrew word translated “meditate” suggests rumination, such as when a cow or a sheep chews the cud. The chewed grass mixed with saliva “settles down” in the stomach, providing the animal with the proper nutritional balance through natural processes. We can do that with the Word. Ingest it. Study it. Meditate on it. Apply it. Live it out. It really works!

Let the Word of Christ settle down in YOU!

What Is Theophostic Counseling?

by Jan Fletcher

Following is an article by Jan Fletcher that appeared in the September 2006 issue of *The Berean Call*. Many unsuspecting and sincere individuals are being deceived by this brand of counseling. The success of TPM reveals how easy it is to slip false psychological theories into theology and thereby lead people into deception.

THEOPHOSTIC PRAYER MINISTRY (TPM) IS TAKING THOUSANDS of churches by storm around the world. This fast-growing inner-healing technique is an offshoot of Agnes Sanford's teachings. Sanford, deceased for over two decades, advocated healing of the memories through mystical prayer. She taught that one should visualize a past situation, and then envision Jesus coming into the memory to solve the problem.

In TPM, a Theophostic-trained facilitator asks the ministry recipient to drift back and identify the first memory he or she can remember in which was felt the same negative emotion that has been "triggered" in the present time and is the current source of trouble. The facilitator helps to identify a lie embedded in that memory, such as, "I'll never be safe." The recipient then prays to Jesus to reveal the truth with the expectation that both the lie and the emotional pain will be vanquished.

Ed Smith, who launched Theophostic Prayer Ministry in Campbellsville, Ky., in 1996, says Theophostic facilitators "ask the Lord to reveal His truth" as clients "watch for, listen [to] and feel" a special revelation from Jesus, who "has the ability to enter into our historical moment and reveal truth in the experience."¹ The TPM facilitator then declares that the source of the revelation is actually Jesus.

"During Theophostic Prayer Ministry, demons sometimes masquerade as Jesus, appearing visually in people's minds looking like Jesus," warns Smith. But, don't be alarmed by this, he says, as it's easy to spot the demonic imposter.² "I have found that when a person looks carefully at the face of a demon 'Jesus,' it will usually be dark or hazy, or look angry, scornful, or evil."³ Smith also warns against all forms of channeling or divining the future using TPM, because he admits that facilitators have used it for divination.⁴

In TPM, truth is defined by how it feels, and Smith elevates a mystical encounter with Jesus over teaching and discipleship. He warns of "clutter"⁵ that can hinder TPM, which includes logical thinking, because this will interfere with receiving truth.⁶ In Smith's thinking, the mystical method must take place before teaching, insight, and encouragement can have any effect on the person's emotional distress. Smith says: "As Christians are released from their lie-based thinking, they will be better able to appropriate the biblical instruction they receive through other cognitive venues.... We need to experience the freeing presence of Christ in our lives so that we can absorb the Word of God and be changed by it."⁷

Smith claims that a feeling of peace validates the entire mystical experience as being from God, and this "Peace rarely, if ever, comes via the cognitive instruction of the facilitator/counselor. If cognitive truth resulted in peace, our churches would be full of peace-filled people."⁸

In Smith's view, preaching, teaching, and discipleship—non-mystical means of receiving God's truth—do not enable believers to fulfill Col. 3:15's command to "let the peace of

God rule in your hearts.” However, this verse follows Paul’s commands in the previous verses to “set your affection [to exercise the mind] on the things above”; to “mortify [subdue] therefore your members which are upon the earth” and “put on...mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another....” Smith claims that these cognitive activities are useless in obtaining the peace of Christ.

Following strong criticism of his earlier training materials, Smith’s latest manual now has frequent, highlighted warnings against the generation of false memories during TPM. Obviously, if one has to sign a “hold harmless” agreement⁹ before engaging in TPM, as Smith recommends, TPM carries significant risk for legal liability.

In Smith’s previous writings, he advocated sneaking TPM past local church leadership by avoiding the name “Theophostic” until people in the church have experienced it through miracle healings, thereby building an experiential argument for the method.¹⁰ Smith has now changed his advice. Although he warns of a “Deacon George,” who may claim TPM “is of the devil,” based on web-based reports by apologists,¹¹ he now compares a church’s rejection of TPM to a body’s rejection of an organ transplant.¹² So, his advice is to compromise the local body’s immune system from the pulpit. Smith recommends that the “preaching pastor...gradually move a congregation in the direction of embracing the principles taught in this manual.... Many people have never been exposed to this type of thinking and, as a result, may need some time to process it.”¹³

God’s lambs are hearing sermons straight out of Smith’s TPM manual without knowing they are surreptitiously being prepared for a Theophostic invasion in their church.

Smith previously developed a new theology he calls “lie-based theology,” which stands in contrast to “sin-based theology [which] believes that the root of my problem is my sin.” Smith said he realized sin-based theology “is a misconception and a grave error,” because, he notes: “It doesn’t work.”¹⁴

In his 2005-revised training manual, one of Smith’s original nine Theophostic principles—“God heals the lost and saved equally with no preference over either”—quietly disappeared¹⁵ Smith says of TPM, “People consistently say it was from God. This is even the case with those who do not profess any relationship with God.”¹⁶ And, later he says, “God does not seem to require confession of sin from a nonbeliever.”¹⁷

But how can a lost person have the “peace of Christ”—that which Smith defines as the end result of Theophostic healing? If a lost person can have it, and claims that God showed it to him, then it’s not the peace of Christ: it’s a false gospel. If a lost person gets a word of truth from Jesus without repentance, it’s a false Jesus!

Smith has consistently shifted his terminology, switching from “genuine recovery” to “genuine renewal,” and repackaging his concepts to stay ahead of critics, and also to ensure that TPM remains appealing to conservative churches. Don’t be fooled by cosmetic changes! Theophostic Prayer Ministry’s core premise¹⁸ continues to promote a false Jesus and a false gospel.

Jan Fletcher is a Christian journalist who has reported on TPM since June 2003. Her research is on the web at www.lyingspirits.com.

ENDNOTES

1. Ed M. Smith, *Basic Seminar Manual* (2005), New Creation Publishing, 137-138.
2. *Ibid.*, 140.
3. *Ibid.*, 233.
4. *Ibid.*, 194.
5. *Ibid.*, 142.
6. *Ibid.*, 145.
7. *Ibid.*, 288.
8. *Ibid.*, 165
9. *Ibid.*, 202-4.
10. Ed M. Smith, *Beyond Tolerable Recovery*, 4th ed., Alathia Publishing, 252,253.
11. Smith, *BSM*, 332.
12. *Ibid.*, 317.
13. *Ibid.*, 309-10.
14. Smith, *BTR*, 224-25
15. *Ibid.*, 116.
16. *Ibid.*, 136.
17. *Ibid.*, 147.
18. CRI's Elliot Miller claims there is nothing unbiblical about the "core Theophostic theory and method" in his two-part evaluation on TPM, published in the *CRJ*, Vol. 29, numbers 2 and 3.

Thoughts:

Sister Doty received the following two e-mails:

"I hate to say it, Sister Doty, but there are some people who thrive on being in a valley. They love the attention and sympathy it gets them from good-hearted, caring saints. They don't care to let EVERYONE know when they are going through a trial or a valley. Their cross is MUCH heavier than anyone else's. You can counsel them and pray with them until you're blue in the face. They don't want to change. They know that if they "get delivered" the attention will stop. They know Pastor or Youth Pastor won't talk to them as much anymore."

"Dear Sister Doty, I have noticed that there is an inordinate amount of depression in the Apostolic ranks. It tends to affect women more than men (unless the men just hide it better). Can I take my religious mask off for a minute and tell you that I have even struggled with it? It seems to happen when I haven't prayed and fasted as I should and I start feeling sorry for myself and I feel like nobody appreciates me. I've never taken medication for it, though. Just a lot of prayer and fasting and hearing of the Word of God and some good worship and praise. Remember that Saul called for David to play on the harp for him when he was troubled by an evil spirit? There is something about worship

and praise that drives depression away. Put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness! Lift up the hands that hang down! The joy of the Lord is my strength!”

A Personal Testimony

“I am so glad that you [Sister Doty] came to our church this past Spring. I only needed one person to tell me that there is life abundantly without antidepressants, for me to start seeking God for my healing. Because I was so unreachable in the deepest throes of depression, nobody wanted me to stop taking my antidepressants. After talking to you, I knew that God did not intend for me to live out my life on antidepressants. After I talked with you I knew I had to perceive things differently, rid myself from any residual anger, and learn to fully forgive.

“God has broken my pride during this last bout of depression this past winter. Through this brokenness, God has shown me I only breathe because He allows me. I see now that I really can go through disappointments and betrayals and they won’t kill me because He is there to help me through them.

“My depression episodes were triggered by some little insignificant disappointment. Because I was repressing my anger, I would just blow up and spiral downward into depression. Now that I am not repressing anger, little disappointments are manageable and not blown out of proportion. I’m learning to speak the truth in love. I’m learning to suppress my anger until I can get my flesh into submission to the Holy Spirit before I speak the truth in love.”

Who Ministers to the Ministers?

by Ilene Dewar

The shrill ringing of the church phone interrupts the peaceful morning I have had. More often than not, the phone call is from a saint in some kind of distress; impending divorce; serious and sudden illness; death; finance problems; suicide; a loved one has committed a grievous sin, or any one of hundreds of problems. A “storm” has come up suddenly, wreaking havoc on the life of a saint.

The pastor and his wife are among the first to be notified when saints are troubled. Prayer and comfort are needed as tears flow, arms are suddenly empty, or grief overwhelms someone in the church family. Perhaps someone’s is crushed, disbelief sets in and one’s whole being is violated.

Ministering to the needs of those who hurt takes a heart full of love and compassion, along with steadfast faith, in a God who allows suffering, but is always in attendance to heal the hurts of His children. The Pastor is there to try and help that one make sense of a senseless act.

Today, when the phone rang, the voice on the other end was not laity, but ministry. A Pastor's wife calling with the news of the sudden loss of an expected grandchild to miscarriage, that on top of a gossiping tongue which lashed out at an undeserving son. Days and days of enduring one shot after another of fiery darts at the ministry of a loving pastor, his wife, and family. The pastor's wife's voice was tight, trying to hold in the torrential tears, just below the surface.

Who ministers to the ministers? Who reaches out a hand to steady, lends a listening ear, or offers a shoulder to catch the falling tears? Those in full-time ministry are not immune to suffering and sorrow, pain and attacks by the enemy. Who ministers to those who are depleted by long hours of service to the Lord, through a multitude of pastoral duties? Though problems seem foreign to those who minister, they have pressures of life just like all people. Though the ministry hears it all, and they see the crushed, bruised, ruined lives of the laity, yet, often, the ministers lay wounded, broken, seemingly friendless and nearly in despair because of their own family problems and pressures.

As Jesus prayed in the Garden, before His arrest, His disciples had a great opportunity to minister to their Lord and Master. Rather, they slept. Their eyes were heavy with sleep, and their hearts not in tune with the needs of their Savior. How unlike Mary, who used expensive perfume to anoint and wash Jesus' feet, drying them with her hair.

As Soteric Counselors, we need to be vigilant to minister to the ministers. They need their wounds bound up, their bruises washed, and tended to. Jesus sent His Word to heal the ministry, too! Be ready with a kind word, a pat on the back, or a hug to those who labor, day and night for us.

Psalm 9:9,10, *"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou Lord, has not forsaken them that seek thee."*



All Truth is God's Truth???

By Troy Wilborn

Those who believe psychological "truth" is "God's truth" are attempting to pull in the Lord as a supporter of their theories. We are asked to believe that a part of God's truth heretofore unknown to those who are of God and who have the mind of Christ has lately been discovered by those who are not of God, and that this new insight ought to be

incorporated by the church into its understanding of the Word of God. Before we accept such an unbiblical and illogical thesis we need better justification than the plea “all truth is God’s truth.” As soon as the door was opened for the perceived truths of psychology to shed further light on scripture, a subtle process began that is bearing its deadly fruit in the church today. If all truth is God’s truth and psychology is part of that truth, then it must be given equal authority with the Bible. They assure us that no psychological theory will be accepted that contradicts the Bible but in actual practice “psychological truth” is imposed upon the Bible and becomes the new grid through which scripture is not to be interpreted.

We are today confronted with an almost impossible situation in the church. In spite of their desire to benefit the body of Christ, Christians psychologists, themselves deceived by their faith in what they believe to be helpful supplementary truth, have brought beliefs and practices into the church which are, in fact, destructive of the very faith most of them sincerely desire to defend.

Inevitably the psychological theory gains authority over the Bible and the church. Christian universities and seminaries develop large and growing psychology departments in order to keep up with “current trends.” The study of psychology has even become a prerequisite for a degree in theology. This new state of affairs simply cannot be supported from the Bible. Yet it is being accepted almost without challenge, and those who do speak out are accused of causing division or of speaking from ignorance.

No lie produces the truth, and no truth comes from a lie. Truth diluted becomes less than the truth. It becomes a gate, an opening for outright lies and deception. John wrote about the truth quite forcefully. Here are some of the things he said: “If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie, and do not the truth...if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him...I have not written unto you because you know not the truth but because you know it and that no lie is of the truth...and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him...for the truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever...for I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth” (I John 1:6,8; 2:4,2:1; 3:19; II John 1:2, III John 3. Paul told the Romans that even if we lie to make God look good, or do evil that good may come, we are considered sinners (3:5-8).

We must consider Paul’s charge to Timothy, in II Timothy 4:3-5: *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

And this just in from World Net Daily News:

A Christian psychologist who at one point served on the board of a pro-family organization has lost his work with the Minneapolis police department over that past affiliation, according to officials.

Technically, Michael Campion's work for the department simply was 'not renewed,' but since even city officials confirm they have been unable to attract a single complaint about him, pro-family groups are citing liberal interests' objections to his former association with their efforts as a reason.

Campion, who at one point served on the IFI board, had been hired by the Minneapolis department to provide screening services for police officers, and he did that work until City Councilor Scott Benson demanded an investigation into his participation in the IFI, which advertises that it is for upholding marriage and family, life and liberty.

City officials say Campion was suspended from his work during that time, then reinstated because there were no complaints, only to be told the department's procedure was being changed and he was no longer needed.

"The chief, when there was an allegation of bias, the chief looked into it," Minneapolis police Lt. Greg Reinhardt told WND. "No complaint came forward. But he stated that in the future, all such services will be contracted under an RFP process, request for proposal, that is being developed."

A similar situation had developed a short time earlier with Campion and the city of Springfield, Ill., where he had provided screening for both police and fire department hirings.

"Obviously he's being treated because of his Christian association in the past," LaBarbera said. "People all over the nation have to be watching this case with a great amount of care."

Let's Hear it for the Counseling Course!

[Taking the course] was an awesome time of study and God's anointing was on me consistently. He would wake me up at 2 and 3 in the morning for prayer and study before I would go to work. He would give me the strength and wisdom I needed and otherwise wouldn't have had. I was going through some terrible trials with my daughter backsliding (while going through this course); God would give me the answers to what I needed to know to help her, through this course. Even when she was at the point of not listening to me, God lead me to a place of total Trust. God truly took me through this course at just the right time and in the heat of the battle GOD'S ALL SUFFICIENT WORD saw me through the battle and my daughter has prayed back through and day by day she is learning to trust God in her own way. Praise the Lord! I could tell you all the miracles God did but it would take quite some time, to GOD be all the glory for the things He has done. I highly recommend this course to all soul winners!

Give Honor Where Honor is Due:

I just wanted to thank you for introducing me to Sis. Anne Richardson; she was so helpful and a constant encourager and she inspired me so much in God's Word I will never forget all the fellowship that we had via e-mail and the wisdom she shared with me. God certainly used her to bless my life abundantly. I also wanted to ask you if I could get some extra ISC brochures. I gave the two I had away and want to show others in the future. I highly recommend any soul winner to take the course. It has truly helped me to see how God's Word is all sufficient for any area of life and as people confide in me about things that they have struggled with for years I know this course would answer their questions and start them in studying God's Word in a whole new way!!!!

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Registration fee: \$249 per person. Only \$49 for returning participants. Special discount for spouses. For more information contact Lynda Allison Doty toll-free at 888-462-2873.



At the 2005 ISC Training Conference several counselors received their official certification as a Soteric Counselor. Among them was pastor Patrick Hancock of Taylorville, IL (above).



ISC Training Conference Schedule

October 26-27, 2006

October 26:

- 6:30 Registration
- 7:00 Word and Worship: Roffie Ensey
- 7:15 Orientation: Lynda Allison Doty
- 7:30 “Counseling the Gadarene” – J. R. Ensey
- 8:30 Feedback and Discussion
- 8:40 Psychology and the Church
- 9:30 Dismissal, Browse, Fellowship

October 27:

- 9:15 Word and Worship
- 9:30 “Counseling the Control Freak” – Lynda Allison Doty

10:45 Feedback/Discussion/Break
11:00 “Counseling Marital Problems” – Darrell Hudson
12:15 p.m. Feedback/Discussion
12:30 Lunch
2-4:00 Interviews
6:30 Word and Worship - Roffie Ensey
6:45 Reports
7:15 “Guidelines For Lay Counselors” – Shelia Jones
8:15 Feedback/Discussion
8:30 Panel Discussion
9:00 Conferral of Certificates; Wrap-up; Dismissal



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