

TheoPhostic Psychoheresy

Throughout the twentieth century psychological ideas of Freud and others have greatly influenced the way the world thinks. Moreover, these ideas have seeped into the church both directly and indirectly through sermons, books, radio, seminars, Bible colleges and seminaries. We have seen the intrusion accelerate over the past three decades to the degree that psychological thinking often takes precedence over biblical thinking, meeting one's emotional needs seems more pressing than seeking the kingdom of God, increasing one's self-esteem is more avidly sought than humbling oneself under the mighty hand of God, and counseling is more often recommended than taking up one's cross. Along with the psychological intrusion has come an emphasis on feelings and an acceptance of extrabiblical religious experiences and practices. For many, the meaning of divine revelation has changed from a closed Canon of Scripture to whatever comes to mind under certain circumstances and engendered expectations.

With these changes in place, TheoPhostic counseling, which was developed by Ed Smith, will appeal to many Christians who are looking for a way to help themselves and others who are hurting. Besides Smith's claim that "*TheoPhostic* counseling is a process of divinely accomplished miracles," the theory is simple and the system is easy to learn. One merely has to understand that the presenting problem is due to a "lie" embedded in an early life memory and that people act according to powerful material in the unconscious, which Smith calls the "dark room," in contrast to the conscious mind which he calls the "light room." He defines the "lie" as the interpretation one has given to a past event and says that "every emotion we feel in the present is a preconceived interpretation, based upon an earlier memory event" (p. 39). The counselor's main job is to convince the client of the usefulness of this system, to get past interferences such as logical and rational thinking, to gain the client's trust, and then to instruct the client to feel the emotion associated with the presenting problem and to "drift" back to earlier events that felt the same way.

When the person has reached an early memory (the earlier the better according to Smith) and described the feelings and memory, the counselor must "discern the lie" (p. 31). When the counselor discerns the "lie," it is his job to "stir up the darkness" by goading the client to repeat the "lie" over and over again until the emotions reach an intense climax. At this pitch of emotion intensified by repeating the "lie," clients are directed to listen for God to speak truth directly to them. However, there is no example in Scripture of the God of truth requiring a person to embrace and speak a "lie" to hear truth. It sounds more diabolical than divine. After this process, which is similar to Freudian abreaction, the client, believing that God has spoken, supposedly receives "complete recovery," but only from that particular "lie" (p. 7). One cannot know how many times this same gruesome, abreaction-like process will be repeated before all the "lies" supposedly embedded in different memories are exhumed.

Smith has put God in a TheoPhostic box, because he says that "God will not speak His truth" if the counselor has "not correctly identified the original lie" (p. 76). Thus God's hands are tied and His mouth is shut without the expert, the TheoPhostic counselor who has mastered Smith's system. Smith says the counselor "must discover 'the lie' that matches 'the picture' and stir up the accompanying emotion" so that the client can hear "the divine truth" (p. 57).

Smith's system is dependent on several different sources: (1) psychotherapeutic theories devised by nonChristians, (2) inner healing techniques which themselves are based on false psychotherapeutic theories of memory as well as on the occult, and (3) extra-biblical demon deliverance teachings and techniques. Smith not only uses secular psychotherapeutic sources for his system; he also suggests the possibility of using other forms of psychotherapy after the person has been healed of the "lies" (p. 11). In other words, TheoPhostic counseling may not be enough for every client, but may need to be

supplemented with additional psychotherapy. TheoPhostic is completely tied to psychotherapeutic theories and techniques in both its form and its practice. Furthermore, there is no external, third-party research evidence to prove that the system does what Smith claims or that any of this is more than a cathartic charade.

When one considers the wonder of what God has accomplished for believers and the vast provisions He has made for salvation, which includes justification, sanctification, and future glorification, one wonders why anyone must add to God's sufficient and abundant provision. Yes, we understand that Smith believes that TheoPhostic is part of God's provision, but it is not found in the Word of God and it is based on ungodly psychological systems comprised of the wisdom of men about which we are warned in 1 Corinthians 2. The Bible does not support Smith's system. In his vain attempt to biblicize his recently devised system, Smith eisegetes Scripture, resorts to metaphorical interpretation, and makes applications that have nothing to do with the intended meaning of the verses he cites.

God did not leave His children without sufficient supply throughout the centuries of the church age. His provisions for life and godliness are resident in Himself and graciously given to believers through His written revelation, the Bible, and through His indwelling Holy Spirit, who applies that Word to believers' lives. True Christians live by grace through faith in the resurrected Christ, knowing that their lives are eternally connected to Him and that He is presently working His good pleasure in them to conform them to the image of Christ, even through difficult circumstances (Romans 8:28-29).

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