

➔ **THEREFORE**  
*if anyone is in Christ,*

*he is a new creation:  
old things have passed away;*

**BEHOLD, ALL THINGS**  
*have become New!*

— 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17



*New!*  
**GOD of  
WONDERS**  
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**Berean**  
**Call**

MARCH 2014

*"SPIRITUALIZED" COUNSELING*

*by T. A. McMahon*

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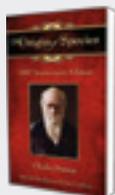
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# THE BEREAN CALL

“[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so.”—Acts 17:11

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## “Spiritualized” Counseling

T. A. McMahon

The Bible gives the body of Christ complete instructions for ministering to one another, yet in rebellion to its teachings and the enablement that the Word of God supplies, the church for decades now has turned to man’s ways and means.

In numerous past articles (most of which are found in *Psychology and the Church: Critical Questions, Crucial Answers*) we have dealt with the destructive invasion of psychological counseling in the church. Few movements within evangelical Christianity have turned believers away from the sufficiency of the Word of God in their lives as has psychological counseling, and tragically so. This article deals with some of the influential teachings and practices that claim to be biblical but cloak the psychological concepts and practices they incorporate in *spiritual language*.

In order to recognize where alleged biblical counseling programs deviate from the Scriptures it’s important to understand what is central to most forms of psychological counseling. It has been referred to as mesmerism, initiated by Anton Mesmer, an Austrian physician (1774-1815). Mesmer’s work—referred to today as hypnosis—became the basis for the psychotherapy of the fathers of the modern counseling movement, especially Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. That may seem irrelevant to those who wouldn’t consider using it as a technique in counseling, especially biblical counseling, but as you will see, very few are aware of how pervasive it is in nearly all forms of counseling.

First of all, “hypnosis” does not refer only to putting someone into a trance to entertain an audience (a very dangerous practice); it has many forms and techniques (some of which you may recognize). These include deep hypnosis, Eastern meditation, relaxation techniques, induced suggestions, monotonous stimulation, stimulation of the imagination, imagery suggestions, guided imagery, activation of unconscious motives, visualization, regressive therapy, altered states of consciousness, trance phenomena, induced hallucinations, hypnotherapy, auto-suggestion, medical hypnosis, shamanic hypnosis, et al. Although the list is quite diverse, the activity is basically the same:

*the individual becomes receptive to the suggestions of a person or an entity other than himself.*

The Bible has its own list of activities related to the practice of hypnosis: sorcery, wizardry, enchantments, “charming,” necromancy, astrology, consulting with familiar spirits, and practicing magic arts. None of these, as we all should be aware, are okay with God. In fact, they are condemned, and all involve deception.

Research regarding hypnosis and its variations does not speak favorably for the practice. Renowned research psychiatrist Thomas Szasz calls hypnosis the therapy of “a fake science.” Eminent research psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey sees the contemporary techniques of hypnosis as no different from that of witchdoctors and shamans. “Medical” hypnosis runs the whole gamut of therapies from relaxation inducement to Freudian regression into the so-called traumatized realm of early childhood development and the “unconscious” mind, to “past lives” and “future lives” therapy. Again, none of these have anything to do with true science, yet millions of Christians are seduced by the medical label. As Dr. Martin and Deidre Bobgan have noted, “Hypnosis in the hands of a medical doctor is as scientific as a dowsing rod in the hands of an engineer.”

A seductive myth of hypnosis is that memories recovered through that process are more accurate than normal memory and provide the key to inner healing. This delusion is a major boon to the acceptance of techniques used in the “healing of memories” ministries, nearly all of which claim to be biblical. To identify the errors resulting from the use of hypnosis in recovering memories, researchers use the term “confabulation,” meaning the tendency to remember past events to be different from the way they actually were . . . and even to remember fantasized events as having actually happened. This is very common in “regression” therapy, used by many Christian counselors. But in fact, as the *Harvard Mental Health Letter* states, “In reality, all memory is a reconstruction rather than a reproduction, and it is almost always deeply unreliable, threaded with fabrications and distortions . . . Hypnotic subjects readily confuse real with imaginary events and . . . become overconfident about their memories” (cited in Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *Hypnosis*, p. 69).

Memory expert Dr. Elizabeth Loftus declares, “There’s no way even the most sophisticated hypnotist can tell the

difference between a memory that is real and one that’s created” (*Hypnosis*, p. 71). According to the American Psychological Association, “. . . it is impossible, without corroborative evidence, to distinguish a true memory from a false one” (*Ibid.*, p. 74). The Bobgans write: “Exploring the past through conversation, counseling, hypnosis, guided imagery, and regressive therapy is as likely to cause a person to create false memories as to remember accurate accounts of past situations” (*Ibid.*, p. 76).

Bernard Diamond, a professor of law and a clinical professor of psychiatry, says that court witnesses who have been hypnotized “often develop a certitude about their memories that ordinary witnesses seldom exhibit.” They “graft onto their memories fantasies or suggestions [that were] deliberately or unwittingly communicated by the hypnotist” (cited in *Hypnosis*, p. 76).

Researchers have found that subjects who are put into deeper states of hypnosis have spiritual experiences very much like the state described by the Eastern mystics, including “an emerging sense of infinite potentiality, a separation of mind and body, and ultimately reaching the sense of oneness with the universe.” This should come as no surprise even to secular researchers, since various forms of hypnosis are found throughout ancient occult religions and have continued to be the primary techniques that shamans, witchdoctors, and medicine men use to contact spirit entities and employ in their healing techniques. Medical doctor William Kroger notes that “for centuries, Zen, Buddhist, Tibetan, and Yogic methods have used a system of meditation and an altered state of consciousness similar to hypnosis” (*Ibid.*, p. 84).

Although the connection between hypnosis and the occult spiritual realm is obvious, it’s important to understand that the findings of the researchers regarding this apply *not only* to those who are put into a trance state. Even more critically, these findings apply to people who have been given “suggestions” by a counselor—whether he calls himself a psychotherapist or a “biblical” counselor—who is employing techniques that are directly *related* to hypnosis.

Given the pervasiveness of various forms of hypnosis in counseling, a Christian needs to realize that whatever form hypnosis takes, 1) it is not scientific, 2) it is no more helpful than a placebo, 3) it is not true to its positive claims, 4) it is often

mentally and physically dangerous, and 5) it cannot be isolated from its occult roots. Furthermore, from a biblical Christian perspective, hypnosis and its various techniques a) are specifically condemned in the Old Testament, b) are never taught as a method for spiritual or physical healing, c) use deception and a submission of one's will to another person or created spiritual entity, d) employ techniques that are occult, and e) can open a person up to doctrines of demons and demonic oppression, and, in the case of the unsaved and professing but not true Christians, demon possession.

Even though a great deal of information is available from secular researchers discrediting hypnosis and its stepchildren, and, more important, the teachings of Scripture that are in opposition to it, numerous professing Christian counseling programs have opted for spiritualized psychotherapeutic versions that use hypnotherapeutic concepts and practices. This is very evident in programs that major in inner healing.

The Inner Healing Movement may be the oldest of the erroneous contemporary approaches that claim to be biblical but are psychological at best and occult at worst. It is simply a Christianized version of Freudian psychoanalysis that uses the power of suggestion (again, a form of hypnosis) to supposedly solve the problems that in most cases it has actually created. The healing of memories process that was supposed to solve problems in fact has created pseudomemories. In numerous cases, false memories induced by the therapist have destroyed the lives of the client and those who, based upon the false memories, were wrongly accused of everything from Satan worship to child molestation and rape. Furthermore, this methodology displaces a believer's reliance, through simple faith, upon the promises of the Bible.

Tragically, Christians become dependent upon practitioners and practices that attempt to mediate God's blessings through emotional experiences and periodic cartharses created by guided imagery through visualization. It was brought into the church by Agnes Sanford, the founder of the School of Pastoral Care, where she trained or influenced a host of "inner healers" who had a huge influence in Christendom in the '70s and '80s, including John Wimber, Richard Foster, John and Paula Sandford, Francis MacNutt, Ruth Carter Stapleton, and David Seamands, a pioneer of the movement, who declares, "The imagination is used to 1) recreate the painful memory... visualize it as it once took place" and 2) to visualize Christ present at the time of the painful incident (cited in Hunt, *Beyond Seduction*, p. 205). This is possible, he claims, because Jesus transcends all time

and space. Jesus isn't the only one whom inner healers visualize. Spiritual counselors include visualizing all sorts of inner guides, one's inner child being a favorite.

How serious a concern is the use of visualization, a technique of hypnosis, by Christian psychologists and inner healers? "Visualization" and "guided imagery" have long been recognized by sorcerers of all kinds as the most powerful and effective methodology for contacting the spirit world in order to acquire supernatural power, knowledge, and healing. Such methods are neither taught nor practiced in the Bible as aids to our faith or prayer. Those who attempt to do so are *not* following the leading of the Holy Spirit or the Word of God, but are practicing an ancient occult technique for communing with demons.

Two of the most popular spiritualized psychotherapeutic programs among Christians that are shrouded in religious terms are Theophostic Counseling and Sozo. Theophostic Counseling, now known as Theophostic Prayer Ministry, or TPM, was developed by Ed Smith in the mid-1990s. Its counselors pray for the counselee that the Lord, who is *visualized*, will give a specific revelation as to the source of his or her problem. The counselor determines whether the visualized Jesus with whom he is communicating is in fact Jesus or a demon masquerading as Jesus. Smith gives his basis for discernment: "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" (See TBC Extra, 09/06).

TPM is said to work equally for non-Christians. According to Smith, "People consistently say [the resolution and subsequent peace] was from God. This is even the case with those who do not profess any relationship with God" (Ibid.). And later he says, "God does not seem to require confession of sin from a nonbeliever" (Ibid.).

To put all of this in perspective, we have a Christianized counseling methodology that: 1) is contrary to the Scriptures, 2) is Freudian, (i.e., it allegedly searches out deterministic traumas in the past that are buried in the subconscious), 3) involves occult techniques producing a false Jesus, and 4) even works for unbelievers, resulting in the "peace of God" without repentance. It's shocking that so many Christians would buy into this!

Sozo is one of the latest inner healing practices to enter the church, particularly among those who are into signs and wonders, healing and prosperity, word-faith, and the Latter Rain/New Apostolic Reformation movements. The Sozo website declares that "Sozo is a unique inner healing and deliverance ministry aimed to get to the root of things hindering your personal connection

with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. With a healed connection, you can walk in the destiny to which you have been called." Sozo was developed and is led by two women, Dawna DeSilva and Teresa Liebscher. Another leader, teacher, and mentor in Sozo is Randy Clark, who instigated the bizarre manifestations allegedly of the Holy Spirit at the Toronto Airport Vineyard.

Although claiming to be biblical, Sozo is a *problem-solving approach* based upon discovering root issues that are blocking spiritual growth. The issues supposedly reside in the subconscious memories of the individual and are identified as a person is regressed by the use of guided imagery and suggestion by the Sozo therapist. Of course, the Sozo therapist is trained to believe that the guided visualization is superintended by the Holy Spirit. This again is spiritualized psychotherapy, using techniques drawn from occult methodologies.

There is neither chapter nor verse nor example in Scripture supporting the approach promoted in the Sozo program. Since there have been a number of healing-of-memories therapists successfully sued for inducing through suggestion incredibly destructive false memories in their clients, ministries such as Sozo have their clients sign a liability release form. It should certainly raise a red flag when a believer needs to sign a liability release in order to have someone pray for him (For more information, see TBC Extra).

The Bible says that *all believers* in Jesus Christ are to minister to their brothers and sisters in Christ, and they are to do so *according to the Scriptures*: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual*, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2).

There is no gift of counseling, but there are numerous other gifts of the Spirit to be used for ministering and building up of the body of Christ. Being "spiritual" refers to anyone who is walking in the Spirit (Romans 8:1,4; Galatians 5:16,25) and not in the flesh. That should be every believer in Christ. We are to minister to other believers by bearing their burdens (coming to their aid during trials, tribulations, failures, struggles, restoration from sin, giving them counsel from the Word of God, etc.) That is fulfilling the "law of Christ," that is, His love. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). "Ye" means ye—all of ye. Until the true church returns to the truly biblical way of ministering, it will continue to suffer the same destructive problems of living that are evidenced by an unbelieving world. **TBC**

## Quotable .....

Did all my beloved fellow disciples, who seek to work for God know the blessedness of looking truly to God alone, and trusting in Him alone, they would soon see how soul refreshing this way is, and how entirely beyond disappointment, so far as He is concerned.

—George Mueller

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION: Do you have any information on Dr. Scott McQuate? I have never heard of him, but his book *The Tribulation* has been recommended. The advertising seems so bizarre I am a little afraid to buy it.**

**RESPONSE:** That uneasy feeling you have may certainly be the Holy Spirit warning you about this book, which in truth leads one away from the Scriptures rather than to the Scriptures.

What we have seen of Dr. Scott McQuate and his books has revealed that he advocates extrabiblical sources, as do many in the Hebrew Roots Movement and “Nephilim/Genesis 6 Sons” teachers. This means that books outside the Bible, such as Enoch, Jasher, Jubilees, and others that are outside the canon of Scripture, are relied upon to support their views. McQuate’s subtitle for his *The Tribulation is Hidden Secrets Revealed from Texts Predating the Bible*.

Although many in this movement stress the authority of the Bible, their subsequent teachings show little regard for those same Scriptures. McQuate doesn’t even give lip service to the Scriptures. He has taken the next logical step down the path that so many Nephilim/Genesis 6 teachers have taken.

Consider McQuate’s claims: “The Tribulation period is *highly-misunderstood* because of many doctrinal lies and misconceptions that have been touted as fact, and unbeknownst to present-day Scholars, Pastors and Theologians, the subject of the Tribulation is not unique to the Bible. The shocking facts of this epic, all-important event were also spoken of within cultures long pre-dating the Bible, such as the Mayan, Sumerian, Hindu, Canaanite and others but they have been intentionally concealed for millennia...until now. For a *watered-down and tremendously adulterated understanding of the Tribulation, we can look to the Bible* and to those who teach the tribulation ‘doctrines’ that have been corrupted, but if we want to understand the Tribulation accurately and truly know what this imminent, earth-altering event is about, we must look to other cultures pre-dating the

Bible from which nearly all of the Biblical stories were taken. These are the ‘old paths’ spoken of by Jesus, which He stated were ‘good’” (our emphasis).

No, they are not. Jeremiah 6:16 tells us, “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

As Scripture clearly tells us, Israel’s downfall occurred because they were doing what McQuate recommends—they were looking to other cultures. In wonderful contrast, Joshua 1:8 admonishes, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

In short, this man reflects the mindset of a cultist who elevates his understanding above everyone else. His blog blatantly claims that, “This is information that is not available from any other source, is exclusive to Dr. McQuate’s research, and will transform your thinking.”

We’re certain that it will “transform your thinking” but not to your eternal benefit. He is a false teacher.

**QUESTION [composite of several]: Do you believe that people get saved by being told there is a hell? It seems to me that the idea that people who choose not to follow God will suffer eternal torment may be thought of as inconsistent with a God who is supposed to be just and loving. That may deter them from turning to the Lord. What are your thoughts?**

**RESPONSE:** There has been much speculation regarding whether someone may or may not come to the Lord because of the biblical teaching of hell. We must always ask: “What do the Scriptures say?” The Lord Jesus Christ warned of hell fourteen times in the Gospels—far more than He spoke of the joys of heaven. Peter wrote of it three times, James mentioned it once, and the four references in Revelation give us a total of twenty-two times that the word “hell” occurs in the New Testament. Jesus specifically said that hell is a place of torment in a “fire that never shall be quenched” (Mk 9:43-48).

Those who have been judged at the “great white throne...according to their works” shall be “cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15). Dave Hunt rightly observed that “they have been confronted by the One on the throne, ‘from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away...’ Every self-justifying excuse has been stripped away, leaving the stark reality of

the extreme wickedness of their sin. They will for eternity mourn the folly of their irrevocable decision. Imagine the pain of the full realization of one’s eternal state, with the ‘blood’ of Jesus on one’s ‘hands.’”

God revealed Himself and gave the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai showing Himself to be “...merciful and gracious...forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Ex 34:6-7). Some will ask, “Then why doesn’t He just forgive the whole human race?”

Scripture tells us that God sent His Son “that the world through him might be saved” (Jn 3:17), that He desires “all men to be saved” (1 Tm 2:4), and that He is “not willing that any should perish...” (2 Pt 3:9). He has made provision for salvation from sin for *all*, but not everyone will accept that provision. Nor would those who refuse to accept it be happy in heaven with the One whom they rejected.

Of course, fear of hell alone is not usually enough to lead one to salvation. Although it may be a catalyst, a person needs an understanding not only of his own sinfulness but must also realize that God *is* loving and fair to require that we *accept* the penalty that Christ paid for our sins and *believe* in Him so that we wouldn’t have to go to hell at all.

Love is certainly one of God’s attributes. He is also perfectly just. He judges righteously at all times. Some scriptures seem to imply that suffering in hell is proportional to the deeds done. In Revelation 20:12 we read, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

In Matthew 11:21-22, Jesus said, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be *more tolerable* for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you” (emphasis added).

The writer of Hebrews warned, “Of *how much sorer punishment*, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29—emphasis added).

No matter what we think may influence people toward accepting or not accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior, the only thing that truly matters is what the Bible teaches. And it teaches “everlasting fire,” “everlasting punishment,” and “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (Mt 25:41,46; 2 Thes 1:9).



# IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

## How Reliable Are the Biblical Documents?

**QUESTION:** I was taught in seminary and have read the same charge in a number of scholarly books that the New Testament is not reliable because it was written centuries after the time of Christ by men who weren't even alive in Christ's day. The "Jesus Seminar," a group of scholars with impressive credentials, makes this claim today. Is there any evidence to the contrary?

**RESPONSE:** That accusation is disproved not only by the manuscripts themselves but by the quotations that we have of the entire New Testament in other writings from the late first to early second century. There is proof even from the writings of Christianity's enemies. For example, Celsus, a bitter opponent of Christianity who was born early in the second century, referred to the four gospels as part of the sacred books of Christians and already well-known in his day. Just that one piece of evidence disproves the claim that the New Testament wasn't written until centuries later! In addition, there is more than sufficient proof from within the New Testament itself that it was, as its writers claim, written by contemporaries of Jesus.

The authors of the epistles of Peter and John testify to having known Christ personally and to having been eyewitnesses of all He said and did during His ministry. Peter writes: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). Speaking for himself and the other apostles, John testifies to an intimate relationship with Christ: "That which . . . we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled . . ." (1 John 1:1).

If the New Testament, which includes such sworn testimonies, was not written by the apostles themselves but was concocted centuries (or even only decades) later by other parties, the whole thing is a fraud! Whoever wrote such tales was lying and was doing so with the deliberate intent of deceiving untold multitudes throughout the coming centuries. And tragically, if this is the case, the deceit has been swallowed by hundreds of millions ever since. That very scenario, however, contains numerous insurmountable problems.

### Irrefutable Internal Evidence

First of all, there is an internal consistency within the Bible's 66 books, even though they were written over a period of about 1,500 years by more than 40 persons, most of whom had never met one another.

Living in different historical eras and widely differing regions and cultures, the only thing these writers of Scripture had in common was the claim that what they wrote was inspired by the one true God. The intricate pattern of truth woven without contradiction throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation bears powerful witness to the validity of that claim, which can be explained in no other manner. As for seeming contradictions, we will deal with them.

This continuity and agreement throughout the Bible is one of the most powerful arguments that it is the Word of God. To show how remarkable this argument is, Josh McDowell tells this true story:

A representative of the *Great Books of the Western World* came to my house recruiting salesmen for their series. . . . I challenged him to take just 10 of the authors, all from one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language and just one controversial subject (the Bible speaks on hundreds with harmony and agreement).

Then I asked him: "Would they (the authors) agree?"

He paused and then replied, "No."

Obviously, any fraudulent writer (for example, of the life and works of Christ) would have to know

the entire Bible intimately and be able to maintain its supernatural internal consistency. It is highly unlikely that any deliberate liar would have either the motivation or the ability to do so.

There is a further problem. Careful study of the New Testament reveals a sincerity and truthfulness that would be virtually impossible to fake. Moreover, the Bible has demonstrated a supernatural power to rescue human beings from sin and degradation and to bring liberty, joy, love, and a transformation of life to all who believe its message. That a deliberate fraud could effect so much good is preposterous. It would require more faith to believe *that* scenario than to accept the Bible's claim to divine inspiration!

### Contemporary Corroboration

Additional proof abounds of a different nature. We know from archaeological discoveries of quotations in other writings that the New Testament in its entirety was in circulation at least by the end of the first century. Many people were still alive at that time who had known the apostles and to whom their writings rang true to fact. There would have been an enraged outcry had the epistles not told the truth—yet we have no such evidence. The Jewish rabbis unquestionably would have jumped on the slightest lie or exaggeration and used it to discredit this “new religion,” as they considered it, which was undermining their leadership and resulting in conversions by the thousands from Judaism. There is no record of any attack on those grounds from that quarter.

Furthermore, there is abundant and indisputable evidence within the New Testament itself that it was written by eyewitnesses. Luke, for example, referred to the other gospel writers as having been eyewitnesses “from the beginning” and affirmed that what they had recorded was “most surely believed among us.” He was not some gullible idiot who was willing to believe any tale that came along but claimed himself to have had “perfect understanding of all things from the very first” (Luke 1:1–3). He declared that he had undertaken to write down the story of Jesus for his friend Theophilus so that he could “know the certainty of those things” (Luke 1:4).

Modern archaeological discoveries have confirmed the veracity of Luke's testimony and the fact that he was indeed a contemporary of the apostles and thus in a position to know and report the facts. In chapter 2, Luke refers to “a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed” and asserts that this occurred “when Cyrenius was governor of Syria” (verses 1–2). Some critics continue to dogmatically state that Cyrenius (known also as Quirinius) didn't become governor over Syria until AD 6, too late a date for the birth of Christ. They ignore more recent findings that show that Quirinius was governor over Syria *twice*, the first time from perhaps as early as 7 BC to about AD 1. Luke was obviously referring to his *first* governorship, not the second.

### Watertight Historical Verification

In chapter 3, Luke provides a whole list of detailed information of names, places, offices, and dates that surely would not have been known by someone writing even decades (much less centuries) later:

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests. . . . (Luke 3:1–2)

Note that Luke's reference is not to just any Caesar but to *Tiberias*. Even the time of the decree is given: in the “fifteenth year” of his reign. These facts have been verified by modern historians and could not have been known by someone writing centuries later, as the skeptics claim was the case. The technical titles of the offices held by the other parties named—governor, tetrarch, high priest—are given, together with the locations of each. Each fact presented has been verified in recent years after laborious digging and research. It would have been impossible to have made such precise statements even 50 years after the fact. We therefore have every reason to believe that Luke, as he claims, was present when these reported events occurred.

Yes, but what about Pilate, whom Luke says was governor of Judea at this time? The skeptics denied his very existence for many years because no trace of him could be found. Josephus mentioned Pilate in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, but that was suspected to be a later addition by someone tampering with the text. And then one day proof positive was uncovered in an archaeological dig: a large quarried stone about five inches thick in the jumbled ruins of an ancient Roman theater in Caesarea.

It turned out that Caesar, having been offended by Pilate, decreed that all evidence of his existence be obliterated. This particular stone, however, because of its precise size, had been saved and used as a seat in a theater. Of course, the side containing the inscription regarding Pilate had been turned downward so it couldn't be seen—until its discovery in the ruins. The stone stands today in Caesarea in modern Israel as one more testimony (among many others) to the reliability of the biblical record.

Today the accumulated evidence authenticating the Bible in every respect is overwhelming. Any critic who continues to parrot the specious charges formerly leveled against the Bible is doing so *in spite of* and *not because of* the facts. Even Bishop Robinson of “God Is Dead” fame, a foremost proponent a few years ago of a centuries-later date for the biblical writings, [later acknowledged] the historicity of the New Testament documents and that they were written early in the first century by eyewitnesses.

## TBC NewsWatch

### WHY IS GERMANY TELLING JEWS WHERE TO LIVE?

**MICHAELFREUND.ORG, 1/17/14, "WHY IS GERMANY TELLING JEWS WHERE TO LIVE?"**

**[EXCERPTS]:** With an impeccable sense of timing, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier arrived in Israel earlier this week, attended the funeral of Ariel Sharon, and then proceeded to browbeat Israel in public.

Speaking with reporters, Steinmeier accused the Jewish state of "damaging" the peace process by building homes for Jews in Judea and Samaria. And in a discussion with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the sidelines of Sharon's interment, he pressed the premier to refrain from additional construction as this "could still disturb the process."

But what is even more offensive about Steinmeier's exploits is the German government's historical amnesia, which has left officials bereft of any sense of irony regarding their position on the right of Jews to live in Judea and Samaria.

After all, it was not even eight decades ago that Germany singled out Jews in the September 1935 Nuremberg laws, seeking to cast them out of civil society as a step towards "cleansing" German soil of their presence. Subsequently, in areas under German control, the right of Jews to live where they saw fit was severely restricted.

Last summer it was widely reported that Berlin had decided to back a European Union initiative that singles out Jewish-owned businesses in Judea and Samaria.

The move is aimed at targeting them for special treatment, which could include the application of unique labels of origin on products produced by Jews in the areas. Needless to say, goods made by Palestinian-run plants in the territories would not similarly be branded.

([www.michaelfreund.org/14321/germany-telling-jews-where-to-live](http://www.michaelfreund.org/14321/germany-telling-jews-where-to-live))

### 'LOW EXPECTATIONS' FOR SCRIPTURAL TRUTH

**ONENEWSNOW.COM, 1/20/14, "LOW EXPECTATIONS' FOR SCRIPTURAL TRUTH TO PREVAIL IN UMC PASTOR'S TRIAL"** **[EXCERPTS]:** A retired United Methodist pastor... Thomas Ogletree, who spent most of his ministry as dean of Yale Divinity School, will be tried March 10 in Connecticut. Other Methodist clergy filed a complaint about Ogletree, who is a part of the UMC's New York Conference, after *The New York Times* ran his son's wedding announcement in 2012.

In a statement released after that complaint, Ogletree called it "a shame" he was being "prosecute[d]...for this act of love" and argued it was "entirely in keeping with [his] ordination vows..." He also referenced his denomination's "historic commitment to inclusive ministry embodied in its slogan 'open hearts, open minds, open doors.'"

John Lomperis of the Institute on Religion & Democracy tells *OneNewsNow* the 80-year-old Ogletree knows as well as anyone else the rules of the United Methodist Church, which state homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching."

"In accord with biblical teaching, our denomination's official position is very clear: that sexual relations are only for the bond of monogamous, heterosexual marriages," [said] Lomperis.

Ogletree has a right to pick his own prosecutor. That being the case, Lomperis isn't optimistic about the ultimate outcome of Ogletree's trial. "...I am told that he has chosen an outspoken opponent of biblical teaching to basically be the prosecutor in the church trial. So we'll see what happens—but I have at this point very low expectations for the integrity of the process under this particular bishop, Martin McLee."

([www.onenewsnow.com/church/2014/01/20/low-expectations-for-scriptural-truth-to-prevail-in-umc-pastors-trial](http://www.onenewsnow.com/church/2014/01/20/low-expectations-for-scriptural-truth-to-prevail-in-umc-pastors-trial))

### ABORTION RATE HITS LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 1973

**CHRISTIANHEADLINES.COM, 2/4/14, "ABORTION RATE HITS LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 1973"**

**[EXCERPTS]:** The abortion rate in the U.S. has dropped to its lowest level since the procedure became legal in 1973, according to a new data analysis that reflects a 13 percent decline in both the abortion rate and the number of abortions from 2008 to 2011.

Declines were seen in all but six states—Alaska, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, West Virginia and Wyoming—which saw either no change or an increase in abortion rates. "Births have been falling for awhile, and the recession certainly accelerated the decrease in births," says economist Ted Joyce of Baruch College in New York, who has studied reproductive health since 1985.

"When you consider the changes in contraception and the largest recession since the Great Depression, those two factors seem like compelling explanations for the decline," he says.

The report says states enacted 205 abortion restrictions between 2011 and 2013, more than in the entire previous decade combined. However, the 2008-2011 study period doesn't include that surge because many restrictions didn't

take effect until late 2011 or later. During the study period, 106 new abortion restrictions were implemented.

Whether the next report in three years will reflect continued declines depends on how the courts rule on state laws that would effectively restrict access to abortion providers, economist Joyce said.

The study, published online in the journal *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, also finds an increase in the proportion of abortions that were early medication abortion. The non-surgical procedure uses the drug mifepristone, often called the abortion pill or RU-486, or the drug misoprostol. An estimated 239,400 early medication abortions were performed in 2011, representing 23 percent of all non-hospital abortions, an increase from 17 percent in 2008, the report says.

([www.christianheadlines.com/blog/abortion-rate-hits-lowest-level-since-1973.html](http://www.christianheadlines.com/blog/abortion-rate-hits-lowest-level-since-1973.html))

### JOEL OSTEEN: WON'T PREACH HOMOSEXUALITY IS SIN

**NEWSMAX.COM, 1/14/14, "JOEL OSTEEN SAYS HOMOSEXUALITY IS 'A SIN' BUT WON'T 'PREACH' ON IT"** **[EXCERPTS]:** Televangelist Joel Osteen says homosexuality is a sin but he doesn't "preach" about it and isn't

against "anybody" who is gay.

In an interview on Larry King Now available via Hulu, the popular Texas pastor said his views on homosexuality are "the same they've always been. I believe that Scripture says that it's a sin, but I always follow up by saying you know what, we're not against anybody," he added.

King asked how homosexuality can be called a sin, "if we don't know what causes it. You don't know why you're a heterosexual..."

"There's a lot of things, Larry, and I don't understand—so I just don't want to preach on it, preach about it," Osteen replied. Osteen was then asked if gay marriage annoys him. "It doesn't annoy me," he said. "From a Scripture point of view, it's not what my faith would teach, but it doesn't annoy me." Osteen added that he only talks about homosexuality during interviews, when he's asked about it.

*The Huffington Post* noted in its report Monday on the interview that it wasn't the first time that Osteen had offered a convoluted answer when asked about his opinion on the subject. In October, Osteen said on *HuffPost Live* that God "absolutely" accepts and approves of homosexuals just like he does everyone else.

([www.newsmax.com/US/osteen-homosexuality-preach/2014/01/14/id/546978](http://www.newsmax.com/US/osteen-homosexuality-preach/2014/01/14/id/546978))

## T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

- Apr 11-12** **Discerning the Times Conference**  
Saskatoon, SK  
(306) 371-1570  
[www.discerning-the-times.org](http://www.discerning-the-times.org)
- Aug 29-31** **TBC Conference**  
Bend, OR  
1-800-937-6638  
[www.theberean.org/conference](http://www.theberean.org/conference)

## STS 24/7 Broadcast Schedule

- Mar 7** **Dick Fisher (pt 2)**  
Personal Freedom Outreach
- Mar 14/21** **Raymond Yungen**  
Eastern Mysticism
- Mar 28** **Mark Dinsmore (pt 1)**  
Therapeutic Prayer Practices

Listen to Search the Scriptures 24/7 at:  
[www.theberean.org/radio](http://www.theberean.org/radio)

## Letters .....

### Dear Bereans,

Thank you so much for the copy you sent of T. A. McMahon's *Jesus Gets Tough* articles [Sept/Oct 2012] in response to my request for something on the seven churches representing the church of the Lord through the ages. This article is well written and helpful in so many ways, including the symbolism of the Lord's church as His bride. If we are to be a part of that bride, however, we must be like the five wise virgins, with "oil in our lamps," so that we do not fail to provide light to the world, as mentioned also in the second part of this article. I'm thankful for the lamp that TBC keeps burning through your monthly publication! JF (OK)

### Dear Staff at TBC,

Just recently, we have begun using the articles translated into German from the Berean Call website to send to Austrian believers to whom we ministered for 10 years. They need to be warned concerning "Christian psychology," which has made inroads everywhere. H&DR (OR)

### Dear Tom,

I have been wanting to write to you in gratitude. Your [April 2013] *Berean Call* blessed me greatly. Your exposition...about the Catholic Church really confirmed my beliefs. I am a former Catholic—even to the extent of being a nun. From a very young age I felt that much was wrong—it wasn't

even Christian. I left the Church and was converted, or born again, in the 1990s.

The last Catholic service I attended, apart from family members' funerals, left me feeling like I was in a great vacuum. I never went back....

Thank you for such open honesty that I never thought I'd hear. God bless you in your ministry. JD (VA)

### Dear Berean Call,

I am writing in regards to the article on the Hebrew Roots Movement [Jan 2014] written by G. Richard Fisher. I will assume that you did not do any research for yourselves but took his word for it....It is unfortunate that some have chosen to call this movement the "Hebrew Roots Movement," and I have disliked this term since the moment someone laid it on me....To me it is simply living out God's Word....I realize in this man's article he often uses the words "some" and "many in the movement"; however, the article clearly comes off as [applying to] all that are in this movement. Perhaps it is unfortunate (and, more likely, perhaps not) that unlike other denominations, as of yet, there is no "creed" or "article of faith" other than the Word itself to go by...and there are those who take this to an extreme just like the Pharisees of days gone by, on which the author has seemed to grab onto and has chosen not to give a balanced approach to this topic. ML (WI)

### Dear T. A.,

What an incredible blessing to read the article on the Hebrew Roots Movement in this month's newsletter! I've been attending a Messianic Jewish church for the past nine months and have been struggling with it so much. My desire has been to gain a deeper understanding of our Hebrew roots. Although I've learned a lot about the various feasts that I never knew before, I've been dealing with an inner "churning" in my spirit that I now realize was the Holy Spirit. I've been doing my best as a "Berean" searching the Scripture to verify much of what they teach and am grateful for the deeper knowledge I've gained. There just seemed to be conflict after conflict in me between the Lawkeeping (Torah observance emphasis—legalism) and the freedom we have been given in Christ through the New Covenant. I've noticed a number of things the article pointed out, including what I'd term "Christian bashing." Anyway, I could go on and on and on...but will simply and deeply say again, "Thank You!" (BK, MN)

### Dear Tom,

I just wanted to say a personal thanks for the two-part radio broadcast you and the other pastor [Anton Bosch] did on the Strange Fire Conference. As an Assemblies

of God pastor, I certainly don't enjoy being painted with the big brush that says, "all charismatics, pentecostals and such are heretics..." or words to that effect. I especially appreciated Bro. McMahon's honesty when he spoke about the spiritual gifts. My great desire as a pastor is to be a true man of God, and one who truly believes in the totality of Scripture. Keep up the good work and may the Lord bless you and your ministry! JG (email)

### Dear T. A. and Staff,

In one of T. A.'s recent columns he warns us about "creeping complacency." I was cut to the heart and rightfully so!

I recalled at the moment I read that column that I needed to remember 2 Timothy where it says to "fight the good fight of faith." I had a song in the night about that time [and thought of] Isaac Watts' great hymn that says "Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease; While others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas!?" PW (FL)

### Brothers and Sisters,

As I get older it sinks in more and more how important your ministry has been and is. So much deception out there! It may be me, but now at 66 years old it is everywhere and has captured so many. Thank you for your effort to keep the truth of The Word of God. It has been an enormous help to my family and friends over the years. AP (NY)

## TBC Notes

### Best of TBC Conferences Online

Coming soon—a FREE online conference featuring three speakers and their presentations from past TBC Conferences. The three-day conference will feature one speaker per day. The talks will run throughout the day and will be followed late in the afternoon (Pacific Time) by a live Q&A session.

We hope to offer more of these conferences in the future. We haven't set the date for the first one, so be sure to keep checking our website: [www.theberean.org](http://www.theberean.org). Click the red "subscribe" button to receive details by email.

T. A. McMAHON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# CLIMBING UP ANOTHER WAY

*Is There a Spiritual Ladder to the Lap of "Father God"?* BY MARK DINSMORE

## *History and Structure of Sozo*

"SOZO" is a psycho-spiritual deliverance and inner healing methodology birthed out of Bethel Church in Redding, California. But though the Bethel Sozo website banner says, "[A] Ministry of Bethel Church," the FAQ section disclaims, "The Sozo staff are independent contractors and are not Bethel Church Staff." Apparently for legal reasons, no one wants to call this "counseling" or "therapy." Rather, they simply call it "healing prayer" (and yet, they *strongly* recommend a suggested donation for receiving "prayer" for which recipients ("Sozoers") must first sign a waiver.

For background, it is interesting to note that Bethel was once an Assemblies of God (AG) church, and Bill Johnson was an AG pastor; but he led his flock out of AG in 2006 to jump into the NAR/River Revival movement. Johnson is now a self-appointed "apostle," and his church is now a part of his own "Revival Alliance" network, co-founded with Che Ahn (Harvest Rock Church, Pasadena, CA) and John Arnott (Catch the Fire Toronto; formerly Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship; formerly Toronto Airport Vineyard Church).

Although Sozo got its start at Bethel, other Sozo groups have spun off, such as The Freedom Resource (TFR). Headed by author and executive director Andy Reese, TFR publishes its own manuals and presentations on how to use Sozo. According to TFR's website, no one individual "owns" or controls the copyright for Sozo concepts and "tools" used in the program: "This particular style or format for ministry has evolved (and continues to evolve) from roots in the Argentine revivals, the understanding and writings of various practitioners of inner healing and deliverance, and from the experience of several churches and individuals including Randy Clark's ministry and Bethel Church in Redding, California. It is changing and growing as we all learn, grow, and share experiences and tools with each other." [Note: TFR just announced brand differentiation from Bethel Sozo and will now practice under "Freedom Prayer."]

Apparently, then, the system is very adaptable, malleable, and open-ended. But one thing appears clear: Something *else* is needed in *addition* to God's Word and the Holy Spirit. As Reese acknowledges, Sozo has "evolved...and continues to evolve." From where? From God's Word? Are the Scriptures ever-changing? No, Sozo comes from "roots in the Argentine revivals...the writings of various practitioners...and from the experience of...individuals." Such a description can lead one only to the inescapable conclusion that these "evolving" techniques are adapted from man's own inventions, not from the inspired Word of God.

## *Bethel Sozo: Redefining "Salvation"?*

The Bethel Sozo website appears to redefine "salvation" not as an accomplishment of Christ at a moment in time but as a process of perpetual deliverance (with the help of their tools, of course):

The SOZO ministry is a unique inner healing and deliverance ministry in which the main aim is to get to the root of those things hindering your personal connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.... SOZO is the Greek word translated "saved, healed, delivered." Sozo contains the whole package of being made whole or well.

At the very least, this confuses *salvation* (the purchase of God) with ongoing *sanctification* of the believer (which comes as we

mature in the Lord and respond in obedience to His word). The Sozo tools, according to Bethel, become part and parcel of a believer's journey to complete the salvation (sozo) process. This subtle shift in terminology raises a critical question: In what then, does Bethel church encourage believers and non-believers to put their faith and hope: Jesus Christ, or the Sozo experience?

The Freedom Resource website makes a telling correlation between itself and the addiction recovery group, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Although it refers only to the organizational structure, in fact its use of divination, the technique by which AA's co-founder Bill Wilson received its 12 Steps methodology, is the main technique of Sozo's "tools."

As explained by Dave Hunt in his article "God as You Conceive Him/Her/It to Be" (*The Berean Call*, July 1997), the principles of AA "came by direct inspiration from the demonic world and they open the door to the occult by introducing members to a false god" ([www.thebereancall.org/node/5821](http://www.thebereancall.org/node/5821)). Like AA's 12 Steps, Sozo utilizes methodologies that are either not found in Scripture or condemned by God's Word.

## *Six Tools—Six Visions—Six Spirits?*

According to the Bethel Sozo website, there are six tools (psychotherapeutic techniques) that are used by the SOZO team ("Sozoers"): • Father Ladder • Four Doors • Presenting Jesus • The Wall • Trigger Mechanisms (Advanced Tool) • Divine Editing (Advanced Tool).

By using these tools and following the Holy Spirit, wounds are healed, strongholds broken, truth revealed, and "doors" closed.... A Sozo session may last 2-3 hours and is conducted by two team members. The Sozo team will sit down with you and with the help of the Holy Spirit walk you through the process of freedom and wholeness.... Sozo is not a counseling session but a time of interacting with Father, Son and Holy Spirit for wholeness and pursuing of your destiny.

Sozo is indeed a "counseling session," nevertheless. Dawna DeSilva, founder of Sozo at Bethel, describes the program this way in the Sozo Basic DVD:

"Our mission statement is to provide gentle, yet powerful deliverance in a safe and honoring atmosphere in which the godhead is allowed to direct our means of ministering. You will understand that when we teach you the "father ladder," when we talk about the godhead. Most people [when we ask] 'who do you pray to?' God. Okay, that's a good place to start. But we're going to teach you to use the tool for the entire aspect of God. God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit."

It sounds as though DeSilva has discovered "a new way" to pray—one that believers have somehow missed or forgotten that needs to be "restored." Jesus not only gave us a model for prayer in Mt 6:9-13, but there are many examples of prayer in Scripture, all directed to the Father, through the Son, and "interpreted" by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26). Though many believers innocently interchange "Jesus" and "Father" in prayer, finding fault in that would be slicing things pretty thin, since Christ declared "I and my Father are one." Evidently, however, DeSilva suggests we should direct our prayers to three *separate* entities, depending upon the specific purpose or

desired result. As we'll see, this can be a door for unholy spirits to enter, especially if one is put into a meditative state of mind.

### ***“Climbing Up Another Way”?***

Co-founder of Bethel Sozo, Teresa Liebscher, elaborates on one of the program's “tools”:

[The Father Ladder] is an amazing tool. It's gonna get you some information, and to the wounds and lies really quick and easy. It's also a tool that can be used in any way, shape or form, including, once you get healed, it's gonna be a tool that you'll be able to access for the rest of your life. I'm going to explain that as we go along. I use it all the time, with myself, with my friends, and a lot of time with my family too. It's a great tool, you guys are gonna fall in love [with it.]

So, what exactly is the Father Ladder? The Bethel Sozo website doesn't say. Even the available YouTube clips featuring Dawna and Teresa only entice, not explain. In order to find out, you have to attend a seminar, or purchase their DVD series. The Basic Sozo DVD course is \$105, plus a \$10 manual. The Advanced Sozo DVD course is \$77, plus a \$10 manual, which includes the “continuing treatment” course called “Shabar,” sold separately for \$45.

The Freedom Resource “Sozo Network” has authored its own set of guides and materials. The “ladder” is a computer flowchart method of interviewing clients that is designed to reveal what has been popularly described by both secular psychologists and Christian counselors as “the father wound” (although it may be a wound inflicted by someone else, or even yourself). In *The Sozo User Manual*, Andy Reese explains, “We are interacting with both the person [client] and God throughout the process. We begin by asking the person to picture Papa God, or by asking Papa to give the person a picture of Himself. We might say, ‘What picture comes to mind when I say ‘Father God’? or ‘Picture Papa God and describe Him to me.’” Curiously, Reese says that “We will use a Father picture to explain [the process] *though a Mother or Sibling picture works the same way*” (Italics added).

This is violation number one. (Actually, it is a “number two” violation of the Ten Commandments): “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above...” (Ex 20:4). Many will protest that a graven (three-dimensional) image is not the same thing as an imagined picture. But is this not the first step an artist or sculptor starts with to carve or cast a graven image? “It's just a representation!” some would protest. “I'm not worshipping it!” Fine. But where in God's Word are we ever instructed to picture or visualize God or Jesus? Of course, when Jesus walked the earth, He affirmed His deity by declaring, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). Christ also declared, “I and my Father are one” (Jn 10:30). However, we are also told that “no man hath seen God at any time” (Jn 1:18, 1 Jn 4:12).

Scripture instructs us not only to avoid making “graven images,” but also to avoid creating “*any likeness*” of “any thing that is in heaven above.” Unfortunately, the church has long succumbed to popular culture and mythology when it comes to depicting “angels,” “Jesus,” and “God” in all forms of art and media. But quite logically, any “representation” of Jesus or God today is patently false. Is He black? white? beige? Is He bearded? Long hair or short? Is He more like Santa Claus, or more like Gandhi?

As should be abundantly clear, it is absolutely preposterous (and pointless) to try and imagine God in our minds as a physical being. God's Word declares, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:24). Therefore, all attempts to picture or depict God are acts of the flesh at best

(“which profits nothing”) or open one up to demonic deception at worst—for God is a *Spirit*. It stands to reason, therefore, that any imagined image of God is, by definition, the very *opposite* of Truth.

The “Father Ladder” flowchart then prompts the Sozo counselor to ask, “Is your picture of God a good one, or a bad one?” If it is a good picture, the client is instructed to speak (audibly or silently) to the “image” of Papa God, and ask the dreamlike figure, “What do you think of me?” If the client has a negative picture of God, the facilitator is instructed to find the reason by using other “tools” in the Sozo method, such as the “Four Doors,” “Presenting Jesus,” or probing for the presence of demonic oppression or possession in the individual using “The Wall” tool or “Dealing With Demons.”

### ***Sozo: Presenting “Another Jesus”?***

In the “Presenting Jesus” tool, the counselor asks the client to “Picture Jesus and ask for His help.” Once again, any such imagined manifestation of Christ in the mind's eye can only be false. Jesus warned of false Christs and false prophets who would arise and show great signs and wonders, using all means possible to deceive the very elect: “Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, [Christ] is in the desert, go not forth: [or] behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not” (Mt 24:24, 26).

The Greek word for “secret chambers” is *tamaon*, which means “a secret room” or “inner chamber.” Is not the mind such a place? The same word is used figuratively for praying “in your closet” (Mt 6:6), and again in Luke 12:3. Obviously, we are not only to pray “in closets” because we are elsewhere instructed to “pray without ceasing.” We certainly don't live and work in a closet; neither can we pray out loud all day long, in every situation. Clearly, the meaning is that even secret (“closeted”) prayers, spoken from our innermost “chambers” of the heart and mind, are heard by our Father in heaven.

However, there is no “secret room” (or secret instruction) in God's Word for *visualizing* Christ as a means of accessing Him through prayer. In fact, quite the opposite: Scripture repeatedly warns of *false* Christs who will even appear as “an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). Such demons have deceived countless individuals through the ages, many of whom have spawned some of the most widespread cults, based on doctrines of devils (1 Tm 4:1). Attempting to contact God or Jesus through our “mind's eye,” therefore, is a form of divination and necromancy (attempting to communicate with spirits of the dead). These variations of witchcraft are expressly forbidden in Scripture.

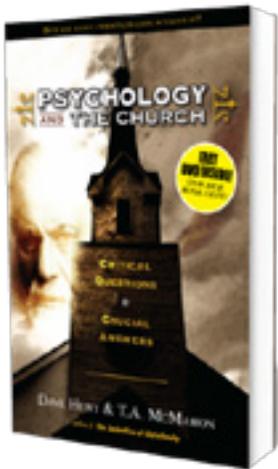
Ironically, *The Sozo User Manual* by Andy Reese explains that if the client is unable to see “Jesus” (which could never be the real Jesus) there is a high likelihood of demonic blockage. In order to probe for the presence of a demon, the counselor is told how to gain access to the client's mind, in much the same way as a hypnotist. In the example given on page 40, the counselor asks the client to “go to the back seat of your conscience right now—sort of like climbing into the back seat of your car, and we're going to see if there is something that is trying hard to block you from getting freedom [to visualize Christ], Okay?”

Considering just two of the six “tools” found in the Sozo program, it's clear that it is dangerously flawed. Furthermore, its methodology is indistinguishable from forms used by secular psychotherapists, which have their origin in the occult. Sozo is spiritualized Freudian psychoanalysis that includes psychic determinism and searching out the unconscious through techniques that include various forms of guided imagery. Anyone involved in Sozo needs to take to heart the admonition given twice in Proverbs:

*“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prv 14:12; 16:25).

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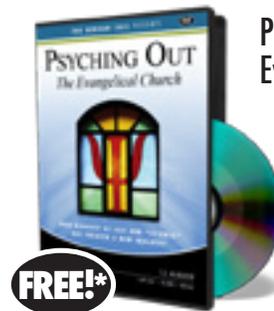


### Psychology and the Church: Critical Questions, Crucial Answers

**Hunt/McMahon**—Have believers compromised their God-given “birthright” by accepting counterfeit solutions to emotional and spiritual issues that are common to man? So prevalent is the use of psychotherapy among Christians today that many pastors themselves are either licensed therapists or are the greatest source of referrals to professional counselors. In addition, the study of psychology has become the number two career choice for all college students. In fact, the popularity of this “science of the soul” is even greater among those enrolled in Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries from coast to coast. The purpose of this book is not to attack or condemn evangelicals who are practicing psychotherapists or those who have been helped by what is commonly called

“Christian Psychology.” Rather, this volume acknowledges the value of believers bearing one another’s burdens through prayer, fellowship, and the Word of God. Simultaneously, this compilation exposes—in a biblically incisive manner—underlying concerns that have plagued the evangelical community as a result of embracing what is tantamount to a counterfeit religious practice woven into the fabric of contemporary Christianity. The Berean Call, 415 pp. + Bonus DVD. Retail \$29.99

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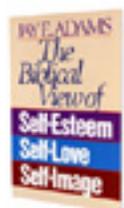


### Psyching Out the Evangelical Church

**McMahon**—In the last 50 years multitudes of pastors have added clinical counseling degrees to their theological credentials. Psychological theories have been preached so often and from so many pulpits that they are accepted without question by increasing numbers of Christians as biblical doctrines. The Christian church in the United States has become a major referral service for clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. The critical question raised by these developments is: Why? Is the Bible not sufficient? Has the Body of Christ been ill-equipped for ministering to the mental, emotional and spiritual needs of Christians? Or has the church been intimidated and “psyched out” by the pseudo-science of psychotherapy? T. A. McMahon takes these issues head-on, and you will be shocked, informed, and edified by what he has to say. 1 DVD, 51 min.

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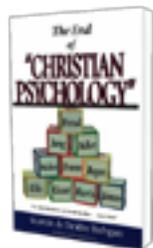
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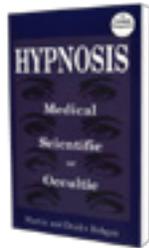
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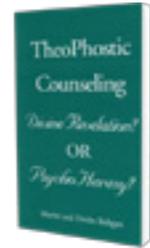
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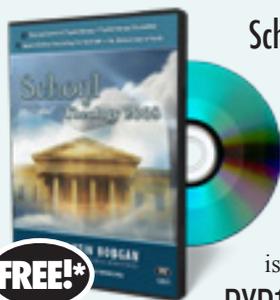


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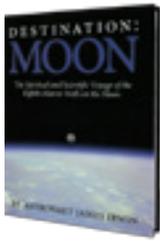
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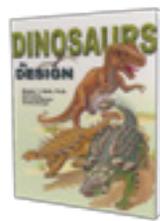
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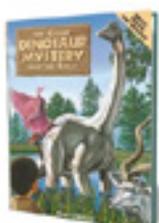


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