CHAPTER THREE

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND EVALUATION

To this point, this thesis has been centered around Gothard's theology. The presuppositional study now shifts to include the psychological framework. Because there is such a strong stance against the study of naturalistic psychology, the "psychology of Bill Gothard" could appear to some to be a misnomer. However, in spite of his disregard for psychology he sharesthree fundamental categories common to every psychological system. The first category is the teaching about the nature of man, i.e. how or why he behaves, feels, thinks and grows. The second category is the nature of pathology, i.e. conflicts, sickness, maladaptive behavior, destructive mental attitudes. The third category is the nature of therapy, i.e. restoration, healing and mental health. The three basic needs and assumptions in any study of mind and behavior form the outline of this chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. One objective is to systematically describe Gothard's sys-

tem. This is a difficult task because Gothard never presents his system conceptually. The material gathered in this chapter is from outlines in the loose leaf manual, from notes gathered in the two seminars, and a personal interview. The second objective of this chapter is to emphasize that the seminar is a system of psychology and needs to be critically evaluated as such. It is not an attempt to simply reduce the entire seminar to a psychological system, as the seminar is certainly much broader. However, as Gothard's theology and hermeneutics were isolated for evaluation in the previous chapters, his psychology will be in this chapter.

ASSUMPTIONS

The Nature of Man

A central point in Gothard's view of man is presented amid some confusion. Gothard says in the manual:

> Scripture distinguishes three levels of our being in I Thess. 5:23 ... 'and I pray God your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless ...' The Greek word 'KAI' which is translated 'and' is used between spirit and soul as well as between soul and body. This grammatical construction clearly shows that the spirit differs from the soul and

> that the soul differs from the body [Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 2].

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of this tripartate division to the content of the seminar, yet in personal interview (March 28, 1974) Gothard stated that he uses the tripartate division of man only as a teaching device and that the localizations of different aptitudes to either body, soul, or spirit were not actual. Whether or not Gothard actually conceptualizes the divisions as real, the emphatic message of the seminar appears to be that the divisions are real and on that basis his view of man will be discussed.

Each division of man -- body, soul, spirit -- has various aptitudes and capacities lying within (Figure 3). The first division, spirit, has the ability and capacity for

> Comprehending the essential nature of God (natural light),
> Discerning right and wrong (conscience), and
> Comprehending the basic meaning of life (wisdom),
> Sensing the spirit of others (sensitivity), and
> Directing basic desires and emotions (creativity) [Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 2].

Later in the manual 'motivation' is added to the list of aptitudes lying within the spirit. The soulish,

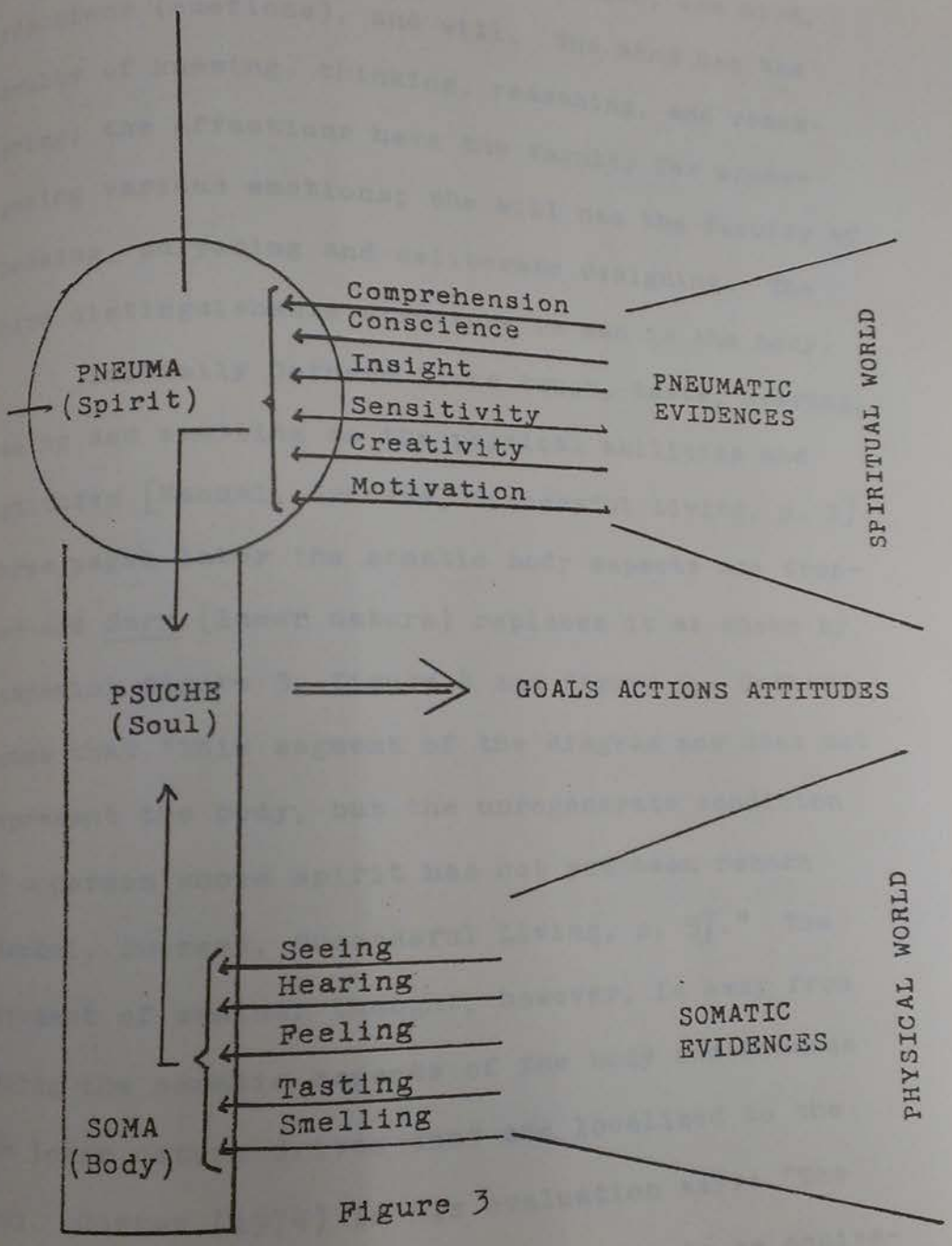

Figure 3

[Manual, Success, Successful living, p. 3]

or psychological aptitudes and abilities, are mind, affections (emotions), and will. The mind has the faculty of knowing, thinking, reasoning, and remembering; the affections have the faculty for experiencing various emotions; the will has the faculty of choosing, purposing and deliberate designing. The third distinguishable structure in man is the body.

Initially Gothard lists touch, taste, hearing, seeing and smelling as the physical abilities and aptitudes [Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 2]. Three pages later the somatic body aspects are dropped and Sarx (lower nature) replaces it as shown by comparing figure 3, figure 4 and figure 5. Gothard notes that "This segment of the diagram now does not represent the body, but the unregenerate condition of a person whose spirit has not yet been reborn [Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 5]." The movement of seminar thought, however, is away from seeing the somatic aspects of the body and towards the lower nature drives that are localized in the body. Carter (1974) in his evaluation says: "The body, flesh, physical and sensual tend to be equiva-

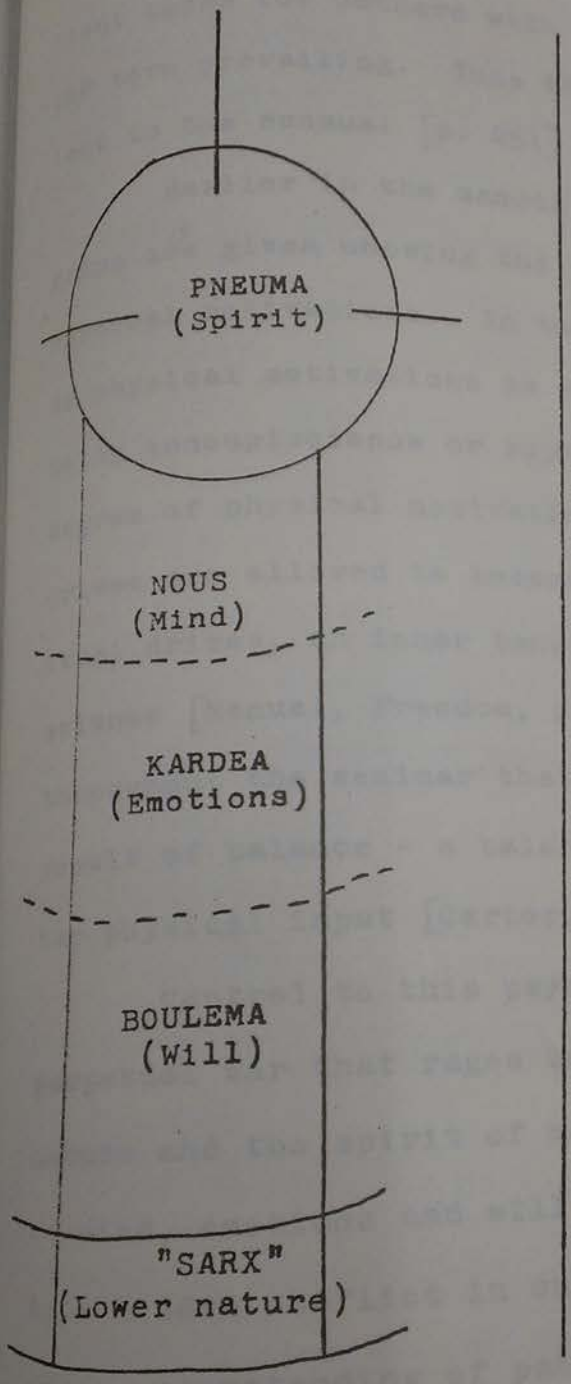

Figure 4

[Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 5]

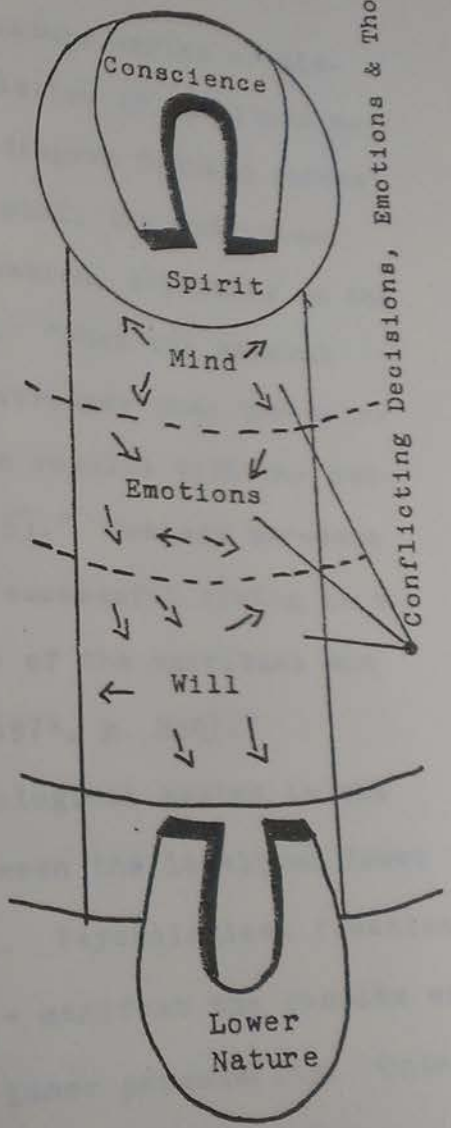

Figure 5

[Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 6]

"lent terms for Gothard with the meaning of the latter term prevailing. Thus the body becomes equivalent to the sensual [p. 251]."

Earlier in the manual another series of diagrams are given showing the relation of spiritual to physical motivations. In the diagram Gothard refers to physical motivations as sensual, the condition being concupiscience or reprobation, depending on the degree of physical motivation. "When the sensual drives are allowed to become stronger than the spiritual drives, an inner tension results with the conscience [Manual, Freedom, p. 5]." Gothard stresses throughout the seminar that "successful living is a result of balance - a balance of the spiritual and the physical input [Carter, 1974, p. 250]."

Central to this psychological system is the perpetual war that rages between the localized lower nature and the spirit of man. Psychological functions -- mind, emotions and will -- manifest the results of this hidden conflict in our inner personality. Gothard's understanding of pathology grows from this point of inner tension.

Gothard has three analogies that occur repeatedly throughout the seminar. Figure 1 and figure 2, the diamond analogies and the analogy of the canvas, represent his view of man. The diagrams have in common that man in his depraved condition is like a jewel that is best brought to beauty by the abrasions of life. In line with his presuppositions regarding God's sovereignty, Gothard is emphatically clear as to the degree God is involved in that character development. Character development is a product of God's extensive control and manipulation of physical environment. Gothard points out that God has an inward character ideal evident in Christ that is to be our model and to that end God is working. (Personality is referred to only as it relates to the emphasis of character ideal. Often it seems that a personality type is presented rather than a character quality.)

The importance of God's control of physical happenings as it refers to character development is observed when he discusses the parent child relationship. It is God who sees the character deficiencies

before birth so God puts the child in a particular home environment that would provide ways to correct the deformed character. "God has the right parents for every child ... God has placed each child in the home He wants [lecture notes]." The reasoning behind this assertion is that when unhealthy child-rearing exists, "The child can adapt and the child can re-adapt [lecture notes]," and this adapting process is part of the character development. The claim that unhealthy child-rearing produces bad children is all but disregarded by his idea that "the basic nature of the child is revealed, not created in the home [lecture notes]." The emphasis in the seminar is to skirt the unhealthy child-rearing issue, disregarding the negative influence by positing the value of such experiences for facing the various situations that will come up later in life. He points to the value of these negative experiences to vaccinate for the future.

Clearly, Gothard's system embraces the total depravity of man extending to the inherently hostile, independent, self-willed nature of the newborn child.

This system suggests either every child is born with a tendency towards maladjustment, i.e. born with an angry or rebellious temperament, or that maladjustment was produced by the child's wrong response to life's circumstances. The system suggests that environmental or emotional contingencies have little or no bearing on maladjustment.

One important dynamic in Gothard's understanding of man's nature is that of individual responsibility. Evident in the previously mentioned relationship between parent and child is Gothard's clear teaching of the necessity for a person to stand solely accountable for his thoughts, actions, feelings, and attitudes. There is no clear statement regarding the age at which a child becomes responsible for attitude and thought patterns, but every indication in the seminar points that this age is very early in the child's development. Combined with this view of God's control as to what family a child is born into, is the understanding of the tough adaptability of a child to very adverse conditions, and the relative lack of placing blame on bad child-

rearing in producing maladaptive behavior. We are forced to conclude that virtually 100% of the causes of maladjustment (pathology) are due to the failure of the child. The writer feels that a distinction must be made between a person's responsibility for supplying efforts to correct deviant or destructive attitudes and behavior, and that person's responsibility for the initial onset of the pathology. Gothard's system indicates that, to a large extent, the onset and, in every case, resolvement are the responsibility of the same individual.

Gothard is clearly attempting to make his system of responsibility comprehensive enough to include every possible situation. His desire to include every situation is evident when he says: "No matter how inconsistent or unfair those in authority be, we are responsible for our response to them [Manual, Family, Chain of Command, p. 5]." He anonymously quotes a well-known psychologist who said: "There is no mental illness, just varying degrees of irresponsibility [lecture]." Gothard states that "98 percent of principle violations are violations

Pathology

There are three concepts central to Gothard's understanding of pathology. The first concept is his understanding of the supernatural universal principles.

> The person who violates them experiences the consequences, and those who live by them will lead a satisfying life whether they realize that these are God's principles or not [Carter, 1974, p. 252].

Gothard has isolated seven of these essential principles. No formal definition is offered, but the essential teaching is as follows: 1. Design -- God has designed all parentage, environment, ability and appearance to bring glory to Jesus Christ. 2. Authority -- God has placed over each person various authorities through which God's directions, attitudes, and actions are transmitted to the individual. 3. Responsibility -- God has given us the charge to be in total control of our responses to life's situations. 4. Ownership -- We have no personal rights to anything, rather God expects us to yield all our rights and transfer ownership to Him. Everything we have, then, is on loan from God. 5. Motivation -- Emo-

tional and physical drives are to be controlled and directed by the spiritual aspects of man. 6. Freedom -- We do not have the right to do what we want, but the power to do what we ought, especially in terms of moral actions. 7. Success -- Spiritual growth comes by incorporating the Bible through memorization and meditation. These principles are the basic principles upon which the seminar is based, and are essential to understanding his view of pathology.

The second central concept is that principle violations are manifested in various relationship breakdowns. Gothard identifies six areas in which principle violations are manifest: 1. rejection of self, 2. reactions to God, 3. purposelessness for future, 4. conflicts in the family, 5. conflicts in dating, and 6. ineffective friendships. Evidence of a principle violation will appear in one of these six ways.

The third major concept in Gothard's view of pathology is the discernability of levels of conflict. There are four levels of conflict according to Gothard: 1. Surface problems which are visible

to others such as clothing, superiority, dishonesty, underachieving, questionable activity, wrong kinds of music, inability to love, lack of trust of God or extravagance; 2. Surface causes are inner tensions such as inferiority, rebellion, guilt, distrust, frustration, worry or nervousness; 3. Root problems are basic personality conflicts listed as roots of bitterness, temporal value system and moral impurity; and 4. The Root cause, which is always resisting or rejecting the desire and power God gives to respond to life according to His will. Gothard has a dynamic theory of pathology, one that describes surface action in terms of successively deeper underlying levels of personality. One's functioning at the various levels is explained by motives found in the next deeper level until only one source of pathology remains -- resisting or rejecting the grace of God (Carter, 1974).

Clearly for Gothard, pathology -- conflict, deviant behavior, and maladjustment -- is sin. The root cause for all non-organic pathology can be reduced to resisting or rejecting the desire and power

God gives to follow the seven rpinciples for living. The root cause -- inner spiritual failure -- is revealed in visible problems, inner tensions, or basic personality conflicts. These problems in turn cause the breakdowns in one or more of the six basic relationships in life.

Gothard emphatically declares that pathology is almost always spiritually based, but sometimes pathological behavior has an organic basis. He directly rules out the possibility for emotional factors as causes of pathology. He feels this is so because emotional problems are the outgrowth of the conflicting drives of a man's spirit and his body (Figures 3 and 4). Balance (spiritual control) produces emotional harmony whereas lack of spiritual control produces conflicting emotions, or emotional problems. There are no emotional problems that originate in the soul - the residing place of the emotions; they only exist as a product of sin (principle violation).

The manual and the lectures of the seminar are full of charts and diagrams tracing one improper re-

sponse that leads to deeper, more destructive responses and attitudes. This pattern always goes from minor violations in the past to major violations in the present. One principle violation builds on the previous violation leading to an increasingly devastating effect on the person violating the principles. The movement is always to the present, stemming from the problem in the past, as if the past were the ultimate determining factor in the current problem. Responsibility for the onset of problems is emphatically placed on the person as it is ultimately his improper response to God that is at fault. Psychological factors do not produce maladjustment. Irresponsible violations of spiritual principles in the life of the person produce the problem.

Therapy

Perhaps the largest component in Gothard's view of therapy is the integral in which his theology is woven into the entire restorative emphasis. The various points in the manual and lecture are always supported by Scripture. In the seminar one repeatedly hears theological phrases such as: "This is the

"way God works;" "these are God's principles;" "this is God's chain of command;" and "this is God's way of dealing with us." Gothard points out that these are God's ideas, not his own. The resounding emphasis throughout the seminar is: "Now you can see life from a bigger better more comprehensive perspective because you are seeing life from God's point of view."

In dealing with Gothard's therapeutic mode, it is impossible to overstate the importance of his desire for a perspective change. Successful therapy is equated with successful perspective change and its implementation. Gothard's standard for emotional or relational health is perception of, obedience to and living in accord with God's principles. Students of the seminar are invited to return as often as possible because it is assumed that one time is not sufficient to completely change the life perspective. Gothard is trying to change the point of view so that good can be seen in every bad situation.

As previously indicated, 98 percent of all principle violations are attitudinal violations. Thus the idea of submission and repentance form a central

part in the necessary attitude change. The most persistent model in the seminar is the description of man in total rebellion to his Maker. As every pathology comes directly from this rebellion, it is easy to see why Gothard stresses repentance and submission so heavily. Submission in Gothard's system is primarily the process of understanding our rebellious nature, isolating the violated principles, repenting of those violations, and living under the divine authority in accord with God's principles. Submission in attitude is an irreduceable component in this system because it alone stands as the opposing vector to rebellion - from which every pathology stems. Rebellion and submission are repeatedly pitted against each other as the deciding factors between health and pathology.

Nowhere in the seminar does Gothard systematically present his therapy, but the pattern of his teaching roughly follows his five steps toward becoming a whole person. The steps are: 1. Be reborn in your spirit. 2. Rebuild your thought structures. 3. Refocus your emotions. 4. Redirect your goals.

5. Reproduce your life in others. These five points provide a conceptual framework by which the therapeutic aspects can be understood.

The seminar has a built-in thought progression. The first step in this progression coincides with the first step in the whole person concept of being reborn in the spirit. A large percentage of the seminar is devoted to bringing the person into a right relationship with God. This requires teaching on the nature of God, His sovereignty, His principles, His Scriptures, and His perspectives. It also requires teaching regarding the importance of salvation, of unquestioning submission and living life in harmony with the basic principles of life.

Therapy is designed first to isolate the basic principles being violated, i.e., to uncover the root cause. Upon isolation of the root cause, a period of re-education or explanation, regarding the violated principle, takes place, demonstrating the severity of an offense against God. The cause and effect relationship between the offense against God and the resultant conflict is pointed out. Gothard then asks

the student to establish an intimate relationship with God through repentance and submission. Diagnosis is extremely simplified because virtually all pathology is the result of principle violation. Being reborn in your spirit refers initially to becoming a Christian, but also is used conceptually as the process of re-establishment of the broken relationship due to the rebellion against God.

Building on the creation of a vital relationship with God in the spiritual part of man (step one), Gothard moves into the soulish functions of the mind (step two). It is at this second conceptual aspect of therapy that Gothard moves from diagnosis into building practical methods that will complete the therapeutic process and bring the person to maturity.

> A Christian is mature when he recognizes a personal deficiency or violation in a basic Scriptural principle and has the discernment and the tools to correct the violation [Manual, Supplementary Pages].

After rebirth, rebuilding thought structures (a function of the mind) is the next step. This is done by making God's words and principles live in our

hearts. Throughout the seminar, meditation on Scripture is offered as the most effective method for exercising control over thought processes. "As we saturate our minds with God's word, it will wash out thoughts opposed to Scripture and will reconstruct other ideas around God's principles [Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 9]." This process of Scripture memorization and meditation is the primary element Gothard attributes to his personal academic success in high school and college as well as the success of his seminar. The specific teaching regarding meditation is stated explicitly only a few times, but there are innumerable implicit references to the value of the meditation process. From personal experiences and his selection of biblical examples, Gothard teaches the utter necessity of meditation for successful integration of God's principles into life style, for rebuilding thought structures.

The third conceptual component to therapy is to refocus your emotions. This concept also revolves around the centrality of Scripture. Emotionality is handled by memorizing a passage of Scripture, then

personalizing that verse by using personal pronouns wherever possible. The personalized verses are then said to God in prayer because: "God delights to hear His own word, especially when we are using it to express our own desires and emotions [Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 10]." Emotions are to be expressed through Scripture. Gothard uses a personal illustration to demonstrate how his severe depression was removed when he quoted back to God a Psalm of David, in which David was expressing a similar emotion. Consistent with the thinking of Gothard is the understanding that God will respond positively upon hearing His own words and then heal, revive, or answer that particular prayer. Little is said regarding outbursts of emotions; rather, the direction in the seminar is toward extreme emotional control. The control exercised does not apparently deny the existence of emotions, but rather stresses the importance of letting God be the source of appropriate expression. Because negative, hostile emotions come as the result of poor spiritual control, they are taken to God in terms of confession and remorseful

The fourth conceptual component is to redirect personal goals (a function of the will). Here the shift is from Scripture input to searching God's will or His goals for the person. This concept, like some others, does not get extensive treatment, but the seminar is set up to give a strong goal orientation to life. Gothard's teaching is that:

> In every age and within every society God has certain specific goals which He wants to accomplish. He looks for men through whom He can reach these objectives [Manual, Success, Successful Living, p. 4].

This orientation is carried out in the various illustrations that are used in the seminar. Self image is talked about in terms of God painting a specific picture, the frame being our physical appearance functioning to highlight the specific achievement He wants to accomplish. The diamond illustration carries elements of this goal orientation as well, the goal here being an inward spiritual ideal. Everything that comes into a life is to be understood as necessary for creating the character needed for that ultimate achievement. This system impresses upon the student

the importance of finding that place in life for which he has been formed. The student is urged to let all other priorities be defined in terms of how well they will help him to accomplish his God-ordained goals. Finding the goals for which God wants us to work helps the person understand all the various experiences that have been brought to him to make the achievement of that goal possible. Therapy is not a completed task until the person has found his goal. Gothard encourages the students to make or develop a "life's message" from experiences and resolved conflicts, because this is the exact message God will use in the lives of others.

The fifth conceptual component is to reproduce your life in others. The first four components have corresponded with the tripartate view of man: rebirth of the spirit, rebuild thoughts (mind), refocus emotions, redirect goals (will). One would expect the last component to correspond with the physical division of man, but this last component fails to materialize in the expected manner.

In his fifth concept Gothard uses three pri-

mary teaching aids: the Bible, personal experience, and experience of others. He encourages students to keep a written account of personal experiences and subsequent insights gained from the study of scriptural principles. The journal is then used to assist others as they pass through a similar difficulty. From the journal, a "life's message" is constructed that would be a media for others to benefit from that experience. The entire seminar in some senses is Gothard's own life's message. Other men closely associated with Gothard use their life messages in a similar fashion, using it as a primary teaching device.

Conceptually, the therapy Gothard offers is training in separating the spiritual away from the other parts of life in order to control the body and soul functions. This can best be understood by Gothard's own words:

> God designed that all aspects of life be related around the spiritual drives in each person. When mental, emotional and volitional drives are integrated around the spiritual, and when the physical drives are disciplined by spiritual standards, an inner balance and freedom result which makes it possible to live in harmony with God's standards [Manual,

Freedom, p. 5].

The Emphasis of the System

The psychology of Gothard, as stated in the IBYC, is a system that assumes conflict of any kind (excluding some suffering for righteousness' sake) is pathological. Conflict has its roots in sin, i.e., lack of proper response to God. It is conversely assumed that proper response to God will produce successful living, harmony in relationships, and lack of conflict in present life situations. As such, the seminar is training in conflict avoidance. Conceptualizing the teaching regarding conflict avoidance is best done by dividing the seven basic principles into the two natural categories of theology and practical application.

Divided this way, the theological teaching comes through the principles of: Design, Authority, and Personal rights. This teaching deals with God's relation to man's physical environment, with God's tools, with God's goals and with God's ownership. The second division, teaching the practical application, contains the principles of: Responsibility, M

turity, Success, and Freedom. The latter are essential principles for the implementation of the conflict-avoiding system.

The three theological principles -- design, authority and personal rights -- are the areas of life that Gothard has identified as the source of most anger. Anger at personal appearance is ultimate anger directed towards God because the angry person has not recognized God's wisdom in their appearance. Anger towards parents or to those in authority is likewise anger directed toward God because the angry person fails to submit to God's picked representatives. Anger that comes as a result of violated personal rights is anger caused by violation of rights that belong to God. Almost all anger in life can be traced to these three areas. The theological teaching is that in each of these areas one must submit to God, realizing that the anger or resentment is rebellion against God. Rebellion is the source of every relationship breakdown, every conflict, every feeling of guilt, inferiority, frustration or anxiety. It is the source of all pathology.

Theologically speaking, anger in this system is sinful because it reflects lack of trust in God's design, His wisdom, and His ability to protect His own rights. By taking such a strong stance on God's causative action regarding appearance, authority, and personal rights, Gothard forces the understanding that all anger is direct rebellion against God and must therefore be eliminated. The answer the seminar gives for anger is to avoid it.

In addition to being a system that avoids conflict, the IBYC also seeks to repress anger. To repress anger and avoid conflicts, Gothard uses the four remaining principles -- Motivation, Responsibility, Success and Freedom. Motivation is the principle that emotional and physical drives are to be controlle and directed by the spiritual drives. Success is the principle that spiritual growth comes through memorization and meditation of Scripture. The responsibili principle states that the individual is to be in control of his responses to all life's circumstances. Freedom is the power to do what we ought rather than the right to do what we want. These form a series

of principles that must be implemented in order to apply the principles and avoid anger and conflicts. This is so because the person is responsible for his own response to life and for seeing life from God's point of view. Seeing life as God sees it, and responding accordingly is best accomplished by extensive memorization and meditation. Through a sensitive spirit, developed through meditation, one is able to control physical and emotional drives, and therefore be motivated by spiritual aspects. Then freedom is achieved because that person is exercising the power to respond as one ought. In this system, responding as one ought means to avoid conflict and work oneself into the mindset that all anger producing situations are sent by God for spiritual benefit.

The movement in the seminar is toward avoiding conflicts by finding methods of dealing with anger that will not threaten or destroy relationships. The means to this end for Gothard is to posit the theological teaching that anger is ultimately directed to God, that all anger is sin, and that successful living comes to the degree that we are submissive (unangry)

toward God. Being submissive to God allows us to see new areas of life that need to be submitted to God, as each new awareness of anger is an indication of sin and an occasion for repentance. This submission is determined by the degree that emotions of anger, rebellion, hostility and bitterness are no longer discernable. At the point at which any of these emotions surface, a lack of complete submission is the cause, because the person is inwardly resisting God's prescription of the situation and its ultimate character benefit. Submission is the ongoing state of mind in which belief in the three basic principles -- design, authority, and personal rights -- supercedes any emotional reaction to life. Submission is the state of mind or heart that creatively accepts everything in life as God's tool used in His wisdom.

EVALUATION

The psychological system presented in the IBYC, like the theology and hermeneutics, is a system that accomodates Gothard's intentions rather than adequately describing psychological functioning. As presented in the seminar, the system answers all the

questions regarding the source of pathology. Professional psychology is an irrelevant option as all pathology has its roots in sinful acts of attitude.

The criticism of the previous chapters has come because the assumptions Gothard makes do not allow for all the complexities of human and Divine experiences. The assumptions made have been a veil over interpretation of human experience and the Bible. This same procedure takes place in the area of psychology as well.

The error of the psychological system stems from the overly rigid division of man into body, soul and spirit. This tripartate division of man is an essential component in all Gothard's teaching regarding emotions and pathology. This conceptual split in man's nature is an idea that many theologians reject (Buswell, 1962). Instead, many theologians believe the biblical teaching is always toward man as a wholistic being, one not to be split rigidly into three definable and isolated parts.

The Implications of Gothard's View of Man

The assumption that man is divisible and that

each division in man has specific aptitudes and attitudes pertaining only to that particular division, leads Gothard into some critical imbalance at several points. This imbalance is evidentebecause Gothard posits the conflict between the spirit and the lower nature as the determining factor in emotional functioning. Doing so clearly implies that emotions function only in response to the spiritual state of the individual. Emotional functioning is always spoken of as a spiritual condition, i.e., anger is rebellion against God, fear is lack of trust, joy is evidence of spiritual harmony, frustration is inner spiritual tension. The diagrams and teaching of the seminar indicate that emotional reactions are not inherent in the human, in that emotions always stem from the harmony or conflict that exists between the spirit and sensual-body, the lower nature (Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5). Positive emotions come from the lack of conflict; negative emotions such as frustration, jealousy, fear or anger are due to lack of spiritual control. Such teaching, however, rules out the clear biblical teaching that man in God's image was

made an emotional being, (as seen in repeated referen-
ces to God's emotions of jealousy, anger, joy, sadness,
and regret; as seen in the psalmist's spontaneous ex-
pression of his wide range of feelings; as seen in
Christ's anger regarding exploitation and the ravages
of sin, and in His concern for His mother; as seen in
Paul's epistles resounding with a deep understanding
of man's emotionality) who responds to life emotion-
ally precisely because God made man emotional. Emo-
tions exist in normal healthy living. Gothard, how-
ever, apparently has a very minute understanding of
the complexity of emotional functioning and emotional
causes and seeks always to interpret feelings by
spiritual condition. The resulting ramification is
that the only contingent factor of behavior, attitudes,
and emotions is sin (or spirituality). Emotional
contingencies are disregarded because the seminar's
division of man, with the allocation of aptitudes
lying within each, is incompatible with the idea that
emotions exist as a function of the whole man. The
result, as Carter (1974) points out, is: "The affec-
tive-emotional side of man which leads to joy, spon-

"taneity, creativity and love is dissolved into rule keeping [p. 257]."

Submission to a System

Gothard presupposes that the human ideal is that the person is to be spirituall controlled, but spirituality in his terminology carries with it virtually the same meaning as submission. Controlling everything through the spirit is done by adopting God's point of view, integrating mind, emotions, will -- i.e., functions of the soul -- and physical drives around the spirit. The crucial element in this teaching is that the student understand what God expects and then submit to that understanding. However, Gothard's appeal is not merely an appeal to submit to God, but a strong appeal to submit to Gothard's idea of God's sovereignty and God's expectations. Submission in the IBYC is submission to a system of believing, and is not necessarily equated with God.

Submission as presented in the seminar is not simply an attitude toward God, but is also an attitude towards emotionality. It is a system that

characterizes anger, fear, resentment, etc., as necessarily sinful. It is a system that assumes lack of emotional reaction is equal to lack of sin. It is a system that teaches pent-up emotions are all released through attitude changes. Submitting to God is not only coming to know and love the Creator and seeking to cooperate with Him, but also a way of dealing with emotions in order to avoid conflicts. Submission means believing (or working toward believing) that God is using all sources of irritation for His glory. Submission tends toward a passive acquiescence to everything as being God's will. Submission stimulates no questions, allows no doubts, disregards injustice, and fosters passivity. Gothard's appeal to submission is an appeal to his own idea and understanding of God's relation to man, not an appeal to submit personally to God.

A System of Guilt

The propensity of the seminar to induce heavy guilt is another criticism. Gothard identifies only one source of pathology: rebellion against God. The implementation of the seminar principles is based on

the ability to convince the student that current problems are all due to that rebellion. The only causative dynamic of pathology is moral failure. The world view presented demands that every trauma, irritation or suffering be viewed as God's tool to identify areas that are not in harmony with His desires. Any feelings that do not correspond to those assumed to be Christ-like are seen as resulting from some principle violation.

In the seminars the writer attended, there seemed to be a lack of teaching on God's acceptance, or on the spontaneous growth that comes from a loving, accepting relationship. Instead, consequences of principle violations are given as the sole motivation for growth. Personal moral failure is the prime motive for living a godly life. The system cannot stand unless the students are convinced that all pathology can be traced to moral guilt.

This guilt-inducing system tends to give children the option to feel guilty, even if it is clear that parents were the primary input into an emotionally destroyed life. A child is to shoulder the moral responsibility for learned behavior even

if his learning took place through a dysfunctional family system. Feelings of resentment are not feelings that are to be talked through with parents, but are to be seen as sin and confessed to God. There is no room in this psychological system for legitimate blame to be placed anywhere but on the individual.

Missing Dynamic of Relationships

As Carter (1974) points out, there is no emphasis on human interpersonal relationships. The whole human to human aspect of Christianity is either eclipsed by the chain of command, or completely omitted. Gothard's descriptions of interpersonal relational relationships are always discussed from the point of view of God's dealing or purpose for them. The exclusion of the relational dimensions of human experience also omits the importance of the biblical teaching on fellowship and brotherly love. "Much if not all of the biblical concept of agape-love is also ignored [p. 256]." The nuturing and supporting aspects of the body of Christ are also omitted.

The teaching of Gothard bypasses the importance of relationships when he emphasizes the fact

that understanding biblical principles is more important than relationships. "It is more important for the teenager to understand God working through his parents than that his parents understand him [Manual, Family, Chain of Command, p. 4]." The ability to have relationships is best achieved by learning a role, or by discovering and accepting the proper position in the chain of command. Relationships, as presented in the seminar, bypass the human dimensions and always center around positions, roles, rule keeping or the spiritual ministry each can have on the other. Relationships only take on a spiritual dimension. Even the section in the manual giving principles for developing friends is filled with references to rigid responsibility, the Divine plan for all encounters, discernment of character deficiencies, and helping to correct those deficiencies. The human elements are missing. Friends are to be established on the basis of spiritual ministry instead of a common human bond that simply finds pleasure in another person.

Another implication of the seminar perspective is that children are hostile little people whose wills

need to be broken. Gothard presents the view that children are hostile to parents and in competition with God and his purposes. Parents are given the delicate job of breaking the will of the child without breaking the child's spirit. Absent from this view of children is the concept of being on the same team. The child is viewed as a rough diamond who needs chipping of parental authority to learn God's purposes. It seems that Gothard fails to adequately present the need for relationships with children, positing instead the proper role and proper discipline that is necessary to get a desired response from the children. The preoccupation is with control, predictability, and proper behavior instead of the need for nurturing relationships in which learned behavior and attitudes come from models, not coercive manipulation.

Denial of Rights

The transference of personal rights to God is another component in the psychological system that needs legitimate balance. The goal for Gothard is to avoid all conflict. The means to that goal is to remove anger by convincing oneself that one has no

personal rights, and that any claim to them is violation of biblical principles. The thrust of the seminar is for the students to deny their rights (transfer ownership to God) so that no anger can emerge should those rights be violated.

The denial of rights carries with it, however, very specific assumptions about anger, assumptions that omit a crucial distinction between the presence of that anger as a legitimate emotion, and the expression of that emotion. Satir (1972) has identified the distinction that Gothard fails to make that leads to incomplete teaching regarding anger.

> Because anger sometimes erupts into destructive actions, the belief is that anger itself is destructive. It isn't the anger, but the action taken as a result of it that can be destructive [p. 101].

Gothard does not see that anger in the biblical perspective is a natural, God-given emotion that can be used in an emergency.

Violations of personal rights do cause anger, and actions taken as a result of anger can cause burning resentment or actual conflict. Gothard, presupposing that anger must be avoided at all costs, there-

fore encourages everyone to deny personal rights. plainly lacking in the seminar is a theology for working through to real resolvement. He does not see anger in the biblical perspective of a very natural defense mechanism. He fails to see that anger itself is not wrong, but that unchecked expression of it, causing damage through resentment, harmful gossip, or physical attack can be wrong. Working through the anger with the person or issue involved in order to find personal meaning and understanding is immediately dismissed because that involves believing in and respecting the authenticity of personal rights. Anger in the IBYC is not seen as a normal human response to indicate when essential developmental processes are being neglected or stifled.

Losing the right to be angry or fearful strips the person of indispensable emotional defenses that enable the person to live in a world that could otherwise overpower him. Instead of positing this anger as rebellion against God, anger needs to be understood in the context of a holistic concept of man, in which all of man (including good or bad uses of

anger) is in relationship to God. Anger is not to control man, but to be honestly recognized as part of our humanness that God intended for man to know, understand, and even use for God's glory. This is not to say that anger cannot be misused, or that it cannot be a very destructive force.

Suppression of anger through denial or transference of rights in order to avoid conflicts seems to deny the validity of some very essential rights. The right to be understood, creative, expressive, trusted, loved, caressed and accepted are examples of rights that Gothard says are to be transferred to God. The rights, however, are often actual needs that must be met in order for normal emotional growth. Anger that rises from neglect of these needs should be seen as an indication that essential need gratification is being overlooked. Emotional and spiritual health could then be enhanced by using the anger to identify some needs that must be filled. Appropriate action could then be taken to meet these needs.

CONCLUSION

The psychology of Bill Gothard, like any other

psychological system, makes definitive statements regarding the nature of man, the causes of pathology, and the practice of therapy. Gothard's psychology grows out of a rigid conceptual split between man's body, soul and spirit. By allocating various aptitudes to the spirit, i.e., sensitivity, creativity, insight, motivation, and conscience, Gothard has removed the biblical balance of man's wholeness. By taking away the emphasis on that wholeness, a psychology emerges in which pathology is a result of conflicting drives between the spirit of man and his body-- which is equated with the physical-sensual-lower nature. The process of therapy is an individual internal affair, building a strong spiritual understanding through meditation on Scripture. The spirit can thus exercise sufficient control to discipline the drives of the sensual-physical-lower nature and integrate the mind emotions and will around the desires of the spirit.

Except for some organic causes, the psychology of Gothard excludes any source of pathology other than the spiritual condition. This exclusion is an

incomplete, and potentially dangerous, one because it may, for some people, prevent the cure of pathology that does not fit into the causative framework of the IBYC system. The exclusion of social-psychological factors in pathology also tends towards the covering of emotions rather than realizing their essential function in human living.

The psychological system assumes that Christ-like living is equated with the absence of anger and absence of conflict. It is a system that is profoundly theological, but is theology that selectively limits Scripture's resounding emphasis on the emotionality of man.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL SUMMARY

The direction taken in this work has been to surface the underlying assumptions of Bill Gothard's Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts. The assumptions were isolated in the three critical areas of theology, hermeneutics and psychology. Attempts were repeatedly made to sift through teaching, example, biblical proof texts and diagrams in order that the IBYC framework could be exposed. Exposure of this general framework will hopefully facilitate the reader's understanding of the subsequent specifics in the seminar teaching. This work has identified what appears to be a faulty system of assumptions, but is not an attempt to say that therefore everything taught in the seminar is necessarily erroneous or harmful. Rather, because the seminar is presented as a complete mindset or life style, there needs to be discriminating ability to sort through the large quantity of teaching, benefiting from some of the content without blindly believing the authenticity

of every concept and being bound thereby. Hopefully this work will facilitate healthy discrimination as there are several cases of misplaced emphasis, omitted perspectives and actual error, as well as numerous cases of beneficial insight and applicable wisdom.

In this process of identifying assumptions, a feeling for the seminar's wholeness may have been lost. The seminar is presented as a conceptual whole, without the benefit of deductive reasoning to convince the student of the seminar's correctness. Instead, theological, hermeneutical and psychological teaching are woven together primarily through illustrative examples either from biblical history or personal experience. The teachings, dervied from the illustrations, are always compatible with the assumptions Gothard makes. These illustrations are all pragmatic examples showing that the teaching of the seminar will work for the individual if the principles are applied. Gothard's claim is that the principles work. Accordingly, it is reported that there have been no exceptions to the principles in all the years of the seminar's operation. The student who has a hard time

believing all the claims is left to deal with the obvious enthusiasm of the remaining 10,000 or 20,000 students attending that particular seminar. Because of this massive momentum, the persuasive element of the seminar can be an overwhelming experience.

As a whole unit, the seminar thrust can be described as: 1. Persuasion to be related to God as Gothard understands God's nature. 2. The primary means to proper relationship to God is through principle keeping (i.e., living in accord with the seven principles of life). 3. Living in accord with God's principles is accompanied with the rewards and benefits that accompany the conditions of the particular principles. 4. A relationship with God is described in terms of an attitude of submission. 5. Scripture memorization and meditation are valuable processes God uses in order to offer the spiritual control necessary for successful living. 6. Because of God's ultimate control of the environment, every experience in life can therefore be beneficial towards character development.

In this writer's opinion, the combination of

the seminar's emphasis and the exclusion of certain perspectives leads to some unsatisfactory implications: 1. With the emphasis on character development, God tends to be seen as the author of pain and suffering. The awfulness of this kind of evil disappears, leading to an uncomfortable association of God's causal influence to the evil itself. 2. The primary attribute of God presented is His environmental manipulation, leading to a somewhat impersonal and legalistic relationship with God. 3. The limited perspectives dim many of the Bible's unique messages, and is accomodated to fit into Gothard's principles. 4. Ascetic living -- i.e., body evil, spirit good -- is fostered. 5. There is a missing comprehension of many emotional needs and incomplete understanding of emotional functioning. Guilt is fostered due to the exclusion of any emotional factors to pathology. 6. Relationships, i.e., fellowship, brotherly love, and agape love, are eclipsed by overemphasis of rigid rule keeping. 7. A Christian tends to become a socially passive observer in the events of life. 8. Studies in secular research findings of

psychopathology are discouraged.

The above criticisms have been offered to offer a balance to a style of living, a product of Gothard's own thinking, that has not benefited sufficiently from the balance offered from other members of the body of Christ who do not share the same assumptions of Bill Gothard. This effort towards a biblical balance will hopefully draw the body of Christ closer together, and further equip us to be salt and light in our world.

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