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A PsychoHeresy Response: A Critique of the Critique of The Masculine Journey By Robert Hicks, Author, The Masculine Journey. Thank you for your inquiries concerning the circulated materials written by Martin and Deidre Bobgan. These materials severely criticize both my book and the Promisekeeper men's organization. However, the Bobgan's main device in finding fault with the Promisekeepers, is by challenging my book which was the Promisekeeper give-away book at the 1993 conference. The Bobgan's response to my book has been widely circulated and passed to other individuals and organizations, who in turn have widely dispersed the material. Undoubtedly, you have received this material thus initiating your inquiries. By way of introduction, let me first say my desire is to honor the Bobgans as fellow believers in Jesus Christ. I do not doubt their intentions nor their commitment to the Saviour. As such, I believe my first response is to affirm their right before God in Christian love and liberty to differ with any writer or organization. In my own baptistic tradition (Conservative Baptist), the "Soul Liberty"0#

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#0of the Individual"0#0 # 0K0See William Kerr's work, 0#0Conservative Baptist Distinctives0#0, published by the Conservative Baptist Association of America, Wheaton, Illinois, 1965, Chapter Three, pp 33045.0 #0 is a very prized and primary belief. Many have died in defense of this doctrine. In addition, I value the freedom of speech which we enjoy as Americans. I would not want to limit this freedom to anyone, for in so doing we ultimately jeopardize our own liberty. Therefore, to differ as brothers and grant differences of opinion is not only what makes our country great but also what stimulates clarity of thought within the Christian community. Therefore, any brotherly disagreements should take place in the spirit of love in order that the world might know we are His disciples. (John 13:34035)

By way of introduction, I would like to point out that I share the Bobgan's concern for the purity of the gospel and a correct understanding of the truth. However, as centuries of theological development reveals, one person's understanding of the truth should never be equated with the truth itself. Given our fallen human natures, even the best of theological reflections are somewhat tainted by our own fallen minds. (Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 7:14, 17, 21). The best we can do is seek to articulate doctrines which express our limited understanding of the biblical texts. But one's own understanding of texts should never be thought of as "having the final truth" about a subject. In spite of our fallen proclivity, we must still be concerned about issues of truth since we live in a relativistic society.

There exists a humorous irony in the Bobgan's attack of me because 0 # #R'# 0*0(0(0#0## 0#I have been equally concerned about the psychologizing of biblical truth. Those who know me would affirm how often I criticize many of the psychological assumptions within evangelicalism. At the seminary where I teach, I regularly assign students to read texts0#

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which are critical of psychotherapy in general. For a starter read: *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional* by Wendy Kaminer; *The Diseasing of America* by Stanton Peele; *The Codependency Conspiracy* by Stan Katz and Aimee Liu; *The Myth of Psychotherapy* by Thomas Szasz; *The Shrinking of America* by Bernie Zilbergeld; and *Modern Psychotherapies* by Stanton Jones and Richard Butman. But as one who is equally concerned about Christian academic integrity, I also have them read the primary source material of various psychologists and other social scientists. My intent is to have the students interact with both sides of the material and then evaluate it on the basis of Scripture. This way the student develops his own conclusions about the material which gives him/her an informed theological opinion. This is what graduate education is all about. To not wrestle with both sides of a theological issue is to sacrifice the development of a Christian mind.

Equally, as I have read the Bobgan's material, I have often found myself agreeing with their concerns about "PsychoHeresy" within our evangelical circles. I am very critical of the epistemology (the science of how one knows what they claim to know), of particular psychologists both within and without the church. In my own book, *The Masculine Journey*, I detail how modern psychology is not able to go far enough or deep enough to penetrate the spiritual issues resident in the hearts of men. In the book I am also critical of Jungian interpretations of masculinity and tried to reveal how unscientific Jungian archetypes are. (page 16-17) Models of manhood or womanhood based on mythology or oriental thought will never generate enough authority or respectability to be called a true science by either Christians or non-believers. I therefore, wholeheartedly concur with the Bobgan's general concerns about psychology. Having affirmed some common ground with this couple, I will now offer a more detailed response to their critique.

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Do Psychological Concepts Exist in the Bible?

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In using the term "PsychoHeresy" the Bobgans apparently assume that psychological concepts are not found in the Bible. Therefore, if a writer uses a psychological term or concept the writer must have borrowed it from "ungodly" humanistic sources. But without a working definition of "Psychology", which the Bobgan's do not have, the reader is left with only emotionally charged labels like, "PsychoHeresy". This label is then put on anything that has the appearance of being related to concepts or terms in psychotherapy. By their own definition, "PsychoHeresy is the diabolic mixture of

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#psychology and the Bible". In the article, "PromiseKeepers and PsychoHeresy", p. 2. If another assumption is posited, a radically different conclusion can be drawn. If I ask certain questions of the Scriptures, a completely different conclusion can be drawn. Questions like: "does the Bible have anything to say about the inner motivations of the human heart?" (II Cor. 4:16; I Cor 4:5; Prov 18:14; 23:16, 12:25) or "is there any connection between the mind, emotions, countenance and behavior in Biblical characters?" (I Thess 5:23; Jonah 4:9; Genesis 4:6; Prov. 21:29, 29:22, Luke 6:45), or "does the Bible ever give a rationale for why men sin the way they do?" (Romans 1:26; Titus 3:10, Ezek. 16:35-58)

Since the Bible has much to say about all these subjects, a completely different conclusion can be reached. When I read the Wisdom Literature, (Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and The Song of Songs) with these kind of questions, I find there is a significant relation between the inner life, and external behavior. If I study the books of Job or Jonah, I find significant rationale for why these men sinned, suffered and experienced normal human emotion the way they did.

In other words, if psychology is defined as "that which goes on in the depths of the human heart", the Bible is very psychological. (See Prov. 23:16, 18:14) The Greek word for "soul" in the New Testament (psyche) is the term from which we get the word "psychology". Mary, the mother of our Lord prayed, "My soul (psyche) exalts the Lord, and my spirit (pneuma) has rejoiced in God my Savior". (Luke 1:4) Mary prays from the "psyche" depths of her human heart. If I were to accept the Bobgan's "undefined" definition about psychology, I would be the first to admit I am a "PsychoHeretic". However, I do believe the Bible both addresses and describes what is going on in the depths of the inner psyche. The God of our Bible, addresses us as "psyche" beings and not just spirit or material beings. From the church fathers, medieval mystics, German Pietists and Puritans, this "soul work" or spiritual formation has dealt with many of the same issues with which modern psychologists have attempted to deal. However, modern secular psychologists do not have the benefit of divine revelation as revealed in the Scriptures. The Puritans wrote at length about "despondency" and the "slough of despond". (Spurgeon and Bunyan). Today, we would call this condition "acute depression"! But the phenomenon and experience is the same because human beings haven't changed. So I firmly believe there is a psychology of human life in the Bible. It is not an organized psychology which automatically translates into some kind of "School". In this sense, it is similar to the science of theology. We do not have an organized theology in the Bible. It is up to Biblical interpreters to organize the material into coherent, logical systems. This is the hard work of "doing" theology.

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Is The Masculine Journey Based on My Own Psychological Experience?

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In another ironic twist, the Bobgan's fall into their own psychological trap in trying to prove the above point. They claim I based my book on my own experience rather than the Bible when they say, "Hicks follows the trend of all psychological theorists in that he considers aspects of his own experience to be #"

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#universal".#2 # "PromiseKeepers & PsychoHeresy", p. 2.2 # Now what is
the Bobgan's authority for thisstatement? You guessed it... psychologists! In the
article, theygo on to quote two secular researchers, Drs Linda Riebel and Harvey #
#'# # 0*(0(0## #Mindess, to demonstrate how "each one's theories and
techniques are#

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#just a means of validating his own identity".## # Ibid, p. 3.##

In other words, when I write, I write in order to justify or validate my own identity. I write in order to find out who I am! As intriguing as this argument may be, what really fascinates me is the logic behind the argument. When I quote a psychologist, it makes me a PsychoHeretic. When the Bobgan's quote one, they are defending the truth! I would have respected their argument much more had they quoted Scripture. But instead, their argument is hopelessly self-defeating. To suggest that I am a PsychoHeretic because I quote psychologists, and then turn around and do the same, illustrates the logical cul-de-sac they are stuck in. They cannot condemn me for quoting these sources (either positively or negatively), and then turn around and use the same kind of sources. It then becomes a fight between their sources and mine. Which are better? In the final analysis, they become what they condemn, "PsychoHeretics", by appealing to the authority of psychologists for their proof against me!

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Are the Bobgan's Influenced By Their Own Experience?

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If I give the Bobgan's the benefit of a doubt and grant them their premise about what motivates human writers, then their argument again falls to pieces and is terribly self-defeating. If "one's theory or beliefs are just a means of validating one's own identity", as they say it is in the above quote, then the same would be true for them and their sources! On the basis of the above presumed true psychological insight, their entire Psycho-Heresy Awareness Ministry, is then just a way of validating their own identity. This is unfortunate. As fellow Christian laborers, I would have hoped their identity would be found securely in the finished work of Christ. However, by their own argument they must have the need to show how others are finding their identities elsewhere, and in the process, find themselves. This really sounds like psycho-babble to me!

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Is the Masculine Journey Based On Jungian Archetypes and Levinson's Developmental Stages?

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The Bobgan's write, "Jungian notions float through the book on thebacks of the authors he quotes, and they are incorporated into his0#

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own explanations".
H # PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter, Vol. 2,
Number 4, p. 4.H # Concerning my dependency on Daniel Levinson's work, #The
Seasons of A Man's Life#, they say, "Hicks recalls six Hebrew words that he
learned in seminary that fit with Levinson's ideas. Miraculously each word just
happens to fit one of Hicks's #

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"contrived stages of manhood". Ibid, p. 4. Is this in fact the case?

At the end of this paper I have supplied the reader with three charts: the six stages of the masculine journey as developed in my book, the four stages of the male life cycle (Levinson), and the outline of Carl Jung's work, "Four Archetypes". It should become quite obvious to the reader, there is absolutely no similarity between my stages and theirs. My six stages are: Creational Male, Phallic Male, Warrior, Wounded Male, Mature Male, and the Sage; Levinson's four are: Childhood and Adolescence, Early Adulthood,

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#Middle Adulthood, and Late Adulthood.#T # Daniel J. Levinson, #The Seasons of a Man's Life#, Ballentine, 1978.T # Jung's four Archetypes are:#

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#0Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, and Trickster.0#0 0K0C.G. Jung, 0#0Four Archetypes0#0, Princeton University Press, 1959.0 #0 Even where there might be similarity in concepts, like my "Sage" and Levinson's "Late Adulthood", the similarity is more by coincidence than collusion. 0#00#0

While accusing me of borrowing my stages from psychologists, they also criticize my usage of the six Hebrew terms from which the six stages or aspects of masculinity are derived. In several places they make statements like, "by making the word 'enosh' say what he wants it to say" or "enosh refers to mankind in general", or "the word, 'ish' is not limited to this meaning". In so doing they set themselves up as self-authenticating linguists, appearing to be very knowledgeable of the Hebrew Bible. However, when they0#

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#criticize my usage, no outside languages sources are referenced.#

OK They do so on pages 18, 19, and 22, in #The Masculine Journey.# # In #

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☺ case where they question my usage of a term, they offer no substantiating language authority. In fact, not one linguistic, word study or Biblical scholar is cited in their whole article. The only authority they ☺

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reference is in regard to my use of the term, "zakar" or phallus. Here, to correct my erroneous understanding of the term, they quote Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language. Now what kind of authority is this? An American language dictionary they use, not a Hebrew one. In short, they tell me, I am using Hebrew terms improperly but their authority for such criticism is an English language dictionary. Most would agree this is not good scholarship and an even poorer argument.

In the first chapter of *The Masculine Journey*, I give credit to Dr.

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#0John Worgul, a Hebrew scholar, (PhD, Dropsy College)0#+ # 0K00#0Masculine Journey0#0, p. 20.+ #0 who lookedover my usages and validated their range of meanings. In addition,for 0

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definition of a hebrew term, I used either Brown, Driver and Briggs's Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, or Holladay's A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. These two works are the standard language tools in the field of hebrew studies today. Any Old Testament scholar can confirm their validity.

One final point should be noted on this topic. For every hebrew term noted in my chapters, my authority for such usage is referenced in the endnotes at the conclusion of the book. If one wants to challenge my usage, at least they should go to the original sources, and do their criticism based on a full understanding of these meanings. Often I acknowledge the range and diversity of meanings for terms, as in the case of, "enosh and

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Ibid, p. 103-104; 123-124. % # But as in any language, there are often differing usages, or usages which are more rare than others. As explained in the beginning of the book, I sought to make "descriptive" statements about the masculine experience and not to suggest that each stage # #' # # * ((# ## # #

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#would be prescriptive for all men and all times.## Ibid, p. 30.## No language is used in this way. Words rarely mean the same thing in every usage whether it is in hebrew or english.

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What Is the Real Issue Behind the Criticism?

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As I have tried to understand the argumentation put forth by the Bobgans, I have come to the conclusion that what is really at stake here is how one conceives the truth. In short, the Bobgan's criticism really concerns how one does theology, what are the sources for theological discussion, and who gets to decide what the truth is! In my opinion, PsychoHeresy is not about Promisekeepers, or even my book, but how one understands truth. In this regard, the Bobgan's appear to make the claim of being singularly influenced by the Bible as their only source of truth. Even granting the premise that one can package the totality of Biblical revelation, the Bobgan's come across as those who would not give any value to the doctrine of creation or natural revelation as discovered in the social sciences. They say, "Hicks follows the predictable pattern of the integrationist. He takes a psychological theory, believes it to be valid under 'all truth is 0#

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#0God's truth', and then considers what the Bible might add".0#0 #
0K0PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter, p. 4.0 #0 In other words, if something is not in
the Bible, it is then not capable of giving humans knowledge about God or His world.
However, the Bible itself tells us the entire creation order (even fallen creation)
shows forth God's glory and illumines the human condition. (Ps 8:309; 19; 76:10; 104;
Romans 1:18032) I draw from these passages, there is something of value to be
learned from the human condition and how God reveals something of Himself in the
natural realm. Is this a heretical view?

One of the premier fathers of dispensational theology, Lewis Sperry Chafer, opens
his multi-volume theology by defining Systematic Theology as, the obtaining of "all
facts from 0

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source concerning God and His works... The divine revelation in its entirety, and not merely the portions of it which harmonize with

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#0accepted dicta, challenges the student of doctrine".0#K # 0K0Lewis Sperry
Chafer, 0#0Systematic Theology0#0, Vol 1, p. x0xi.K #0 In his closing remarks about
natural revelation, Dr. Bruce Demarest, professor of theology at Denver Seminary,
says, "Scripture thus upholds a natural theology, if we mean by the term that which
can be known about God through His works in nature and conscience.". He further
explains, "I suggest that the indicia of the external world mediated by sight pass
through the mind and strike the chords0#

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"of the knowledge of God already implanted in the soul".
Bruce Demarest, General Revelation: Historical Views and Contemporary Issues, p. 240. Zondervan. As noted in the chart in the appendix, the position the Bobgan's have taken, has its source in the extreme Calvinism of Abraham Kuyper which departed from the longstanding tradition of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, the Puritans, Hodge, Warfield, Strong and Henry. So I ask the reader, who is in the main stream of Orthodox theology, the Bobgan's or me?

Apparently, the Bobgans in spite of their condemnation of combining psychology with Bible, also believe in "natural revelation". The Bobgan's quote sources outside the Bible when it serves their purposes. The brought in a PhD in Psychology, Hilton Terrell, to

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#write an introduction to one of their own chapters.#h # K Martin and Deidre Bobgan, #Prophets of PsychoHeresy I#, EastgatePublisher, pp. 221-222.h # Likewise, Deidre has authored a self-published book where she combines the#

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#science of ballet with a "disciplined walk with God." Her book, Lord of the Dance: The Beauty of the Disciplined Life, is marketed with the following statement, "From her background in classical ballet, Deidre draws unique parallels between the training of a ballet dancer and a disciplined, graceful walk with God". Unique indeed! Quoted in the back of Prophets of PsychoHeresy I could easily call this "PhysicoHeresy" because of the assumed collusion between the natural science of bodily movement and the Bible. In fact, Deidre, could not even combine the Bible with ballet without holding to my view which is the longstanding orthodox view of natural revelation.

Evangelical theologians have always believed the Bible to be the absolute determiner of truth. And it is the Bible which bears witness to the fact that truth is manifested in the natural world as well. Jesus chided the religious of his day for not seeing truth in categories outside the Scriptures. (John 5:39) All these religious purists saw were the cognitive facts of Scripture and consequently, rejected Jesus as the living personification of Truth. Jesus himself said, "I am the Truth" (John 14:6) making the essence of truth personal as well as propositional. The apostle Paul quoted a pagan poet (Acts 17:28), which under the guidance of the Holy Spirit became Scripture. Much of the Wisdom literature (Proverbs and Song of Solomon), have similar counterparts and sayings in Egyptian love literature. Solomon was a "collector" (Koheleth) of natural wisdom, a wisdom he found in many varied places "under the sun". (Eccl. 1:1, 12:13)

The Bible has been and will always be my standard for evaluating what truth is. By my Bible also instructs me that there is much to be learned about God and human experience by studying the creation and the human condition. This would include not only psychology but all areas of human knowledge, whether it be science, math, literature, sociology or ballet! When there is something in these fields which agrees with the Bible, I affirm it as truth, if it disagrees with it, I reject it.

What View of Truth Do the Bobgan's Appear to Embrace?

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I hate labeling, but since they have labeled me, I guess "turnabout" is fair game. As I have evaluated the Bobgan's books and their criticism of my book, I feel they have fallen prey to a "gnostic" view of truth. Though hard to define as a system, Greek gnosticism denied the value of creation. The supreme deity was too exalted to have anything to do with the material world. Therefore, the material world becomes meaningless in itself. Harold Brown writes, "no true wisdom can be gleaned studying it. Presumably, if gnosticism had triumphed, it could not have produced experimental natural science as Christianity did". He goes on to point out, "They (gnostics) tended to dualism, with its doctrine that the

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"Flesh is evil". # Harold Brown, Heresies, Baker, pp. 49-50, 55.
When one has a compartmentalized (unintegrated) view of truth, a dualism in thinking is bred. When one category is # # # # # completely evil (human insight based on research) and the other good (The Bible), one is coming close to the method if not the philosophy of gnosticism.

Gnosticism views the material world of nature and human inquiry (including human desires, and motivation), either as evil, irrelevant or meaningless. There is no use in studying them because they are useless or evil. This would include the physical sciences, social and psychological sciences, even ballet. But because, people like the Bogans do not find these sciences in the Bible, they view them as irrelevant, non-spiritual or heretical. Only things of the Spirit, (God, Holy Spirit, or the Spirit in Man) are then intrinsically good and worthy of study. A complete dichotomy of reality is then created. In my opinion, the Bogan's approach to truth is not the singular, Scripture-derived method they claim, but one which is more in line with that of philosophical gnosticism. It may be recalled that Gnosticism was the first identified heresy of the early church. Irenaeus wrote, #

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#00#00Against Heresies0#0, to combat its inroads.0#" # 0K00#0Heresies0#0, p.
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What Does the Charge of Heresy Imply?

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As noted previously, the Bobgan's do not quote any language authorities or theologians when they disagree with my conclusions. However, when I evaluated the Bobgan's Promisekeeper article written primarily against me, I found out of 75 total endnotes, they quoted my book 53 times. In addition, they quoted other psychologists 8 times, (doesn't that make them psychoheretics?), the Bible twice, Shakespeare once, and themselves once. One would have expected since their primary concern is the identification of heresy, that some theological works, historical creeds, commentaries, or language studies would have been referenced in order to substantiate their claims of heresy. Heresy is a very serious charge and should not be made without sufficient evidence. In addition, heresy can only be defined in light of some recognized, commonly accepted, standard of truth. Heresy is a departure, but a departure from what? Departure from a standard, otherwise, heresy is just hearsay!

Without an appeal to some confession of orthodoxy, it makes the Bobgan's the sole arbitrators of truth. Supporting evidence from the historic councils, confessions, or even evangelical doctrinal statements, is completely lacking in their evaluation of my material. If my beliefs differ from the Nicene, Chalcedon, or Apostles Creed, then indeed there would be grounds for the charge of heresy. But read as you will the Bobgan's criticism and you will not find any mention of the Anglican Confession, Westminster Confession, Book of Concord, or any evangelical doctrinal statements. When the historic and contemporary confessions are consulted, no statement is ever made about the relation of the Bible to psychology, or any other natural science for that matter. Even statements about Christ's human nature, temptation and # # # # # * ((# ## # impeccability are for the most part lacking or not clear. The absence of any standard of truth mixed with the Bobgan's self-determined definition of heresy, should make any thinking Christian wonder why they do not define heresy against some commonly accepted standard of faith. Likewise, this absence should also make the Bobgan's charge of heresy suspect simply because of their own self-authority.

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Are the Bobgan's Accountable to Anyone?

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In the final analysis, one must ask, "what gives any individual the right or authority to set himself up as a self-appointed arbitrator of truth. As far as I know, the Bobgan's are not accountable to anyone. Their entire ministry is focused on finding "PsychoHeresy" in Christian literature, and then disseminating information about it.

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#0it around the country.0#.# # 0K0At the end of their "PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter" they encourage the letter to be shared with friends, They write, "You may make up to 100 copies for private distribution. Or, you may make up to 100 copies of a single article for private distribution if you indicate the source". p. 6..##0 I have had their material faxed ahead of me to where I was speaking or doing public appearances. They do not publish under any of the commonly recognized, evangelical publishing houses, but one of their own making (EastGate Press). Being self0published means they are not necessarily accountable to editors, or the ethical standards of most publishing houses.

On the contrary, my book, 0#0The Masculine Journey0#0, being a Promisekeeper imprint, went through a very stringent editorial process. The Promisekeeper organization had its own editors and readers. NavPress, as publisher, likewise had their own editorial readers. All those involved in the editorial process were trained in theology and biblical languages. (For all I know about the Bobgans, they not trained in either psychology or theology) For any change to take place in the manuscript, Promisekeepers, NavPress and I as author, had to sign off on every change. This is normal editorial procedure in Christian publishing. Therefore, I had to subject my thinking, doctrine and arguments to extreme theological scrutiny outside myself. I assume since the Bobgans are self0published, they are not under the same editorial and theological scrutiny most writers face. They, alone, are their own determiners of what truth is. Apparently, they answer to no one outside themselves. I answer to a theological faculty and board, my denomination, and to my publisher for everything I teach and publish.

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Do I Present Jesus As A 'Phallic Kind of Guy'?

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Bobgan's claim my view of the temptation of Christ makes him out to

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#be a "phallic kind of guy". # # PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter, p. 6. #
What is interesting about this claim is that the phrase "phallic kind of guy" never
appears in my book with reference to Jesus. It doesn't even appear with reference
to men. The phrase "regular guy" is taken from the study guide, which was not even
written by me but by a ghost writer. Even here, the phrase appears in a list of
eight possible choices where a man may choose the one which best describes his own
current relation to Christ and his father. Two of the other choices are: "Dad was
a # #' # *((## # passive wimp, but not Jesus, who cracked a
whip; and Dad was an old #

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"Cuss and Jesus was just another swear word." # The Masculine Journey Study Guide, pp. 21-22. In other words, this claim is erroneously based upon a phrase in the study guide which is taken very badly out of context.

What I

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Ø say about Jesus is this: "Jesus was also very much zakar,phallic". In the next sentence I explain what I mean by the term. I continue, "Jesus was very much masculine, and masculine meansØ#

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#being male, and being male means having a penis."#, # Masculine Journey#, p. 181., # In this regard I am only affirming the full humanity of Christ as a male. But the Bobgan's fault me for suggesting that Jesus was truly "tempted" in every way as we are as men". My intent in seriously looking at the temptation of Christ was not to make Jesus in the image of a "regular guy" as they claim, but to affirm the long standing orthodox belief that Jesus was fully human and thus qualified to be our high priest. This intent brings the discussion to the theological issue of the relation of the two natures of Christ. John Calvin summarized the history of this doctrine as moving from one extreme to another, and in the process destroying a full regard for one of the natures. He writes, "We fasten on the attributes of humanity to destroy his divinity, and... on those of his divinity"

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"to destroy his humanity." John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Eerdmans, Vol I, p. 418.

Most scholars confess that a complete and satisfactory understanding of the dual nature of Christ is impossible. Most finally acknowledge with all humility that the Incarnation is a mystery. It is also important to realize the exact nature of the temptation of Christ in relation to his humanity, has never been a settled tenet in either the historic creeds or contemporary evangelicalism. To clarify the nature of this hypostatic union, one must argue logically from either Christ's deity or humanity in order to assert a certain view about his temptation. To affirm too much or not enough on either his human or divine side, will place one in the direction of some historic heresy. (Either Arianism or Doceticism) How one sees the reality of Christ's temptation apart from the above logical arguments, is then determined by the one biblical phrase, "He was tempted yet without sin". Rather than arguing my own case for what this temptation means, I will quote several theologians on the issue: some from the patristic period, some from the Medieval period, one from 19th century, another from the early 1900's and the last, a current evangelical scholar.

Although there was no settled doctrine of the temptation or of the two natures of Christ during the Patristic period, a certain

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#direction in theological thought can be seen. # See Thomas Weinandy's excellent historical overview of the doctrinal development in, # In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh #, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993. # Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) held Jesus was "subject to the same feelings as ours, and this not in appearance or in imagination, but in reality... for if the Incarnation was a figment then our salvation #

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#0was a figment."0## # 0K0Weinandy, p. 25026.# #0 Origen (1850254) said,
"Jesus was capable oftemptation, dishonor, crucifixion and death...and was so
tempted in0#

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every way as we, so that he might obtain victory for us". Ibid, p. 26, Augustine wrote, "The Son of God assumed human nature, and in it he endured all that belongs to the human condition. This is a remedy

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#0for mankind of a power beyond our imagining."0#\$ # 0K0De Agone Christiano,
12.\$ #0 Commenting onTertullian (1600220), Weinandy notes, "Jesus possessed a real
andnot a phantasmal humanity. Secondly, he did not assume a 'betterkind' of flesh,
but one like our own that bore the 'birthmark of0#

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#sin'... and thirdly, he did not sin personally."## # KWeinandy, p. 3132.#
The Councilat Chalcedon (451) closed the Christological controversy by
affirming the

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the doctrine of "homoousios". Weinandy observes, "contrary to Eutyches' Monophysitism, which would have strongly endorsed an uncontaminated humanity because Jesus' divinity sanctified it, the Fathers of Chalcedon professed that the person of the one, eternal Son was not only homoousios with the Father, but also homoousios with us in his humanity, 'like us in every way except sin', for to be homoousios with us demands more than a generic, ahistorical sameness of species, but a communion with us as we are in reality—brothers and sisters defiled by the sin of #

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#Adam".## # Ibid, p. 35. #

In the medieval period, Aquinas quoting Chrysostom, testified, that Jesus "having assumed the 'likeness of sinful flesh' that such a

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"carnal nature was in need of baptism" (by John the Baptist). Ibid, p. 51. Anselm in his *Cur Deus Homo*, stated, "Jesus must be 'taken without sin and yet of a sinful substance'". The conclusion Weinandy comes to in this historical study is that though there was tension and ambiguity about the relation of the two natures, two things were clear: One, the absolute necessity of Jesus' sinlessness; and two, the equal importance of affirming an inherited enfeebled humanity bearing all the birthmarks of human sinfulness, for it is only in affirming both that a sinless life possesses any soteriological

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#value.#< ! OKMy own summary of Weinandy's summary on page 38.< #00 ` `

One of American's premier theologians of the 19th century was Charles Hodge of Princeton Seminary. Hodge is one of the determinative theologians for all later evangelicals. Hodge states directly, "This sinlessness of our Lord, however, does not amount to absolute impeccability. It was not a 'non potest peccare'. If He was true man he must have been capable of sinning... Temptation implies the possibility of sin. If from the constitution of his person it was impossible for Christ to sin, then his temptation was unreal and without effect, and He cannot sympathize with he

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#people".#E " #Charles Hodge, #Systematic Theology#, Vol I, p. 457.E
#

Augustus H. Strong's #Systematic Theology#, was first published in 1907 but is still widely used as a theological text. In regard to Christ's temptation he writes, "But in Christ was there no sin or tendency to sin; then how could he be tempted? In the same way, we reply, that Adam was tempted... Christ had innocent desires and to these desires temptation may appeal. Sin consists, not in these desires"

0, but in the gratification of them out of God's order, and contrary to God's will... there is no harm in any natural appetite, 0#

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#considered itself."#V # [Augustus H. Strong, #Systematic Theology#,
Judson Press, 1974, p.677.V #

In other words, Strong raises the sharp possibility of Christ being truly tempted by means of his human nature. He desires but this in no way is to be construed as sin.



Ø In the same way, Millard Erickson, currently professor of theology at Bethel Seminary comments, "Was the humanity of Jesus, if free from all sin of nature and of active performance, the same as our humanity?... The underlying assumption seems to be that if something is possible, it must become actual, and that, conversely, something that never occurs or never becomes actual must not really have been possible. Yet we have the statement of the writer of the letter to Hebrews that Jesus was indeed tempted in every respect as we are (4:15)... One simply cannot conclude that where sin has not been committed, temptation has not been experienced; the contrary may Ø#

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"Every well be true." \$ Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, Vol. 2, Baker, p. 719-721.

So it seems all these scholars, far more competent in the field of theology than I, have argued for a humanity of Christ which includes the possibility of having real human desires which are contrary to God's will. If this is the case, then the kind of desire experienced is irrelevant. Whether it be hunger, thirst, desire for power or some kind of physical/sexual attraction. If Jesus is truly human then he actually experienced desire in these areas, yet without sin. James confirms that desire (epithumia), also translated "lust" is not the same as sin (hamartia) but in fact sin is conceived when desire is acted upon. (James 1:15) Some want to place limitations on the phrase that Jesus was tempted "in every way as we are as men". This way Jesus was only limited to being tempted by hunger, power, or Satanic deception; often called "external temptations". (Matthew 4:1-11) But this view denies what the Church Fathers defined as a true nature or "simplicity of nature", as "free from parts", rather than the "sum total of parts". In other words, if Jesus was only tempted in the physical and spiritual realms but not the psychological, emotional or sexual areas, doesn't this argue for a kind of human nature consisting of parts? This distinction then makes for an incomplete human nature. As Professor Driver has said, "a sexless Jesus can

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#0hardly be conceived to be fully human".0#n % 0K0Tom F. Driver, "Sexuality and Jesus", Union Seminary QuarterlyReview, 20(3), March, 1965, p. 239.n #0

In addition, the writer of Hebrews also seems to place great emphasis on the "all's and every's" in the development of his Christology. In fact, these "all's and every's", are crucial to a full understanding of the developed doctrines of Christ. In Hebrews a form of the word "all" (pas/pantos) 0

It is used 50 times. In almost every usage of the word, if the "all" does not mean "all", the entire doctrine breaks down. Christ is no longer "heir" of it.

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things, (1:2); or he really didn't offer up a sacrifice once for

0all, 0

0(7:27); or not 0

every

High priest is appointed to offer sacrifices (8:3); or God is not the judge of

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0(12:23); or grace is not for 0

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the believers (13:25); or Jesus was not tempted in

every

Way!

In my opinion, to see Christ truly tempted by the full range of human desires does not reduce the doctrine of Christ, but in fact makes a sound affirmation of the full human nature of Christ. # #'

0*0(0(0#0## G0Princeton theologian Charles Hodge saw clearly the implications of not holding to a full humanity. He writes, "the humanity of Christ is not so exalted by its union with his divine nature as to cease to be human. This would break the bond of sympathy between Him and us. It has been the pious fault of some Christians that they merge his humanity in his Godhead. This is as real, if not so fatal an error, as merging his Godhead in his humanity. We must hold fast0#

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#to both".P & Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol II, Eerdmans, p. 397. P

Unwittingly, in accusing me of "reducing Christ to the lowest common denominator of masculinity", the Bobgans have moved in the direction of yet another form of gnostic heresy, "doceticism". This ancient heresy believed Christ could not have been true humanity because they could not tolerate the conception of a perfect spiritual being

in the flesh. Therefore, Christ only#

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"seemed" (dokeo) to be human, and only appeared human. ' K Brown,
Heresies #, p. 52.) # Insuggesting that Christ was too holy to have any truly
humandesires, the Bobgan's place themselves on a dangerous road leadingto this
ancient heresy. Therefore, I contend that my view ofChrist is more exalting of the
true Christ which affirms both hiscomplete divinity and full humanity. Anything
less is heresy byall the ancient creeds and contemporary evangelical theologians.

I hope my response is taken in the spirit I have intended. I donot like having to
respond to my fellow brothers and sisters inChrist in such a forum. I would rather
just grant the benefit ofa doubt and just move on without defending myself.
However,because of the increasingly public nature of Bobgan's critique andthe
impact it has had on so many, I have drafted this response. Inaddition, since they
have never contacted me personally in attemptto confirm or deny their accusations,
my only recourse is to makeavailable a response in this form. My desire is to
guard the unityof the faith in the bonds of Christ and seek peace with all men. I
pray that I have addressed these concerns in a way honoring myLord. Thank you
again for your inquiry, and for your diligence inreading this lengthy reply.

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#' 0*(0(0## G##% REFERENCES`