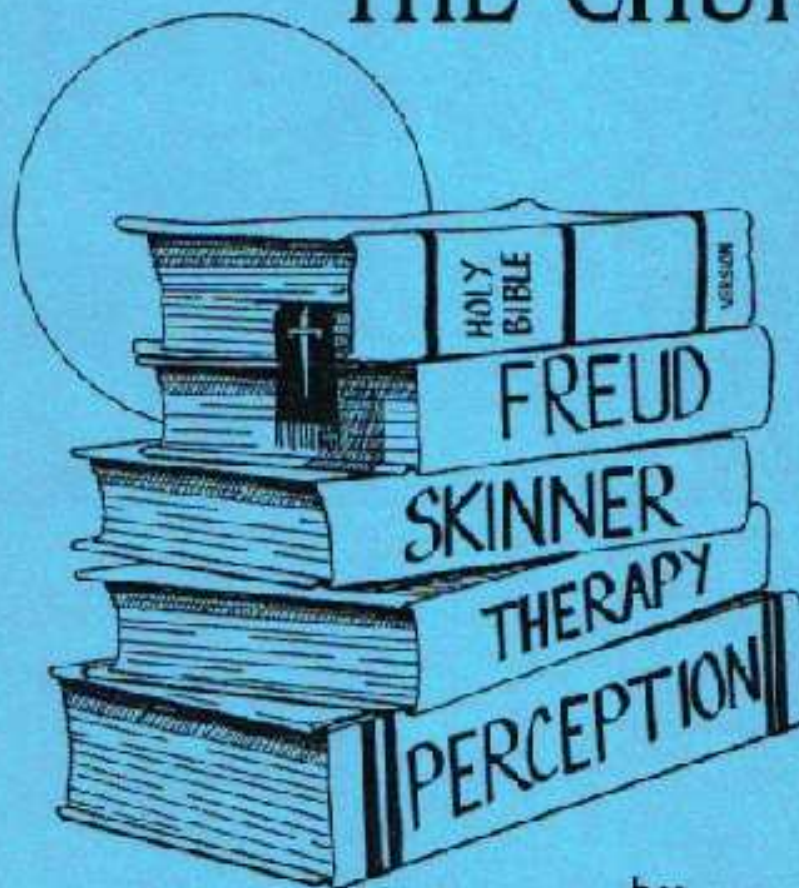


USING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHURCH



 Alpha Editions

by
Donald Ratcliff

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INTRODUCTION

I hope this study guide will give you some ideas on how psychology can be used in church work. Psychology can be helpful in better understanding churches and church-related activities, as well as offering constructive alternatives in the way things can be done in ministry.

Let me caution you against making psychology the heart of your life. The only sure foundation is Jesus Christ, and only through prayer and the careful study of the Bible can the church be built. However, I hope you will see that psychology can help us build the church more effectively. Only through the work of the Holy Spirit can we accomplish the task of building the Kingdom, but God can use what psychologists discover for His purposes.

These ideas are, by no means, the last word on these topics. You should feel free to experiment with some of the ideas in this book. Psychologists are learning more every day about people, and thus this book will always be incomplete. I encourage you to read this with a good, current textbook in general psychology, and you may find yourself doing some of the same adapting and extending of ideas to the church similar to what I have done in this booklet.

If you have enjoyed this booklet, or if you have some corrections or needed changes, please let me know. You can contact me at dratcliff@vanguard.edu or you can write me at Donald Ratcliff, Psychology Department, Vanguard University, 55 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, California 92626.

The Lord bless you!

[Updated January, 2005]

"I just finished reading your book, *Using Psychology in the Church*, and I really appreciated the content and the format. I'm a psychologist in private practice and [I will be using it in] a counseling class for the church that I attend."--Daryl E. Quick, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist

"Overall I find this a very helpful volume . . . I think this effort will undoubtedly be of benefit to Christian psychology teachers."--Frank B. Wichern, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist.

"I like it very much."--Paul Meier, M.D.

"It looks like something our students would respond positively to--practical and applied. They want something they can use . . ."--Ron Koteskey, Ph.D., Asbury College.

“Psychology can be used to the glory of God. And . . . Donald Ratcliff shows us how, by applying psychology sensitively and effectively to a wide variety of church ministries. He involves readers directly by blending factual information with questions (which readers are expected to grapple with and respond to, comparing their responses to the author’s) and application sections (where the learner deals with intensely practical issues).

Sandwiched between a helpful chapter entitled ‘Introducing Psychology’ and a short, but effective conclusion are chapters on motivation, biological psychology, learning, memory, intelligence, perception, development, personality, abnormal psychology, counseling, and social psychology.

In the appendix, Ratcliff shows his ability to apply his ideas. He includes his own research projects on behavior modification in the Sunday school, personal evangelism, test anxiety, and self-change.

Christians are expected to maintain a difficult stance in ministry--one arm extended vertically to receive from God wisdom, power, love, and insight; and the other arm extended horizontally to channel that which we have received to the lives of others. Future and present Christian workers alike will find this volume helpful as they equip themselves to reach up and reach out.”--Harold W. Darling, Professor of Psychology, Spring Arbor College [deceased].

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