

A Critique of Dr. Jay Grimstead's Support of Theophostic Ministry by Martin and Deidre Bobgan

We received a response directed primarily at us with references to PAL (*PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter*) but also at others who have critiqued Theophostics from a biblical and scientific perspective. The response is titled "Critics of Theophostic Ministry" and was written by "Dr. Jay Grimstead, Director, Coalition on Revival [COR], PO Box 2129, Murphys, CA 95247. Grimstead's paper is addressed "To Whom It May Concern" and is NOT marked "Confidential." Therefore we regard it as a public document open to a public response.

As we shall demonstrate, Grimstead's response is: seriously flawed by logical fallacies and sophomoric thinking; contains some ideas that Dr. Ed Smith, the inventor of Theophostics, could not support; does not provide any footnotes or quotes from authoritative sources; and depends solely upon Grimstead's say so. We predict that even individuals who belong to COR will not support Grimstead's open letter supporting Smith's Theophostic Ministry and that some will even be horrified by what it reveals about Grimstead's flawed thinking, flawed theology, and anti-science views.

Response Part One

In his first section titled "PAL claims there is no proof or evidence that Theophostics really works," Grimstead quotes us correctly as saying, "the evidence for the Theophostic system's success is essentially Smith's say so."

Grimstead begins his first response by utilizing a logical fallacy, known in logic as the straw man fallacy. One logic text says:

To recognize the straw man fallacy, look for a response that misrepresents an opponent's argument in order to defeat it more easily. The arguer appears to be attacking the opponent's position, but in fact the arguer is attacking a misrepresentation of it.

Unfortunately Grimstead uses the straw man logical fallacy repeatedly throughout his response. He says:

We who have connected with the world of professional health and medicine know that the FDA and the AMA generally reject testimonies of being cured as evidence that a healing procedure is valid. I am not saying that a few testimonies create undeniable proof that some cure works. I am however stating that **it is pure foolishness and tunnel vision of a great magnitude** for the FDA or any critic or examiner of evidence (or the Bobgans) to say that personal testimonies of hundreds of sane people who claim they have been cured of serious physical or emotional health problems means nothing, or cannot be taken seriously as evidence of a cure.

The FDA and the AMA use careful studies examining large numbers of individuals with scientific parameters to test the success or failure of drugs, methods, procedures, and

claims. The FDA and AMA are **not opposed to testimonies** themselves, but rather they are **opposed to unverified testimonies**. Note how Grimstead, utilizing the straw man fallacy, has omitted the word *unverified* and made it seem as if the FDA and AMA reject **all testimonies**. This statement by Grimstead is both false and libelous. While the FDA and AMA are not perfect in all they do, if it were not for the FDA and AMA, quackery would rule the day, many would suffer, and many lives would be lost due to unsubstantiated testimonials accepted as true without proof.

After libeling the FDA and AMA, Grimstead foolishly presents his case for the use of unverified testimonies by saying:

Our entire court system works on the basis of human testimony about theft, murders, forgery etc. and receives such testimony as evidence which is duly weighed with all other evidence surrounding any case. Most people who get hired for a job are hired based on the evidence of someone's testimony about their competence, either from themselves or from recommendations of former employers etc. etc.

Grimstead confuses his reader in the above quote with another logical fallacy used twice. This one is known as a false analogy:

To recognize a fallacy of false analogy, look for an argument that draws a conclusion about one thing, event, or practice on the basis of its analogy or resemblance to others. The fallacy occurs when the analogy or resemblance is not sufficient to warrant the conclusion, as when, for example, the resemblance is not relevant to the possession of the inferred feature or there are relevant dissimilarities.

Those who testify in court are under oath to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The person under oath in court could go to jail, be fined, or both for testifying falsely. This is far different from testimonies that Smith and Grimstead are utilizing. None of the Grimstead/Smith testimonies are given under oath and without cross examination. There is a big difference between testimonies in court and testimonies reported by Grimstead and Smith.

Grimstead's example of the use of recommendations by the applicant for a job or former employer being the same as the unverified testimonials of Theophostic clients is a second false analogy. Applications are signed by the applicant and he could be fired later if even one part is false. Also, the former employer would risk his own reputation and that of his firm if he lied about an applicant. The former employer could even be sued. No such limitations are in place for a Theophostic client. The Theophostic client does not affirm the truth of anything in writing in the same way as a job applicant must do, and there is no testimony sought for or given by a former employer, who in this case would have to testify as to the applicant's past behavior. We know of no formal evaluation of those who knew the Theophostic client's past behavior as with a past employer in Grimstead's example. Also, since Theophostics has such a short history, there could only be a short-term follow-up to evaluate the future status of the client.

Another false and libelous statement by Grimstead is this:

We have seen this extreme closed-mindedness about evidence and what I call a “blindfold mentality” over and over when the AMA and FDA representatives and their sheep speak of the alternative medical community and such people as chiropractors, doctors of acupuncture, iridology, colon cleansing, cancer cures at the Mexican clinics, fasting, kinesiology, reflexology, magnet therapy, yearly gallstone removal, etc. etc., who simply claim from high on Mt. Olympus that these thousands of people over the past 70 years who have claimed cures for all degenerative diseases are simply fooling themselves and they were not really cured, or their testimonies do not constitute evidence.

Neither the FDA nor the AMA has ever made such a statement. While the FDA and AMA and other responsible groups insist on the scientific parameters necessary to protect the public from quacks and quackery, we have never seen and neither has Grimstead ever seen a statement on their part saying that the individuals who claim they are cured are “fooling themselves.” They do require, as scientists should, substantiation, which is apparently unnecessary for Grimstead or Smith.

If one followed Grimstead's recommendation about accepting unsubstantiated testimonials, then snake oil, William Reich's orgone theory, blood letting for all manner of diseases, and thousands of other claims discredited by the scientific method would still be around. For Grimstead, unverified and unverifiable (in most cases) “cures” would be promoted and promulgated on individuals, suffering and desperate for help, on the basis of the say so of people like Smith and Grimstead himself.

One wonders about Grimstead's claim when he says that “the theophostic [sic] theory of healing has proven duplicable over and over again in thousands of people's lives.” It is obvious that Grimstead has not spoken with these “thousands of people.” He therefore has taken the word of Smith and one or two others. Aren't you glad that Grimstead does not head the FDA or the AMA and that he is not in a position to carry out his macabre ideas, which would no doubt result in disappointments, disablements and deaths at times?

Here is another of Grimstead's straw man logical fallacies:

That PAL [*PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter*] tries to compare the use of case histories by Freud and others as evidence that case histories from Theophostic hearings are therefore invalid is simply a non-sequitor [sic] and does not follow logically. It greatly weakened their argument.

We would never say that because Freud (Oedipus Complex), Bettelheim (autism), Wilbur (Sybil), and others used case histories that anyone and everyone who uses case histories to claim healings or cures are wrong. We would say that to protect the public these healings and cures must be verified scientifically. Also, we do point out that the use of case histories in the past generated trust in theories that were embraced and practiced for numerous years by many in the field until they were discredited by close examination through the scientific method. We repeat what we said in the article that Grimstead read but chose to overlook:

In our book we say the following regarding Smith's claims and cases: If one were examining TheoPhostic counseling from a scientific perspective, rather than

simply believing Smith's say-so claims, cures and cases, one would need to proceed with parameters and requirements of proof. Internationally recognized astronomer Alan Hale restates in an article what all reputable scientists know:

- 1) Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. . . .
- 2) The burden of proof is on the positive. If you are making an extraordinary claim, the burden is on you to produce the extraordinary evidence to prove that you are correct; the burden is not on me to prove that you are wrong.

In all his written material and tapes, we find that Smith has violated both principles. We found no "extraordinary evidence" and no "proof." There is no outside, third-party evidence or support for TheoPhostic theory or methodology. The evidence for the TheoPhostic system's success is essentially Smith's say-so. Subjective, personal testimonials alone do not carry weight as evidence or proof in scientific investigation.

Grimstead ends his first section by saying:

I also urge the Bobgans (or others) to order the Theophostic Training Tapes and booklets and look over what they say. I challenge them to find anything that stands in opposition to historic, biblical Christianity in these materials. As a theologian, I have found nothing whatsoever that is unbiblical or illogical or in opposition to historic, orthodox Christianity or science as I have examined this group and their methods called Theophostic Ministry.

We have heard Smith's tapes and read his manuals and now challenge Grimstead to read our book, our articles, the article by Dr. Gary Almy, and the letter to *Christianity Today* by Mark Pendergrast. In PAL Vol. 10, No. 5 we reveal that Dr. Brian Maier, Assistant Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Dr. Philip Monroe, Assistant Professor at Biblical Theological Seminary, made a joint presentation on the theology of Theophostic Ministry at a conference. The obvious conclusion that should be drawn from Maier and Monroe's analysis is that Theophostic counseling is theologically insupportable and should not be practiced or utilized as a biblical approach. Based on Smith's unbiblical teachings, the condemnation of Theophostic Ministry should be an open-and-shut case.

Response Part Two

There are three parts to Grimstead's second response section. He first says:

That Smith has changed his description of his new knowledge from something God revealed to him and now describes it as "an insight from God" is of no consequence and is not worth mentioning. So what?

Smith reveals in his work that Theophostics was all of God and not from himself. Smith says: "He [God] gave me Theophostics so I would have no room to boast." Smith further says, "I [Smith] could not write down the new information fast enough to keep up

with what God was saying to me.” This is of great consequence! One can only logically conclude from what Smith says that he was declaring that God uniquely chose him to receive the Theophostic “insight” and that he had difficulty keeping up with what God was saying to him. Later Smith changed his language and now says he was only claiming that God gave him insight, not divine revelation uniquely given to him at a “speed” that was hard for him “to keep up with.” However, Grimstead does not seem to care if there is a shift or denial regarding God’s involvement in the matter.

In the second item of his second response, Grimstead says:

That Smith now calls his ministry “Theophostic Ministry” rather than “Theophostic Counseling” is of no consequence and is not worth mentioning as a negative critique. Again I say, so what?

This is another straw man fallacy. We did not mention the change in title to Theophostic Ministry as a “negative critique,” but rather to explain why our book is titled *TheoPhostic Counseling* when Smith now uses Theophostic Ministry.

In the third part of Grimstead’s second response he says:

That Smith has changed the pagination of his books is an irrelevant critique. So what if the page numbers change? What kind of silly attack is this?

Again this is another straw man. Our comment is not a “critique” and not a “silly attack” of the page changes; instead it is very relevant because we list numerous quotes with page numbers from Smith’s earlier editions. This comment of ours lets the readers of our book know that the page numbers we list do not coincide with Smith’s current edition. This was both relevant and necessary, but it was not a criticism of Smith as Grimstead charges.

Response Part Three

In his third response, Grimstead says:

This criticism appears to be mindless because by using such twisted “logic” the PAL authors would also need to say there is no need to use any of the thousands of books written by Christians over the past hundreds of years who claim they are sharing insights from God in their books if no teaching by the Church leaders is needed other than the Bible itself.

Another straw man. Grimstead speaks of “thousands of books written by Christians” as if the authors of those books, like Smith, have claimed divine revelation or divine “insight” from God and that their books were, like Smith’s, all of God and nothing of the authors and that these authors, like Smith, have said they “could not write down the information fast enough to keep up with what God was saying” to them. The commonality is books written, but the authors’ claims and sources differ. We would reject every book that was based upon the same claims as Smith by any authors, even if there were millions of them.

We take 2 Peter 1:3,4 literally. Grimstead apparently does not.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Grimstead evidently believes that Christians need Smith's divine insights and that God at this time in history has appointed Smith to add to the Bible. We challenge both Smith and Grimstead to prove through outside third-party, scientific researchers that Theophostic Ministry can live up to its claims. Since both seem to function on the authority of their own personal say so, we doubt that either will accept this challenge.

Grimstead also says in his third response:

In this section also they [Bobgans] criticize Smith for the statement, "I choose to use all available means possible (unless they are contrary to Biblical teaching) of reaching as many people for Christ as possible." They claim this statement is meaningless.

Grimstead does not get the point we are making when we say that Smith's claim to not use anything "contrary to Biblical teaching" is meaningless. Every Christian psychotherapist claims that! Since Christian psychotherapists use many of the more than 450 systems of psychotherapy, many of which are contradictory to one another, and yet they all say they do not contradict Scripture, one must logically conclude that Scripture is therefore contradictory—if indeed all these Christian psychotherapists are not using anything "contrary to Biblical teaching." If Grimstead can provide us with one Christian psychotherapist who will say that what he/she practices is "contrary to Biblical teachings" we will correct this statement. We have tried for many years but failed to find one Christian psychotherapist who would admit to using anything "contrary to Biblical teachings." That is why we say that such a statement is meaningless.

Response Part Four

In his fourth response, Grimstead says: "PAL claims Smith has no right to make a distinction between Divine Revelation and what Smith calls 'an insight from God.'" Another straw man. We never said "Smith has no right to make a distinction" between insight and revelation. We did say:

So, what's the difference? Divine Revelation or Divine Insight? And, as Smith says, "I could not write down the new information fast enough to keep up with what God was saying to me."

Grimstead read this and yet accused us of saying, "Smith has no right to make a distinction." Smith can make all the distinction he wants as long as he speaks the truth and does not change the language to hide his original words and intent. The truth according to Smith's words is that it was all of God and given by God to Smith uniquely and so rapidly that Smith could not keep up with Him. It is irrelevant whether Smith

distinguishes between a divine revelation and a divine insight, but it is very relevant when he changes the obvious meaning of his original words.

Response Part Five

In his fifth response Grimstead says:

PAL denounces Theophostic because it appears to include elements of “guided imagery, visualization and hypnosis” and these are assumed to be evil or demonic elements.

Grimstead does not deny that Smith utilizes “guided imagery, visualization and hypnosis.” Instead, he defends their use. Grimstead says:

There is nothing in scripture or orthodox theology or logic that requires us to write off as useless, ungodly, demonic, antibiblical tools the counseling elements of guided imagery, hypnosis or visualization.

In addition to our book *Hypnosis* and our chapter “Guided Imagery, Visualization, and Hypnosis” in our *TheoPhostic Counseling* book, we suggest reading the *Watchman Fellowship Profile* on “Hypnosis.” The *Profile* concludes:

Hypnosis can be indirectly linked to biblical admonitions against “charming.” It is historically linked to pagan and occult practices. Even proponents warn of the potential for misuse or unethical application. These factors coupled with the absence of a provable neutral, non-religious theory of hypnosis make hypnosis a potentially dangerous practice not recommended for Christians.

As a further defense of the use of guided imagery, visualization, and hypnosis, Grimstead says:

That some new-age, humanistic counselors use these methods does not demonize these methods or render them antibiblical or inherently evil in the same way that principles of engineering, chemistry or computer technology cannot be considered demonic or evil just because demon possessed people and pagans use those scientific tools as well as Christians.

Grimstead is guilty of what logicians call a category error. As Dr. Ronald Leifer says, “A category error is an error in the use of language that, in turn, produces errors in thinking.” It is obvious that engineering, chemistry, and computer technology involve the tangible, measurable, and scientific in contrast to guided imagery, visualization, and hypnosis, which are pseudoscientific and occultic methods and which Christians should avoid.

Grimstead is apparently not aware that Smith says on his web site the following: “For the record, Theophostic Ministry unequivocally denounces all forms of guided imagery, minister/counselor directed visualization and hypnosis.” This would be an easy mistake

for Grimstead to make, because even though Smith denies doing these things, they are part and parcel of his therapy.

Response Part Six

In part six of his response Grimstead brings up Mark Pendergrast's criticism about "Smith's cavalier lack of concern about whether memories of abuse are true or not." What Grimstead fails to note is that Pendergrast says that this is "shocking."

In order to defend Smith's memories of abuse practice, Grimstead explains how memory works according to Smith's system. Grimstead mentions agreement with "many who are competent in the field" but doesn't name those competent individuals. And, as with Smith, Grimstead gives no footnotes or authoritative statement as to his detailed explanation which he claims is true. Just as Smith wants his readers and listeners to take his word for all that he says, so too Grimstead wants his readers to believe him absent any proof.

Grimstead ends part six of his response with the following question: "Do these critics believe that Jesus does not or cannot answer direct prayers for guidance instantly and often?" In return we ask: Does Grimstead not believe that Satan can appear as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11: 13-15)?

Response Part Seven

In his final section titled "My suggestion to critics of Theophostic," Grimstead highly praises Dr. Ed Smith and then says:

Like most new approaches to anything that tends to be revolutionary and have great success, it must go through a period of unjust and unthinking criticism and attack.

As we have demonstrated in our writings, there is nothing "revolutionary" about Theophostics, and, as we prove in our book:

TheoPhostic counseling is the result of many existent therapies, including psychoanalytic, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and cognitive-behavioral therapies. In addition, TheoPhostic includes elements from the inner healing movement, which includes guided imagery, visualization, and hypnosis.

Grimstead's and Smith's unwillingness to put their claims to the test of science is appalling. As we say in our book:

Regardless of Smith's fantastic claims, rarely heard in the field of psychotherapy, he has produced no footnotes to support what he says and has provided no academic research by outside, third parties. His phenomenal claims lack the necessary phenomenal proof and seem to depend entirely on his say so and his belief in the veracity of his client responses, which he so carefully guides.

Grimstead closes by saying, "For biblical truth to reign within the evangelical Body of Christ." We respond with the statement we make in our book *TheoPhostic Counseling*:

As a result of our analysis we conclude that TheoPhostic counseling came out of the evil cauldron of the perverted wisdom of men rather than from the mind of God.

Conclusion

It is interesting that Grimstead entirely avoided several major points of our article "Theophostic Ministry" (*PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter*, Vol. 10, No. 4), including the fact that we say:

If there were only one psychotherapeutic system to choose from as evidence of the psychotherapeutic origin of TheoPhostic counseling, EMDR would be it (p. 104). In the latest edition of his Theophostic manual, which Smith endorses "as the authoritative source for his views," he says:

Some have seen a likeness of this rating the lie with the work of Edith [sic] Shapiro and EMDR. (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing.) I truly cannot say since **I am not that familiar with her work nor have I been trained at any level in her methodology** (p. 54, 4th ed.). (Bold added.)

Smith claims that he is "not that familiar with her [Shapiro's] work [EMDR]." HOWEVER, Smith has spoken publicly about all the therapies and self-help approaches he had learned and used, including EMDR! Smith said in one of his taped lectures, "**I even went the route of the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing**—had people follow the bouncing ball. You know, **I even did that.**" After completing the list of psychotherapies and self-help approaches he used, which included EMDR, Smith said, "I am not discrediting these people but **I used them all.**"

Smith has not responded to this obvious "discrepancy." Maybe Grimstead will be able to do so.