

A Response to Robert Hicks

by Martin and Deidre Bobgan

© copyright 1996

Robert Hicks has responded to our critique of his book *The Masculine Journey* with a paper titled “A PsychoHeresy Response; A Critique of the Critique of *The Masculine Journey*” (APR). In response to our many criticisms, Hicks lists nine questions. Although not all nine questions are related to our original critique, we will nevertheless respond to all nine and encourage the reader to refer to our original critique, which is titled [*Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy*](#), and to read the original quotes from Hicks’s book and particularly to read them in context.

We are responding to Robert Hicks’s response to our critique of his book *The Masculine Journey* with reluctance, because there are some things in Hicks’s response that raise serious questions about him. However, because of his direct charges and what he implies, his response leaves us no option but to confront what he has said. Hicks should have used the normal means of dealing with differences by quoting and comparing rather than inventing and accusing. His most serious accusations have no quoted material or other documentation associated with them. Also, he gives the impression that he has read our work, when his critique from beginning to end indicates either that he has not read us or that he does not understand what we have clearly said. Our response raises questions about his integrity, theology, and writing ability. We leave it up to the reader to judge those things as a result of reading our *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy* critique, Hicks’s APR response, and this paper written in response to Hicks. While Hicks would probably require the reader to have degrees in theology and psychology to understand and make judgments about what he and we have said, we certainly make no such requirements.

One of the most confusing issues about *Promise Keepers* is its relationship to Robert Hicks’s book *The Masculine Journey* (TMJ). TMJ is a blatant example of psychoheresy run rampant. Because of our concern, we wrote articles about TMJ. Our booklet titled *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy* (PKB), which contains those articles, is part of our “*Promise Keepers Warning Package*.” *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy* reveals the grossly unbiblical teachings in TMJ.

The Masculine Journey was a project of Robert Hicks, *Promise Keepers* and NavPress. The confusion arises over the current relationship between TMJ and *Promise Keepers*. Some say that *Promise Keepers* has distanced itself from TMJ. Is *Promise Keepers* backing away from an enthusiastic support of Robert Hicks’s book *The Masculine Journey*? It may appear so at first glance. For an extended period of time, *Promise Keepers* provided a 7-page letter supporting *The Masculine Journey* to those who requested it. However, shortly after our article “*Promise Keepers Still Endorses The Masculine Journey*” went to press March, 1996, they replaced the 7-page support letter with a brief statement, which said: “*Promise Keepers no longer distributes the book The Masculine Journey by Robert Hicks, published in 1993 by NavPress.*” However, as of June 17, 1996, *Promise Keepers* has begun to supply yet another position statement regarding *The Masculine Journey*. The current statement says:

Several passages in *The Masculine Journey* by Robert Hicks (1993, NavPress) could be understood in more than one way. Some of the content of the book

has unfortunately lent itself to a wide range of interpretations and responses involving theological issues which Promise Keepers does not feel called to resolve.

The statement continues to say that they don't want these unforeseen controversies to detract from the focus of Promise Keepers. After again stating that they no longer distribute the book, they confess:

At the same time, we believe Mr. Hicks's core theology is consistent with orthodox evangelical Christianity, and that *The Masculine Journey* was a forthright attempt on his part to deal with male issues from a biblical context.

Unfortunately, the organization only seems to be trying to avoid further controversy over the book. There is still no hint of warning, apology, or repudiation. Any fair reader of Promise Keepers' present statement on *The Masculine Journey* would have to conclude that Promise Keepers still supports Hicks and his book, which was given to every man who attended the 1993 conference (50,000 copies given out), and reveals the psychological foundations of the movement. Until Promise Keepers makes a definitive statement confessing the error of being involved in the development of *The Masculine Journey*, as well as of promoting and distributing it, they must be held culpable.

Promise Keepers' continued support of *TMJ* is a fatal flaw of the movement. Promise Keepers' involvement in the development, production, and distribution of *TMJ* to begin with reveals the unbiblical roots of the movement's view of masculinity. Because of the unbiblical nature of *TMJ*, we contend that if *TMJ* were Promise Keepers' only flaw, that would still be a sufficient reason for men to reject the movement. Promise Keepers' continued support of Hicks and *TMJ* contradicts any effort on their part to distance themselves from it. You can't have it both ways.

One acid test we have given pastors for the book is to ask them to preach a message in graphic detail from *TMJ*, particularly from Chapter 3, "The Phallic Man — *Zakar*." It is our belief that any pastor who preaches it the way it is written would be dismissed from his pastorate.

Hicks contends that "this word [*zakar*] reflects the phallic male in his distinct sexual aspect" (*TMJ*, p. 24). He says, "To be male is to be a phallic kind of guy, and as men we should never apologize for it, or allow it to be denigrated by women (or crass men either)" (p. 24). He also identifies Jesus as being "very much *zakar*, phallic" and says, "I believe Jesus was phallic with all the inherent phallic passions we experience as men" (*TMJ*, p. 181).

The phrase "a phallic kind of guy" brings forth images of Greek paganism rather than biblical manhood. That is exactly the direction Hicks takes his readers. To emphasize the connection between sexuality and spirituality, Hicks refers to various pagan artifacts and practices as well as biblical circumcision. He says, "The phallus has always been the symbol of religious devotion and dedication" (*TMJ*, p. 51).

Hicks reduces the biblical definition of manhood to one body part. He says, "The Bible simply defines manhood by the phallus" (*TMJ*, p. 49). As a matter of fact, Christianity has nothing to do with the phallus as a symbol of manhood. Paul even called those who insisted on circumcising new believers as preaching another (not the same) gospel. Why does Hicks want to introduce the phallus into Christianity? He says, "We are called to worship God as phallic kinds of guys, not as some sort of androgynous, neutered nonmales,

or the feminized males so popular in many feminist-enlightened churches” (TMJ, p. 51). He simply justifies his emphasis on the phallus by erecting a straw man.

Hicks declares: “I believe until the church sees men for what they are, phallic males with all their inherent spiritual tensions, it will not begin to reach men where they are living” (TMJ, p. 55). He contends that men’s sexual problems (including “sexual addictions,” pornography, and adultery) “reveal how desperate we are to express, in some perverted form, the deep compulsion to worship with our phallus” (TMJ, p. 56). But his analysis of the situation is driven by psychological notions. He fails to give any solid biblical support that every man has a “deep compulsion to worship with [his] phallus.”

The Promise Keepers movement has rapidly expanded from 4,200 men at one meeting in 1991 to 727,342 men in attendance at 13 different sites during 1995. The Promise Keepers’ budget has also expanded from \$4 million in 1993 to \$64 million in 1995. Far greater growth is anticipated for 1996. Promise Keepers’ special conference for clergymen in Atlanta, February 6-8, had 38,914 in attendance.

Those who have read *The Masculine Journey* know exactly what we are saying here. How can a movement that says Hicks’s “core theology is consistent with orthodox evangelical Christianity” continue to grow without men of God confronting this issue?

In his critique of our critique, Hicks says

By way of introduction, I would like to point out that I share the Bobgan’s [sic] 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 (APR, p. 1).

On the other hand, Hicks later criticizes us for not using “some confession of orthodoxy” as a standard of comparison (APR, p. 8). Thus, he is being contradictory by opening the door to varying interpretations on the one hand (APR, p. 1) and then saying:

Supporting evidence from the historic counsels, confessions, or even evangelical doctrinal statements, is completely lacking in their evaluation of my material (APR, p. 8).

According to Hicks this makes us “the sole arbitrator of truth” (APR, p. 8). Yet, we document what we say with Scripture. Apparently from Hicks’s point of view Christians cannot use the Bible as a standard for evaluation without being accused of being sole arbitrators of truth. One evidently must have extrabiblical material to support what one says in order to avoid such a criticism. This is only one of many confusing criticisms of us in Hicks’s paper. We have made it abundantly clear in our writings that Scripture is the sole standard of truth. As the Reformers said clearly: “Sola Scriptura!”

Hicks goes on to say:

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 (APR, p. 2).

We conclude and make it very clear that Hicks is NOT “equally concerned about the psychologizing of biblical truth.” Or, as our critique demonstrates, he would never have written *The Masculine Journey*, which is an extreme excursion into psychoheresy.

The dust jacket for *The Masculine Journey* lists Hicks as “President of Life Counseling Services, a professional center for Christian Counseling located near Philadelphia.” We called this center and received two brochures from them. On the cover of the general brochure is the following statement: “Life Counseling Services is an affiliate of The Minirth Meier New Life Clinics.” Frank Minirth, Paul Meier, and Steve Arterburn (New Life) are blatantly integrationist. The Minirth Meier New Life Clinics are riddled with psychoheresy (See *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I*, Part 3), and New Life Counseling Services is no exception. One look at the counseling services provided, including self-esteem, and the background of the staff members, including clinical psychologists, demonstrates how deeply Life Counseling Services and Robert Hicks are immersed in psychoheresy. The second brochure announces a Life Counseling Services seminar titled “Overcoming Life’s Challenges.” The backgrounds of the speakers and the content of their talks reveal the strong influence of psychology. The speakers are listed as therapists and licensed psychologists. The topics include “Ways to increase self-esteem.” These two brochures alone confirm that Hicks is NOT “equally concerned about the psychologizing of biblical truth.” On the contrary, they reveal Hicks’s love, support, promotion, and immersion in psychoheresy.

Hicks claims to “have read the Bobgan’s [sic] material” (APR, p. 2). Thus there is no excuse for some of the comments he makes.

Hicks says:

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 (APR, p. 2).

He then refers his readers to pages 16 and 17 of his book. Yes, Hicks does criticize some aspects of secular psychology, just as other integrationists do. We have made it clear in our writing that Hicks, like so many who criticize secular psychological ideas, is also influenced by them and uses them. This can be very deceptive, because when people read the criticisms, they may assume that the writer will not be using the ideas of the persons he is criticizing. Yet, this is exactly what happens with *The Masculine Journey*. We say:

Initially Hicks rejects a few psychological notions about what it means to be a man and says Jesus is “the model of manhood for which men should strive.” When he dismisses Jung and others at the beginning of the book with such words as, “So the Jungian definition of manhood doesn’t work for me,” he gives the impression that he won’t be using their ideas. But he does use the ideas of Jung and other psychologists. Jungian notions float through the book on the backs of the authors he quotes, and they are incorporated into his own explanations (PKB, p. 4).

It is clear that Hicks both rejects and uses psychological ideas, just as do so many of the psychologizers of the faith.

In the next to the last sentence in his introduction, Hicks says: “I therefore, [sic] wholeheartedly concur with the Bobgans [sic] general concerns about psychology” (APR, p. 2). Yet, he contradicts this statement and his earlier statement about being “equally concerned about the psychologizing of biblical truth” throughout *The Masculine Journey* and throughout his critique of us.

We want to point out to the reader that in checking Hicks’s footnotes, you will see that his most outrageous criticisms of us, such as Docetism and Gnosticism, are **not** substantiated in any way from anything we have ever written. These are not even conjectures on his part, but rather accusations without substance. As we shall state later, it is the psychologizers of the faith like Hicks who should be accused of being Gnostics and Docetists.

In our response to Hicks’s response to our critique of *TMJ*, we will follow his divisions and division headings. However, we will not exhaustively respond to Hicks. Instead, we will point out enough errors in his response to demonstrate that he has either not read our material or simply does not understand it.

1. “Do Psychological Concepts Exist in the Bible?”

Hicks says, “In using the term ‘PsychoHeresy’ the Bobgans apparently assume that psychological concepts are not found in the Bible” (APR, p. 2). Yet, we have continually been clear about our target of criticism, which has always been that part of secular psychology dealing with the nature of man, how he should live, and how he can change. We coined the term *psychoheresy* because what we describe is a psychological heresy. It is a heresy because it is a departure from the fundamental truth of the Gospel. The departure is the use of unproved and unscientific psychological opinions of men instead of absolute confidence in the biblical truth of God. We say in each of our newsletters:

Psychoheresy is the integration of secular psychological counseling theories and therapies with the Bible. Psychoheresy is also the intrusion of such theories into the preaching and practice of Christianity, especially when they contradict or compromise biblical Christianity in terms of the nature of man, how he is to live, and how he changes.

If by “psychological concepts” Hicks means the over 450 psychotherapeutic systems developed by Freud and hundreds of others, we would say that those psychological concepts are either absent from Scripture or are worldly distortions that may sound scriptural. For example, one of the best-known names in the field of psychology is Carl Rogers. Rogers developed a so-called nondirective counseling methodology called “client-centered” therapy in which the client does the choosing in an environment encouraging positive self-regard. Rogers left Christianity and embraced humanism. Besides emphasizing the innate goodness of man, Rogers’ “self theory” made self the central agent of change, capable of knowing what is right, and the final authority rather than God. Nevertheless, many pastors and Christian counselors became “client-centered” in their counseling and attempted to wed Rogers’ self-centered theories with Scripture. Over the years we have given numerous examples of Christians who have taken many of these secular ideas and attempted to

biblicize them, whether they be Rogerian, Freudian, Jungian, or from the notions of other psychological theorists.

Now if Hicks is merely suggesting that, if one looks hard enough and is willing to stretch the ideas far enough, one can find secular psychological concepts of Freud and others in the Bible, that would be a different proposition. We know of two Christian psychotherapists who supposedly found all of the unconscious ego defense mechanisms of Freud in the Bible, which shows that one can certainly find even the most bizarre secular psychological ideas in Scripture, if one uses enough imagination and distorts Scripture enough to fit the imagination.

Hicks says, "Therefore if a writer uses a psychological term or concept the writer must have borrowed it from 'ungodly' humanistic sources" (APR, p. 2). We need to repeat our criticism of Hicks and the other psychologizers of the faith. It is simply this: they use psychotherapeutic ideas and their underlying psychologies, which are not science, but merely the conjectures or opinions of men. Almost any psychological concept, no matter how silly or satanic, can be supported by distorting Scripture. Even the Freudian-Oedipus Complex has supposedly been found there. Since psychotherapy with its underlying psychologies is not science and we know that God's Word is true, why even bother to use such psychological terms and concepts? They originated from the very wisdom of men that the Bible warns us about.

We have been very clear in our writings as to what our concern is. Hicks says he has read our books and newsletter. Nevertheless he says:

But without a working definition of "Psychology", [sic] which the Bobgan's [sic] do not have, the reader is left with only emotionally charged labels like, "PsychoHeresy". [sic] This label is then put on anything that has the appearance of being related to concepts or terms in psycho-therapy [sic] (APR, p. 2).

How could he have missed our clear definitions and lines of demarcation? As we have often stated, our criticism is Hicks's use of the guesses and opinions of men, rather than God's Word when it comes to matters of life and godliness.

Hicks then changes the subject and says:

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) (APR, pp. 2-3).

These are excellent examples and questions by Hicks. However, they reveal his view of the nature of psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies and also the relationship between psychology and Scripture. The answer to Hicks's questions is yes, the Bible does speak to these issues. However, since the Bible gives us the truthful, authoritative answers to these

questions, why use the psychological wisdom of men or discuss these questions from the guesses and opinions of men? Of what advantage is it to discuss guesses instead of truth?

Hicks says, “In other words, if psychology is defined as ‘that which goes on in the depths of the human heart’, [sic] the Bible is very psychological” (APR, p. 3). Hicks once more demonstrates that he does not understand our criticism of his work. Hicks has put forth his own definition of what *psychology* is and comes to a natural conclusion that the “Bible is very psychological.” But, we are not speaking of **his** definition of *psychology* in our critique since he did not define it there. In our critique of Hicks’s book, we are speaking of his use of the well-known psychologies of men such as Freud, Jung, Adler and others. We are criticizing Hicks for using psychotherapeutic and psychological ideas from well-known secular theorists. Hicks skirts the issue in his response by offering a very generalized definition of *psychological* in order to make “the Bible very psychological.” Using his definition, one could identify almost anything as “very psychological.”

In summary, Hicks turns our criticism of his use of well-known psychotherapies and their underlying psychologies into his own broad definition of the word *psychology*, which is broad enough to make the Bible and almost every literature book a book about psychology. We recommend against using the term *psychology* in such a general sense, especially in the way that Hicks defines it, because of the resulting confusion.

Because of Hicks’s broad definition of *psychology* and his avoidance of our criticism of his use of specific psychologies as revealed in his book, he does not even deal with our concerns about his use of psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies. After diverting the reader away from our true concerns and distorting what we have written, he then goes on to say, “I do believe the Bible both addresses and describes what is going on [sic] the depths of the inner psyche.” He also mentions “‘soul work’ . . . with which modern psychologists have attempted to deal” (APR, p. 3). In addition, he says, “I firmly believe there is a psychology of human life in the Bible.” By first ignoring the specifics of what part of psychology we are criticizing, avoiding speaking of our specific criticisms of psychotherapies and psychotherapists that he has used in his book, and pretending that we are critical of anything and everything that might fit into his very broad use of the term *psychology*, Hicks then uses common biblical terms that sound somewhat like what therapists would also deal with in his attempt to justify his use of psychology, psychotherapy, and psychotherapists and in his attempt to give credence to his conclusions. However, there is a huge difference between God’s Word and the very opinions of men that the Bible warns against. What Hicks proposes and promotes constitutes science falsely so-called (1 Timothy 6:26).

2. “Is The Masculine Journey [sic] Based on My Own Psychological Experience?”

Hicks’s contention in this section is found in his statement:

When I quote a psychologist, it makes me a PsychoHeretic. When the Bobgan’s [sic] quote one, they are defending the truth! . . . To suggest that I am a PsychoHeretic because I quote psychologist [sic], [sic] and then turn around and do the same, [sic] illustrates the logical cul-de-sac they are stuck in (APR, p. 4).

Hicks fails to see the obvious difference between his use of psychological theories mixed with the Bible and our quoting psychological research that reveals the weaknesses and failures of psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies. He attempts to **integrate**

psychological theories with Scripture. We quote psychological **research** to give additional reasons why it is foolish to integrate. His use of psychology contaminates Scripture. Ours does not. For instance, we quote psychologists Mindess and Riebel, whose research reveals the personal, limited nature of psychotherapeutic theories. But their profession does not make us contradictory. The very thing about which Mindess and Riebel are writing has to do with how psychological theories are formed. Neither one is proposing a theory; both are scholars who disclose what happens when such theories are formed. We say the following in *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy*:

In her article “Theory as Self-Portrait and the Ideal of Objectivity,” Dr. Linda Riebel clearly shows that “theories of human nature reflect the theorist’s personality as he or she externalizes it or projects it onto humanity at large.” She says that “the theory of human nature is a self-portrait of the theorist . . . emphasizing what the theorist needs” and that theories of personality and psychotherapy “cannot transcend the individual personality engaged in that act.”

In his book titled *Makers of Psychology: The Personal Factor*, Dr. Harvey Mindess says that psychological theorists “portray humanity in their own image” and that “each one’s theories and techniques are a means of validating his own identity.” He says:

The field as a whole, taking direction as it does from the standpoints of its leaders—which, as I will demonstrate, are *always* personally motivated—may be regarded as a set of distorting mirrors, each one reflecting human nature in a somewhat lopsided way, with no guarantee that all of them put together add up to a rounded portrait. (Emphasis his.)

Hicks’s book is not based fully on the Bible, but rather on his own personal experience of what it means to be a man. He forms arbitrary stages, in which to place his own personal experience and subjective psychological notions. By giving biblical labels to these stages and mixing in some biblical truth, he makes it appear that the Bible validates everything he says about manhood (PKB, pp. 3-4).

We do not incorporate such psychological conclusions with Scripture, but rather mention them to demonstrate that believers need not turn to Freud, Jung, Adler and others. Thus, quoting them does not make us contradict our position of concern about the psychological wisdom of men. Nevertheless, in his eagerness to defend his own position, Hicks contends: “They cannot condemn me for quoting these sources (either positively or negatively), [sic] and then turn around and use the same kind of sources” (APR, p. 4). Hicks once more demonstrates that he does not understand our criticism. He apparently does not even understand the commonly held conclusions in the field, that psychological theorists do project their own lives onto the theories they construct. Regarding our quoting Riebel and Mindess, it does not matter if they are therapists, since they are not writing about a therapy to be performed, but rather how theories are formed.

Because of his own misunderstandings, Hicks argues: “In the final analysis, they become what they condemn, “PsychoHeretics”, [sic] by appealing to the authority of

psychologists for their proof against me!” (APR, p. 4). First, we have not condemned Hicks of being a “PsychoHeretic,” but only of using psychoheresy as we have described it above. As a matter of fact, we have never accused anyone of being a “PsychoHeretic.” Everyone who has read our books knows this, except perhaps Hicks. The authority of Mindess and Riebel comes from the fact that they are known experts in how psychological theories are made up from the very personalities of the therapists themselves. They provide good evidence for this. We would never quote favorably any of their therapeutic ideas or notions about the nature of man or how he might improve his life the way Hicks does with the many therapists he quotes in *The Masculine Journey*. If Hicks had read us, he would know this. If Hicks were familiar with the research literature in the field, he would know this. If Hicks knew the difference between psychotherapy and research about psychotherapy, he would not be so confused in his response.

3. “Are the Bobgan’s [sic] Influenced By [sic] Their Own Experience?”

Since item three depends upon item two and Hicks has already demonstrated his ignorance concerning our quoting Mindess and Riebel, this item hardly needs answering.

In every issue of our PsychoHeresy Awareness Letter we state our purpose as follows:

We desire to encourage Christians to look to the Lord and His Word as sufficient for life and godliness, rather than to the psychological opinions of men. We pray that the information provided (1) will reveal the unbiblical nature of such theories and methods; (2) will turn hearts back to the Lord; and (3) will show that attempting to integrate psychological counseling theories with the Bible distracts believers, dilutes Scripture, dishonors God, develops the flesh, and debilitates spiritual growth.

In spite of our clearly stated purpose, Hicks attributes an entirely different purpose by accusing us of needing to “show how others are finding their identities elsewhere” in order to find our own identity. He says:

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, [sic] and in the process, [sic] find themselves. This really sounds like psycho-babble [sic] to me! (APR, p. 4).

If Hicks were as clear in his writing about his own identity being “found securely in the finished work of Christ,” there would be less criticism of his work. If he were clear in his writing about every believer’s identity being “found securely in the finished work of Christ,” there would have been no purpose at all for him to write *The Masculine Journey* in the first place. Read his book *The Masculine Journey*, read our criticism of it, and see how far he has strayed from any man finding his identity “securely in the finished work of Christ.” Hicks’s final two sentences in the above quote are still a puzzle to us. If Hicks has found his identity elsewhere than in the Scriptures, as his book clearly demonstrates, he is the one engaged in “psycho-babble,” not us.

4. “Is the Masculine Journey [sic] Based On [sic] Jungian Archetypes and Levinson’s Developmental Stages?”

Hicks says:

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, Middle Adulthood, and Late Adulthood.” Jung’s four Archetypes are: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, and Trickster.” Even where there might be similarity in concepts, like my “Sage” and Levinson’s “Late Adulthood”, [sic] the similarity is more by coincidence than collusion (APR, pp. 4-5).

We say in *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy*:

Initially Hicks rejects a few psychological notions about what it means to be a man and says Jesus is “the model of manhood for which men should strive.” When he dismisses Jung and others at the beginning of the book with such words as, “So the Jungian definition of manhood doesn’t work for me,” he gives the impression that he won’t be using their ideas. But he does use the ideas of Jung and other psychologists. Jungian notions float through the book on the backs of the authors he quotes, and they are incorporated into his own explanations.

One book on which he relies is Daniel Levinson’s *The Seasons of a Man’s Life*. Hicks says the book is true on the basis of his own experience and on the basis of what he considers “excellent research.” Levinson investigated the lives of forty men and came up with what Hicks calls “certain predictable eras in the male life cycle.”

Levinson is a psychologist who, together with several colleagues, conducted a study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. From 1968 to early 1970 forty men between the ages of 35 and 45 were interviewed.

The orientation of the interviewers was primarily Freudian, but there was also a Jungian who “helped us to assimilate Jung’s ideas without having to reject other viewpoints.” Psychological interviews always follow the theoretical orientation of the interviewers. Levinson says, “On the psychological side, our thinking about adult development thus grows out of an intellectual tradition formed by Freud, Jung and Erikson. This tradition includes Rank, Adler, Reich and other socially oriented depth psychologists.”

The study yielded descriptive information, but not from any kind of controlled observational data. Rather, it was anecdotal, based solely on subjective interviews. One psychological test was used during the interviews—the Thematic Apperception Test, a projective technique with extremely low validity. The test was not even administered according to strict

procedures, but was simply used as a means to stimulate ideas during the interviews.

Levinson says, “Our essential method was to elicit the life stories of forty men, to construct biographies and to develop generalizations based upon these biographies.” In addition, Levinson says that they were “working toward an intuitive understanding of the man and his life.” He recalls:

We found ourselves full of ideas—stemming mainly from psychoanalytic theory—about the subject’s development in childhood and adolescence. We could make many connections between these early periods and what happened at mid-life.

In other words, they were giving Freudian and Jungian interpretations to the biographical information they gleaned during the interviews. Thus the study began with Freudian and Jungian presuppositions, was conducted within the framework and control of those notions, and finally was interpreted according to the underlying psychological theories. And that is what Hicks calls “excellent research.”

In his book and from his psychoanalytic bias, Levinson describes four stages of development with their transition periods. However, these are arbitrary divisions. Others have postulated various numbers of stages. For instance, Confucius identified 6 stages in the life cycle.

Hicks follows the predictable pattern of the integrationist. He takes a psychological theory, believes it to be valid under “all truth is God’s truth,” and then considers what the Bible might add. He says, “As a biblically trained theologian I asked, ‘Do the Scriptures have anything to contribute in this regard?’” His teaching originates from human opinions and the Bible is bent to fit.

Hicks recalls six Hebrew words he learned in seminary that fit with Levinson’s ideas. Miraculously each word just happens to fit one of Hicks’s contrived stages of manhood.

How could Hicks’s involvement in these books, psychologists, and theories not influence him? Hicks mentions using the six Hebrew words. He faults us for not using “outside language sources” or a “substantiating authority” (APR, p. 5). Just because we did not quote from outside sources does not mean that we did not refer to dictionaries and lexicons. Apparently Hicks does not understand that footnotes follow direct quotes and that the absence of footnotes does not mean academic references were not consulted. At the end of this paper, we refer to another paper that critiques Hicks’s use of the Hebrew words and that critique does cite authoritative sources. We will comment on his remarks about his use of the six Hebrew words in our conclusion.

5. “What Is the Real Issue Behind [sic] the Criticism?”

In this section Hicks again demonstrates clearly and fully that he has **not** read our books, articles or position papers on the subject of creation or natural revelation. As with his other sections he states his confusion as fact and then uses it as evidence. Hicks says, “In other words, if something is not in the Bible, it is then not capable of giving humans

knowledge about God or His world” (APR, p. 6). This is a false accusation on Hicks’s part. We have never said such a thing. Yet, he uses this false accusation, as if he is quoting us, to suggest that he is main stream orthodox and we are not. If Hicks would spend more time reading our work and less time misrepresenting it, he would have more credibility with his readers. Our concern is not with natural revelation. God has revealed much about His universe through natural revelation, and we are grateful for God’s mercy and generosity in allowing mankind to discover things about His creation. Our concern is when Christians borrow notions from unredeemed psychological theorists, suppose that they can be used for salvation and sanctification, and then have the audacity to call it “natural revelation,” when these theories fall into the category of “science falsely so-called,” rather than natural revelation. Even though natural revelation is available to all men, the source is true, because what comes from God is unchanging truth. Ideas from psychotherapy and its underlying psychological theories, on the other hand, are varying subjective opinions and notions of men. Hicks’s confusion of natural revelation and psychological theories communicates an extreme ineptitude on his part.

In the next paragraph Hicks contradicts himself by saying that we do believe in “natural revelation” after all, because we “quote sources outside the Bible.” He gives two examples. He first says, “The [sic] brought in a PhD in Psychology, Hilton Terrell, to write an introduction to one of their own chapters.” Here again we are using a quote from a Christian medical doctor, psychologist, who knows the field well and has written a **rejection** of it and tells why (see *Prophets of PsychoHeresy I*, pages 221-222). This is certainly diametrically different from what Hicks did in *The Masculine Journey*.

Just as a reminder, our target of criticism of Hicks and others is their use of psychotherapies and their underlying psychologies. While many Christian psychologists contend that Freudian ego defense mechanisms, the Jungian collective unconscious, and other such psychological notions are part of God’s natural revelation, we would disagree. Reason: these psychologies are not even science. The Freudian Oedipal complex et al are not part of God’s revelation, but merely Freud’s revelation of himself. What would be included in “natural revelation” would be a major difference between Hicks and us.

Hicks says:

Likewise Deidre has authored a self-published book where she combines the science of ballet with a “disciplined walk with God.” I could easily call this “PhysicoHeresy” because of the assumed collusion [sic] between the natural science of bodily movement and the Bible. In fact, Deidre, [sic] could not even combine the Bible with ballet without holding to my view which is the longstanding orthodox view of natural revelation (APR, p. 7).

Hicks is making a major mistake in the use of human logic when he compares the body (ballet) and a medical model of the mind. As one authority has said, “Mind is not a thing like muscles and bones and blood. The medical model when applied to the mind is absurd.” Ballet has nothing to do with this type of psychology. If Hicks had truly read our work, especially Chapter 3 of *PsychoHeresy*, he would not have made such a ridiculous accusation.

Moreover, Deidre is not attempting to combine ballet with Scripture, but rather uses it as an extended analogy, much like Paul’s use of the analogies of an athlete and running a race. Also, in his eagerness to depreciate the book, he calls it “self-published” when, in fact, it was originally published by Harvest House Publishers in Eugene, Oregon.

Hicks ends this section by saying, “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” (APR, p. 7). The problem with this position is that, in spite of the vast differences in psychological understandings and practices, we have never yet found a Christian therapist who believed he was doing something unbiblical. Every Christian we know who is a psychotherapist will tell you that the psychology they practice is biblical, in spite of the vast differences among them regarding what they choose to use from the over 450 different psychotherapeutic systems. The Bible reveals why this is so: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

6. “What View of Truth Do the Bobgan’s [sic] Appear to Embrace?”

Without a shred of evidence, Hicks makes serious charges against us in this section. He says, “As I have evaluated the Bobgan’s [sic] books and their criticism of my book, I feel they have fallen prey to a ‘gnostic’ view of truth.” Hicks has provided no substantiation for his “feeling” and gives little evidence that he has actually read our books. However, if he has read them, he certainly has provided no tangible, visible quote demonstrating that we have fallen prey to a “‘gnostic’ view of truth.”

Hicks says:

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

This statement from Hicks is further evidence that he has either not read our books or does not understand them. It may be that he even misunderstands Gnosticism. It is unfortunate that he does not realize that the type of psychology he promotes is a form of Neo-Gnosticism.

John MacArthur has said:

Nothing epitomizes neo-gnosticism more than the church’s fascination with humanistic psychology. The integration of modern behavioral theory into the church has created an environment in which traditional counseling from the Bible is widely viewed as unsophisticated, naive, and even fatuous. The neo-gnostics would have us believe that sharing Scripture and praying with someone who is deeply hurting emotionally is too superficial. Only those who are trained in psychology—those with the secret knowledge—are qualified to help people with serious spiritual and emotional problems. The

acceptance of that attitude is misleading millions and crippling church ministry (*Our Sufficiency*, p. 30).

Hicks refers to psychology as science. While research psychology does use the scientific method to investigate aspects of animal and human behavior, to use the word *science* to describe psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies is stretching the word *science* beyond useful meaning. Psychology and its branch of psychotherapy do adopt a scientific posture, but they have not been able to meet the requirements of a science. In investigating the question, “Is psychology a science?” the American Psychological Association appointed Sigmund Koch to plan and direct a study. This study was subsidized by the National Science Foundation and involved eighty eminent scholars. After evaluating and publishing the results, Koch concluded, “Throughout psychology’s history as ‘science,’ the *hard* knowledge it has deposited has been uniformly negative.” In other words, it falls short of the requirements of science. Koch also described how hard psychology has tried to look like a science:

The *hope* of a psychological science became indistinguishable from the *fact* of psychological science. The entire subsequent history of psychology can be seen as a ritualistic endeavor to **emulate the forms of science** in order to sustain the delusion that it already *is* a science. (Italics his; bold added.)

Karl Popper, whom many consider to be the greatest twentieth-century philosopher of science, examined psychological theories having to do with human nature; why people think, feel and act as they do; and how they change. He concluded that these theories, “though posing as sciences, had in fact more in common with primitive myths than with science; that they resembled astrology rather than astronomy.” He also wrote, “These theories describe some facts but in the manner of myths. They contain most interesting psychological suggestions, but not in testable form” (Popper, “Scientific Theory and Falsifiability,” *Perspectives in Philosophy*. Robert N. Beck, ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1975, pp. 343, 346).

Rather than knowledge being added to knowledge with more recent discoveries resting on a body of solid information, one psychological system contradicts or disenfranchises another, one set of opinions is exchanged for another, and one set of techniques is replaced by another. With over 450 separate systems, each claiming superiority over the rest, it is hard to view so many diverse opinions as being scientific or factual. The entire field is amassed in confusion and crowded with pseudo-knowledge and pseudo-theories resulting in pseudo-science.

7. “What Does the Charge of Heresy Imply?”

In checking our endnotes for our critique of his book Hicks says:

However, when I evaluated the Bobgan’s [sic] Promisekeeper [sic] 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, [sic] (doesn’t that make them psycho-heretics [sic]?), the Bible twice, Shakespeare once, and themselves once (APR, p. 8).

In order to analyze anyone's work, one must quote extensively from it. We used all of these quotations to demonstrate that Hicks is involved in psychoheresy, which we defined earlier. We quoted from researchers in psychology, since Hicks borrows so heavily from it, to show that his use of unscientific, secular psychotherapy and its underlying psychologies is reason enough to reject his book. While we say he is using psychoheresy as we define it, at no time have we called him a heretic.

Hicks refers in this section to our not appealing to some "confession of orthodoxy" and our supposed lack of "supporting evidence from the historic councils, confessions, or even evangelical doctrinal statements" (APR, p. 8). But, he earlier refers to these as "somewhat tainted" (APR, p. 1). Since Hicks, on the one hand, considers them to be tainted, why would he, on the other hand, insist that we refer to them?

8. "Are the Bobgan's Accountable to Anyone?"

Hicks says, "As far as I know, the Bobgan's [sic] are not accountable to anyone" (APR, p. 9). He also says:

They do not publish under any of the commonly recognized, evangelical publishing houses, but one of their own making (EastGate Press [sic]). Being self-published means they are not necessarily accountable to editors, [sic] or the ethical standards of most publishing houses.

Hicks continues to demonstrate more ignorance about our ministry and publishing company. The *Promise Keepers & PsychoHeresy* is published by PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries, which has a board of directors that leads the ministry. We are accountable to this board. Prior to the beginning of EastGate Publishers our books were published by the following "commonly recognized, evangelical publishing houses": Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN; Moody Press, Chicago, IL; and Harvest House, Eugene, OR.

We do not operate independently, but seek the wisdom of other believers. Our books have been endorsed and recommended by many well-known Christians across America. We only say this to demonstrate once more that Hicks has not done his homework on who we are, how we operate, who supports our work, and why we criticize his book *The Masculine Journey*. Hicks has apparently not even taken the time to read the endorsements on the cover or at the beginning of some of our books.

Hicks says:

On the contrary, my book, *The Masculine Journey*, being a Promisekeeper [sic] imprint, went through a very stringent editorial process. The Promisekeeper [sic] organization had its own editors and readers. NavPress, as publisher, likewise had their [sic] own editorial readers. All those involved in the editorial process were trained in theology and biblical languages (APR, p. 9).

This is an admission on Hicks's part that Promise Keepers, NavPress, and Hicks were all in agreement on the outcome of *The Masculine Journey* and agreed with its content. It would be difficult for Promise Keepers, after being involved in finalizing *The Masculine Journey*, to withdraw its support.

However, in checking with Promise Keepers, we learned that the seven-page letter supporting *The Masculine Journey* is no longer sent out by them. In checking with NavPress, the publisher, we found that all traces of Promise Keepers' involvement have been removed, including page 203, which is a one-page reference to Promise Keepers. The Promise Keepers logo has also been removed from *The Masculine Journey* book and accompanying study guide. This was obviously in response to our own as well as others' critical analyses of Hicks's writings. While on the one hand, Promise Keepers has not repudiated the book, on the other hand, they have certainly recognized the need to withdraw their logo from both the book and study guide. And what will Hicks say if Promise Keepers finally repudiates his book? Will he repent?

Hicks says, "For all I know about the Bobgans, they [sic] not trained in either psychology or theology." Hicks's questioning our theological and psychological background is silly for a variety of reasons. While it is true that neither one of us has a degree in theology, it is also true that many who have degrees and advanced degrees in theology have endorsed our work. Also, one of us has a doctorate in educational psychology and has probably taken more courses in psychology than Hicks has. In addition, our work has endorsements from at least two psychiatrists with international reputations in the field. We see no such recommendations of Hicks's work. If Hicks truly read just the covers of our books, he would know much of this. And, if Hicks had read just the endorsements for our books, he would have known this.

Now, if Hicks wants to get technical about writing, we would like to know his background in English. One of us has a Master's degree in English. We could say that Hicks does not have a degree in English and therefore has no right to be a writer. However, we do not believe that one needs a degree in theology, psychology, or English to write in these fields. One does need to demonstrate knowledge, however. Our accusations of Hicks include the following: his theology is warped and his psychology is really psychoheresy.

We also must say that it is a good thing Hicks did have editors work on his book. If he wrote *The Masculine Journey* in the same manner he wrote his critique of our work, his editor must have had plenty of work to do. Please note the word *sic* throughout our response. The dictionary defines *sic* as follows: "used within brackets, [sic], to show that a quoted passage, especially one containing some error or something questionable, is precisely reproduced." Please note our necessity to use the [sic] designations for his writing. We only quoted part of his total response. If we had reproduced it in its entirety, the readers would see numerous additional [sic] designations.

The cover flap of *The Masculine Journey* states that Hicks is a Professor of Pastoral Theology at the Seminary of the East in Dresher, Pennsylvania. According to *Walston and Bear's Guide to Earning Religious Degrees Non-Traditionally*, this institution is unaccredited. In other words, the institution is not examined by the usual accrediting associations to which other institutions submit themselves. Degrees from such institutions are generally not recognized by those Bible colleges and seminaries that are accredited.

In addition, Hicks's use of reason and logic are grossly lacking throughout. One of us has a degree minor in philosophy, but it is not necessary to have such a degree to think logically, nor a degree in English to write clearly. Some who criticize our work have never been to college. Never in our responses have we made an issue of it. We only mention this weakness here in response to his erroneous accusations.

9. “Do I Present Jesus As A [sic] ‘Phallic Kind of Guy’?”

Hicks says, “The phrase ‘regular guy’ is taken from the study guide, which was not even written by me but by a ghost writer” (APR, p. 9). Hicks says this as if he has no responsibility for *The Masculine Journey Study Guide*. In speaking with his ghost writer and two editors at NavPress, we found that Hicks indeed did not write a word of the study guide, but he was sent galleys of the study guide prior to its publication, and his name is on it.

There are two issues involved here and both have to do with integrity. The first is the use of his name on a book that was solely ghost written, and the second is his not taking responsibility for the contents of the study guide. After all, he did receive galleys of the study guide prior to its publication. If he did not read the galleys, which contained his name, then he is to be faulted. If he did read the galleys and is now not taking responsibility for the content, he is to be doubly faulted. Further, please note how glib he is in reporting that the study guide was ghost written and that he had nothing to do with the writing of the study guide, and yet he apparently has no conscience about the fact that his name is on it. We assume he was either paid for the use of his name on the study guide or is receiving royalties.

Hicks declares that “the phrase ‘phallic kind of guy’ never appears in my book with reference to Jesus” (APR, p. 9). He then says: “What I do say about Jesus is this: ‘Jesus was also very much zakar, phallic’” (APR, p. 10). Sounds a little contradictory to us. If Jesus is “also very much zakar, phallic,” doesn’t that make him a “phallic kind of guy”? Also, on page 51 of *The Masculine Journey*, Hicks says, “We are called to worship as **phallic kinds of guys.**” (Emphasis added.)

Hicks follows this with a number of explanations and ends up falsely accusing us. He says:

Unwittingly, in accusing me of ‘reducing Christ to the lowest common denominator of masculinity’, [sic] the Bobgans have moved in the direction of yet another form of gnostic heresy, ‘docetism’ [sic] (APR, p. 13).

This is another indication that Hicks has not read our work or may not understand Docetism. (He obviously does not know enough about Docetism to capitalize the word.) Docetism teaches that Christ was spirit and did not actually become flesh, but merely appeared to be a man. As usual, Hicks provides no evidence for accusing us of Docetism, which is tantamount to calling us false prophets. Scripture says:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:1-3).

Evidently Hicks believes that anyone who has a higher view of the manhood of Christ than he does must be guilty of Docetism. We express our concern about the way Hicks portrays the manhood of the Master as though he was just a regular guy, not only with human weaknesses, but with the weakness of sinful flesh. While Jesus was fully man, He was also fully God and thus was born of a virgin so that he would not inherit sin when he took on

human flesh. Christ was the second Adam. A descendent of Adam, that is, a regular guy, could not have been our propitiation for sin. Christ had to be one without sin to be sin for us. To consider Jesus a regular guy overlooks the glorious truth that as He was fully man He was also fully God, not two separate persons, but one God-man. We affirm the manhood of Jesus and contend that it is Hicks who demeans His manhood.

Conclusion.

In his last paragraph Hicks says, “Since they have never contacted me personally in attempt to confirm or deny their accusations, my only recourse is to make available a response in this form” (APR, p. 13). When a work becomes public and particularly as public as Hicks’s book, it is not necessary to contact the author. Additionally our critique has reached only a fraction of the number of individuals who have a copy of *TMJ*.

We have been critiqued in literally hundreds of publications, but never have we complained about not receiving a copy of the critique. We are not herein complaining that Hicks does not practice what he preaches, because we never received a copy of his response directly from him.

As we said earlier, we were reluctant to respond to some of the things said in Hicks’s critique of us. However, Hicks’s critique required us to respond to his misrepresenting us without quoting us and, when he did quote us, his misrepresenting what we said; to integrity issues (such as those regarding the study guide); to theological issues (such as Christology, use of original languages, and knowledge of Docetism and Gnosticism); and poor writing skills (note the use of *[sic]* in the quotations from his critique).

A major issue in Hicks’s book is his use of the six Hebrew words. As a conclusion to this paper we recommend an article written by a seminary student titled “The ‘Masculine Journey’: A Turn Down the Wrong Road,” which includes specific word studies revealing Hicks’s misuse of these words. This publication can be obtained by writing to Discernment Publications, 4650 Von Karman, Newport Beach, CA 92660. We also suggest that those who have not read our book *PsychoHeresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity* do so. Also, by reading *The Masculine Journey* itself and what we have written about *The Masculine Journey*, the reader will see that Hicks’s book is a radical departure from orthodox, biblical Christianity.