

American society has many sources of information available for its citizens.
Print media has become secondary to broadcast media in recent decades.
Some newspapers and magazines are in danger of going out of business.

Personal contacts have been downgraded due to celebrity status of broadcasters
Some people feel closer to TV or radio personalities than to kith and kin.
This phenomenon has become crucial to learning about health and behavior

Folk wisdom or professional expertise means less in our broadcast culture.
Relatives or friends once provided advice or examples to many people.
The glamour and apparent competence of celebrities is taken as ability by many

One area of celebrity expertise assumed by many is in daily life conduct
Psychotherapy may be a matter of incidental learning here
A celebrity may dispense advice, accidentally or on purpose, & be heeded

Cognitive Therapy tends to be a very practical form of teaching
Celebrities such as television evangelists will give their audience advice
I find some televangelists are fairly competent as cognitive therapists.

Cognitive Therapy focuses on the present and on doubts plaguing people
Televangelists and other celebrities appear to be cheerful and competent
By accident or by design some televangelists dispense cognitive therapy

Psychotherapy developed to address human confusion and fears
Psychotherapy has many schools of thought
Each school of psychotherapeutic thought has firmly held tenets explaining life

Each school of psychotherapy can be viewed as a religion of sorts
There is a founder who is usually held in high esteem
The founder's ideas are taken as basic truth or generally acceptable concepts

Some psychotherapists reject traditional religiosity as unthinking and uncritical
Some refer to themselves as “spiritual” rather than “religious”
Their view of their school of thought might ironically be a sort of religion

Cognitive Psychotherapy is a major school of psychology.

It is an American approach to explaining and helping personal needs

My training as a psychotherapist was in Client-Centered Therapy, then

Rational Emotive Therapy, now entitled Rational Emotional Behavioral Therapy.

Psychotherapy has been accepted as a very helpful experience by many

Psychotherapy has been damned as irrelevant narcissism by some

Since there is no unified school of psychotherapy it confuses many

Medical science is agreed upon by practitioners in general terms

Psychotherapy's disagreements can easily be lampooned or misunderstood

Since some celebrities use psychotherapy to explain life it has dual status

Endorsement of psychotherapy by a TV or movie star can seem credible to some

Another person might see this enthusiasm as a rich snob's questionable opinion

Many TV or movie stars are fairly uneducated talented fortunate people

Any endorsement they make is often taken seriously but should be questioned

Broadcast television and studio films have produced celebrities for decades

Cable television and independent films now establish more celebrities

Show business requires full time journalists to publicize all of these notables

One subset of celebrities with a large population is religious entertainment

Some celebrities talk about therapy or proudly enter rehab for substance abuse

Religious celebrities rarely commit either of these public spectacles

Gospel singers or television preachers are role models to many

These people are self-selected for fame and some fortune

Their audience expects marital fidelity and clean living

Since many educated people are not traditionally religious this area is overlooked

My TV dish system has a Mormon channel & a Catholic channel.

There are eleven "Christian" cable channels on my TV dish system

These channels run 24 hours a day for 7 days a week for 365 days a year

Programming is needed for every minute and self-sponsored financially

The cable industry has created job opportunities for many people

Christian cable TV has provided many outlets and jobs for religious people

Anyone can question the motives or sincerity of religious broadcasters

Some televangelists rake in double digit millions of dollars in donations

Religious television is often overlooked by academics as an important population
This part of the American population was crucial in Republican election victories

Like them or not our fellow citizens in this area are influential as a group
Since they are often given little attention I was fascinated by this culture

My interest in TV preachers was sparked when I noticed certain TV
Preachers seem to employ cognitive principles in their programs

Televangelists usually broadcast in 30-minute segments
A program might be self-contained or a segment of a longer sermon
Many televangelists do not identify a denominational affiliation
Some of them are non-denominational or come from small denominations

Hadden and Swann in *Prime Time Preachers* say religion defines culture,
Political & economic institutions which are surface expressions of religious values

Most intellectuals are not conventionally religious so they do not discuss religion
Many psychotherapists recognize the problems of rigid religiosity
Ellis was very clear that he found rigidity to be a serious personal problem.

Religious TV, like all TV, gives simple solutions and are upbeat entertainment
Martha Stewart gives lessons on how to live an upper-middle class lifestyle
Religious TV provides moral teachings and, I contend, practical life information

Televangelism's audience response is viewership and sponsorship.
The Electronic Church needs money to remain on the air
Some televangelists request money directly and others are less direct

Television is visually oriented so viewers lose community to watch TV
The most successful preachers are good entertainers and keep your attention.

Protestantism began in the 1500s in Europe as a reaction to Catholic traditions
Some corruption & honest disagreements sparked & spurred the Reformation
The “Protestant Ethic” of hard work and worldly reward is basic to our culture

This view involves an expectation of voluntary effort and free will
TIME Magazine reported in 2008 that 44% of Americans change religions
Nearly half of that number is people moving from one Protestant sect to another

Protestant televangelists deliver a general message palatable to many viewers
Some televangelists do not identify to which church they belong.
It is a free enterprise religious ethic and free enterprise entertainment.

Protestantism has three basic principles:

Supremacy of the Bible means the Bible is taken as a sole infallible authority

Justification by Faith Alone views good works as supportive of faith

The Universal Priesthood of Believers holds that anyone can read the Bible and be active within their congregation.

This religious populism often disagrees with a hierarchical system
Protestants may conceive an “invisible unity” of all Christians as fellow believers

There is a wide range of beliefs and practices within Protestantism

One crucial distinction is attitudes toward other faiths

Anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism varies with congregations and individuals

Jimmy Swaggart made openly anti-Catholic statements I have seen.

Jim Bakker made openly conciliatory statements toward Catholicism I have seen

Both of them were at the center of sex scandals

Both of them are still broadcasting but with more limited appeal

Their appeal shows the career span of televangelists

Televangelists adhere to the basic rule of show business

They give the people what they want: they are entertaining

The only other celebrities with such long careers are country music acts

American culture has been noted for having had a “civil religion.”

This idea held that elected officials were held in high esteem

Recent decades have developed an oppositional view toward office holders

Many Americans expect all politicians to be criminal or ineffective now

This disrespect is a cause and effect of a coarsening of political campaigns

Connected to it is a coarsening of religious tolerance

Tolerance is not acceptance but a willingness to accept differences as natural

A sense of culture and economy as more precarious contributed to this change

Therefore some people latch onto one or more televangelists as authorities

Stress and doubt motivate people to find peace and confidence.

Televangelists promote a sense of peace and confidence in God’s Word

Pentecostal Christians have a firm sense of the rightness of their views

Pentecostalism is an American stream of Protestant thought
Pentecostals developed in Los Angeles in the early 20th Century
They seek a return to New Testament gifts of the Holy Spirit

Pentecostals may believe in speaking in tongues, divine healing & miracles
Pentecostals may believe in a self-ordained ministry with little formal education

The Pentecostal message is direct and clearly stated
Given television’s immediacy Pentecostals come across well on television
Many TV preachers are Pentecostals with a simple firm message.

The simple direct message of televangelists connect with emotional needs
The firm confidence of a preacher reaches assuages emotional fears
The glamour of a TV celebrity validates the message and messenger.

Since these celebrities need material they often expand beyond religious texts
Televangelists are very well known within their celebrity universe
Some write books and make personal appearances in large venues

Pat Robertson was a major factor in Republican elections
Jerry Falwell established and ran The Moral Majority political pressure group
Ted Haggard used to visit the Bush White House every Monday

The influence of televangelists has gone far beyond the scope of religion
I will discuss 3 prominent televangelists: Joel Osteen, Paula White & T. D. Jakes
Each is understood to bring in double-digit millions annually.
Each of them has produced books propounding their viewpoints.

I will review one book of each of these celebrities.
I will summarize statements taken from 5 programs of each televangelist
They espouse views that connect with cognitive therapy

The place of the clergy in Christianity and of Jesus Christ is pegged clearly Matthew 13: 54 – 58 of The King James Version of the New Testament says:

“And when He was come into His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, When hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in Him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in His own country, and in His own house. And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”

Christians of all denominations refer to persecutions as justification of faith
Some Catholics were mistreated by some Protestants in certain situations
Some Protestants were mistreated by some Catholics in certain situations

The idea of a prophet being disrespected and abused and even killed is basic
The idea of a prophet disrespected or abused or even killed gives validation
However, each of my subjects is well honored and certainly well paid.

Financially secure people may offer past abuses as proud validation of faith
Anyone can find justification for beliefs and behaviors and tradition

I have known bitter vicious religious bigots coming from various faiths
I have known people of genuine good will of various faiths or no faith
I believe these televangelists honestly preach their understanding of God’s Word

These televangelists reach people with practical advice as well as religion
Study of religious institutions as social institutions is a valid academic effort
My work here is a study of a social institution that has received little attention

As celebrities and high-income earners these pastors have received much honor
American life focuses upon gaining wealth and gaining celebrity.
Joel Osteen has been interviewed on **60 MINUTES** and **Larry King Live**

The principles of REBT, as developed by Albert Ellis over a period of 50 years or so, are specific. He and other therapists and various philosophers stated that:

*Ideas rather than events worry people
Beliefs establish point of view for good or for ill
People need to abandon irrational beliefs rather than medicate themselves
The focus is on the present rather than extensive plumbing of the past*

Ellis particularly found three core irrational beliefs are being crucial:

The first is that a person must be competent or the person is worthless
This is a matter of conditional worth rather than unconditional worth

The second is a person interpreting any setback as a catastrophe

The third is basing self-worth on outside criteria rather than personal existence

REBT has been seen as practical enough to be practiced on yourself
REBT takes into account that chemical imbalances must be addressed
Some difficulties such as bipolar illness must be treated with pharmaceuticals
Once the client is stabilized then therapy can begin

Televangelists set themselves up as experts on religion and life in general
They acknowledge one cardinal rule of Cognitive Therapy:
We are all fallible flawed human beings and none of us is exempt from mistakes

Some of them have been at the center of various scandals.
Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker were involved in sex scandals
Juanita Bynum, The Prophetess, has been abused and divorced
Ted Haggard scandalized himself via a homosexual and drug scandal
Paula White was divorced for a second time in October 2007.

Joel Osteen, Paula White and T. D. Jakes have been identified as
“Prosperity Gospel” Preachers who expect financial blessings for believers

This understanding of life and faith focuses on material financial blessings

The preachers studied here have little oversight or accountability
Each of them has disavowed that label but had made such statements

Mainstream and obscure clergy may be as prone to scandal
Public figures run the risk of unwanted attention due to negative behaviors
August 2008: Victoria Osteen, the wife of Joel Osteen, was sued for assaulting
A flight attendant

Victoria Osteen, who is a minister in her husband’s congregation, disagreed
She was acquitted but had a reputation tarnished
The FAA fined Mrs. Osteen \$3,000 for interfering with a crew member

NEWSWEEK has referred to their theology as “thin.”

No matter the theology they are very popular with some viewers

SIXTY MINUTES labeled Joel Osteen as the USA’s most popular preacher

Osteen is a self-ordained college dropout who inherited his dad's church
He preaches empowerment, hope and God's plan for you
He defined himself in this **Sixty Minutes** broadcast as a “life coach.”

Cognitive Therapists provide practice information so this is the same effort
He was asked if he is another Dr. Phil or Oprah
Joel Osteen said they are giving principles from the Bible

He expects people to know when they are wrong if they commit wrongs
This point is found in Cognitive Therapy and Client-Centered Therapy
The question is: is he giving sub rosa Cognitive Therapy or folk wisdom?

His church has no religious symbols & its pulpit is called a “podium”
The building is called a “worship facility”
He welcomes visitors and tells them they will be made to feel right at home

His brother, sister and wife are ministers in his Lakewood Church
Osteen's operation is reported to take in \$43 million in collections
Another \$30 million is received in the mail.

He does not request donations and has said he feels that is tawdry
His main income is from books that are repackaging of his sermons
He received a \$13 million advance for his book **Become A Better You**

This book outlines seven principles for managing your life
He mentions God or Jesus infrequently in the text

Some mainstream theologians see his work as “**cotton candy theology.**”
One theologian compared his sermons to easy listening music
He is criticized for having no focus on sin and being upbeat without gravity

Osteen says he keeps his message simple to reach the most people
He is reported to be negotiating to have a reality show on a broadcast network

Religious services have always had an educational and entertainment function
A free enterprise religious tradition involves competition and expectations
“Good preaching” and satisfying choirs are crucial draws for congregants

Theology may be similar between denominations so church shopping is likely
Catholicism has been territorial and very hierarchical
Protestantism is voluntary, usually has no territory and focused on personality

Osteen is surprisingly uncomfortable when he is preaching
He apparently memorizes his sermons
He seems to be unsure of his delivery

Of the preachers studied here he is the least confident
Since he was the “son of the boss” he may carry a sense of unearned benefit
He looks like a teenager although he is now 46 years old.

I reviewed one book and five programs of Joel Osteen’s for this project
His book ***Your Best Life Now: Seven Steps to Living and Your Full Potential*** was a New York Times best-seller

Self help materials have been an item in Cognitive Therapy
Albert Ellis encouraged bibliotherapy for clients
He felt a person could learn much from reading or (now) viewing this information

Osteen’s book is a mainstream form of self-help book.
He gives these topics as chapters for his readers:

“Enlarge Your Vision: See Yourself As A Winner.”

“Develop A Healthy Self-Image: God Loves You No Matter What.”

“Discover the Power of Your Thoughts and Words.”

“Let Go of the Past: Past Wounds Can Be An Excuse.”

“Find Strength Through Adversity: God Wants You To Be A Winner.”

“Live To Give: Heal Wounds Rather Than Return Evil.”

“Choose To Be Happy: Happiness Is A Decision.”

Each of these statements could be a Cognitive Therapy lecture, article or book
Televangelists need material and this material is practical and attractive
His book is clearly written and well structured with practical advice

Apparently Osteen, White & T. D. Jakes are self-ordained
In an interview on ***Larry King Live*** Osteen confused Samuel with Solomon when he was discussing King David and his son.

Mass media gives the illusion of face-to-face familiarity with celebrities
This relationship gives the viewer the idea they know the celebrity
This relationship gives the viewer the idea that they are friends with the celebrity

Many people do not have mentors or trusted friends
The TV preacher can fit well into this void
At any time people usually think the world is a sorry mess.

The usual American feeling is that things are the worst ever now
Seeking guidance from a calm confident advisor provides solace.
The TV preacher can provide this stability and advice.

I reviewed five programs of Joel Osteen for this research
His program opens with an outdoor shot of Joel & wife Victoria
The theme song says "Discover the champion in you."

He delivers an optimistic message with references to Biblical characters
The program's TV line listing is: "Pastor Joel Osteen preaches from Houston."

He is the most awkward of the three preachers reviewed here
He apparently memorizes his sermons
He inherited the position of pastor from his father

Osteen may have a sense of being the "son of the boss"
His stage has a metal cutout world map but no religious symbols

He wants people to increase "capacity" to receive blessings
He says being open to opportunities lessen the inability to receive
He urges people to set goals, promotions are blessings, be practical.

In one program he denied being a "Prosperity Minister."
He then stated "***I can tell you this: I am not a Poverty Minister.***"
He stated he can not find in Scripture where believers should be depressed
He says if vision increases then capacity to receive increases

He said "The only thing holding you back is your limited mindset."

His program usually begins with a blonde joke and ends with a prayer
The lower screen crawl publicizes his books and his wife's book
He says antidepressants & sleeping pills are needed due to a lack
Of laughter in one's life so people should laugh more often

He, as well as Paula & T. D. Jakes, refer to Satan as "The Enemy."

He states these ideas in his sermons:

Not every battle is worth fighting

A battle not worth fighting does not improve your life

Ignore slights: people are too easily offended

Some things do not matter or do not make a big deal of them

People are limited in their thinking

God can bring opportunities into your path

With men some things are possible, with God all things are possible

His audience is multi-racial and generally well dressed
He is fresh-faced, well groomed and wears a suit and tie
He seems to be an eager likable adolescent

Paula White, You're All That: Understand God's Design for Your Life.
NY: Faith Words/Hachette Book Group USA 2007

She says we need to find our "***authentic selves***" (Rogerian Counseling idea)
People must confront self to remove internal barriers
Refers to herself as a "***wounded healer***" (Counseling idea)

She has said God supplies self-esteem
She says self appraisal is like TV reception: it can be fuzzy or clear
She says you attract the people you think you deserve

Perceptions and feelings can change especially toward yourself
You may have a lot of unlearning to do (REBT idea)
Bible teaches thinking is foremost predictor of possessions

A person can be transformed due to Jesus
Just being busy does not produce results

TV Program ***Paula***: photos of Paula with children & elderly.

Theme lyrics: "***I can take whatever life gives to me,***
Let's start with Paula today"

Line listing: "Issues facing men and women from every walk of life."

She is conventionally attractive: thin, dyed blonde hair, symmetrical features
She wears skirt suits or pants suits, no cleavage shown, blouse buttoned to chin
She has a French manicure and her hair is perfectly coiffed

Paula constantly refers to ***First Fruits*** donation offerings
She quotes Scripture constantly, the most of the three preachers here

Paula White often explains translations of original vocabulary of Scripture
She uses nuances of translations to make her points

She is very polished in delivery and never seems to make a mistake in delivery
She claims God's Word can bring deliverance from depression
It is a debatable point: she acknowledges there is depression
Some clergy and laymen deny there is such a difficulty as depression.

She says Jesus is your elder brother: new idea but very supportive
"You can have inner stamina and stability when all things are going wrong around you." (Sounds like REBT encouragement to continue despite difficulties)

"Setting priorities is primary"

This view is standard in REBT & its spinoff of Assertiveness Training

She routinely says: **"Teach me, Paula, I am tired in living in ignorance!"**
Sees herself as the guide to knowledge as per Ellis' example as counselor

She says: **"We are in the end times."**

I have been hearing this line from TV preachers since 1973.

"Learning can be misunderstood" referring to Bible interpretation

This statement can also be interpreted as referring to Irrational Beliefs (iBs)

"Somebody's going to get rich, might as well be you."

People have authority to be good or evil, sensible or stupid

This view is basic to REBT: we are all fallible flawed human beings with will

T. D. Jakes: TIME Magazine (9/17/2007): America's best preacher

Many white Americans admire Black people for having genuine spirituality

Paula White refers to T. D. Jakes as her spiritual father

T. D. Jakes is popular amongst Black and White viewers and book buyers

He has appeared on Dr. Phil's TV show a few times

He has functioned as a cognitive therapist rather than as a preacher

Dr. Phil McGraw has said Reverend Jakes does a lot of the same things

Dr. Phil does on his show. I agree from watching both of them.

Dr. Phil in T. D. Jakes' book **Reposition Yourself** and on **Dr. Phil Show**

March 17, 2008 said if he had found the manuscript for this book on the street

He would have put his name on it and published it himself.

Jakes & Dr. Phil talk about self-image and self-confidence as conscious matters

T. D. Jakes, REPOSITION YOURSELF: LIVING LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS. FOREWORD BY DR. PHIL MCGRAW NEW YORK: ATRIA BOOKS, 2007.

"Stagnation is the danger of traditional thinking." (REBT idea)
Education is basic to fulfilling potential (REBT practical advice)

"Everyone makes regrettable decisions." ("Don't should on yourself.")
"You can always change your life." ("Do not masturbate.")

He uses Joseph in the Old Testament as an example of reinvention
Many are stuck in the past due to bad experiences (REBT view)

"Anyone can say any obstacle is insurmountable" (REBT view)
"Any problem can be approached from various perspectives."

He lifts weights to stay fit: fits with Ellis' idea of rational hedonism
The idea is to watch your diet and exercise for longer healthier life

"Many see life as change." (External or Internal Locus of Control.)
"Do not procrastinate, do not count on others, do not blame your past."
(Irrational ideas as obstacles.)

Jesus and God want you to do well: encouragement as therapist encourages
The reference to the supernatural is from the religious tradition

He uses Biblical incidents carefully to illuminate his points

He disavows ***"name-it-claim-it"*** theology as dangerous propaganda
"There is no prosperity gospel." (22)
He says he is labeled as a "Prosperity Preacher" due to a few isolated comments

TV show them lyrics:

"Shaping the nation, changing the world, reaching from heaven."

TV line listing: "Bishop T. D. Jakes reaches out to broken people."

Program opens with Bishop in casual clothes to greet viewers before sermon
He establishes rapport as a friendly advisor to the viewer.

His program is an excerpt of a longer sermon

He is well rehearsed, strolls around stage or church altar area

He is a polished speaker and modulates his voice from shouts to near whisper

He has a multi-racial well-dressed audience similar to Dr. Phil's audience
He wears a suit and tie
He requests donations in the in-program commercials for "Aaron's Army."

"Do not listen to people who tell you that you will never succeed."

He prescribes "homework" in the tradition of Ellis

"I do not enjoy being depressed. Some people enjoy being depressed."

His teeth are misshapen and he is missing a front tooth
Is "just plain folks" or is it an attempt to identify with poor audience members?

It has been noted that Bill Gates is a billionaire

Despite his money Bill Gates it is said he cannot afford a good haircut.

He tells everyone to be active, take responsibility and reach out to others

"Any psychologist will tell you that the best way to determine someone's future behavior is to look at their past behavior. " (This is a Dr. Phil cliché).

He is acknowledging the utility of secular psychology.

His message seems to be common sense given in an authoritative voice
Disturbed people may be too anxious to determine common sense on their own
A therapist is a guide to stress relief and more efficient thinking and acting.

All three TV preachers reviewed here clearly utilize Cognitive Psychology.
They may or may not know the formal organization of Cognitive Psychology.

As long-term careerists they need material for every program.
To establish and maintain rapport they need to offer intriguing programs.

The use of Cognitive Psychology will help some viewers to manage their lives.
Without knowing it the preachers have made use of therapy terms and concepts
Without knowing it some viewers will be helped by psychotherapeutic concepts

End of Presentation.

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“Prophets With Honor”

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