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THE HUMAN PERSON IN THEOLOGY *and* PSYCHOLOGY

A BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
for the
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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The Human Person in Theology and Psychology: A Biblical Anthropology for the Twenty-First Century

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To
Vernon C. Grounds,
esteemed philosopher, theologian,
counselor, colleague, and friend
who taught us that it's
all about people.

"God . . . alone is immortal," wrote the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 6:15-16; cf. Rom. 1:23), for He exists from eternity past to eternity future. Biblical teaching concerning the intermediate and the eternal state strongly suggests that God created humans as personal agents with an identity that endures through and beyond the grave. At death the righteous enter paradise to be with Christ, whereas the unrighteous enter hades separated from Christ (Luke 16:19-31). At the Second Advent, the saved receive glorified bodies and dwell in the New Jerusalem, whereas the unsaved are reunited with their bodies and cast into hell (Rev. 20-21).

The term *immortality*, as commonly used, signifies the undying nature of the human soul or self (i.e., *posse non mori*). In this respect the human person possesses a derivative immortality conferred by the immortal God. That said, when applied to humans the word *immortality* (*athanasia*) in Romans 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54; and 2 Timothy 1:10 denotes God's eschatological gift of eternal life to believers in the risen Christ. At the resurrection, those who belong to Christ become immune from decay and death and experience perpetuity of life through the reunion of their soul/spirits with their glorified bodies. Paul's teaching of conferred immortality differs radically from the Platonic notion of the soul's innate immortality and its quest for liberation from the contamination of the body in order to enter the world of eternal ideas.

Informed by St. Paul, we assert the *everlastingness* (having no end) of the human soul rather than its *eternality* (having neither end nor beginning). The radical New Testament teaching was hinted at in the Old Testament wisdom literature: "In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality" (Prov. 12:28).

CHAPTER 5

SUBSTANCE *and* IDENTITY in PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

THE BIBLE CONTAINS A VAST amount of material concerning the essential composition and identity of human persons as God designed them to be. In essence these two topics seek to answer the questions: What is the human person? and Who is the human person? We have also seen how Christian scholars have discussed and synthesized these issues throughout the history of the church. We should not be surprised that twentieth-century psychology has also dealt extensively with these two themes. After all, any discipline or inquiry that seeks to study humans must begin that study with an examination of these two foundational issues: Is the human person composed of one substance or two or more substances? And what are the characteristics of people that constitute their essential humanness?

Psychologists and other social scientists who deal with these issues do not, however, organize their investigations around scriptural categories. At one time scholars took their investigative agenda from the pages of the Bible or from the theological categories derived from it, but those days are long gone. Thus we will not find listings in the indexes of psychological volumes for "Image of God" or "soul." Yet we will find psychological material directly related to human characteristics we believe are related to the image-bearing status of humans (spirituality, awareness of God/religion) and to issues related to human features traditionally associated with soul (mind, thinking, memory, etc.).

Psychology has dealt with issues of human substance and identity in four

primary ways. We find matters of substance or essential composition spread throughout the discipline in the form of the mind-body problem (MBP). We also find that psychology has wrestled with the identity of humans by asking and attempting to answer three major questions: What is the self/person/persona of a human being? What does it mean to be a male or female human? And what explains the religious/spiritual impulse found everywhere throughout human society? These four issues are related and interlocking. If one assumes a materialist solution to the MBP, then one's understanding of personhood, sexuality, and spirituality are dramatically affected. If one prefers a solution to the MBP that is not reductionistic, then other consequences govern one's understanding of the remaining three identity issues. To look at this interlocking phenomenon from a different perspective, what I conclude about the sexuality of a person and its deeper meaning will affect what I conclude about the self. What I decide is the best psychological explanation for personhood will likewise bear a strong impact on how I view the human religious impulse. And so forth.

In this chapter we will explore how investigators have treated these four matters (essential composition, personhood, sexuality, and spirituality) within twentieth-century psychology. At the conclusion of the chapter, we will present some integrative considerations that hopefully will facilitate readers as they seek to understand how the biblical and theological conclusions of chapter 4 cohere with or do not cohere with the psychological conclusions we will discuss in this chapter.

ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION

Modern psychology primarily has dealt with the issue of whether humans consist of one or more substances in an indirect manner. More often than not, the issue is implied or assumed rather than explicated by psychological investigators.¹ Philosophy (especially in a specialty called philosophy of mind) has been and continues to be the primary discipline in which discussions of the MBP occur. Well-trained psychologists may receive training in the history and philosophy of psychology, but more often than not these topics receive only cursory attention in psychological training programs. Many psychological investigators would prefer to open up new av-

1. Michael Wertheimer, *Fundamental Issues in Psychology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972).

enues of inquiry regarding the essential composition of the human rather than risk getting mired down in the intellectual cul-de-sacs that have plagued philosophy for centuries with regard to the MBP.

Psychology and psychiatry have been associated with the study of the mind throughout the twentieth century. Psychiatry emerged as a medical specialty out of the field of neurology, and psychiatrists continue to be certified by a board that regulates both neurology and psychiatry. The history of both psychiatry and neurology has been intertwined for one hundred years, and they are now working toward even greater degrees of synthesis.² In recent years a loosely affiliated group of disciplines sometimes called cognitive science (psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, and philosophy) has increasingly converged on the topic of the science of the mind, resulting in a "tightening (of) the link between mind and brain."³ Any proposed solution to the MBP relates to the issues of will, freedom, and pathology; and all of these topics are of vital interest to psychology.⁴ In prior centuries, scientists and philosophers have investigated how the physical relates to the spiritual, but increasingly current debates have explored how the physical relates to the psychological.⁵

Psychology has made contributions to the overall discussion of the MBP in three main areas. First, psychology has directed a massive amount of its investigative energy into understanding cognition, memory, reasoning, concept formation, language, and consciousness, all of which relate to the "mind" side of the MBP. Understanding the mind, according to neurosurgeon William Penfield, is "perhaps the most difficult and most important of all problems."⁶ Second, the clinical branches of psychology have demonstrated that psychopathology, developmental deficits, intelligence, and normal and abnormal personality patterns can all have connections to both "mind" and

2. L. J. Cozolino, *The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy: Building and Rebuilding the Human Brain* (New York: Norton, 2002), 3.

3. Malcolm Jeeves, *Mind Fields: Reflections on the Science of Mind and Brain* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), xi. See also M. Bunge, *The Mind-Body Problem: A Psycho-biological Approach* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1980), xv; and Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), xii.

4. J. Benjamin, "The Mind-Body Problem in Contemporary Psychiatry," *Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences* 2 (1990): 67.

5. H. Feigl, "Some Crucial Issues of Mind-Body Monism," in *Philosophical Aspects of the Mind-Body Problem*, ed. D-Y Cheng (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1975).

6. William Penfield, *The Mystery of the Mind: A Critical Study of Consciousness and the Human Brain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 85.

"body." In fact, they each seem to be connected to the linkage between mind and body, whatever that may be.⁷ And third, psychology has participated with other disciplines in an unprecedented exploration of the human brain, the "body" side of the mind-body equation. Of these three avenues of study, the explosion in knowledge regarding the human brain has had the greatest and most substantial impact on current discussions of the MBP. Before we explore the status of the MBP discussion in contemporary social science, it will be helpful to survey in a brief manner some of what recent science has uncovered about the functioning of the human brain.

Brain Studies

The relatively small organ known as the human brain represents a vast territory of almost unimaginable complexity that "has been slow to give up its secrets."⁸ While we have learned an immense amount of information about the brain, in many ways it continues to represent a frontier with numerous mysteries yet to be untangled. Scientists can study the brain at any of the six main levels of the central nervous system: subcellular, cellular, neural microsystems, neural macrosystems, the organism itself, and how the organism functions within groups.⁹ These different levels of investigation require different teams of researchers: physicists work at the subcellular and subatomic levels (exploring such mysterious components as antiparticles, neutrinos, photons, muons, tau, quarks, and gluons¹⁰), chemists work at the cellular level (seeking to understand how neurotransmitters function according to chemical and electrical laws), biologists work at the neural micro- and macrosystems levels, and psychologists and social psychologists work at the organism and group levels. "Until relatively recently the gap between studies by neuroscientists investigating events occurring at the level of single cells and by psychologists studying processes like attention and thinking was so large that it seemed virtually unbridgeable. . . ."¹¹ But the gap is closing as more and more evidence accumulates pointing to the necessity of a holistic understanding of brain functioning.

7. D. L. Robinson, *Brain, Mind, and Behavior: A New Perspective on Human Nature* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996), xv.

8. R. Carter, *Mapping the Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 6.

9. Bunge, *The Mind-Body Problem*, 35.

10. J. W. Elbert, *Are Souls Real?* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2000), 127–31.

11. Jeeves, *Mind Fields*, 53.

The brain contains 100 billion cells called neurons.¹² These neurons, supported by other cells known as glial cells, communicate with one another, "together giving rise to the overwhelming richness and complexity of the brain's neural circuits."¹³ Each neuron contains a body (soma, containing a nucleus, ribosomes, and Golgi apparatus), dendrites (branching extensions that receive input from other cells), and an axon (the terminals of which give out neurochemical information to other cells across a small gap known as a synapse). The brain contains many types of dendrites related to their location and function in the organ and many types of neurons themselves (Purkinje and pyramidal cells are two examples). The ends of the axons contain small terminals called boutons that number between 10 and 1000 and make contact with the dendrites of up to 1000 different neurons. Some axon branches are quite long, making contact with cells in a different part of the brain whereas other axons communicate only with nearby neurons.

We must stop to marvel at this amazing product of God's creative handiwork. Cramped inside the human skull is a mass of tissue weighing three pounds and containing 100 billion cells. As hard as it is for us to comprehend the immensity of that number, the matter becomes far more complicated when we realize that each of the axons of these 100 billion neuronal cells can contain between 10 and 1000 information output terminals. Based on what he knew about creation, David wrote, "O LORD, our LORD, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:1). What would he have written if he could have known about neurons, axons, and dendrites? We can ascribe even greater levels of majesty to God, the Creator of the human brain, based on what we currently know. And our current knowledge is obviously partial and incomplete.

At one time research into brain function concentrated on mapping the topography of the brain to determine which areas controlled which functions (Wernicke's area for meaningful speech and Broca's area for motor speech are just two examples) and on studying hemispheric differences between the two halves of the brain. But these topographic and hemispheric studies have proven to be rudimentary when compared to current understandings of the neural micro- and macrosystems that can now be observed with recent technological advances. The brain is a "living machine operating all the

12. M. W. Dubin, *How the Brain Works* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 3.

13. *Ibid.*, 3. Dubin's volume is the source for subsequent information in this paragraph, and it serves as a readable introduction to current brain science.

time."¹⁴ Even in its resting state, the brain hums with activity. A neuron in its resting state has an electric potential of "about -75 mV (millivolts) relative to the potential in the extracellular space."¹⁵ The membrane of the neuron contains ion channels (thousands per square micron) that are either closed or open and that are specialized to allow only one type of chemical to pass through. Potassium (K⁺) is concentrated inside the cell when it is resting as compared to surrounding spaces, and when the cells fire or become active the chemical concentration quickly changes due to the opening and closing of the membrane's ion channels. And on and on goes the complexity of brain function.

The firing of a single neuron is not enough to create the twitch of an eyelid in sleep, let alone a conscious impression. It is when one neuron excites its neighbours, and they in turn fire up others, that patterns of activity arise that are complex and integrated enough to create thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. Millions of neurons must fire in unison to produce the most trifling thought. Even when a brain seems to be at its most idle a scan of it shows a kaleidoscope of constantly changing activity. Sometimes when a person undertakes a complex mental task or feels an intense emotion the entire cerebrum lights up.¹⁶

The amazing gains we have witnessed in understanding the human brain have come as a result, in part, of a steady increase in technological advancements. Neurosurgeons working at the midpoint of the twentieth century solved some of the brain's mysteries by studying the damaged brains of living patients who suffered from epilepsy, stroke, tumors, or other neurological pathologies.¹⁷ Cutting through the corpus callosum of persons suffering from severe forms of epilepsy helped science understand more fully the functioning of the brain's two hemispheres.¹⁸ Electrical stimulation of

14. L. W. Swanson, *Brain Architecture: Understanding the Basic Plan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 90.

15. Dubin, *How the Brain Works*, 5.

16. Carter, *Mapping the Mind*, 19.

17. See K. M. Heilman and E. Valenstein, eds., *Clinical Neuropsychology*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), for material related to various brain pathologies and which neural systems they affect.

18. Jeeves, *Mind Fields*, 23.

various parts of living brains helped map the brain as to its major functions. Electroencephalograms (EEGs), positron emission tomography (PET scans), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and more recently magnetoencephalography (MEG) have all contributed to our ability to "see" the brain at work and to measure its activities in new and very promising ways.¹⁹ Scientists can now "watch" the brain operate at conscious and unconscious levels during activity, during awake resting states, and during the various stages of sleep.²⁰

The challenge then for cognitive scientists is to take information known about the brain's functioning at the cellular and subcellular levels and apply it to the higher functions of the mind. If the simplest thought involves the activity of millions of neurons, and if the identical thought activates different cells the second time around, we can see why the task of moving from cellular levels of analysis to larger systems of neural connections involved in thinking and planning is such a monumental task. Based on current understanding regarding brain function, researchers have had to jettison earlier models of brain functioning, such as the brain as a computer or the brain as a passive responder to external stimuli, because they were too simplistic for the data.

Cognitive scientists strive to understand how a host of mind functions relate to brain activity. How can we use our current knowledge of brain neurochemistry best to account for:

- Language, speech (both receptive and expressive), writing
- Thinking, feeling, sensing
- Memory (both short-term and long-term), retrieval, decay
- Learning, change, intelligence
- Consciousness, wakefulness, sleep, altered states of consciousness, awareness, temporality

19. Z. L. Lu and L. Kaufman, eds., *Magnetic Source Imaging of the Human Brain* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 36-37; see also V. Walsh and A. Pascual-Leone, *Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation: A Neurochronometrics of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003); and A. Pascual-Leone, N. J. Davey, J. Rothwell, E. M. Wasserman, and B. K. Puri, eds., *Handbook of Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation* (London: Arnold, 2002).

20. C. Furst, *Origins of the Mind: Mind-Brain Connections* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 3-5, 75-93.

- Intention, willing, volition
- Behavior, personality, motivation, perception?²¹

The above list provides quite an agenda for twenty-first century researchers who will continue to extend the boundaries of our knowledge about the human brain.

What valid conclusions can we draw from this very cursory survey of recent brain studies? Some observers are gloomy regarding the future of brain research. "It would be a fatal error to presume that the heuristic toolbox of the neurosciences will be capable of explaining every aspect and meaning of human feeling, thinking, and acting."²² Yet the brain is "far and away the most complex yet intrinsically interesting object that we know of" even though "... in all honesty, no one at this point in time pretends to understand how the brain as a whole works."²³ However, recent brain research has changed the landscape of the MBP forever in one crucial aspect: Any proposed monism or dualism or any combination of the two must deal with the inescapable fact that whatever interaction there may be between brain and mind is intimate, inseparable during life, and interlocking to a degree that could not have been understood as recently as fifty years ago.

The Demise of Dualism

Never before have debates about the MBP taken place in the context of this vastly larger body of knowledge regarding the mind and the brain. And perhaps this new context is the very reason why we have witnessed a noticeable decline, though not a total disappearance, of dualistic understandings of the MBP. Expanded levels of knowledge about the brain and its physiology and complex functioning seem to have driven dualism, especially substance dualism, into a demise. The Christian lay public, however, continues to use a Thomistic and Cartesian-like dualism to understand the teachings

21. See Bunge, *The Mind-Body Problem*, 35ff.; Dubin, *How the Brain Works*, 23–46; D. Gareth Jones, *Our Fragile Brains: A Christian Perspective on Brain Research* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1981).

22. Sergio Moravia, *The Enigma of the Mind: The Mind-Body Problem in Contemporary Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 205.

23. L. W. Swanson, *Brain Architecture*, vii, x.

of Scripture.²⁴ The body (brain) is animated or enlivened by the part of the self that leaves the body at death and is rejoined to it at the resurrection. Philosophers generally refer to such beliefs as examples of folk psychology, and the vast majority of them have moved away from a Thomistic and Cartesian substance dualism toward either a strong materialism or a softened and modified dualism.

Dualism makes five claims:

1. There is a mental realm.
2. The mental realm is fundamental.
3. There is a physical realm.
4. The physical realm is fundamental.
5. The two realms are ontologically separate.²⁵

The main objections to dualism center on this fifth component: that the human is composed of two distinct substances that have no ontological similarity to each other. How is it possible, the critics ask, for one kind of substance to interact with and have causal connections with a totally different kind of substance?²⁶ To people unaccustomed to philosophical reasoning, the objection seems unimposing; but philosophers see it is a nearly insurmountable problem. Merely asserting that the two substances interact in a causal and influential way with each other will not satisfy skeptics. They want dualists to specify the nature of the interaction and to explain how it can occur.²⁷ In addition, they argue, we have identified more and more of what we formerly understood as examples of mind activity (thinking,

24. C. Taliaferro calls such people the "untutored" or "pretechnological primitives" who rely too heavily on commonsense appeal rather than on logic and reason. C. Taliaferro, "Emergentism and Consciousness: Going Beyond Property Dualism," in *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons*, ed. K. Corcoran (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 60–61.

25. J. Foster, *The Immortal Self: A Defense of the Cartesian Dualist Conception of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 1991), 1.

26. Keith Yandell, however, argues that this objection assumes that only like can affect like and that something in space can only be affected by something else that is also in space, assumptions he alleges are unproven. See "A defense of Dualism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 548–66.

27. Warren S. Brown and Malcolm A. Jeeves, "Portraits of Human Nature: Reconciling Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology," *Science and Christian Belief* 11 (1999): 139–40.

reasoning, language, etc.) as having neurocognitive correlates. For example, a thought does not occur solely in the "mind." We know that brain activity accompanies or is associated in some way with every thought.

Philosophers also object to substance dualism because in the centuries in which it was dominant it did not produce a precise model for how the brain and "mind" interact, it excelled at labeling rather than explaining, it did not acknowledge the strong evidence for the molecular and cellular roots of abilities and disorders, and it was otherwise a barren system.²⁸ Given this depressing and stark assessment of substance dualism by contemporary philosophers, we are somewhat surprised that some dualists continue to exist. Although a minority, they continue to make their voices heard in academic circles.²⁹

Does the Christian faith stand to lose intellectual viability if dualism falls? Some philosophers argue that dualism is not essential to Christianity. Eleonore Stump argues that if we use a concept of soul as taught by Aquinas, we do not need a substance dualism to undergird Christian theology.³⁰ Baker argues that a Christian need not be a dualist and therefore should not be a dualist.³¹ Others see dualism as a part of Christianity but not an original part.³² Most everyone agrees that the early church fathers were heavily influenced by Platonic dualism;³³ scholars disagree, however, regarding the nature and extent of dualism found in the teachings of the New Testament. Yet other scholars readily concede that biblical Christianity and some form of Thomistic or Cartesian dualism go hand in hand. Foster argues that the

28. M. Bunge, *The Mind-Body Problem*, 4, 16–21.

29. See S. T. Davis, "Physicalism and Resurrection," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 229, 245; J. P. Moreland, "A Defense of a Substance Dualist View of the Soul," in *Christian Perspectives on Being Human*, ed. J. P. Moreland and D. M. Ciochi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 55–86; J. Foster, "A Brief Defense of the Cartesian View," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 15–29; E. T. Olson, "A Compound of Two Substances," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 73–88; W. Penfield, *The Mystery of the Mind*; Karl R. Popper, *Knowledge and the Mind-Body Problem: In Defense of Interaction* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Richard Swinburne, "Dualism Intact," *Faith and Philosophy* 13 (1996), 68–77.

30. Eleonore Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism with Reductionism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 505.

31. L. R. Baker, "Need a Christian Be a Mind-Body Dualist?" *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 489.

32. Bunge, *The Mind-Body Problem*, 10–16.

33. Peter van Inwagen, "Dualism and Materialism: Athens and Jerusalem?" *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 475–88; Furst, *Origins of the Mind*, 910.

case for a Cartesian dualism is strong and that it is closely linked to theism. "In other words, being confident of the strength of the case for the Cartesian view, I see the need for its theistic underpinning as creating a problem for the atheist rather than for the Cartesian."³⁴ Thus by the end of the twentieth century, dualism was no longer the dominant view in the secular arena regarding the substance of human nature, although it continues to have its share of Christian and theistic advocates.

Materialism

The form of monism that has taken the scientific world by storm is materialism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, behaviorists dominated American psychology. They dismissed the mind as a nonscientific concept and attempted to explain human nature in behavioral terms only. Their prevalence on the philosophical scene was short-lived as the concept of the mind returned to the discussion table. But when brain science began to explode with new and unexpected discoveries every decade, materialism soon became the predominant force in conceptualizing the substance of human beings.³⁵

Materialism is the end result of reductionism, the widespread methodology operative in contemporary science. This methodology proposes that the "higher" levels of science can be best explained by reducing them to the lowest ones. Reductionism "professes that scientific progress consists in the stepwise explanation of the phenomena of the one level in terms of the next lower level. . . ."³⁶ The sciences thus form an explanatory chain moving from macrolevels (the social sciences) to microlevels (the natural sciences). Political science, social psychology, and sociology study groups of people; psychology studies individuals; biology and chemistry study the cells and groups of cells of these individuals; and physics examines the cell at even more microscopic levels.³⁷ This methodology places the most complicated of concepts (God) at the top and the simplest at the bottom and considers the

34. J. Foster, "A Brief Defense of the Cartesian View," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 29.

35. Bunge, *The Mind-Body Problem*, ix–xv.

36. Maurice K. D. Schouten, "Theism, Dualism, and the Scientific Image of Humanity," *Zygon* 36 (2001): 680.

37. S. Watanabe, "Logic of the Empirical World, with Reference to the Identity Theory and Reductionism," in *Philosophical Aspects of the Mind-Body Problem*, 162–81.

most sublime of explanations to consist of explaining the simplest. Each layer is dependent on or determined by the next lower level.³⁸ Reductive materialism is both ontologically and epistemologically reductionistic; the psychological ultimately becomes physics.³⁹

In this world of multilayered hierarchy or tiers, philosophers take their place as observers and managers of the whole process. The current scientific scene can greatly profit from believers working at all levels in this chain of science and from placing Christian theologians alongside the philosophers to monitor and influence the entire process.

Materialism in its most reductive form considers the human person to consist only of atoms, or neurons, or cells.⁴⁰ In many ways, the current emphasis on materialism harkens back to the beginning of the twentieth century when behaviorists advocated a similar reductionism. Materialism "means that we just cannot recognize any reality which cannot be exhaustively described in material or bodily terms."⁴¹ This extreme form of materialism is "essentially incomplete"⁴² because it cannot account for sense experience and for the content of the mind. Christians can applaud the scientific progress that a materialist view of science has been able to accomplish. After all, their work in learning more about the intricacies of creation can only, ultimately, bring glory to God. But Christians are also aware that when scientists attempt to utilize an extreme materialism to explain everything about the human person, they are taking great, unsupported leaps of logic across a span of problems that demand a better set of explanations.

If the mind and all of its contents are purely neurochemical events, religion as we understand it is at stake.

It is easy to see that being able to get your God Experience from a well-placed electrode could—at the very least—undermine the precious status such states are accorded by many religions. How believers will cope with what many might see as a threat to their faith

38. Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, 221–22.

39. Bunge, *The Mind-Body Problem*, 6.

40. For a humanist critique of materialism, see Roger W. Sperry, "Mind, Brain, and Humanist Values," in *New Views on the Nature of Man*, ed. John R. Platt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 71–92.

41. H. D. Lewis, *The Elusive Self* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 2.

42. B. Ellis, "Physicalism and the Contents of Sense Experience," in *Philosophical Aspects of the Mind-Body Problem*, 64.

is one of many interesting challenges that brain science will throw up in the coming millennium.⁴³

If the laws of chemistry, physics, and biology govern all behavior, what becomes of free will, spirituality, and religious sentiments? Some scholars suggest that our new understanding of how the brain functions will erode all of this and more.

Ironically, the new understanding shows that a supernatural soul lacks the properties needed to support consciousness. This casts doubt on the idea that a soul, by itself, could support meaningful personal immortality. This argument also extends to other spirits, raising a problem for the idea of angels, and even the idea of a personal God.⁴⁴

Most Christians, however, believe that because so many substantial problems exist within the reductive materialism view, its impact on religion will be minimal and short-lived. Only the most ardent scientist is willing to assert that nothing but the material exists in the world and that all apparent "mind" functions are merely expressions of electrochemical brain events.

If we imagine a continuum with substance dualism on one end and reductive materialism on the other, we can find in the current scene a host of alternatives that take their place somewhere between these two extremes. Many of these options are a combination of some monistic and some dualistic themes. Scientists anxious to embrace the implications of recent brain science will deny that their favorite solution to the MBP contains some soft dualism, whereas others will readily admit some of the following systems do contain dualistic implications that nonetheless fall short of full-blown Thomistic or Cartesian substance dualism. The major options are:

43. Carter, *Mapping the Mind*, 19. Other views about this issue abound. Bruce R. Reichenbach, "Monism and the Possibility of Life After Death," *Religious Studies* 14 (1978): 34, argues that monism does not rule out life after death. R. Audi, "Theism and the Mind-Body Problem," in *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today*, ed. J. Jordan and D. Howard-Snyder (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 159, writes that there are substantial problems inherent in any assertion that the mind equals the brain.

44. Elbert, *Are Souls Real?* 14. See also Schouten, "Theism, Dualism, and the Scientific Image of Humanity," 682.

- Epiphenomenalism (Mind is a bundle of nonmaterial phenomena that emerges from its materialistic base but cannot interact with it. Mental events are effects but not causes of anything.)
- Identity Theory (Perception and consciousness exist but cannot be dissolved into behavior; they are physical processes, not spiritual phenomena, and identical with material processes in the brain.)
- Eliminativism (The existence of the mental is part of folk psychology and needs to be excluded from our consideration.)
- Functionalism (The mind is a function of the brain; all mental properties are input-output relations of the brain.)
- Emergentist Materialism (Mental events are a set of emergent brain functions that appear when an organism becomes appropriately complex, functions that cannot be reduced to neurobiology once they emerge.)⁴⁵
- Interactionism (The mental and the physical interact, a position very close to Descartes's substance dualism.)
- Nonreductive Physicalism (See below.)

While some of these positions may seem hardly discrete from others in the list, they each contain technical features that distinguish them. Limitations of space prevent a detailed discussion of all but the last one listed. We will give it more consideration because of its appearance in many Christian circles as an alleged viable option to the supposedly less desirable alternatives of substance dualism or reductive materialism.

A multidisciplinary group of professors at Fuller Seminary have contributed a great deal to the development of nonreductive physicalism (NRP).⁴⁶ Advocates of this position argue that the mind is physiologically embodied and that higher levels of explanation supervene on lower levels to explain behavior. The position bears some similarity to the double as-

45. Most introductions to the MBP, including many of the sources cited above, will contain definitions of these various options. See especially D. M. Armstrong, *The Mind-Body Problem: An Opinionated Introduction* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999); and S. Guttenplan, ed., *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Blackwell Reference, 1994).

46. See Nancey Murphy, "Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues," in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. W. S. Brown, N. Murphy, and H. N. Malony (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 127-48; and Brown and Jeeves, "Portraits of Human Nature," 139-50.

pect monism of earlier centuries and seeks to place a limit on how the reductionistic methodology is applied to the understanding of human functioning. Thus the position also shares an emphasis found in emergentism: Certain human features appear that cannot be reduced to their place of origin. NRP, sometimes also called nonreductive materialism, does contain ontological reductionism, but it seeks to avoid causal reductionism and reductive materialism.

Dr. Murphy affirms that this alternative is a new position in the philosophical world.⁴⁷ In philosophy, as in most all other academic arenas, new proposals to old problems emerge in the literature on a periodic basis. Then critics begin to identify inconsistencies or unacceptable consequences of the new proposal that either prompt other philosophers to improve the new proposal or to abandon it altogether for even newer options. As one example of this process, advocates of psychoneural identity theory at one time trumpeted it as "the one (approach) in tune with a worldview adequately informed by the best contemporary science."⁴⁸ Yet within only a few years it too fell into disfavor. So we do not yet know how (NRP) will fare over time. Jaegwon Kim, a respected figure in the field of philosophy of mind, is doubtful that the position will survive. He calls NRP a myth, a theory with dim prospects, and an approach that is not inherently stable (i.e., it will naturally drift closer to eliminativism or to a dualism of some sort).⁴⁹

Conclusion

Questions about the unitary or dualistic nature of humans have fascinated thinkers throughout the ages. We have seen how Scripture deals with this issue and how theologians have systematized that material into theological convictions. Although psychology does not often deal directly with the philosophical issues surrounding monism or dualism, psychologists have actively participated in advancing our knowledge about the brain and the mind. Their research has forever changed the landscape of the mind-body debate. David Olds has given us one example of a synthesizing approach

47. Murphy, "Nonreductive Physicalism," 148.

48. Jaegwon Kim, *Supervenience and Mind: Selected Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 266.

49. *Ibid.*, 265, 279, 284.

that pulls together the major clinical theories of the twentieth century and shows how they all can be anchored to a brain-centered psychology.⁵⁰ His approach regards "higher" levels of brain dysfunction as fodder for the psychoanalytic approach to treatment, "mid-range" levels of brain disorders to be responsive to other treatments such as behavioral interventions, and the "lower" levels of brain functioning problems to be responsive to neurochemical interventions (medicine).

In general, however, clinicians operate in accordance with dualism. Therapists may give verbal allegiance to monistic materialism, but they tend to deal with their clients as if dualism were true. Clinicians seek to deal with the inner life of a person, to help the person sort out issues and resolve conflicts, and so on. Rarely do therapists conceptualize these features of the inner landscape of a person as anything but immaterial entities.

Although materialism dominates in current discussion of the MBP, researchers have not adequately accounted for the "mental" or the "mind." Sergio Moravia has called for scientists to attend more to a subject to which they can attribute these psychic states and events: the human person.⁵¹ Perhaps we should change the phrasing of the question at hand from "What is the relation between the mind and the brain?" to "What is the relation between the body and the person?" In any event, the identity of the person (the entity that possesses a mind) is just as important an issue as is the problem of the substances that comprise the human. We will now turn to an examination of the identity of the human in recent psychological theory.

IDENTITY

In the previous chapter we explored how the Bible treats the question of human identity. Scriptural data regarding human identity revolves around the image of God in humans and the soul of the human. Not surprisingly, modern psychology has not focused its quest for understanding human identity on the *imago Dei* or on the soul.⁵² Some observers find this ironic:

50. David Olds, "Brain-Centered Psychology: A Semiotic Approach," *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought* 13 (1990): 331–63.

51. Moravia, *The Enigma of the Mind*, 251.

52. For an exception to this trend, see Philip Hefner, "Imago Dei: The Possibility and Necessity of the Human Person," in *The Human Person in Science and Theology*, ed. N. H. Gregersen, W. B. Drees, and U. Gorman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 73–94.

that a discipline named for the soul ("psych"ology) should ignore the very subject for which it was named! But the historical roots of many words including *psychology* bear little resemblance to current understandings.⁵³ In any event, the discipline as a whole tends to regard matters of the soul and the *imago Dei* as the province of religion rather than social science and hence not worthy of much attention.

Psychology has addressed the issue of human identity primarily through focused attention on the subject of the self and personhood. What is the self? How does an individual develop a sense of self? What is personhood? Attendant to these questions are the topics of gender and religion. Because modern social science considers gender as closely connected to personhood, we will explore recent theories regarding masculinity and femininity in this chapter. We also will explore how psychology has treated the topic of religion because those investigations are the closest that the discipline comes to exploring the *imago Dei* in humans.

The Self

Nearly every clinical theory of psychology that has emerged in the past century has articulated a fairly detailed view of the self. One difficulty we must face at the outset is the plurality of terms used for this concept: *self*, *selfhood*, *person*, *personhood*. No matter which term we use, we are in reality trying to define and describe the human individual, especially with regard to those features of a person that are not obviously physical. If we describe someone as 26 years old, of medium build, 175 pounds, and 5 feet 9 inches tall, we are certainly referring to some of the features that give this person identity. But psychology in the main has focused on those aspects of identity that cannot be counted on a calendar, seen with the eye, weighed on a scale, or measured with a yardstick. How do we define the person with regard to those features that are more reflective of the inner world, of the psyche, of the personality, and of the emotional life of the individual? Or to speak tautologically, how does psychology view the psychology of an individual?

53. See James R. Beck, "Self and Soul: Exploring the Boundaries Between Psychotherapy and Spiritual Formation," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31 (2003): 31–32.

Definitions

- Behavioral schools view the human as having continuity with animals, as learners and responders to reinforcements, and as trainable. The human person, however, has no true freedom or dignity because these concepts are mythical inventions of prior centuries without any scientific basis.⁵⁴
- Cognitive schools view the human as an intelligent thinker whose thoughts produce epiphenomena that we call emotions and values.⁵⁵
- Psychoanalytic schools view the human as a person in turmoil characterized by powerful internal conflicts (Freud), undifferentiated incompleteness (Jung), or misdirected strivings (Adler).⁵⁶
- Humanistic schools view the human as a vast, untapped source of potential that will find appropriate expression if and when the environment and circumstances are conducive.⁵⁷
- Postmodernists in psychology view the individual as possessing numerous selves that are socially constructed.⁵⁸

54. B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (Toronto: Bantam Vintage, 1971). For an excellent Christian rebuttal, see Francis A. Schaeffer, *Back to Freedom and Dignity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1972).

55. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *The Person in Psychology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 175.

56. Some current psychoanalytic approaches to the self are described in J. F. Gurewicz and M. Tort, eds., *The Subject and the Self: Lacan and American Psychoanalysis* (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1996). For a description of a Kohutian variant on classic psychoanalytic views of the self, see H. Kohut, *Restoration of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1977). For a description of approaches to the self in other quarters of the current psychoanalytic scene, see L. A. Sass, "The Self and Its Vicissitudes in the Psychoanalytic Avant-Garde," in *Constructions of the Self*, ed. G. L. Levine (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

57. See Abraham Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

58. Psychology and related disciplines increasingly emphasize the social dimensions of the self; the circle of these advocates includes but goes beyond postmodern thinkers. See L. E. Cahoon, "Limits of the Social and Relational Self," in *Selves, People, and Persons: What Does It Mean to Be a Self?* ed. L. Rouner (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992); M. E. George, "The American Origins of the Postmodern Self," in *Constructions of the Self*; and A. C. Thiselton, *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self: On Meaning, Manipulation, and Promise* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

In summary, Rick Hoyle and his colleagues have given us an overarching definition of the self that seeks to be transtheoretical. "Self is a dynamic psychological system, a tapestry of thoughts, feelings, and motives, that define and direct—even destroy us."⁵⁹

Most Christians would view these various definitional approaches not as wrong but as incomplete. Each one of these approaches to defining the individual person is deficient from a biblical standpoint, as we shall examine further in the integrative comments following this chapter. Their fundamental flaw is that they take one feature of human functioning and assume that it represents the whole or is sufficient to explain the entire range of personhood. By committing this error, these definitions all fall short of the biblical standard, which defines individuals primarily by the fact that they are created in the image of God for the purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever.

Development of the Self

The particular pattern of development related to the self depends a great deal on the definition of self that one is using.⁶⁰ Each school of thought that develops a view of a mature self will also, almost by definition, describe a sequence of steps, phases, or tasks through which the individual passes to achieve that mature status. Behaviorists, for example, often view the infant as a learner waiting to be reinforced for random or purposeful behaviors. As children grow the behavior patterns that emerge become more complex and sophisticated until they reach adulthood. Psychoanalytic theorists organize their view of development around a sequence of psychosexual stages through which every young child passes. Successors to the psychoanalytic tradition have modified their understanding of just what is contained in this process, but they generally develop a schema of stages through which the self develops into maturity. Object relations theorists, for example, focus

59. Rick H. Hoyle, Michael H. Kernis, Mark R. Leary, and Mark W. Baldwin, *Selfhood: Identity, Esteem, Regulation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999), 1. For an overview of current research on the self, see J. G. Snodgrass and R. L. Thompson, eds., *The Self Across Psychology: Self-Recognition, Self-Awareness, and the Self Concept* (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1997).

60. See Theodore Lidz, *The Person: His and Her Development Throughout the Life Cycle* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), for a comprehensive look at many twentieth-century developmental theories.

on the earliest years of a child's life even more intently than did Freud. They find the first twenty-four months of a child's life to be crucial in creating the structure on which adult function later occurs.⁶¹ Erik Erikson also developed a unique set of development steps, although his schema spans the entire life span, each step building on previous ones until we complete all of the tasks life demands of us.⁶²

These various proposals for the development of the self share a common theme. The route to maturity is fraught with danger. At any stage, defects, errors, faulty learning, poor reinforcement, or unresolved conflicts can occur and can often have long-term consequences. In fact, many views of adult pathology explain the presence of an emotional disorder or a bad trait or an ineffective coping style as related to some psychological transaction along the developmental sequence that went awry. Perhaps the bonding with an adult caregiver was faulty. Perhaps influential people in the young child's life reinforced the wrong set of behaviors. Perhaps one or both parents was emotionally absent or distant or abusive or overly enmeshed with the child. And so forth. Thus one's view of the self, one's view of maturity or normality, and one's view of pathology or dysfunction are all linked with developmental processes.⁶³

We can easily forget that these developmental understandings of how the self develops were not always a part of our culture's knowledge base. What now has taken on the semblance of common sense was not always so considered by our ancestors. Twentieth-century psychology has made an important contribution to our society's understanding of the psychological vulnerabilities of infancy and childhood, of the peculiar features of that enigmatic phase of modern life called adolescence, of the importance of parenting and childcare, and of the potential hazards of trauma. We now understand in expanded ways that the processes of moral reasoning for a child are different than they are for an adult. We know that various cogni-

61. Harry Guntrip, *Psychoanalytic Theory, Therapy, and the Self* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); James R. Masterson, *The Real Self: A Developmental, Self, and Object Relations Approach* (New York: Brunner Mazel Publishers, 1985); Margaret S. Mahler, Fred Pine, and Anni Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

62. Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968).

63. For a postmodern account, see David M. Levin, ed., *Pathologies of the Modern Self: Postmodern Studies on Narcissism, Schizophrenia, and Depression* (New York: New York University Press, 1987).

tive skills, such as abstract reasoning, appear sequentially throughout the early years of a person's life. And we know that socialization skills develop over time rather than appearing full-grown in a person's life. We are not suggesting that these approaches to the development of the self were unheard of in prior centuries; but we are suggesting that psychology has documented them to a degree that they now function almost as psychological laws in contrast to being minimally articulated ideas in the past.

Unlike theology, psychology has not devoted a great deal of time attempting to understand the origin of the soul. In the last chapter, we learned that theologians have developed two major theories regarding the origin of the soul, creationist and traducianist perspectives. But if we loosely define the soul as the person or the self, we can find a related theme in modern psychology that deals with the issue.⁶⁴ Dr. Stephen Greggo, who teaches at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has compared these theological schools with the nature-nurture theme in developmental psychology.⁶⁵ Developmental psychology is increasingly committed to the position that the human personality develops through a process that is a complex mixture of genetic factors and environmental experience. For any given individual, the process will be distinct and idiosyncratic. Even identical twins raised in the "same" environment will manifest some individual differences, although we must admit that no identical twin can ever experience exactly the same environmental influences as the other twin experiences. Greggo's conclusion is that:

The human soul is not the sole product of human reproductive forces or divine action alone. Rather, the origin of the human soul is a creative convergence of nature, nurture, and interactive forces that are operating within both the human and divine, visible and invisible realms. This process is possible only through God's grace as demonstrated in his initial creation and in his ongoing engagement in human affairs.⁶⁶

64. Identifying the self with the soul is a fairly common approach among Christian psychologists. See the special issue "Perspectives on the Self/Soul," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 26 (1998): 3-122. See also Beck, "Self and Soul," 24-36.

65. Stephen P. Greggo, "Soul Origins: How Do the Creationist and Traducianist Perspectives Hold-up to Current Trends in Developmental Psychology?" (presentation at the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, 2001, Colorado Springs, Colorado).

66. *Ibid.*, 14.

Self-Regard

Psychology regards the topic of the self as a broad topic that includes body focus, self-esteem, identity, self-consciousness, embarrassment, shame and guilt, boundaries, and self-concept.⁶⁷ Yet the self is as difficult to define for psychologists as it has been for philosophers. Gunderson writes that we must account for why the self seems "so adept at slipping through the meshes of every nomological set of physical explanations which philosophers have been able to imagine science someday bestowing on them."⁶⁸ The study of the self is not confined just to psychology; all the humanities and social sciences are interested in the topic.⁶⁹

Almost all investigators into the nature of the human being agree that the ability to be conscious of one's self is a central feature of our humanity. This ability appears to distinguish humans from animals, although some research suggests otherwise. We have thought for a long time that no evidence exists pointing to self-awareness among animals, even though we routinely project such abilities onto our pets. One can say to a particularly obnoxious pet cat, "You sure think highly of yourself, don't you?" But the reality is that the cat is behaving like a cat no matter what human characteristics we might try to imagine as part of the cat's experience.

Research among chimpanzees has uncovered evidence for some level of self-awareness or self-consciousness among these higher primates. The research strategies utilized by animal biologists are interesting. The first step in the research paradigm is to give the animals opportunity to gain experience in the use of mirrors. In the mirror the chimpanzee is able to see the face and other parts of its body not normally seen. Then, when the animal is under anesthesia, researchers apply a brightly colored mark above one eyebrow and at the top of one ear, a mark that when dry will not exude olfactory or tactile sensations for the animal. After recovering from the anesthesia, the animal is again given opportunity to use the mirror. The animals give evidence of noticing the brightly colored mark by increased use of touch in the marked areas. Statistics noting the number and frequency

67. Arnold Buss, *Psychological Dimensions of the Self* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2001), 6–9.

68. K. Gunderson, "Asymmetries and Mind-Body Perplexities," in *Philosophical Aspects of the Mind-Body Problem*, 99.

69. G. Levine, "Constructivism and the Reemergent Self," in *Constructions of the Self*, 1–3.

of these touch behaviors are significantly higher than one would predict with just ambient touch behaviors.⁷⁰ This line of research has its critics, who argue that these touching behaviors do not necessarily reveal self-awareness as we understand it among humans and that the experimental results may simply be artifacts of the use of a mirror or of the anesthesia.⁷¹ Scientists admit that we may be unwise to argue for the complete presence or absence of self-recognition in animals or that one self-aware organism has the same level of that capacity as another organism has. Other interesting research seems to establish that the higher primates can even recognize themselves in a distorting mirror (concave and convex).⁷² Perhaps some of the higher primates do display a certain level of self-awareness. This finding does not, however, detract from the assertion that self-consciousness is an important and central component of what it means to be human.

One aspect of self-consciousness has to do with self-regard: How do I value or regard myself? One of psychology's best-known emphases has to do with this very issue. The clinical branches of the discipline, most especially "pop" psychology, have espoused healthy self-esteem as an important component of the effective and mature life. Psychology has focused attention on the issue of self-regard in ways that earlier generations never considered. We can all agree that everyone attributes to self a degree of regard ranging on a continuum from self-hatred to self-loathing to self-acceptance to self-love to unadulterated narcissism. The tendency to hate the self or to worship the self is a natural part of sinful living, even though many, if not most, of our ancestors may have given it little attention. Through the centuries Christians and non-Christians alike have disliked or liked themselves, have been humble or proud with respect to their accomplishments, and have been content or discontent with who they are. What is new to this arena is psychology's advocacy of healthy (read high) self-esteem.

The self-esteem movement spread like wildfire through American society in the third quarter of the previous century. The reasons for its prevalence as a theme in the public square during these decades may have to do

70. Gordon G. Gallup et al., "Further Reflections on Self-Recognition in Primates," *Animal Behavior* 50 (1995): 1525–32.

71. C. M. Heyes, "Self-Recognition in Primates: Further Reflections Create a Hall of Mirrors," *Animal Behavior* 50 (1995): 1533–42.

72. Ann Kitchen, Derek Denton, and Linda Brent, "Self-Recognition and Abstraction Abilities in the Common Chimpanzee Studied with Distorting Mirrors," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 93 (1996): 7405–8.

with the fact that the time was ripe for such a cultural emphasis or that the American public was truly dispirited and ready for a more hopeful theme. Whatever reasons historians may someday attach to its phenomenal success, the self-esteem movement produced both good and not-so-good results. Therapeutically, many persons have benefited from learning how to increase their level of self-regard. But given the insatiable human capacity for selfishness and pride and the powerful American quest for unbridled individualism, the self-esteem movement has at the same time produced undesirable results.⁷³ However, one can find strong indications that the self-esteem movement has lost quite a bit of its steam. Research questioning the automatic and positive benefits of heightened self-esteem is lowering the levels of ardor among its advocates, and the pendulum toward a more balanced emphasis may currently be occurring. Secular author Richard Keshen argues that we must incorporate self-esteem into our understanding of the mature person only when we combine it with reasonableness and with respect for and consideration of others.⁷⁴

For example, research shows that high self-esteem levels occur along with some very undesirable personality traits just as Christian critics have long suggested.

For some people . . . , to have high self-esteem means that one is very proud of who one is, feels superior to most other people, and is very willing and able to defend against possible threats to one's positive self-view. In other words, people with high self-esteem engage in self-promoting activities.⁷⁵

Thus even secular clinicians are developing nuanced ways of dealing with self-esteem issues in order to avoid producing undesirable outcomes.

73. Roy Baumeister in his book *Escaping the Self* (New York: Basic Books, 1991) argues that our undue emphasis on self ironically has fueled escapism, this time for the burden of selfhood. See also James L. Collier, *The Rise of Selfishness in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Michael A. and Lise Wallach, *Psychology's Sanction for Selfishness* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1983.)

74. Richard Keshen, *Reasonable Self-Esteem* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 3–19, 146–72. For another secular example of this trend, see Philip O. Hwang, *Other-Esteem: Meaningful Life in a Multicultural Society* (Philadelphia: Accelerated Development, 2000).

75. Hoyle, Kernis, Leary, and Baldwin, *Selfhood*, 85.

In addition, the mixed research regarding self-esteem and its contribution to healthy functioning may be due to a lack of definitional clarity regarding self-esteem itself. Researchers are currently suggesting that we will not fully understand the possible contribution of self-esteem to human functioning until we utilize tighter definitions that will distinguish among the various manifestations of self-esteem. For example, self-esteem can be defensive or genuine, explicit or implicit (conscious or nonconscious), contingent or true (dependent on or independent of constant validation), and labile or unstable (self-worth feelings linked to environmental events or feelings of self-worth that are extremely short-lived).⁷⁶ We may learn about the genuine impact of various levels of self-esteem on human functioning only when researchers employ more finely tuned and nuanced definitions of this variable in their work.

Critics within the church who question the value of psychology in Christian ministry have focused their most strident criticism against psychology's emphasis on healthy self-esteem.⁷⁷ They argue that forwarding positive feelings toward oneself is directly contrary to the teachings of the New Testament. To assess this issue fairly, all interested parties need to ask themselves the following questions.

1. Does self-denial as taught by Jesus require us to hate ourselves? (See Matthew 16:21–28 and parallel passages in Mark 8:31–38 and Luke 9:21–27.)
2. Did Jesus literally require of His disciples that they hate their own lives? (See Luke 14:25–27.)
3. Is God honored when we regard ourselves with loathing and disparagement?

The answer to each of these questions is an unqualified no. A careful interpretation of the texts in question will help us avoid misreading and misapplying the teachings of the New Testament dealing with self-regard.

Although we want to include most of our integrative comments in the section immediately following this chapter, a few comments here are called for. We can all agree that thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought

76. Ibid., 88–93.

77. Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

to think is pride and a great sin in the eyes of God. We can all agree that Christians are obligated to be other-centered, not self-centered, and to regard the other as better than themselves. Therefore, we can affirm that thinking more highly of ourselves than God does is pride and thereby sinful. We can affirm that self-denial is self-denial, not self-hatred as some would have us believe. Self-denial is putting Christ first, putting our own personal agendas second, and following Christ even if it means following Him to our deaths. The three self-denial passages in the Gospels come in the context of warnings Jesus was giving His disciples about His upcoming death in Jerusalem. Jesus warned them that they too needed to be prepared to take up a cross and follow him by denying themselves (giving up their own personal agenda for their lives and becoming cross-bearing followers of Jesus).

Terry Cooper has convincingly demonstrated that pride and self-debasement are not discrete categories of human experience. Throughout history arguments have been advanced that one or the other of these two problems is at the heart of human misery and dysfunction. Augustine was an early spokesman for the "primacy of pride" thesis, and many have followed in his train.⁷⁸ In more recent times, low self-esteem or some sort of related derogation of the self has been suggested as the root cause of human dysfunction. This assertion, made by many psychological theorists, has typically enraged Christian observers who are accustomed to the Augustinian view and who defend biblical self-denial as a necessary form of self-regard. Cooper demonstrates, however, that some degree of self-doubt and low self-esteem is always involved in pride and prideful states, hidden though they may be. Conversely, pride is never far away from the person who strives to excel in self-denial. Self-debasement and pride exist in human experience, not as separate or distinct sins, but as linked problems with one in ascendancy and one in concurrent obscurity. "One may be dominant, but the other does not lie far behind. Thus, there is unexpected low self-esteem in pride and unexpected pride in low self-esteem."⁷⁹

We must also remember that the text commanding the disciples of Jesus to hate their very own lives also contains the command to hate father and mother. Since the command to hate father and mother directly contradicts other passages commanding us to love and honor our parents (Exod. 20:12;

78. Terry D. Cooper, *Sin, Pride, and Self-Acceptance* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003), 164.

79. *Ibid.*, 165.

Eph. 6:2-3), exegetes of the Lukan passage uniformly understand the meaning of hatred toward family to be relative.⁸⁰ In other words, disciples must love Jesus with such ardor and intensity that their love for wife, children, mother, and father pales in comparison and seems to be hatred. Readers cannot take the Luke 14:26 command literally any more than we can take the statements of Jesus in Matthew 5:29-30 literally even though some literalists and psychologically disturbed individuals have tried to do so. Paul did not hate the fact that he was a Jew and that he had lived a faultless life as measured by legalistic righteousness; he considered these features of his background as rubbish only by comparison with his love for Christ (Phil. 3:4-9).

We are not left without standards, however, for the degree of self-regard a Christian must forward to the self. The standard is to regard myself as God regards me—no more and no less. What God hates about me, I am to hate (Rom. 12:9). What God loves about me, I am to love (Matt. 6:26). God hates my sin, so must I. God created me in His own image and so loved the world (including me) that He sent His only-begotten Son to die for me. I must acknowledge such wonder and mystery and utilize these truths in monitoring how much regard I forward to myself. If I regard my self more highly than does God, it is sin. Learning how to monitor my own self-regard so that it matches the regard God forwards to me is not an easy task. In fact, it is a lifelong challenge. But when we can engage heartily in this endeavor, God is honored, and we are protected from pride and false humility.⁸¹

Self-esteem, then, is a useful concept that has been overemphasized but should not be abandoned by researchers or clinicians. The evidence suggests that we should continue the pursuit of understanding how self-esteem contributes positively and negatively to adjustment and that we should engage in this pursuit in a balanced fashion. Healthy and accurate self-esteem is not a cure-all for any human woe, but it is one component of healthy adjustment that we should help people achieve. Helping people distinguish a level of self-regard that pleases God from a self-centered effort at self-enhancement at the expense of relating to others is an ongoing challenge for all practitioners of counseling and ministry.

80. Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 398; John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 9:21-18:34* (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 762-63.

81. James R. Beck, *Jesus and Personality Theory: Exploring the Five Factor Model* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999), 197-216.

Psychic health, like physical health, is an unquestionable good, and it does not really matter what we call it. But neither form of health guarantees that people, individually or collectively, will do what they should do to remedy injustice, teach children skills that will help them lead productive and happy lives, or end the scourge of racism. Enhanced self-esteem is no more a shortcut to happiness or a better society than a low cholesterol count or well-defined abs. Healthy selves in healthy bodies can put their energies to good purposes or bad ones.⁸²

Gender

Scripture links gender with the identity of the first couple in Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." The close linkage in Scripture between human identity and gender is also reflected in contemporary psychology. According to researchers in all of the social sciences, masculinity and femininity represent key components of human identity because they represent core issues anchored both to our genetic makeup and to our functioning throughout the life span.

"It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" are often the first words attendants in a birthing room will give to the new parents. And if the parents have not known about the child's sex before birth, this information triggers a veritable cascade of expectations, hopes, dreams, wishes, and wants. But the news also signals some restrictions and limitations as well.⁸³ Gender is an appropriate subject for psychological investigation because we live in a gendered world. In addition to learning more about how the two genders live out their lives with each other in human society, we need to understand how men and women are alike and how they are different.

Psychology received its impetus for exploring the topic of gender from the broader social movements in our society regarding women. The story of how society has treated women over the centuries is not an uplifting one. In the United States freed male slaves received their franchise fifty years

82. John P. Hewitt, *The Myth of Self-Esteem: Finding Happiness and Solving Problems in America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 142.

83. James R. Doyle, *The Male Experience*, 2d ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1989), 3.

before women did (The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was proclaimed on March 30, 1870, and the Nineteenth on August 26, 1920). Women have had to face prejudice regarding their intelligence, the stability of their personality, their leadership capability, and a host of other impediments to their full participation in society. The women's liberation movement, a broad-based effort that touched all segments of American society, attempted to address the issues described in the following quote:

Females rank as a lower caste, generally deprived of wealth, power, and prestige. They are trained psychologically so that direct expression of hostility toward males is often impossible. Excluded from the power structure of major institutions, their opportunities to change the normative structure of the society are very limited.⁸⁴

In the last half of the twentieth century, considerable progress occurred in rectifying inequities that had existed in the past and in raising levels of awareness regarding women's issues in all of the academic disciplines. Feminist scholars in psychology began reexamining existing theory, locating areas where it poorly represented or misrepresented females and offering new models that better explained the data available from both men and women. As soon as feminist researchers revised some of psychology's approaches to women, corresponding investigations into the meanings of masculinity emerged to expand our understanding of maleness. We will briefly explore just two areas in psychology regarding the subject of gender that have greatly changed as a result of these processes: our understanding of the differences between men and women and our enhanced understanding of the psychology of women and men.

In evaluating how psychology has treated the subject of gender, however, we must keep in mind that premodern, modern, and postmodern ideologies lurk quietly behind the stage on which twentieth-century social science has conducted its research. As Christian sociologist Elaine Storkey has eloquently pointed out, each of these ideologies brings with it strengths and weaknesses that have enhanced as well as tarnished interpretations given to obtained data.⁸⁵

84. Janet S. Chafetz, *Masculine, Feminine, or Human? An Overview of the Sociology of Gender Roles*, 2d ed. (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1978), 236.

85. Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

Sex and Gender Differences

Research results showing similarities between men and women rarely get published, just as journalism generally shows preference for printing "bad" news over "good" news. But the topic of differences between men and women has generated much attention. The volume of psychological research into this topic is massive.⁸⁶ All parties agree that some of the observed and documented differences between the two sexes are anchored in biology and flow from genetic, hormonal, or other physiological factors. Others of the observed and documented differences between the sexes are socially constructed, due to environmental influences, parenting, learning, and socialization. Controversies rage regarding which of the differences stem from which source and regarding the relative balance between biological and environmental influences on any particular observed difference.⁸⁷ Few scholars of any persuasion would argue that all the observed differences are biological in origin or that environmental forces create all of them.

Researchers have utilized several nomenclatures to describe their work, which includes the study of sex-related differences or simply the study of gender.⁸⁸ Some contributors to these investigations refer to the differences between men and women that are biological in origin as sex differences and to the differences that are environmental in origin as gender differences; we will observe this nomenclature here in this chapter.⁸⁹ Psychological investigators working in the area of sex and gender differences face the daunting task of teasing out the origin of the differences by means of fairly sophisticated research design strategies. When contradictory findings emerge from studies exploring the same area, research teams must devise yet additional studies to refine and clarify the findings. The task is ongoing. The following summary merely represents current findings that are always subject to change as more research emerges.

86. When the distinguished psychology professor at the University of Southern California, Dr. Carol Nagy Jacklin, undertook the task of assembling the most relevant pieces of research regarding gender, the enterprise resulted in four large volumes containing a total of nearly two thousand pages. See C. N. Jacklin, ed., *The Psychology of Gender*, 4 vols. (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

87. Anne E. Beall and Robert J. Sternbert, eds., *The Psychology of Gender* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993).

88. Jacklin, *The Psychology of Gender*, 1:xiii.

89. Michael S. Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-4.

Modern biological science has established that the sex of a fetus is determined at the moment of conception when a sperm carrying an X chromosome fertilizes the ovum producing a girl or a sperm carrying a Y chromosome produces a boy. Although the development of the fetus for both sexes is undifferentiated for the first five to six weeks, differences in intrauterine development soon appear as triggers on the sex chromosomes move the process in a male direction or a female direction.⁹⁰ Barring some genetic defect or developmental abnormality, the sex of the newborn is easy to determine. External genitalia accompanied by the corresponding internal organs distinguish boys from girls. At puberty both sexes develop secondary sex differences that further distinguish them. We have a more challenging task, however, to identify the more subtle sex differences between the sexes. Are boys more mathematical than girls? Are boys more analytic and girls more emotional? And if such differences do exist, are they biological and thus fairly fixed and determined, or are they environmental and social and thus more subject to modification if we as a society should so choose?

The following list represents material gathered from several sources according to topic.⁹¹

- Verbal ability. Many studies have identified an advantage in verbal abilities for women and girls. But "the verbal advantage that was once associated with women is not only small but disappearing."⁹²
- Mathematical ability. Men and boys beginning at junior high school age have an advantage, but these differences are not clearly due to innate ability.
- Spatial ability. Men excel at spatial visualization, spatial perception, and mental rotation, but women show an advantage in tasks of perceptual speed and memory for placement of objects. Thus a clear male advantage in spatial ability is less clear than it was in early reports.

90. Herant A. Katchadourian, *Biological Aspects of Human Sexuality*, 4th ed. (Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1990), 41-43, 140.

91. Linda Brannon, *Gender: Psychological Perspectives* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996), 104-11, 464-65; Mahzarin R. Benaji, "The Psychology of Gender: A Perspective on Perspectives," in *The Psychology of Gender*, ed. Beall and Sternbert, 251-73.

92. Brannon, *Gender*, 110.

These differences between men and women are relatively small, especially when compared to the range of differences among all men or among all women. Research has shown no differences between men and women in overall levels of intelligence, ability to learn and memorize, creativity, musical ability, and ability to read nonverbal cues in spite of various stereotypes that would suggest such differences. Studies exploring gender differences in more subtle psychological traits and features are numerous but beyond the scope of this brief review.⁹³

As to whether these differences are sex differences (due to biology) or gender differences (due to environmental forces), the answers are varied. In general, current thought leans more heavily toward a social constructionist explanation than to a biological one. Brannon argues that if we are to find a biological base for differences in mental abilities, we must first find different structures in the brains of men and women and a link between those structures and the differences we have documented above. Some evidence exists for differences between male and female brains (lateralization, hormonal-influenced brain organization), but the evidence for a link between these brain features and mental abilities is weak.⁹⁴ And if, for example, the observed difference between men and women in verbal ability is truly biological in origin, we would expect the difference to remain stable over time. But evidence for the difference continues to shrink in magnitude over recent decades of research, suggesting instead an environmental cause.

Yet we must remember that "the controversy revolves less around known facts than around what we want the facts to be and what we want them to mean."⁹⁵ Why should these "facts" regarding differences between men and women be subject to such controversy? The answer relates to the topic of roles. If the differences between men and women are, in fact, sex differences (anchored in biology), then biology to a certain degree becomes destiny and the basis of set roles. But if the differences are more heavily related to environmental influences, then the roles we observe in society are not determined or necessary but are primarily the expression of choices made by

93. As one example, see Robert F. Bornstein and Joseph M. Masling, eds., *The Psychodynamics of Gender and Gender Role* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Assoc., 2002).

94. Brannon, *Gender*, 107–9.

95. M. Gay Hubbard, *Women: The Misunderstood Majority* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 138–39.

our societies and cultures. This debate echoes through the halls of secular institutions and up and down the pews of churches.⁹⁶

The Psychology of Men and Women

In the first half of the twentieth century, scholars became aware that the work of Sigmund Freud had assumed that masculinity was the norm and femininity was a deviation from that norm. Karen Horney, a member of the third generation of psychoanalysts, began to expose systematically the male bias of Freudian theory and to articulate a psychoanalytic approach to women that was not androcentric.⁹⁷ Freud's patriarchal bias had led him to frequently pair femininity with passivity, to question the objectivity of women, and to virtually ignore their early (prephallic) development.⁹⁸ "Freud's generalizations concerning girls and women do injustice to both his psychoanalytic method and his clinical findings."⁹⁹

As more and more women entered the field of psychology and began to look at how the major theories of development and personality had been constructed, they found that most approaches were based on male patterns. Researchers had predominantly utilized sampling techniques with only males as subjects and assumed that the findings also applied to women. Certain aspects of psychology thus turned out to be psychologies of males. Investigators soon opened up lines of investigation into all aspects of the field

96. For material regarding how the debate expresses itself in the evangelical world, see James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg, eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001); Anne Carr and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, eds., *Religion, Feminism, and the Family* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996); Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1980); Kaye Cook and Lance Lee, *Man and Woman Alone and Together: Gender Roles, Identity, and Intimacy in a Changing Culture* (Wheaton, Ill.: Bridgepoint Books); Rebecca M. Groothuis, *Good News for Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1991); and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

97. For a collection of her papers, see Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967).

98. Roy Schafer, "Problems in Freud's Psychology of Women," in *Female Psychology: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Views*, ed. Harold P. Blum (New York: International Universities Press, 1977), 331–60.

99. *Ibid.*, 359. (This judgment comes from within the psychoanalytic movement and is shared by most all observers.)

with the result that theories are now more carefully nuanced with regard to how males and females operate psychologically. Subtle differences emerged between the psychology of men and women in areas of the sense of self, the role of empathy, effective psychotherapy interventions, power, anger, aggression, and the self-in-relation.¹⁰⁰ Two scholars have made particularly important contributions to this new understanding of women: Carol Gilligan and Mary Belenkey. Dr. Belenkey and her colleagues explored women's ways of knowing and processing information, skills that undergird styles of interacting with the world and people. She documented passive, received, subjective, procedural, and constructed ways of knowing.¹⁰¹ Dr. Gilligan found that a complete understanding of the psychological understanding of women required careful attention to intimacy and issues of generativity.

In view of the evidence that women perceive and construe social reality differently from men and that these differences center around experiences of attachment and separation, life transitions that invariably engage these experiences can be expected to involve women in a distinctive way.¹⁰²

The emphasis on women's studies in psychology has triggered new interest in studying men and masculinity in a more focused manner. The men's movement, however, has primarily been a social movement among largely white, middle class, and college educated men who have expressed the need for help in adjusting to the new expressions of femininity and female participation in society that have characterized the last half of the twentieth century.¹⁰³

100. Judith V. Jordan et al., *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: Guilford, 1991).

101. Mary Belenkey, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tavile, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

102. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 171.

103. Michael Shiffman, "The Men's Movement: An Exploratory Empirical Investigation," in *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (Newbury Park, N.J.: Sage, 1987).

Religion

The entire domain of scriptural studies and the theological disciplines concerns itself with religion. But as we have seen in the last chapter, the scriptural theme that relates most closely to the religious or spiritual identity of the human person is the concept of the image of God. In some magnificent and ineradicable way, every human bears as part of his or her identity the stamp of God's likeness. All humans are image bearers. The field of psychology, however, has not largely been committed to the idea of the reality of a supernatural God who is the Creator of the human race. Psychology does not entail atheism or agnosticism (witness the active participation of Christians in the field), but many in the field do not profess a belief in God or believe that such a profession of faith is relevant to their work.

Defining religion is a matter of some controversy among social scientists. Many definitions focus on belief as a core component of the phenomenon. But since belief cannot be observed but only self-reported, it does not satisfy those scientists who want a more easily studied factor. We all know that self-reports are subject to deliberate deception or self-delusion. Belief does not always correlate well with behavior, and reports of belief are subject to intense levels of social conformity. Perhaps the idea of the supernatural should be at the heart of any definition that attempts to explain the religions of the world. The involvement of ideas and convictions regarding the supernatural is indeed present in most religious systems. But again, scientists are restless with a definitional concept that they cannot measure. "Because supernatural things or powers cannot be identified, correlations involving them cannot be demonstrated; something supernatural cannot be shown to be correlated with any observable event."¹⁰⁴ In an effort to provide a definition that will facilitate social science research, Steadman and Palmer suggest that religion is the "communicated acceptance of a supernatural claim, a claim that cannot be shown to be true by the senses (of the observer)."¹⁰⁵ Crafting a definition such as this one for the purposes of efficient research protocols often leaves us with a hollow, incomplete description of the phenomenon. Surely that is the case in this instance. Religion is

104. Lyle B. Steadman and Craig T. Palmer, "Religion as an Identifiable Traditional Behavior Subject to Natural Selection," *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems* 18 (1995): 152.

105. *Ibid.*, 157.

a rich mixture of allegiances and beliefs that take the individual beyond self to important relationships with a stronger being for the purpose of living a safer, more satisfying life.

Psychology is more likely to study how humans create God in their image, than how God created humans in his own image. Many secular theorists conceive of God as a creation of human projections. "It is by no means certain whether we are made in the image of God, as Christians proclaim, or whether it is out of our need to believe that we may have created God in our own image."¹⁰⁶ To understand how this theme plays out in the discipline, we will explore the theories of religion of four of the major figures in twentieth-century psychology (Freud, Jung, Allport, and Fromm), the work of researchers in the specialty of the psychology of religion, and recent work exploring the possible genetic basis of religion.

The Pioneers on Religion

Sigmund Freud has earned his reputation as an unrelenting critic of belief in a supernatural religion. He did not practice Judaism, the faith of his ancestors. He was exposed to Roman Catholicism as a child in his native Czechoslovakia, but the evidence that this brief exposure had a strong impact on him is weak.¹⁰⁷ Freud wrote about religion in various papers from 1907–1926, but in the spring of 1927 he began work on his first book on the subject.¹⁰⁸ *The Future of an Illusion* was the first in a series of books written in the last twelve years of his life dealing with civilization and religion and how one can utilize psychoanalytic principles to explain them.

Freud developed his explanation for the naturalistic origin of religion by beginning with the primitive human's fear of nature. By humanizing natural forces (storms, lightning, thunder, etc.) and regarding them as father figures (gods), our ancestors behaved in a manner identical to that of every human infant (infants are terrorized by their helplessness and are fearful of their fathers). The infancy of the human race thus bears similarity to the

106. In true agnostic tradition, Patrick Casement poses the question but ultimately says that it cannot be answered in "In Whose Image?" in *Beyond Belief: Psychotherapy and Religion*, ed. Samuel M. Stein (London: Karnac Books, 1999), 20.

107. Although Paul C. Vitz argues in *Sigmund Freud's Christian Unconscious* (New York: Guilford Press, 1988) that Freud had a Christian unconscious structure to his personality against which he struggled throughout his career.

108. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1964), ix–x.

infancy of every person. Later our ancestors reduced the numbers of their gods to one and added loving and kind features to the terrorizing traits of God. Humans have deeply ambivalent feelings about God: we fear God and we fear (hold in awe) God. Thus religion is a human creation designed to help us deal with our terrors and fears. Once we mature, we no longer need to have religion soothe our infantile wishes and illusions. According to Freud religion is an illusion, an obsessional neurosis that civilization will one day outgrow, although Freud reserved the right to be wrong.¹⁰⁹

I will moderate my zeal and admit the possibility that I, too, am chasing an illusion. Perhaps the effect of the religious prohibition of thought may not be so bad as I suppose; perhaps it will turn out that human nature remains the same even if education is not abused in order to subject people to religion. I do not know. . . .¹¹⁰

Carl Jung's attitudes were remarkably proreligious, especially when compared to the dark views of Freud regarding religion.¹¹¹ Jung was the son of a pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church. For Jung, religion, including Christianity, shared common ground with spirits, demons, laws, and ideals that humans found to be "powerful, dangerous or helpful enough to be taken into careful consideration, or grand, beautiful and meaningful enough to be devoutly adored and loved."¹¹² He supported the religious practices of his patients if it "works for" them as a defense.¹¹³ Religion for Jung was a source of great richness and symbolic treasures, although there is little evidence that he believed in a supernatural God who was separate from the world but active in it.

Gordon W. Allport, a psychology professor at Harvard, was an active Christian layman who had a lifelong interest in religion. "All the great religions of the world supply, for those who can subscribe to their arguments and affirmations, a world-conception that has logical simplicity and serene

109. *Ibid.*, 49, 70–71.

110. *Ibid.*, 79.

111. See Wallace B. Clift, *Jung and Christianity: The Challenge of Reconciliation* (New York: Crossroad, 1985); and Murray Stein, *Jung's Treatment of Christianity: The Psychotherapy of a Religious Tradition* (Wilmette, Ill.: Chiron, 1985).

112. Carl Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1938), 5.

113. *Ibid.*, 55.

majesty."¹¹⁴ He could not agree that religion represented prelogical thinking; if so, how do we account for "the development of logic, mathematics, and scientific method" that religious institutions have fostered over the centuries?¹¹⁵ Religion is not an escape from reality for its adherents. The roots of religious interest vary from individual to individual. "A man's religion is the audacious bid he makes to bind himself to creation and to the Creator. It is his ultimate attempt to enlarge and to complete his own personality by finding the supreme context in which he rightly belongs."¹¹⁶

Erich Fromm, a neo-Freudian, existential psychoanalyst, was convinced that every person has a religious need, that is to say, a need for an orienting frame and for something or someone to revere.¹¹⁷ In both authoritarian and humanistic religious systems, the character of God is a projection from the human. Psychoanalysis is one method of helping the patient regain what he or she has given away to God, parts of the self from which the individual has become detached.¹¹⁸

Current Approaches to Religion

This brief overview of the attitudes toward religion held by some of the pioneers of modern psychology and psychotherapy illustrates that religion has not been a neglected topic in the discipline. Each theorist has given religion a different twist, and none of these twists compares exactly with biblical faith. As a specialty within psychology, the psychology of religion has taken up the task begun by these and other founders of the discipline to understand more fully how religion functions in human experience.

We often describe our age as secular, but the persistent findings of pollsters and researchers alike is that religion still plays a very central role in American society. "Historical scholarship indicates that religious institutional membership as a percent of our population has increased linearly from 1776 to the 1990s, except for a brief period during the Civil War."¹¹⁹ The majority of Americans continue to believe in the existence of God, in

114. Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 19.

115. *Ibid.*, 22.

116. *Ibid.*, 161.

117. Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New York: Bantam, 1950), 25.

118. *Ibid.*, 49, 85.

119. Bernard Spilka, "The Future of Religion" (unpublished manuscript), 6.

life after death, and in heaven.¹²⁰ And while church membership and a stated belief in God, life after death, and heaven may not to many people be satisfactory proof of genuine Christianity, these facts are remarkable given the overall tone and tenor of contemporary society. Many clinicians and scholars in psychology now concede that an all-out attempt to destroy religion despite its adherence to supernatural and transcendent themes is unjustified, given two demonstrable facts: religion often serves as a constructive organizing force in one's life, providing hope and comfort; and religion is and has been an effective purveyor of moral principles that are necessary for societal health.¹²¹

Psychologists of religion also study how religion expresses itself over the life span, how religious persons deal with doubt and death, the phenomenon of conversion, mysticism, prayer, worship, and the demographics and personality patterns of religious people.¹²² An emerging area of research seeks to determine whether a genetic basis exists for religion. Evidence from twin studies suggests that genetic factors do seem to influence religious expression among people but that the effect is probably not direct but indirect through the interaction of other psychological factors that do have direct genetic underpinnings: need for meaning (pertinence), need for control, and need for sociality.¹²³

Evolutionary psychologists have displayed a surprising amount of interest in the topic of religion. Normally we view evolutionists as antireligious or at least inimical to religion as a constructive component of the human experience. Recently, however, evolutionists have reconstructed what they believe is a defensible account of how religion evolved among humans. Evolutionary psychologists see religion as an inborn feature of the human brain.

120. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

121. Robert A. Hinde, *Why Gods Persist: A Scientific Approach to Religion* (London: Routledge, 1999), 233–44.

122. An early classic in the field is Walter H. Clark, *The Psychology of Religion: An Introduction to Religious Experience and Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1958). For more recent works, see C. Daniel Batson, Patricia Schoenrade, and W. Larry Ventis, *Religion and the Individual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Robert Crawford, *What Is Religion?* (London: Routledge, 2002); and Bernard Spilka, Ralph W. Hood, Bruce Hunsberger, and Richard Gorsuch, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*, 3d ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003).

123. Bernard Spilka and Kevin L. Ladd, "The Psychobiology of God: Evolution and Genetics" (paper presented at the Convention of the Society for Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, Utah, November 2002).

They cite three lines of evidence in support of this assertion. First, religion appears to be a valid part of human societies all around the world. This cross-cultural validity is universal to human culture. Second, the vigor of faith persists even in hostile environments such as the state-supported atheism of the Soviet Union or the skeptical scientism of the twentieth century in the West. Religion is a force "which exceeds most other leanings."¹²⁴ Third, the amount of resources and energy allocated to religion indicates to evolutionists that the factor is important and central. Genes that thus push people in a sensible direction, such as happens with religion, will increase because they have adaptive advantage.

Several brain arrangements (see chap. 2 for a discussion of modular brain models) evolved to facilitate the development of religion. The necessary modules for the development of religion are: "Submission to a higher power, the creation of thought constructs and adhering to the belief in them whether or not they can be substantiated, the redirections of love and devotion towards abstract beings, as well as socializing based on spiritual aspects such as in connection with rituals."¹²⁵ Once these brain components had evolved by means of adaptation processes, the stage was set for the emergence of the religions of the world.

So should religion be abandoned? No, say the evolutionists. Grinde urges people to go with their nature. If religion is part of the brain's system that has evolved over the centuries, we live best when we live in harmony with that internal reality. Be religious, says Grinde, "yet I would choose my god carefully."¹²⁶ Surely his advice qualifies as one of the most ironic twists to emerge from the field of evolutionary biology.

124. Bjorn Grinde, "The Biology of Religion: A Darwinian Gospel," *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems* 21 (1998): 20.

125. *Ibid.*, 23.

126. *Ibid.*, 26.

CHAPTER 6

SUBSTANCE *and* IDENTITY INTEGRATED

IN THE INTEGRATION OF theological and psychological material related to the question of what comprises the human being, some truths are firmly established.

SUBSTANCE

Christian Certainties

1. *A pure materialism with regard to human nature is incompatible with authoritative biblical revelation.* Reductive materialism reduces all components of the human person to atoms and molecules, an approach that accounts for only one-half of the process described in Genesis 2:7. Numerous biblical texts cited in chapter 4 identify an immaterial substance. So, for example, as he was being stoned to death, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). Similarly, Jesus uttered these words as he was dying; "Father into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46).
2. *We best account for biblical data by positing that humans have both material and immaterial natures.* Even though these categories may not fit precisely with units of analysis common among philosophers and psychologists, they most closely cohere with the teachings of Scripture on the subject.

3. *The "mind" of the Mind-Body Problem (MBP) seems to fit most closely with what Scripture describes as the soul/spirit/mind.* Scripture uses these constitutional terms in a fluid manner, and so must we. They are not precise, scientifically defined words in the Bible, but together they comprise what contemporary scholarship calls the mind.
4. *The material and immaterial (brain and mind, if you will) of the human being causally interact with each other.* Some philosophical solutions to the MBP affirm that only the brain can causally interact with the mind, but the data of Scripture and modern psychology have established that both causally affect each other.
5. *The mind and brain are intimately connected in living persons; we have no experience with one acting alone without the other.* Science tells us that every thought is accompanied by brain activity, and conscious or unconscious experience seems to accompany every brain event.
6. *The intermediate state is an important and relevant doctrine for this debate.* Some advocates of nonreductive physicalism (NRP) seem more concerned about accounting for brain science than accounting for personal eschatology (the state and destiny of the human being after death). The doctrine that a believer at death enters the presence of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8), although supported by only a few texts, is important nonetheless because it speaks to the substantial composition of the human being.¹ We must not lightly dismiss this data of biblical revelation.
7. *The fact that we have no experience with the mind acting apart from the brain does not mean that the mind (the immaterial reality) could not function apart from the brain (the material reality) after death.* We have no personal experience with this eventuality, but the fact that we have not observed the immaterial functioning in this manner does not mean that it does not occur. Granted, having to take some issues by faith may not be intellectually satisfying to many interested parties, but at times allegiance to Scripture's teaching requires such a commitment of us.

1. James R. Beck, "Questioning the Intermediate State: A Case Study in Integrative Conflict," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 10 (1991): 24-35; and David G. Myers, "Are We Body and Soul: A Response to James Beck," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 10 (1991): 36-38.

Brief Integration

The substance dualism position articulated over the centuries represents the majority position of competent and responsible Christian scholars. The thesis of holistic dualism continues to offer the best solution to the MBP in light of revealed truths contained in Scripture. The findings of modern brain science do not require that Christians abandon their understanding of how the mind (soul/spirit/person/immaterial reality) is related to the body (brain/material reality). The findings of brain science do, however, give us useful information about how the mind and brain relate to one another in living persons. Christians must abandon their conception of a mind operating by itself in a living person. The operation of the mind always includes the operation and activity of the brain and vice versa. It is only when physical death, an eventuality caused by the advent of sin into the world (Gen. 2:17; 3:19), rudely destroys the created unity of the person and temporarily separates the immaterial from the material that the mind operates apart from the brain. At the resurrection, this unnatural existence of the immaterial existing apart from the material will be rectified.

We can appreciate the careful work conducted by the team at Fuller Seminary that has introduced nonreductive physicalism (NRP) to the theological world. However, their system fails to satisfy the demands of all the certainties we have listed above when it fails to account well for the fact that Scripture distinguishes the material and immaterial constituents of human nature, that the Bible distinguishes between the inner and the outer aspects of humans, that the doctrine of redemption deals with both immaterial and material aspects of humans, and that reality of the intermediate state is clearly taught in Scripture (see chap. 1). We prefer the proposals advanced by J. P. Moreland and John W. Cooper to this problem.² As apologist Douglas Groothuis writes, "(Jesus) drew a distinction between two aspects of the person, which are interrelated but not identical or reducible to one another."³ So also did the apostle Paul in his teachings on the subject. An integration of current psychological findings with our best

2. John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); and J. P. Moreland and Scott Rae, *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000).

3. Douglas Groothuis, *On Jesus* (Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2003), 41.

understanding of scriptural truth will require us to develop some type of dualistic understanding that allows both mind and brain the levels of functioning we have described in the above list of certainties.

We are convinced that the development of solutions to the MBP requires the participation of scholars from many disciplines: theology, psychology, philosophy, and other social sciences. Most philosophers will no doubt continue to struggle with substance dualism as a viable position. We understand that substance dualism is not without its own set of philosophical problems, but we are more content leaving these issues unsolved than we are disregarding the data of Scripture that requires a separate sphere of operation for the material and the immaterial in living humans. When making a theological judgment, we must accept the hypothesis that coheres with the greatest body of biblical and extrabiblical data with the least number of difficulties.

Needed Research

The search for a completely satisfying solution to the MBP, although futile to date, should be a quest that attracts bright minds with a philosophical bent. Christians need to be engaged in this process so that the church can benefit from integrations that take seriously the teachings of Scripture and the findings of science, which is a challenging intellectual task indeed. Brain science has not produced data that would destroy the foundations of our faith. If anything, brain science has provided us yet additional information into some of the secrets of creation that prompts us to stand in even greater awe before our Creator. But short of finding some yet-to-be-discovered solution to the MBP that solves all the philosophical and intellectual questions attendant to the issue, we need to hold the truths of Scripture and the findings of science together in the best integration possible. Surely this integration will contain mysteries and unresolved tensions, but such are to be expected when delving into metaphysical and spiritual issues.

IDENTITY

If we can feel comfortable with a brain-mind dualism, we are ready to move to the more central subject of who we are as human beings. Scripture offers some further certainties about human identity.

Christian Certainties

1. *The self is a holistic concept that encompasses both the physical and the nonphysical, the material and the immaterial.* The church has striven diligently during the past two millennia to steer a clear course between two heretical extremes: (1) that the immaterial is more valued and important to God than the material or (2) that the material is more important and valued to God than the immaterial. The data of Scripture and of psychological science providentially prove congruent on this point: the person is a whole.
2. *The exact term we use to signify the human being (self, person, or soul) is not crucial to the integrative task.* We appreciate the fine work of Jeffrey Boyd, who has called the mental health profession to account for abandoning the term *soul* in favor of more recent terminology such as *person* or *self*. Boyd is correct in asserting that the change of terms signifies a departure from the historic Judeo-Christian understanding of the human being. But we are convinced that Christian theologians and psychologists can appropriately and usefully utilize *self* or *person* as the designated term for the human being as long as the meanings infused into the term are holistic and reflective of scriptural teachings regarding image-bearing features of humans.
3. *This whole person, both material and immaterial, is the object of God's redemptive work and is the subject of eschatological hope.* Psychology has introduced a considerable degree of richness to our understanding of the human *psyche*. This material neither contradicts nor undermines the data concerning the human person that is depicted in the pages of Scripture.
4. *A central feature of the human person is the image of God each person bears.* The image, intrinsic to human nature, distinguishes men and women from other living beings. We favor an omnibus, or multiplex, definition of this image: humans (created to reflect God's nature and works) are spiritual, rational, volitional, emotional, moral, and relational beings. This image appears in every person, redeemed or unredeemed, is the basis on which God forwards love and concern to all persons, and is the datum on which we are to forward dignity and respect for all individuals.
5. *God revealed his nature to us; we did not create God's nature out of our*

wishes and projections. A naturalistic understanding of the origin of religion and of God is thoroughly unsatisfying. It may be the best explanation for the investigator who has ruled out any possibility for theism before even launching the debate; but for those who allow the possibility of a theistic understanding of the universe, the description of God's nature given to humans by revelation is eminently possible, factually accurate, and existentially satisfying.

6. *Humans do form psychological images of God, images that may be distorted by developmental flaws.* This psychological fact does nothing to undermine biblical faith, but it does greatly inform ministry and spiritual formation as we seek to encourage one another to greater degrees of maturity in Christ.
7. *Sex (biological) differences between men and women bear the stamp of God's creative work; socially constructed (gender) differences may or may not reflect God's purposes for the human race.* We continue to face challenges in sorting out sex and gender differences. Our task is to exegete Scripture carefully when it speaks to the matter of gender and to utilize these teachings as a guide to psychological findings regarding the meanings of gender.
8. *The Christian's challenge to mature in Christ and to conform to his image is intertwined with the Christian's status as an image-bearer, a holistic self, and a gendered creature.* Any integration of factors related to human identity must take into account God's design for our sanctification and for our development as his disciples in kingdom mission.

Brief Integration

Theological anthropologies of the future will be stronger, more cohesive, and more helpful when they include all the data of Scripture regarding human identity as well as well-established data emerging from the psychological sciences regarding the self, gender, and the religious impulse. The psychological self is clearly more complex than previously imagined. Human personality, including motivation, is an arena of human functioning that psychology has been able more fully to illuminate and explain. When we combine these findings with scriptural teaching about poor personality functioning (the works of the flesh, Gal. 5:16–21) and God's intended func-

tioning for His children (the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22–26), we gain an enriched understanding of human identity.

Our integration of material regarding human identity must always attend to a dual purpose. We must first articulate human identity with its created intent and with its sinful expressions. Second, we must explain how salvation restores that created intent for humans. In other words, we cannot be satisfied with merely explaining the psychology of the believer (a Christian psychology). We must also define what it means to be human apart from redemption. An integrated approach will spell out human identity as taught in Scripture and as enhanced by psychological science in a manner that identifies the human condition before the entry of sin into human experience, the human condition as tarnished and affected by sin, and the human condition as experienced by those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Needed Research

Psychologists and theologians can profitably investigate further the nature of the image of God. Clearly, the image is related to some of or all of the psychological functions we have investigated here. But we still do not have a satisfying integration of how the image reflects intelligent design, God's nature, sin's impact, and psychological process.

Christian scholarship must continue to focus on how the psychological self meshes with scriptural teaching regarding the human person. How do the definitions of self as advanced by the major schools of psychology relate to Scripture? How can we incorporate these varied approaches in such a way as to correspond correctly with what the Bible says about human identity? How can we understand new findings regarding the psychology of men and women in light of what the Bible teaches us about roles? And how can we utilize new approaches to God-concepts that psychology presents to us in a way that enhances our approach to ministry and spiritual formation? As always, the challenge is to exegete Scripture carefully and to locate material in psychology that is reliable, replicated, and responsible as we bring these materials together in our constructive integrative task.