

# A Theological Anthropology

*“What is man, that . . . Thou has made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty!”*

Psalm 8:4–5

*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing*

John 6:63

In this chapter we will lay down our anthropological foundation, which will shape our analysis of mental illness as a human phenomenon. Throughout history man has been an enigma, and a paradox, not only in the pages of Scripture, but also to himself and his fellow human beings. Although there have been many studies on every detail of a human's life concerning his social, psychological, economical, political, physiological, and cultural status in life, one seemingly trivial question that has puzzled philosophers, scientists, and laymen alike, driving the fundamental answer to all aforementioned categories, is *What is a human being?* The answer to this question is fundamental to our understanding of madness. The implied anthropological assumptions we bring to all contemporary settings not only affect our treatment of our modern challenges—whether sociological, economical, psychological, ethical, or even physical—but they also have a profound impact on the formulation of our fundamental

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theological understanding.<sup>1</sup> As Barth commented, “One cannot speak of God without speaking of man.”<sup>2</sup>

The way we understand the nature of humankind is not merely a product of historical philosophical reflection or a phenomenon emerging out of contemporary scientific and technological debates. In fact, for Christians, these questions are “deeply rooted in the biblical traditions of the people of God.”<sup>3</sup> The biblical writers’ focus on human nature primarily pointed the reader toward humanity’s covenantal relationship with God. They did not perceive humanity as an ambiguous entity awaiting conceptual clarity by scientific discoveries. Instead, they pointed to a creature clearly distinguished by his standing in relation to his Creator. A “real man,” says Barth, “is the being determined by God for life with God and existing in the history of the covenant which God has established with him.”<sup>4</sup> Our study is guided by this covenantal anthropological picture that receives a greater clarity in the person of Jesus in the New Testament.<sup>5</sup> Based on this, we will offer, not a full blown but a contextually-driven, theological anthropology, which will inform our analysis of key issues with regard to how the church should understand and frame “schizophrenia.” While dealing with the subject of mental illness and what a person is experiencing in the midst of madness, the questions about the essence and nature of the human being, *who* he is, *why* he is who he is, and whether there are any meanings in the events surrounding his life, make a significant difference as to *how* his particular situation should be treated.

Scientists such as Bill Joy, Stephen Hawking, and Ray Kurzweil predict that it is conceivable for computer technology to displace human species. They predict that without genetic modification, humans will not be able to keep ahead of technological advancements.<sup>6</sup> Are humans merely primitive machines that soon will be replaced with newer and more advanced models? Ray Kurzweil, the famous inventor and technology futurist, predicts that in a few decades, “nanobots will roam our blood streams

1. Anderson, *On Being Human*, viii.

2. Barth, *The Humanity of God*, 56. Likewise, Calvin asserts that without knowledge of self, no one can have any knowledge of God (Calvin, *Institutes*, 1/1.1).

3. Green, “Bodies—that is, Human Lives,” 149.

4. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3/2:204.

5. For a detailed Christ-based theological anthropology, see Cortez, “Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies.”

6. Joy, “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us”; Herzfeld, “Creating in our Own Image,” 303–4.

fixing diseased or aging organs.” He believes it is only a matter of time before humans and computers will intermingle with nanobots—blood cell-sized robots—that will be integrated into our bodies and brains. So, if something goes wrong, the damaged cells can be amended or replaced with the right technology that will correct the problem. It is merely a matter of technical repair! Thus, those who manage to survive for another fifteen to thirty years, Kurzweil predicts, will never die but will have an “eternal life.”<sup>7</sup>

These predictions bring hope and excitement to many people and fear and despair to many others. But what do these projections mean? Are our lives so meaningless that they could easily be replaced with robots? Are we beings devoid of purpose beyond our physical manifestation? We are reminded by the evidence that technologists in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have traditionally over-claimed and under-delivered. AI has faltered in the past not because of difficult challenges such as solving an astrophysics problem, but it has failed in mimicking what a young child can do, such as identifying a face in a crowd, or appreciating nuances in a simple story requiring a common sense, or experiencing the emotional effects of such a story. It is that level of consciousness, which is able to experience love and hate and beauty of a sunrise, that has been problematic for AI to figure out.<sup>8</sup>

Then there are those materialists who view humans through a somatic lens made of chemical substances. Not only is a person’s bodily existence dependent on a tiny thyroid-gland secretion, so too is his or her sanity and psycho-spiritual life determined by it. A minor blow on the right spot upon the head, which is considered purely physical damage, could turn a “genius” into an “idiot,” and bring a fruitful life down to a mere survival. It is easy to understand, as Brunner suggests, how a physician who is limited by this reductionist view of human existence, finding that to be the only sphere of influence for him, “constantly falls a prey to the temptation to ignore other aspects” of a person’s being.<sup>9</sup> Based on all these scientific observations, are we to accept that we are reduced to mere structured aggregates of physical parts?

The presuppositions about the constitutional nature of human beings that a psychiatrist brings into the treatment determine a great deal. In the

7. Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near*; Gaudin, “Kurzweil: Computers Will Enable People to Live Forever.”

8. Herzfeld, “Creating in our Own Image,” 304–6.

9. Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 40–41.

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absence of a correct conceptual model of a human being, psychiatrists, psychologists, and all those in the field of mental health, are bound to “run up against an inadequate framework for treating” the person as he actually is.<sup>10</sup> Andrew Sims, the former president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, a supporter of biopsychiatry, points to the “unhealthy situation” created in modern times where “psychiatry denies the significance, and even existence, of soul or spirit.” This has been “disastrous for all those involved,” he claims.<sup>11</sup>

When many theologians in the latter part of the twentieth century rejected the idea of the existence of the soul, the soul did not disappear as some might have expected. According to Jeffrey Boyd, a distinguished psychiatrist, it only “got uncoupled from religion.” Today the soul is as talked about and analyzed as it ever was in the history of humanity. The difference is that now it is called by different names: “self,” “personality,” “mind,” “I,” or even “*psyche*.” The new soul experts, according to Boyd, are those in the mental health profession who treat and analyze the soul through various procedures, “without ever mentioning God.” Throughout history, the question “who am I?” was always treated as a religious reflection. But twenty-first-century Western culture considers it to be a “psychological question.” From Boyd’s perspective, this question that the popular culture is consumed with can only be answered if we start with God and with why Christ had to die in our place.<sup>12</sup>

Warren Kinghorn, a psychiatrist and theologian himself, believes that the church has assumed that “mental illness” is a “given,” and as a result it has failed to build a theological response to concepts that are not only “not givens,” but are badly in need of some interpretive help. The longstanding questions and doubts about a psychiatric diagnosis “can be solved *not* by more and more research but rather *only* by a theology, or something like a theology,” claims Kinghorn.<sup>13</sup> This is where anthropology can adjudicate the debate on the best course of action for treating mental illness; a “properly nuanced Christian anthropology” would provide a “more complex account of human agency” than is being advertised by

10. Moreland, “Restoring the Substance to the Soul of Psychology,” 30.

11. Sims, *Is Faith Delusion?*, 2.

12. Jeffrey Boyd points to Oscar Cullman’s seminal essay challenging the concept of an immortal soul as a turning point in this debate; Boyd, “Losing Soul,” 472–74, 479; and Cullman, *Immortality of the Soul Or Resurrection of the Dead?*

13. Kinghorn, “Ordering ‘Mental Disorder.’” Emphasis mine.

some consumer advocacy groups<sup>14</sup> and would provide psychiatry with “a much needed aesthetic and eschatological context” to perform its challenging task.<sup>15</sup>

This is the challenge that this chapter will take up: to understand the true nature of the human being as revealed within Scripture, but in so doing to focus not only on what a human *is*, but also on what a human *can be or ought to be*.

## A Theological Framework

There is a long tradition of inquiry into the nature and constitution of the human person in the history of the church. Different theologians and philosophers have attempted to determine the proper way to construe the elemental construct (i.e., mental, physical, spiritual) of a human person. Some see the human as a single physical substance (physicalism), others as a single non-physical/spiritual substance (idealism), some as two distinct substances (dualism), and others as consisting of three distinct substances (trichotomism). There also are a variety of positions within each one of these categories. This debate usually structured as the body/soul, or brain/mind has engaged philosophers and theologians for centuries. But, in the past two centuries, due to the implications raised by dramatic developments in the neurosciences, this debate has received vitality and intensity beyond what was experienced in earlier times. Advancements of imaging technologies have opened up unparalleled windows to the brain.

The advances in neurosciences, plus great challenges and opportunities presented by technological developments in artificial intelligence, human cloning, and DNA discoveries have caused theologians and philosophers to rethink their theological anthropologies. They are asking new questions about how we should make sense of biblical revelations in light of scientific developments, questions about how to address a wide range of issues, including distinguishing humans, animals, and machines; the role of human agency, free will, moral responsibility; and making sense of our traditional values for human significance.

14. *Ibid.*, 16. He points to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), which, in an attempt to fight stigmatization of those suffering from mental illness, promotes mental illness as “no-fault brain disorders.” See [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

15. Kinghorn has addressed these issues in greater details in his own doctoral dissertation, “Medicating the Eschatological Body.”

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Our definition of the human constitution has great implications for our traditional Christian doctrines. What does it mean that we are sinners before God? What is the hope of salvation in Christ? What is it that is being saved? What does it mean that we are made in the image of God? What is spiritual growth? What is sanctification, and *who* or *what* is being sanctified? Are prayer and worship byproducts of our brain chemical stimulations? What does death mean? What does Scripture say about who we are and how we are made? A proper understanding of what it means to be a human has significant implications on these fundamental questions answered by Christian tradition.<sup>16</sup>

### *A Trinitarian Framework*

In theological anthropology, the relationship between God and humans takes precedence over any other issue and will inform all other determinations that we may make. God displays His “ownership of the world and of the human race” through the act of creation. He is not only the “power behind creation”, but also, “its authoritative interpreter,” and its “faithful maintainer.” Frame notes that since God’s Wisdom was “his agent of creation (Prov 8),” it is impossible for us to make sense of the mysteries of creation—human creation being the climactic act—without seeking God’s Wisdom.<sup>17</sup>

Since, in biblical teachings, humans are primarily presented in the context of the covenantal relationship with God, I will define our theological anthropology within the paradigm of the *economic* Trinity. Frame claims that the whole Bible is about God’s story of redeeming His people. Since, God chose the name *Yahweh* (LORD) for Himself, and that name is “at the heart of the fundamental confession of faith of God’s people,” he wants his people to know him primarily as a covenantal Lord.<sup>18</sup> *Economic* Trinity speaks of how the triune God relates to creatures, centered on the distinct roles played by the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in regards to creation, providence, and redemption.<sup>19</sup>

16. *Ibid.*, 3; Cortez’s dissertation (“Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies”) raises these fundamental questions.

17. Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 296, 298.

18. Deut 6:4–5; Rom 10:9. Frame has written a multi-volume exposition of God’s covenantal Lordship. See *ibid.*, 12.

19. *Ibid.*, 706.

We can only understand the human person in relationship to the God who is Creator, Redeemer, and Life-giver/Sanctifier. God is thus “the answer to questions about the ultimate origin, meaning, and goal of life which lie behind all other problems and questions.” An anthropology based on faith in the triune God explores all events of life—including “mental illness”—through the interpretative lens of this Creator-creature relationship.<sup>20</sup> The human being is thus understood from a threefold perspective: first, based on the knowledge of God the Creator—the human is made by the Father in his image; second, based on the knowledge of God the Redeemer—the human is one who as a sinner cannot fulfill God’s purposes for his life alone and is in need of redemption by the Son; and finally, based on the knowledge of God the Lifegiver/Sanctifier—the human is in need of regeneration to become “alive” in Christ and grow in conformity to his image. The act of regeneration, though mysterious to us, causes one to be born of the Spirit of God—a true union between the Spirit of God/Christ and the human spirit.<sup>21</sup>

## The Father and the Creation of Human Being

In the book of Genesis, following the creation of light, heaven, earth, seas, vegetation, and animals, God on the sixth day created Adam, the first man, from the dirt of the earth. Wayne Grudem explains that the creation text brings to light God’s lordship over his creation, and highlights the fact that creation came to being because of God’s free will, and “it is to be used solely for His purposes, and that is to glorify Him.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore, all our lives and circumstances that we encounter will providentially point to God’s glory and his lordship over his creation (Isa 43:21; Eph 1:11–12; 1 Cor 10:31). This fact highlights that human lives have purpose and significance.

The first creation account introduces the human person as the pinnacle of God’s creative activity. Moreover, it affirms human beings’ unique

20. Shirley Guthrie is a systematic theologian who has developed a strategy for pastoral counseling drawing on central insights from Barth’s theological anthropology. He presents a helpful example of how economic Trinity can be used as a model to deal with human issues in counseling. Guthrie, Jr., “Pastoral Counseling, Trinitarian Theology, and Christian Anthropology,” 132; see also Hunsinger, *Theology and Pastoral Counseling*, 18.

21. For explanation of regeneration, see Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 74–75; Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 301–2; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 468.

22. Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 129.

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significance and dignity as created in the image of God himself.<sup>23</sup> Consider the following relevant texts from the first chapter of Genesis:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule.” . . . And God created [*bara*] man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:26–27)

By “divine fiat,” God created *adam*—“generic humanity.” The verb used here for act of creating is *bara*. *Bara* stresses “the initiation of the object,” not any manipulative act that may be necessary afterwards.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, the verse emphasizes God’s creation of the essence of man, his inner person, and marks this creature—*adam*—as something special, resembling God. Created to reflect God’s likeness, man stands out in distinction and superior to other creatures made on the same sixth day. Verse 27 shows that humankind was created as two sexes. James Beck and Bruce Demarest state, “The repeated affirmation that God created persons in His image signifies that both male and female possess a remarkable resemblance to Himself” in their inner persons, and both are “endowed with unparalleled dignity and worth.”<sup>25</sup>

And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good (Gen 1:31).

Is this an absolute pronouncement about the nature of creation? Beck and Demarest claim, “The descriptor, ‘very good,’ denotes that the entire creation, including human persons, perfectly conforms to the divine will and is ideally suited to the purpose for which God created it.” If God created the universe including persons for his own glory then it is expected that their design, whether we approve of that design or not, would ultimately fulfill God’s purpose.<sup>26</sup>

In Genesis 2, God formed the human person from the dust of the earth, and breathed life into his material frame:

Then the LORD God formed [*yatsar*] man of dust from ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [*nismat hayyim*]; and man became a living being [*nephes hayya*] (Gen 2:7).

23. Beck and Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 39.

24. Zodhiates, *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, 1716.

25. Beck and Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 39–40.

26. *Ibid.*, 40.

This was not a mechanical act as if “He first formed a body of clay and then put a soul into it,” explains Louis Berkhof; “When God formed the body, He formed it so that by the breath of His Spirit man at once became a living soul.”<sup>27</sup> Here the verb *yatsar* (to form, to sculpt) is used in contrast to *bara* in verse 1:27, emphasizing that the act of creation took place once. Here, the emphasis is on how God formed man’s structure and made him to become a living being, where in 1:27 the focus was on man’s inner person to be a reflection of God’s image. Although *nsama* (“breath”) is also used of the life force that animates animals (Gen 7:22), according to Walther Eichrodt, “animals are produced and brought to life simply, so to speak, by the universal divine breath blowing through the whole of Nature.” However, only in the case of the man is there recorded “a direct transfer of the divine breath” that constitutes the man “an independent spiritual I” and unique image of God.<sup>28</sup>

The body was made out of the dust of the ground, but the soul of the man came to life through a new substance, the breath of God. Berkhof believes that in these simple words—distinguishing the “dust” from ground and the “breath” of the living God—the twofold nature of man is clearly pronounced, and corroborated by other passages in Scripture (Eccl 12:7; Matt 10:28; Luke 8:55; 2 Cor 5:1–8; 1 Pet 3:19). The two elements are the “body” and the “spirit of life,” and by the combination of the two, “man” became a “living soul.” In fact, from Berkhof’s perspective, man is a living soul who has a body and a spirit; “Thus, it may be said that man *has* spirit, but *is* soul.”<sup>29</sup>

HUMAN ONTOLOGY—Considering the variety of positions in regards to the human constitution in contemporary debates, one could arrange them in three distinct broad categories: *monism*, *dualism*, and *trichotomism*.<sup>30</sup>

Broadly speaking, influenced by biblical references such as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12, Christian *Trichotomists*<sup>31</sup> see the three distinct components of the human to consist of: (1) a physical body—the source of all passions; (2) a soul—as the seat of rationality with reason,

27. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 192.

28. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2:121.

29. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 183, 194.

30. Beck and Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 120.

31. For examples of the trichotomist position, see Nee, *The Spiritual Man* and van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context*.

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affection, and will; (3) a spirit—as the center of connection with God.<sup>32</sup> In this view, all people have a soul, and different faculties of the soul can either serve God or yield to sin. They argue that as the consequence of sin, the spirit of the human is dead before faith, and it comes to life when one receives the new life.<sup>33</sup>

In the *dualistic* views, soul (Heb. *nephesh* and Gk. *psyche*) and spirit (Heb. *ruach* and Gk. *pneuma*) both refer to the immaterial part of the human, and in many biblical texts it appears that they are used interchangeably. “This is the part that lives on after our bodies die,” says Grudem. He emphasizes, “Those who hold this view often agree that Scripture uses the word ‘spirit’ . . . more frequently when referring to our relationship to God.” Many people with dualistic views affirm that the biblical text portrays the human as a unified entity with a constant interaction between the “material” and the “immaterial” parts of which the person is made.<sup>34</sup> This interaction is of a great significance in the manifestation of “mental illness.”

Until the early part of twentieth century, according to J. P. Moreland, the vast majority of Christian thinkers believed in substance dualism—body and soul/spirit. He states that “the mind<sup>35</sup> and spirit are faculties of the soul and the soul is an immaterial substantial reality that contains a person’s various faculties of consciousness.” Moreover, the soul is what “animates . . . and makes the body human.”<sup>36</sup> Thomas Aquinas claimed, “we now proceed to treat of man, who is composed of a spiritual and corporeal substance.”<sup>37</sup> Although humans are created as holistic unified persons, Moreland asserts that most Christians “ought to” believe in the preservation of “personal identity” in a “disembodied intermediate state.”<sup>38</sup> The

32. Beck and Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 127.

33. The text used for this argument is Romans 8:10: “And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.” See Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 193.

34. *Ibid.*, 193–94. Grudem points out: “in John 12:27, Jesus says, ‘Now is my *soul* troubled;’ whereas in a very similar context in the next chapter John says that Jesus was ‘troubled in *spirit*’ (John 13:21).”

35. The Old Testament does not have a specific word for mind; it is usually referred to by *leb* (heart), or *kilya* (kidney) or *ruach* (spirit), always referring to the innermost part of the person, Gk. *nous*, *dianoia*, *phronema*. Beck and Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 132–34.

36. Moreland, “Restoring the Soul to Christianity,” 23–27.

37. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*.

38. Moreland, “Restoring the Soul to Christianity,” 23–27.

doctrine of intermediate state has been part of the faith of many Christians since the inception of the tradition. John Cooper, who has done a detailed exposition of this doctrine, points out that not everyone who advocates the “traditional view of the afterlife” is necessarily a dualist. For example, both G. C. Berkouwer and Herman Ridderbos strongly defend Pauline teaching of the intermediate state, yet both vehemently reject dualism.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Moreland, most people, Christian or non-Christian, consider dualism to be the natural response to how they perceive themselves. Many philosophers who reject the dualistic view, even, admit that it is “the common sense view.”<sup>40</sup> Today, the concept of dualism is being challenged, not by atheists or non-believers who might consider Christianity to be very archaic, but rather by some sincere Christian theologians or philosophers. These people are pointing to scientific findings in brain sciences and making a case that “mind is something that matter *does*.” The mind emerges out of chemical interactions and electrical stimulations within the brain.<sup>41</sup> For many theologians and philosophers, this reliance of the mind on the brain has made the existence of a distinct self-activating entity such as the soul/mind questionable. This has serious implication for how psychiatrists treat mental illness, for it has caused them to embrace a reductionist view of human being, an entity that is only as good as its physical parts and its chemical construct.

Those who propose a holistic portrait of human nature and insist on the physicalness of its constitution insist that since “science has not yet discovered empirical evidence for the existence of the soul,” we cannot assume that there is a reality distinct from the physical body. These *monists* claim that terms such as *mind*, *soul*, and *spirit* depict human beings from different perspectives, and have no bearing on the constitution of one’s nature. Philosophically, *monism* consists of supporters of both *materialism* (also called *physicalism*), and *idealism or panpsychism* (contending that all is spiritual).<sup>42</sup> In today’s contemporary debates, monists with a variety of views are presenting a challenge to the historical dualism of Christian faith.

39. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 159.

40. Moreland, “Restoring the Soul to Christianity,” 23.

41. Welch, *Blame it on the Brain?*, 29–30.

42. Beck and Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 120–22; Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 20 n.36. For detailed views in support of materialism, see Bultmann and Grobel, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:209; Berkouwer, *Man*, 203; and Robinson, *The Body*, 16.

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Joel Green is a New Testament theologian who argues for *ontological monism*. He admits that there is enough textual evidence in the New Testament for the dualistic reading to have gained support, but he dismisses that as “conceptual glossolalia.”<sup>43</sup> Green is primarily concerned to take a stand against the Gnostic denigration of the body and individualistic spirituality and soteriology to the exclusion of relational issues of present life in the community of God’s people. Yet Cooper, who has developed a cogent and popularly received position called “holistic dualism,”<sup>44</sup> considers Green’s argumentations for an “alternative to the traditional position” to be “incomplete and unsound.”<sup>45</sup> Green rejects the idea that Luke 16 has anything to do with an intermediate state and sees the characters acting as “human agents with a corporeal existence.”<sup>46</sup> Cooper objects to this position and suggests that Green “avoids the topic” of intermediate state even when he comments on Luke 23:43—Jesus’ conversation with the thief on the cross—and fails to “engage the debate about this important aspect of Luke’s eschatology.”<sup>47</sup> Green deals lightly with his alternative reading of 2 Corinthians 5:1–10 and admits that this text is “the most pressing evidence in Paul for a body-soul dualism,” but argues that irrespective of Paul’s inconsistent language, for him, “embodied existence is the norm.”<sup>48</sup> Cooper notes that in an effort to avoid the debate about the disembodied intermediate state, Green “fails to consider” 2 Corinthians 5:6–9, 12:2–4 and Philippians 1:20–24—where Paul points to a separation from his body. In Cooper’s view, Green brushes over evidence related to the intermediate state instead of directly “refuting it” or arguing for an alternative interpretation that would be “as comprehensive and coherent” as the traditional readings. Nonetheless, many Christian monists consider Green’s exegetical reading of a materialistic human nature not only acceptable, but rather convincing.

One of the more vocal advocates of monism is Christian philosopher Nancey Murphy. Murphy advocates *non-reductive physicalism*, defining the person as “a physical organism whose complex functioning, both in society and in relation to God, gives rise to ‘higher’ human capacities

43. Green, “Bodies—that is, Human Lives,” 173.

44. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 108.

45. *Ibid.*, xxii.

46. Green, “Bodies—that is, Human Lives,” 168.

47. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, xxii.

48. Green, “Bodies—that is, Human Lives,” 171–72.

such as morality and spirituality.”<sup>49</sup> Murphy contends that Christians can remain faithful “with a view of the human being as a purely physical creation,” because, “In the Hebrew Bible, human life is regularly understood monistically rather than dualistically, and this unified being is a physical being.” She is not as concrete about the portrayal of humans in the New Testament, and perceives that those writers “recognize a variety of conceptions of the composition or makeup of the human being.” However, she assures us, that they “do not *teach* body-soul dualism.”<sup>50</sup>

It seems that Murphy et al. in their attempt to describe the “human nature that would allow for greater resonance between science and faith,”<sup>51</sup> have concluded that “humans are what you see,” and nothing more; that is “there is not another invisible, non-material part of the individual that must be factored into the formula of understanding.”<sup>52</sup> Warren Brown concludes that they see value in this position because it “allows one to accept and profit from both scientific and theological accounts of humankind.” This is essential for reconciling theological and scientific accounts. Brown says: “If the human being is not divided into parts, such as body and soul, then explanations given by different disciplines and from difference [*sic*] perspectives must ultimately be seen as noncontradictory.” It also seems that by reducing humans to one substance, they seek to remove some complexity. The “understanding of human nature,” says Brown, is a “grandiose” task that they are trying to simplify, and make it “at least theoretically possible.” But what if in their noble cause to reduce complexity, they destroy the identity of what they’re studying? The aforementioned objectives run the risk of sacrificing theology at the altar of science in a realm that science is not well-equipped to address.

A. Pedro Barrajon skillfully challenges Murphy’s and Brown’s arguments, contending that if the spiritual realm cannot be detected by scientific methods, “that does not mean that [it does] not exist nor that there be not a form of knowledge different from that proposed by experimental sciences. . . . The soul cannot in effect be experienced by science, except by its spiritual activity.” The question is whether we accept the existence of the

49. Murphy, “Human Nature,” 25. Murphy has co-edited and contributed two chapters to *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, which is a collection of articles by Christians from different walks of life, including some prominent biologists, psychologists, ethicists, philosophers, and theologians, all advocating for physicalism.

50. Murphy, “I Celebrate Myself,” 24–25, cited in Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, xxiv–xxv.

51. Murphy, “Human Nature,” xiii.

52. Brown, “Conclusion,” 228.

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spiritual realm or not, a concept which admittedly is culturally dissonant, but not necessarily philosophically obtuse. If the metaphysical level is not accepted, then everything has to be studied by empirical methods. But if the spiritual realm, as clearly presented in Scripture, is a reality, then it has to be studied by appropriate methods relevant to that realm. None of the hard sciences are able to study or handle the soul/spirit, because it is not conducive to their methodologies and falls outside of their field of investigation.<sup>53</sup>

Now, with all these debates, are recent philosophical and scientific developments sufficient for the “wholesale revisionism” or agnostic positions that some theologians advocate? “No,” strongly responds Cooper. He points out that, like himself, the dualists are not caving in and theologians, philosophers, and scientists alike—such as J. P. Moreland, Scott Rae, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swinburne, Jeffrey Boyd, Sir John Eccles (the Nobel Laureate for his work in brain physiology), and many others—strongly argue for the biblical evidence in support of dualism.<sup>54</sup> Cooper believes that none of the advancements in brain sciences and our understanding of the correlation of mental states and the brain functions justify favoring monism over “a doctrinally required dualism.” He points to Nancey Murphy’s candid statement about this. After researching the advances in brain sciences, she admits: “It is still possible to claim that there is a substantial

53. Barrajon, “The Soul in Theology,” 462–63.

54. Moreland argues that regardless of how “widespread Christian monism” is, a careful exegetical reading of Scripture cannot sustain it. “Holy Scripture clearly teaches some form of anthropological dualism” (Moreland and Rae, *Body & Soul*, 23). Alvin C. Plantinga, “On Heresy, Mind, and Truth,” 186: “Now I should confess upfront that I confess dualism.” He continues to emphasize that dualism was accepted by Paul and is what the Christian creeds teach; Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, xviii.n9; and Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul*, 174, 310–11. Swinburne defends an anthropology in which humans are made of two substances, body and soul, which causally interact with each other, hence, “*dualistic interactionism*.” He says, “A man’s having a mental life must be understood as a non-bodily part of the man, his soul, having a mental life.” Swinburne uses an analogy of a light bulb and a socket to argue that soul (like a light bulb) needs the brain (similar to a socket) to turn on and work. Thus, the breakage of either the bulb or the socket eliminates the light. He points out that it is the omnipotent God who sustains the soul, and even if the brain stops working, he is able to keep the soul alive. Boyd advocates a dualistic model of human constitution and believes that the complexity of human characteristics such as consciousness, free will and sinful tendencies cannot be supported through materialistic models. See also Boyd, “What DNA Tells Us about the Human Soul,” 142–59 and Eccles, *Facing Reality*, 173–74; he believes in Cartesian *dualistic interactionism*. He identifies “the subjective component of each of us,” which is “the conscious self” as the soul. He believes that the soul “is non-material and hence is not subject in death to disintegration that affects all components of the individual . . . both the body and the brain.”

mind and that its operations are neatly *correlated* with brain events. . . . It follows, then, that no amount of evidence from neuroscience can *prove* a physicalist view of the mental.”<sup>55</sup>

As was previously explained, the body/soul debate is structured as brain/mind debate among neuroscientists and psychiatrists. For decades many brain scientists have hoped that sooner or later they will map a one-on-one causal connection between specific brain states and particular functions of the mind. According to Cooper, “science has not turned out that way.”<sup>56</sup> It has not been easy to find a complete correlation between brain events and particular states of consciousness. The brain seems to function like a major network in which millions of inter-connected events have to work together to bring about a single thought or emotion. This does not mean that if one experiences the same thought or emotion repeatedly, the brain cells will go through the same connections every single time. In fact in some cases of those who have suffered from strokes or other damages, other parts of brain can take over to compensate for the damaged parts.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the complexity of interactions among brain cells specific to any mental state make it prohibitive to map the relation between the two. Thus, the “thesis that all mental events are correlated with specific kinds of brain events” is just a thesis that has not been proven.<sup>58</sup>

Even if a strict and consistent correlation between mental states and changes in the brain could be observed, this would not prove that the brain events were the cause of mental states. In fact the experience demonstrates that *brain states could easily be the effect of mental states*. This theory plays a big role in how mental illness should be evaluated. Brain scientists have observed that a person could easily generate complex brain events, for example, by visualizing an image, meditating on God, being anxious, or fearing something. In these cases it is clearly the mind that affects the brain; thus, *it is very possible that mental turmoil causes changes in the brain*. Therefore, according to neuroscience research, based on “hard empirical data,” we can see two distinct “kinds of events—mental and physiological—each of which appears to be able to affect the other.”

55. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, xxvi; Murphy, *Human Nature*, 139.

56. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 206.

57. Jill Bolte Taylor is a neuroanatomist who experienced a massive stroke, and explains how her brain was retrained to relearn the functions it had lost resulted from her brain damage. Taylor, *My Stroke of Insight*.

58. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 206.

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The actual mechanism behind this correlation is not detectable.<sup>59</sup> The famous brain surgeon and neurophysiologist Wilder Penfield declared:

The nature of the mind presents . . . perhaps the most difficult and most important of all problems. For myself, after a professional lifetime spent in trying to discover how the brain accounts for the mind, it comes as a surprise now to discover . . . that the dualist hypothesis seems the more reasonable of the two possible explanations. . . . In the end I conclude that there is no good evidence, in spite of new methods . . . that the brain alone can carry out the work that the mind does. I conclude that it is easier to rationalize man's being on the basis of two elements than on the basis of one.<sup>60</sup>

Despite all of the advancements in brain sciences, Herman van Praag, the Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at the universities of Groningen, Utrecht, and Maastricht, the Netherlands, and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, recently wrote:

Today the brain reigns supreme in psychiatry at the expense of the mind. The mind is in danger to be usurped by the brain. Mind, so it is rumored in neurobiological circles, will eventually and probably pretty soon reveal its secrets via the study of the brain. . . . For the future of psychiatry, this reductionist viewpoint is risky. Psychiatrists cannot, with impunity, disregard an important domain of man's personality makeup. . . . It seems highly unlikely that in the foreseeable future, brain studies will provide useful information about the appearance of individual minds. As psychiatrists, we should continue to honor the mind in its own right. Let's not quench its luster by reducing it to sheer matter.<sup>61</sup>

Andrew Sims reiterates this point by explaining why spiritual experiences are more than mere "irritation of the brain." Even if a scientist can pinpoint all mental states and visions and beliefs to specific localities in the brain, this only explains where in the brain the experience was mediated. "[W]hen I look at and see a cherry tree," Sims explains, "there is electrical activity in my occipital cortex at the back of my brain." This does not mean that the cherry tree is not real and is only the effect of Sims's brain state.

59. Newberg et al., *Why God Won't Go Away*, 7, 36–37; Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 207; and Clarke, *Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God*, 21.

60. Penfield, *The Mystery of the Mind*, 85, 114.

61. Van Praag, "Enlightenment and Dimmed Enlightenment."

Identifying brain locality of an experience does not “*explain away*” that experience, any more than “an analysis of the wood fiber *explains away* the meaning of what is written on this page.”<sup>62</sup> Consequently, the argument that brain causes “mental illness” merely due to observation of changes in the brain is questionable. The changes could very well be the byproduct of the turbulence in a person’s soul, spirit, and mind.

Kenneth Kendler, a psychiatrist and a philosopher, a hard-core biological/genetic researcher, attempts to offer a “coherent conceptual and philosophical framework for psychiatry.” He claims that psychiatry needs to go beyond the “temptations of simplistic reductionist models” and “embrace complexity” of mind-brain interrelationship and accept that, “In ways we can observe but not yet fully understand, subjective, first-person mental phenomena have causal efficacy in the world. They affect our brains and our bodies and through them the outside world.” For him, “both brain → mind and mind → brain causality are real,” and psychiatrists who reject this reality are doing it to their own and their patient’s peril.<sup>63</sup>

As demonstrated here, the brain/mind (or body/soul) relations continue to be hotly debated not only among theologians but among neuroscientists and psychiatrists as well. However, regardless of distinct perspectives on human ontology, there seems to be an emerging consensus among most theologians that God created humans as holistic entities. Cooper offers a distinction between “functional holism” and “ontological holism” to drive at his model of “holistic dualism.” In *functional holism* “the body-soul complex is a deeply integrated unity with a vastly complicated, intricate array of mutual functional dependence and causal connections.” Functional holism allows for the soul to exist independent from the body, but certainly sustained by God at all times. *Ontological holism* argues that “mental constituents” of a person are “ontologically dependent” on a properly functioning brain and thus no disembodiment is possible. In Cooper’s model, “A holistic entity could conceivably be constituted out of any number of metaphysical substances or principles.” These distinct substances of a whole may exist independent from each other, yet “without all the properties and capacities they had when integrated within the whole.” Thus, there is a “phenomenological,” “functional,” and “existential” unity, yet the “whole” at the bottom is not a “single homogeneous substance.”<sup>64</sup>

62. Sims, *Is Faith Delusion?*, 111.

63. Kendler, “Toward a Philosophical Structure for Psychiatry,” 433–40.

64. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, xxvii, 45–46; Moreland and Rae, *Body & Soul*, 21.

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It is striking that, despite the widespread consensus that Jesus Christ is the ultimate model for humanity, much of the contemporary theological anthropology has failed to center its formulations of human ontology in a Christocentric context. If Christ is the perfect human person, what must we believe about human ontology? The analysis of scientific and philosophical investigations into the nature of the brain and mind are rarely done through the christological lens.<sup>65</sup> For example, Nancey Murphy has stated that the emerging positions on the mind/brain debates may have “implications for thinking about the person of Christ,” but she fails to reverse the direction of her analysis to evaluate how human constitution ought to be perceived in light of who Jesus was. In fact, she goes as far as saying that with recent scientific findings, and the “recognition of the continuity of humans with the whole of nature,” it is time for “reconsideration of the scope of God’s final transformative act.”<sup>66</sup> She is so certain of human understanding of self that she is willing to fundamentally question the history of revelation in the Christian tradition.

In fact most christological models used for understanding human beings are limited to Jesus’ actions and behaviors and what he “reveals as the *exemplar* of true human living.”<sup>67</sup> Regardless of the value of such models, it is a very limited lens through which to understand the nature of a human person christologically. Nellas argues for *imitatio Christi* to be understood as an internal mode of “*Christification*” to be transformed to his likeness rather than a mere “external imitation.” This ontological likeness will lead to moral imitation.<sup>68</sup>

For Barth, the priority of Jesus’ subjective experience over any physical agents is of “decisive importance . . . in the anthropology of Jesus.”

65. Cortez makes a point that, even when a theologian is clearly committed to the Christocentric approach to anthropology, such as Ray Anderson who makes his anthropological arguments based on Barth’s Christocentric anthropology, he never addresses what implications this christological model has on human ontology. Cortez, “Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies,” 6.

66. Murphy, “Human Nature,” 23.

67. Cortez, “Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies,” 6.

68. Nellas and Russell, *Deification in Christ*, 39, 136–39, 153–54; cited in Cortez, “Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies,” 7 n. 14. It seems as if Nellas is arguing that imitation is more ontological than moral. The question one should ask is: What is the relationship between Christ’s ontology and his morality? Could it be that it is the abundance of Divine Spirit in him that brings his perfection? John Owen argues that the Holy Spirit is what caused the Son’s *imaging of God* in Jesus’ humanity. See Owen, *The Works*, 3:168–69, cited in McDonald, “The Pneumatology of the ‘Lost’ Image in John Owen,” 327.

When man “thinks and wills,” claims Barth, “the soul proceeds,” and “the body follows.”<sup>69</sup> But stressing the holistic nature of Christ as the model of humanity, he points to the fact that Christ’s body and soul are inseparable; yet, it is *always* the spiritual realm that is directing him, and interestingly, this invisible reality always manifests in a physical form. Barth says:

He does not fulfill His office and His work from His miraculous annunciation to His fulfillment in such a way that we can separate His outer form from His inner or His inner form from His outer. *Everything* is the revelation of an inner, invisible, *spiritual* plane of life. But it is almost more striking and characteristic that everything has an outer, visible, bodily form.<sup>70</sup>

According to Cortez, “Any view of the human person, on Barth’s account, that gave primacy to the body in the activity of the person, would, therefore, undermine the biblical account of Jesus’ person and work.” For Barth, it is “a series of key christological principles from which anthropological reflection must begin.” However, it must always be done in a way that “anthropology is not reduced to Christology.” We should avoid collapsing the two into one another.<sup>71</sup>

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD—Throughout the church ages the portrayal of humanity as being in the image of God has been intensively analyzed, resulting in varied and diverse hypotheses and sentiments concerning the meaning of *imago Dei* in Scripture. From ancient Jews to contemporary theologians, from philosophers to psychologists, scholars have debated for centuries about God’s statement, “Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness,” leading to various conclusions.

The significance of the topic invites renewed attention any time we gaze at profound human challenges (e.g., deep suffering caused by mental illness) and seek to understand them in the context of God’s image in the human person. We will not attempt a comprehensive survey and synthesis of *imago Dei* here, but will focus upon those elements that will have direct impact on questions with which this study is concerned.<sup>72</sup> There is little exegetical consensus about the phrase in Genesis 1:26, so that it plays vir-

69. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3/2:418.

70. *Ibid.*, 3/2:327; emphasis mine.

71. Cortez, “Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies,” 99, 217.

72. Overstreet has developed a detailed historical survey of well-known theologians’ perspectives on the *imago of God*. See Overstreet, “Man in the Image of God.”

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tually no role in theological formulations of the Old Testament. However, it dominates the anthropology of the New Testament, and there is almost a universal agreement that in the New Testament it is clearly identified with the person of Jesus Christ as the true image of the invisible God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15).

LeRon Shults points out that the significance of *imago Dei* for Christians comes from the fact that it points to Jesus. Since Jesus is the true *imago Dei*, then the “ultimate reality” of being “human” requires partaking of His life.<sup>73</sup> Van Hyssteen echoes the significance of humanity sharing in the life of God revealed in Christ. Humanity, he says, “is intrinsically oriented to life with God in the Spirit as disclosed in Jesus Christ who alone is the true image of God.”<sup>74</sup> Thus, in our anthropological formulation, *imago Dei* plays a vital role. After all, if Jesus, the perfect human person, is the true image of God, what does that say about the rest of humanity? How might God be transforming humanity to that true *imago*?<sup>75</sup>

While affirming the true reflection of *imago Dei* in the person of Jesus, how should one interpret the chasm between the image emanating from Him, in contrast to the rest of humanity? Where does this likeness lie between God and humans, or God and Jesus? Did humans totally lose the image as a result of sin? Or is it merely marred and defaced? Was the image meant to be shared among all humanity, or was it a special gift for people of faith? What is the mystery behind restoration of the image if it is lost or damaged? What does it mean to our daily lives? Have we mixed up the specific identification of the image with the implications resulting from it? Is the image part of our ontology (*substantive* interpretation), or is it about our role and functionality in life on earth (*functional* interpretation), or is it about our relational capacities (*relational* interpretation)?<sup>76</sup>

Many theologians, ancient and modern, see the image of God in humans as the capacity to imitate God and grow to be more and more in His likeness. Nonna Verna Harrison emphasizes that for the early church fathers “there is no imitation except through participation in the

73. Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 220.

74. Van Hyssteen, *Alone in the World?*, 125.

75. See further explanation of a Christological perspective of the *imago Dei*: Watson, *Text and Truth*, 277–304; Marshall, “Being Human: Made in the Image of God,” 55; and McFarland, *The Divine Image*, 4.

76. Some have added other categories to these commonly used groupings, such as *existential* (closely associated with the relational view of neo-orthodoxy) and *eschatological* interpretations (e.g., Moltmann’s). See Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 233–40, and Van Hyssteen, *Alone in the World?*, 126.

archetype,” which can only be granted through God’s gracious gift of Self.<sup>77</sup> Thus, bearing God’s image necessarily meant *participating* in the life of the Trinity. Therefore, *theosis* played a key role in the Patristic foundation of any anthropological formulation. This did not necessarily mean “a glorious transfiguration of the human person”; but it was about sharing in and having union with the Spirit of God and the “communal life” of the Trinity. The common belief tends to limit this understanding of *imago Dei* to the Greek fathers or Cappadocians in particular. Harrison makes a case that “recent patristic scholarship has shown that the Cappadocians and Augustine agree . . . more than is sometimes supposed.” The fathers understood “*imago Dei* primarily in Christological” terms.<sup>78</sup> According to this view, without faith in Christ the image cannot be manifested in the person. Moreover, “the *imago Dei* means . . . the inmost core of the human person is ontologically connected to God. This point of contact enables us to enter into communion with God and participate in divine life.”<sup>79</sup>

Some of the fathers distinguished between image and likeness. Irenaeus is considered to be the “earliest significant” commentator on the doctrine of *Imago*, which the church took henceforth as standard. He held that man, after the Fall, continued to possess the image (*tselem*) of God, but lost his likeness (*demuth*). From an etymological perspective, *tselem* meant representation, and *demuth* meant imitation. Thus the “image was construed to be the basic natural *form* of the human, while likeness was taken to mean the supernaturally endowed *function* of existing in right relation to the Creator.”<sup>80</sup> It is only through the work of Christ that man can receive the “robe of sanctity,” which is the likeness of God and it is granted *only* through the *Spirit*. Thus, “likeness” comes by the work of the Spirit as mediator of righteousness. This was a promise seed in Adam that anticipated the work of Christ, and Adam lost it as a result of the Fall. For

77. Harrison, “Greek Patristic Foundations of Trinitarian Anthropology,” 399.

78. Ibid., 400. The Greek fathers and Augustine alike strongly advocated the relationship between participation in the Spirit of Christ and formation of *imago*. Augustine wrote: “But the soul’s beatitude, by which it is made happy, cannot be, except by participation of that ever-living life and unchanging and eternal substance which is God. . . . It is made blessed by participation in God.” For him this is possible only because of Christ’s Incarnation and by grace. According to Bonner, Augustine was “prepared to equate justification and deification, regarding both as the consequence of man’s adoption,” and insisted that “our renewal and reform to the image of God is a process which, begun in baptism, is the work of a lifetime.” See Bonner, “Augustine’s Conception of Deification,” 373, 384, 381.

79. Harrison, “Greek Patristic Foundations of Trinitarian Anthropology,” 401.

80. Anderson, *On Being Human*, 216–17.

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Irenaeus, there was a clear distinction between a human's natural nature (image) and the supernatural nature (likeness) potentially endowed by the Spirit consequent to the work of Christ.<sup>81</sup>

Augustine continued with Irenaeus' view of separation between image and likeness, yet for him the "Primitive State" was a state of perfection. In Irenaeus's view *likeness* grew as the person matured spiritually; but in Augustine Adam was created with an "original state of perfection." Augustine was influenced by Neo-Platonist concepts and had a "mystical concept of *imago*," which was the essence of a "person in love and knowledge of God," but his commitment to Scripture and Trinitarian self-love made his approach to *imago* very *pneumatological*. Andrew Louth remarks, for Augustine, "An image is like that of which it is the image, but less than it. . . . The image seeks to return to that of which it is the image—it longs for its archetype." Augustine created a dichotomy between the rational soul and spiritual soul; the former holding a lower level of knowledge, and the latter holding knowledge of God. The Fall virtually destroyed the image with the loss of true knowledge and love of God. As a result of the Fall the soul has turned away from eternal truths to engagement in corporeal realities. Augustine's views strongly influenced Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin.<sup>82</sup>

Thomas Aquinas defined the image as the rational soul and identified it as being about how humans relate to God. Drawing on Aristotelian concepts of human nature, he defined the progression of image through three stages: (1) common to all men and inherent to their nature is the intellectual *aptitude to understand* God and love God; (2) those who have been justified by grace *actually understand* who God is and love him, though not perfectly; (3) finally, those who are blessed enough to *know and love God perfectly*, carry the image that is "in the likeness of glory." In a sense, there is an image at the time of *creation*, another one at the time of *regeneration*, and yet another one (that is a perfect likeness) at the time of *glorification*.<sup>83</sup>

With the Reformation, both Luther and Calvin built their anthropological models on an Augustinian foundation, each adding their own emphasis. Luther broke with the thirteen-centuries-old tradition of distinction between image and likeness. He pointed out that if the image was about the natural soul, then this meant that Satan carried the image of

81. Irenaeus, "Church Fathers."

82. Anderson, *On Being Human*, 217–18; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 506; Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, 153, 147.

83. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*.

God, since he was given the same natural qualities—a scenario he forcefully rejected. To Luther man was a “theological being” who could only be understood in the light of Scripture. His challenge was to explain the relationship of the image to a fallen man. His answer to what remains was “*Relics of imago*.”<sup>84</sup> For Luther, the significance of the image was to show that humans “were created ‘by a special plan and providence of God’ for a better spiritual life in the future,” which would come through the gospel of Christ.<sup>85</sup>

While Luther believed that the *imago* was virtually destroyed as a consequence of the fall, Calvin believed that despite total “defacing” of the *imago*, God bestowed his “common grace” upon humanity, such that they can continue their human existence—though in sin—distinct from other animals. While this vestige of the image has no soteriological relevance, it is nevertheless fundamental to what it means to be human. Calvin took Paul’s references to image in Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24 and interpreted them as the image referring to *knowledge* (of God), *righteousness* and, *holiness*. Even though Calvin granted that the *imago* “was not totally annihilated” in Adam, he still saw it to be “so corrupted” that whatever had survived was “frightful deformity.”<sup>86</sup> Calvin, like Luther, centered the *imago* in relation to God rather than in an intrinsic natural reason.<sup>87</sup>

To Calvin, it was a “settled principle” that the image of God was “spiritual.” He attacked those who attributed image to anything other than man’s soul or spirit and accused them of mingling “heaven and earth.” Therefore it is only at “the end of regeneration” that Christ will “reform us to God’s image.” The progressive process is shown when Paul teaches: “we . . . with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image” (2 Cor 3:18). Thus it is the image of Christ as the perfect human that is the image of God to which we are *being* conformed.<sup>88</sup>

John Owen is another Reformed theologian who emphasizes the loss of image through sin, such that it is only present in the person of Jesus as the perfect human, and “derivatively” in those who are united to him by his Spirit. McDonald points out, “On the whole, the historic Reformed

84. Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 507–8; Anderson, *On Being Human*, 218–19.

85. Van Huyssteen, *Alone in the World?*, 129.

86. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1/15.4.

87. Anderson, *On Being Human*, 219; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 508–9; Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 227–29.

88. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1/15.3–4.

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tradition attempts to eschew an absolute either/or on this question for a nuanced both/and.” Representatives of the tradition usually do this by distinguishing the “creational” aspect of image representing a “facultative emphasis” against the “soteriological” aspect reflecting “relational emphasis.” This allows the sustenance of image as “an abiding, albeit distorted and misdirected” character of the creation of a human person. Owen “severely minimizes” this division of facultative and relational aspects of image, and his overall outlook places him further on the spectrum, toward the “utter loss” of the image. The image, for Owen, is centered on holiness and righteousness, as it is for Calvin.<sup>89</sup> Wherefore, lacking this holiness and “conformity unto God,” we have lost the capacity to “stand in that relation unto God which was designed us in our creation.” We lost all that “blessedness” and “pre-eminence” of our original state “by the entrance of sin.”<sup>90</sup>

Owen goes on to emphasize that if we do not acquire the image again, we will “always come short,” and will not be able to fulfill the “end of our creation.” We are called unto a true “intercourse” and a real “communion with God.” One must endeavor to attain this by surrendering to the sanctifying work of the Spirit unto holiness. He who fails in this will “always misseth both of his end, his rule, and his way.”<sup>91</sup> Even when he speaks of those who have been justified, and regenerated, he says:

[T]hough all children do partake of the nature of their parents, yet they may be . . . very deformed and bear very little of their likeness. So . . . we may have the image of God and yet come short of that likeness unto him, in its degrees and improvements that we ought to aim at.<sup>92</sup>

Many of those “who have had extraordinary gifts of the Spirit,” or are living in “rigid austerities,” or “renunciation of the world,” or “outward works of charity,” are even considered “vessels of wood and stone,” who being “not purged from sin,” cannot be used by God for purposes they were created.<sup>93</sup> The answer consists, therefore, “alone in that likeness unto God,”

89. McDonald, “The Pneumatology of the ‘Lost’ Image in John Owen,” 324–25.

90. John Owen et al., *The Works of John Owen*, 3:129.

91. *Ibid.*, 3:129–30.

92. Owen, *The Works*, 3:578 as cited in McDonald, “The Pneumatology of the ‘Lost’ Image in John Owen,” 325.

93. He refers to Matthew 7:22–23, saying: “Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles? And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

which can be restored, by the grace of God, through the work of the Spirit, in union with Christ.<sup>94</sup>

Owen places tremendous emphasis on the work of the Spirit as the “efficient cause of all external divine operations” in our lives; so, “all our ascending towards Him” begins in our spirit connecting to his Spirit. Thus, “the restoration of the image” can only happen when people grow in the likeness to Christ through the “mortification” of their flesh, which is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>95</sup> “Indwelling sin always abides whilst we are in the world; therefore it is always to be mortified,” says Owen. It seems like, for Owen, faith in Christ is the beginning of the process, which reorients the person toward God. But only as sin is “mortified,” through an *ongoing* and *progressive* work of sanctification by the Spirit, can conformity to Christ—the true image—begin to appear.<sup>96</sup>

In the post-Reformation era there were not any essential contributions to the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Most everyone continued with teachings of Luther, Calvin, and Augustine. With the growth of humanism taught by the Enlightenment, many returned to the scholastic notion of a rational soul representing the image of God. Because of biblical and scientific criticism the questions about “the primitive state of human prior to the fall” fell off scholarly radars. Later theologians have not generated ideas that would address the traditional issues; they have been mostly absorbed in questions raised with the scientific advancements.<sup>97</sup>

The view espoused by Karl Barth, and shared by several contemporary theologians, is that image has to do with man’s capacity for personal *relationship*.<sup>98</sup> Humans can reflect God’s image only in community and as God is relational in himself, so has he created humans to be. Barth originally believed with Luther that the *imago* was totally lost with the Fall, but later modified his position by insisting that a human person could not lose what he never owned.<sup>99</sup> Drawing on Barth, Anderson says, “The human

94. Owen et al., *The Works of John Owen*, 3:140–41.

95. *Ibid.*, 3:161, 200, 386 as cited in McDonald, “The Pneumatology of the ‘Lost’ Image in John Owen,” 326, 331.

96. One of Owen’s most influential works in the Reformed tradition has been his treatise on *The Mortification of Sin*, which he wrote in 1656 while he was the Dean of Christ Church and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford; it is in this treatise that he deals in great exegetical detail with how fleshly sin will be mortified by the power of the Holy Spirit unto holiness. Owen, *The Mortification of Sin*, 13.

97. Anderson, *On Being Human*, 220.

98. *Ibid.*, 76.

99. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3/1:200.

## In the Fellowship of His Suffering

person is not created to *be* the image and likeness of God, but rather created *in* the image of God.” This means that human identity is defined by its intrinsic constitution as a communion among human beings, which is their interrelatedness. Barth believes that Genesis 1:27 is a commentary on Genesis 1:26. The fact that God made humans as male and female in His own image points to the fact that “co-humanity is itself the *imago*.” He argued that the image was to be seen in the man-woman relationship as a type for all other relationships in community.<sup>100</sup>

The prevailing view among contemporary theologians is that *imago Dei* describes humans in their current state, and that it must not be applied to an aspect of human existence that was lost as a result of the Fall. These theologians mostly give the biblical image an existential interpretation with a “relational” twist. In their view, biblical language must be applied to current human existence, rather than focusing on the first man and woman. Niebuhr and Tillich are examples of theologians who believe that humans are relational beings, longing for a relationship with a God who has set human beings apart from other beings, to love and be loved.<sup>101</sup> Likewise, there seems to be a general agreement that the fact that man and woman were created in the image of God is primarily pointing to—even if the image does not consist in this—the human’s exalted position in the created world and his preeminence in the eyes of God. Many theologians point to the redeeming sacrifice of Christ to argue the value and eminence of humans in God’s economy.

Of this variety of conclusions about what constitutes the image of God in the human person, the view shared by conservative theologians who have an exalted view of Scripture as the word of God points to a profound corruption of the image as a result of the Fall. Moreover, they agree that the restoration of *imago Dei* is an essential element of God’s redemptive act through Christ. How shall this lost or damaged image be restored? How might this loss of image influence our understanding of insanity? Where is the image of God in the midst of madness? The concept of *imago Dei* will inform our anthropological framework as we move forward in search of answers to these questions.

100. Anderson, *On Being Human*, 221–23; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 514.

101. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, and Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 1:161–65. For an analysis of contemporary views see Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology*, 233–42.