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Exploring Anthropological Monism for Pastoral Care Practice in a Local Church

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EXPLORING ANTHROPOLOGICAL MONISM

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This research project explored the viability and benefits of anthropological monism for pastoral care practice in a local church. Monism, as it relates to human nature, refers to humanity consisting solely of materiality or physicality from which emerge all capacities and functions of the human individual—feeling, thinking, relating, acting, or experiencing God, self, others, or the world in general.

Biblically and theologically, anthropological monism can point to integration for holism to overcome life disruption and fragmentation due to sin.

It can also highlight embodiment and refocus the church towards human physicality and the prominence of resurrection for end-of-life outcomes rather than an ethereal disembodied heavenly expectation.

Anthropological monism can utilize the concept of community for forging outwardly focused relationships for a healthy and healing orientation of spiritual development and maturation for whole and holy personhood.

A multidisciplinary literature review was undertaken to glean insightful pastoral care strategies, especially noting the plasticity or openness to wire or rewire the brain for forming healthy new relational templates or fundamental ways of perceiving and relating to others, utilizing recent discoveries from the academic disciples of neuroscience and neuropsychology as one practices, tending to intra- and interpersonal relationships with God, others, self, and one's cultural environment.

Personal eschatology—namely, what happens to humans when they die—was explored through a monistic framework. A recreation resurrection view holds promising potential for integrating science and theology under this subdiscipline. Contemporary funerary practices were also briefly explored to survey contemporary tends in the making and how anthropological monism might speak correctively towards them.

Finally, qualitative fieldwork using questionnaires and interviews with a number of clergy and parachurch leaders revealed findings that entail both potential cautious misgivings associated with anthropological monism and also promising constructive benefits of anthropological monism for pastoral care practice.

DEDICATION

To my loving and beautiful wife Lynn and our five precious children: Jessica, Gabriel, Marcus, Miles, and Mason.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

Statement of the Problem

The problem this project addressed was how an anthropological monistic framework might help pastoral care practice in a local church. In response to this problem, the researcher:

1. clarified what kind of monism the researcher envisioned, providing a theological view of human personhood from the lens of Christian writers in both a theological and social science context, highlighting the distinctives that anthropological monism brings to the conversation for whole and holy personhood

2. explored pertinent literature reviews of multidisciplinary investigations for new developments in the understanding of the human individual from theoreticians and practitioners of both a Christian and non-religious or secular perspective, from which recent anthropological monism distinctives have emerged

3. performed qualitative field research through interviews and questionnaires of local clergy and/or parachurch leaders, gaining viable and beneficial practical pastoral care strategies in the areas of (a) spiritual formation of the human self and (b) feasible personal eschatological outcome expectations consistent with an anthropological monistic paradigm

4. compiled conclusions all of which eventuated in the project outcome of

   leveraging practical pastoral care principles and recommendations that address

   the human person in a whole and holy way to the glory of God.

Definition of Terms

Anthropological monism is the view that a human is a unified or wholly integrated physical being devoid of any second immaterial metaphysical entity (e.g., spirit or soul) having emergent capacities predicated upon the complexity of brain development that results in limited top-down causal influence on the body. In short, humans are composed of only one kind of substance. Monism sees it as unnecessary to postulate a second immaterial metaphysical entity (i.e., soul or spirit) to account for various human capacities and distinctives (or dispositions).

Bio-cultural is the viewpoint that humans are shaped through biological and sociological factors including one's embodied DNA or genetic materials along with environmental influences, and with sociological embedded influences of culture, parents, siblings, peers, TV media, clergy and teachers, and other relational influences.

Integration is the coordinating of differentiated aspects of the human self into a unified whole.

Local church refers to a localized, organized, gathering of Christian believers who come together for the purposes of worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and the spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:42-47).[1]

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from *The Holy Bible, Updated New American Standard Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999).

Multidisciplinary is the mindset that although the Bible is the primary source for contextualized truth, all educational disciplines possess venues of God's truth, and therefore should be interactive with each other.

Pastoral care is the multifaceted help provided by clergy to their care-seeking congregants involving embodied spiritual guidance, instruction, and nurturing support. As such, pastoral care is a subset of pastoral theology, which reflects on the responsibilities of clergy members to the congregants under their poimenic care. Pastoral theology, in turn, falls under the rubric of practical theology, which refers to the practical outworking of theological truth.

Person is a term for the human being that will point to characteristic *persona*. In line with its etymological history with connections to an ancient Etruscan ritual, a liturgical performer wore a mask concealing his or her own identity and spoke for the goddess *Phersu*. Later dramatic actors wore masks concealing their identities and projected the *persona* of a character they were portraying. This term also found currency in the theological efforts to understand the distinct persons of the Trinity.[2] Although this term may carry nuance, in this thesis it will share broad semantic overlap with other human being terms such as "self" and "individual," and thus at times is used interchangeably and synonymously with them.

Personal eschatology is the concern about the future of individuals beyond death as distinct from historical and cosmic eschatology, which is concerned with the future of human history and of the cosmos at the end of this age when God's kingdom comes.

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[2] Gil Bailie, "The Imitative Self: The Contribution of Rene Girard," in *The Self Beyond the Postmodern Crisis*, eds. Paul C. Vitz and Susan M. Felch (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute Books, 2006), 20.

Personhood is the status of being a human person, entailing all of the embodied integrative aspects constitutive with it.

Platonic dualism refers to Plato's duality of contrastive values consisting of ideals or forms that are real and eternal, in opposition to the physical, which is temporal and nonessential.

Postmortem refers to what pertains to or what happens after physical death of the human being.

Self refers to the unity of subjective consciousness in perception and action of the human being in time[3] as a whole embodied person embedded socially in the world. The term *self* is derived from the Greek term *autos,* entailing a reciprocal autonomy.

Selving is somewhat of a neologism that refers to the whole person as an embodied, meaning-making creature that is constantly involved in the embedded hermeneutical task of interpretation of present contexts in light of one's subjectivity and one's interaction with others' subjectivity.[4]

Soul/spirit is the purported immaterial, immortal, metaphysical entity of the human subject located in one's embodiment that displays itself in animated consciousness, rational thought, and various psychological states and capacities, among other things.

Spiritual formation is the habituated process by which a human becomes developmentally mature in character and relationship with God, others, and the cosmos.

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[3] Todd E. Feinberg, *From Axons to Identity: Neurological Explorations of the Nature of the Self* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2009), XI.

[4] Brad D. Strawn, "'I Don't Feel Like Myself Today': The Changing Nature of the Self and Its Import for Integration" (installation address lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2014).

Spirituality is awareness of and interaction with the presence of God, His people, and His creation. It is a Trinitarian embodied life orientation towards God through Christ empowered by the Spirit that utilizes habituated community practices resulting in Christlikeness. The above sentence builds upon a more simplified relational definition: spirituality consists of ways of relating to the sacred.

Delimitations of the Problem

The research was limited to exploring only viable and beneficial pastoral care practices emerging from an anthropological monistic framework in the areas of spiritual formation and personal eschatological outcomes in a local church setting. The researcher did not attempt to prove the biblical plausibility of anthropological monism itself.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that the researcher is socially situated and this reality will influence his evaluations.

The second assumption is that the Bible is the inspired word of God and the primary reservoir of truth for a Christian's understanding.

The third assumption is that anthropological monism can be a plausible viewpoint from the Bible.

The fourth assumption is that an integrated multidisciplinary approach to truth and practice is best.

The fifth assumption is that the recent findings and discoveries from bio-cultural sciences have been peer-reviewed and are tenuously embraced by the professionals in these disciplines, potentially resulting in corrective, constructive, and exciting implications for theology.

The sixth assumption is that the local church is central to developing Christians for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

The Setting

Recent advancements in the disciplines of hermeneutics, linguistics, and lexical studies along with an explosion in the bio-cultural fields of cognitive science, neuroscience, and social-behavioral psychology, to name a few, have given the church cause for reforming and sharpening her understanding of human nature through both a vigorous critical and constructive adventure. Her work is never done!

The setting of the researcher, while vocationally located in the Midwest, extended in reach through academic and ministry colleagues, Bethel libraries, the Internet, and the researcher's personal library.

The setting for the research itself was the Midwest, particularly the central to the northern regions of Illinois. Field reporting primarily came from pastors in the greater Peoria, Illinois region and also some parachurch leaders. The pastors were selected on the basis of their availability, interest, openness to theoretical reflection and practice, and educational prowess. These people were interacted with via personal interviews and questionnaires. Eighteen pastors and/or parachurch leaders were engaged through field research. Their openness to anthropological monism for its viability, insightful ideas, and strategies in pastoral care practice for a local church congregant was explored.

The researcher conducted the qualitative grounded theory fieldwork sourced with these individuals. The data was collected, coded (looking for categorical patterns and themes), and analyzed for recommendations for viable and beneficial contributions that

anthropological monism can provide in the area of pastoral care of the local church congregation.

The Importance of the Project

The Importance of the Project to the Researcher

The way human nature is constructed has implications for how humans develop and mature spiritually, and furthermore what humans can expect when they experience death. Oftentimes scholars who hold to anthropological monism are charged with being influenced and led primarily by neuroscience and other social sciences rather than by the Scriptures. Thus anthropological monism is declared dead on arrival due to the perception that it is the offspring of secular sciences rather than the Bible.

On a personal level for the researcher, key and loving family members and relatives have met with seemingly premature death. Because of this, the researcher's own existential question about what death means for a person's existence has always been a topic of reflection. Did death end the loved one's total existence? Is part of the loved one existing in another ("heavenly") dimension with God? What postmortem eschatological expectations about them will come to fruition?

Decades of this researcher's pastoral care observations have caused the researcher to ponder the integrated constitution of a human subject. These include the person's interior whereabouts during surgeries, congregants who have had near death experiences, congregants suffering with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, and congregants who have had strokes that radically changed their personality and character.

Adding to the abovementioned is how a pastor tends to a congregant for spiritual maturation in a way that conceives the congregant as essentially an individualized and

isolated soul. The congregant's interiority is the primary focus. Knowledge input is perceived as key for transformation. However, more often than not this strategy consistently ends in failure. The researcher wonders whether conceiving a congregant in this way and directing the congregant in this way are flawed.

Finally, recent new developments and discoveries in the neurosciences and social sciences that are challenging the traditional understanding of the human subject warrant a thorough and courageous reexamination of what humans consist. How does the researcher as a pastor tend to his or her congregation with these questions in mind?

The Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

In addition to eschatological questions relating to human destiny, how humans are constructed will have implications for how humans develop and spiritually mature. The researcher, over years of pastoral experience, has seen a disproportionate volume of biblical information taught to congregants all the while observing an anemia of congregational transformation. Churches are filled with congregants saturated with Bible knowledge but deficient in characterological and spiritual maturation.

Often a Christian is viewed dualistically, as possessing both a body and soul. The soul is perceived as the immortal, important part of the person. In terms of development, focus is on the interior, in line with the person-as-an-isolated-individual-with-no-community narrative. However, when maturation takes place in an anthropological monistic framework, the focus is more holistic and outwardly directed; a person is developed in community in a local church with a Christ-centered narrative. In a worshipful context, embodied and habituated liturgies ingrain the right passions and

dispositions conducive to Christlikeness. Some Christian psychologists practicing an anthropological monistic framework are already publishing potential benefits.[5]

<p style="text-align:center">The Importance of the Project to the Church at Large</p>

If anthropological monism is found to be both viable and beneficial for the local church, then the Christian community at large can benefit. Psychologists and counselors can tap into this rethought framework to be leaders for attending to spiritual transformation for their care-seekers. Colleges and seminaries can restructure and adapt to incorporate new emphases from an anthropological monistic framework that will better prepare future leaders to play a part in advancing the kingdom of God.

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[5] Warren S. Brown and Brad D. Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life: Neuroscience, Psychology, and the Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

CHAPTER TWO

ANTHROPOLOGICAL MONISM'S THEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR WHOLE AND HOLY PERSONHOOD

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly clarify what kind of monism the researcher envisions with a focus towards viable and valuable pastor care practice. Next, three categorical contributions of anthropological monism—integration, embodiment, and community—are unpacked as they relate to whole and holy personhood.

The Purpose of This Theological Exploration

A Clarification of This Theological Exploration

With anthropological monism's emergence as a new conversational partner at the table of theological anthropology, over a decade ago Stuart Palmer put forth a challenge to explore its implications for pastoral care practice.[1] This chapter is an attempt to answer Palmer's challenge, showing the viability and benefits of anthropological monism for pastoral care practice by explicating some distinctive contributions of anthropological monism vis-à-vis human personhood. From the foundations of this chapter monistic trajectories will flow into chapter three, which pertains to pastoral care for the local church congregation with regard to spiritual maturation and eschatological implications concerning human death and new creation outcomes.

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[1] Stuart L. Palmer, "Pastoral Care and Counseling without the 'Soul,'" in *What about the Soul?* ed. Joel B. Green (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 159-170.

A Clarification of Anthropological Monism

This researcher envisions anthropological monism as a biblical-theological view in which a human is a unified, wholly integrated physical being devoid of any second immaterial metaphysical entity (i.e., a spirit or soul), having emergent activities and capacities predicated upon a hierarchical complexity of brain development that results in a reciprocal bottom-up and top-down causal influence of the body. In short, humans are composed of only one kind of substance, namely material. This researcher conceives monism as a way to show that it is unnecessary to postulate a second immaterial metaphysical entity to account for various human activities (both physical and mental), capacities, and distinctives.

It is necessary for the researcher to locate himself on the monism continuum because today many kinds of monism are operative in theological discussions (e.g., emergent monism, dual aspect monism, multidimensional monism, non-reductive physicalism, ontological physicalism, and materialism). Veli-Matti Karkkainen explores the monistic landscape in his work *Creation and Humanity* and envisions a "multidimensional monism" as a proposal for conceiving the nature of human nature.[2] For him and others, monism has been reconfigured to mean "unity" rather than a numerical "oneness" in human composition. For Karkkainen, human nature, although a unity, nevertheless has both "material and mental"[3] features or properties. Thus for Karkkainen and others dualism exists within a monistic framework. This may be the new emergent middle position as the debate between dualism and monism plays out.

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[2] Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Creation and Humanity: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 337.

[3] Karkkainen, 331.

Karkkainen aligns himself with people like the historical biblical scholar N. T. Wright who talks about a "differentiated unity"[4] and the scientist theologian John Polkinghorne who uses the term "dual-aspect monism."[5] One can envision that monism will continue to be nuanced in the foreseeable future.

Having clarified the kind of monism the researcher envisions, in what follows three categorical contributions of anthropological monism will be explicated for whole and holy personhood: integration, embodiment, and community.

<div align="center">

**Anthropological Monism's Theological Contributions
for Whole and Holy Personhood**

The Contribution of Integration for Whole and Holy Personhood

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One contribution that anthropological monism provides for whole and holy personhood is the concept of integration. Jeannine Brown, Carla Dahl, and Wyndy Reuschling, although not necessarily sympathetic to monism in general, point to a move towards integration for whole and holy personhood to overcome fragmentation.[6]

Conceptualizing Integration

Integration itself is a very broad and diffuse concept. The integrative approach the authors use is a "relational" and "communal" approach[7] because of their relational collegiality and belief that knowledge emerges out of relationality.[8] Integration for Dahl

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[4] Karkkainen, 337.

[5] Karkkainen, 339.

[6] Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy: An Integrative Conversation About Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), xiii.

[7] Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, "Location: Our Selves, Our Disciplines, Our Process," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 11, 171.

[8] Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 11.

touches on wholeness and holiness as "authentic encounter with God and others."[9] Thus, Dahl seems to conceive integrated persons as people who are authentic in all areas of their lives (with self, others, and God). For Dahl and her coauthors, a whole and holy person is not viewed as having separate parts, but rather as relationally integrated and authentic. The intuition of her concept of integration can be utilized with the researcher's conceptual use of integration and monism. This researcher envisions integration in a very robust way including ideas of bringing together, incorporating, relating, connecting, associating, and linking the various aspects of human personhood with one's self, others, and God. Thus, with monism's emphasis on unity, integration becomes purposive for a well-ordered, unified wholeness of the human individual.

The Need to Overcome Disintegration Because of Sin

Integration becomes necessary for becoming whole and holy persons again because of the intrusion of sin in God's good creation. Scripture itself depicts sin as relational disruption and disintegration. In the Genesis 3 account, human personhood became relationally fractured (disintegrated) from God (evidenced by "hiding," Gen. 3:8)[10] and from one's self (evidenced by shame and guilt, "covering," Gen. 3:7). Walton notes that the first couple prematurely "passed into (or through) adolescence … [because] autonomy and sexuality should come only at the end of an appropriate process. Adam and Eve were not ready for it."[11] Along with dysfunctional maturation, marital

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[9] Carla M. Dahl, "Wholeness and Holiness: Selves in Community with God and Others," in Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy: An Integrative Conversation about Christian* Formation, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 46.

[10] John H. Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 224.

[11] Walton, 216.

disharmony is evidenced by blame-shifting statements (Gen. 3:12), as well as increased

pain in childbirth, although embraced through a God-given heightened "maternal

instinct" ("desire;" Gen. 3:16).[12] Uncooperative environmental impact is also evidenced

(Gen. 3:17-19, Rom. 8:18-25)[13] undermining the divinely given human vocation to care

for and fill the world. Finally, familial and sibling rivalry, jealousy, and violence (Gen.

4:1-8)[14] are evidenced, not to mention the ultimate disintegration from death itself (Gen.

2:17, 3:19).[15]

The Need to Overcome Epistemological Fragmentation for Whole and Holy Personhood

The quest to understand what it means to be human (i.e., whole and holy)

involves knowledge among other things. The quest for acquiring and implementing true

knowledge as it pertains to human personhood must overcome disintegration. Knowledge

has been and is spread out across many epistemological fields of study. Fragmented,

specialized knowledge becomes more vigorous and rewarding as collaborative. Thus

today professionals in various academic fields are seeing the necessity of a

multidisciplinary dialogue.[16]

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[12] Walton, 228.

[13] Terence E. Fretheim, *Creation Untamed: The Bible, God and Natural Disasters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 42.

[14] J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 52-53.

[15] Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say About Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012), 85.

[16] Jeannine K. Brown, "A Journey toward Integration" (installation address, Bethel Theological Seminary, 2015).

Brown, Dahl, and Reuschling—specialists in hermeneutics, social science, and ethics, respectively—embarked on a collaborative and integrative effort to explore and gain knowledge of the question: what does it mean to be human? Their collaborative process involved a three-fold methodological dynamic that they labeled as "offering, reception, and integration."[17] Each author "offers with humility, receives with curiosity, and integrates with creativity."[18] This same methodology can be utilized for pastoral ministry, drawing from and contributing to other academic disciplines such as psychology and neuroscience to help a congregant integrate all the various aspects of his and her self as they pertain to God, others, and self for whole and holy persons.

The Need to Overcome Partitive Human Taxonomies

Another expression of fragmentation and disintegration is the perception of the human subject conceptualized through a partitive taxonomy (e.g., dichotomy or trichotomy). Although it can be argued that a partitive taxonomy of the human individual may be a Christianized version of Platonic dualism,[19] nevertheless, to be fair-handed, one can understand this seemingly warranted construal because of the plethora of terminology used in the biblical corpus to refer to the human subject. Even those who do embrace monism do not eschew the concept of dualism itself. For example, N. T. Wright provides a helpful list of different types of duality such as ontological (God and the cosmos),

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[17] Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 11.

[18] Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 11.

[19] Joel B. Green, "Why the Imago Dei Should Not Be Identified with the Soul," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, eds. Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), 188.

moral (good and evil), and eschatological (present and future), with which monists would concur.[20]

One example of the historical outplay of this kind of partitive taxonomy in a contemporary setting is when a modern secular Western mindset at times conceptualizes human personhood in a reductionistic, compartmentalized, individualized, isolated, and non-narrative framework.[21] In line with this partitive taxonomy, Christian psychologists and counselors will at times direct attention to a person's "soul" or immaterial interiority that becomes the focal emphasis for counseled wholeness.[22] With personhood conceived in terms of individualization and isolation, community relationality is largely ignored or viewed as optional. The effect of this modern Western framework can eventuate in a loss of relational narrative and the fracturing or compartmentalization of the human subject.

However, Nancey Murphy, Robert Di Vito, and others warn that there seems to be no Old Testament or New Testament standard for configuring the human individual. Rather, the biblical authors drew upon common terminology and vocabulary of the Ancient Near East and Greco-Roman world in order to depict the human being as an integrated whole. Therefore, any biblical study regarding Old Testament or New Testament terminology for taxonomy of the human person will be of little value for this

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[20] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God: Christian Origins and Questions of God*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 253-254.

[21] Paul C. Vitz, "Introduction: from Modern and Postmodern Selves to the Transmodern Self," in *The Self: Beyond the Postmodern Crisis*, eds. Paul C. Vitz and Susan M. Felch (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006), XI-XX; W. Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 24-27.

[22] John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervans, 2014).

conversation.[23] Murphy, James Dunn, and others offer an alternative through a distinctive

lens of anthropological monism. Dunn explains:

> While Greek thought tended to regard the human being as made up of distinct
> parts, Hebraic thought saw the human being more as a whole person existing on
> different dimensions. As we might say, it was more characteristically Greek to
> conceive of the human person "partitively," whereas it was more
> characteristically Hebrew to conceive of the human person "aspectively."[24]

> According to Murphy, "For the biblical authors each 'part' stands for the whole

person thought of from a certain angle."[25] Instead of viewing the human person in "parts"

or metaphysical "components" that can be separated from one another, the human person

can be viewed "aspectively as physically embodied and socially embedded, as a unified,

integrated whole with emergent expressions, capacities, facets, and distinctives. This

alternative suggested by Murphy and others bodes well for monism's focus on keeping

personhood unified and integrated rather than fragmented and compartmentalized.

The Need for Reintegration for Humans to Become Whole and Holy Beings

Brown and her coauthors explore the question "What does it mean to be human?

Their book's title gives their primary answer "Being fully human means becoming whole

and holy."[26]

Becoming through formation of the imago Dei. The authors provide their answer

by first focusing on the idea of "becoming" through the lens of formation.[27] Dahl opts to

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[23] Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 22; Robert A. Di Vito, "Old Testament and the Construction of Personal Identity," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (1991): 229.

[24] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 54.

[25] Murphy, 21.

[26] Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 10.

[27] Dahl, "Being and Becoming: A Journey toward Love," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 20.

utilize love as the primary formation strategy.[28] Love contributes by forging relationally

trustworthy contexts for becoming.[29] Dahl wonders how people change and develop. She

sees evidence in both Scripture and social science that change can happen both

instantaneously and incrementally. For Dahl, change is more relational and spiraling than

linear and sequential. Change, growth, development, and maturation often happen in the

crucible of relational challenge and pressure. Added to this, spiritual formation often

involves spiritual practices that orientate us toward God in a receptive posture that

integrates the life-changing grace of God in our lives. Therefore, formation is about

God's work in us and about our capacity for orienting ourselves toward God and our

receptivity to that work.[30]

Brown utilizes the biblical storyline to frame "becoming" (i.e., spiritual

formation). God's creational intention (vocation) for human beings involves them bearing

the divine image.[31] She quickly links the *imago Dei* with the vocation of individual and

national reflective holiness of God to the world.[32] However, just what the *imago Dei*

holds for human personhood and reformation is somewhat under debate among other

scholars. Some point to the paucity of scriptural support, which undermines placing too

much emphasis on the *imago Dei* and its contribution to understanding personhood.[33]

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[28] Dahl, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 15.

[29] Dahl, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 18.

[30] Dahl, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 17-36.

[31] Jeannine K. Brown, "Being and Becoming: The Scriptural Story of Formation," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 67.

[32] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 67.

[33] J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 6-17.

Moreover, understanding the *imago Dei* has proven somewhat elusive for the church.

Some in Old Testament scholarship believe that the Genesis account does not intend to

give the content of the *imago Dei,* or have given up the quest to understand the *imago*

Dei. J. Richard Middleton cites scholars as such James Barr who acknowledge that the

royal functionalist view is the most dominant and influential view today but still does not

think that the Genesis account intends to give the reader the content of the *imago Dei*.[34]

However, others like Diane Chandler have made it the core of spiritual formation, with a

schematic showing that all spiritual disciplines focus in and radiate out from the *imago*

Dei.[35]

This researcher believes the *imago Dei* remains important for several reasons.

First, whatever it means to be and become human must be understood and linked with

God's intentions for humans.[36] Second, the New Testament and in particular the Pauline

corpus picks up the Old Testament concept of *imago Dei* and explicates Christ as the

fulfillment of it, which in turn has implications for the Christian's Christlikeness (e.g.,

Col. 3:10). Third, Christian scholarship continues to produce academic works attempting

to understand the *imago Dei,* thus conveying its importance. Fourth, because the *imago*

Dei speaks fundamentally to what it means to be human (whole and holy) and because it

can be conceptualized as "vocation," it must be linked to embodiment. One shows how

one is like God and unlike ungodliness by one's actions (e.g., compassion for the poor

entails embodied actions). Thus, the *imago Dei* is an outwardly focused embodied reality.

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[34] Middleton, 29.

[35] Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrative Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 28.

[36] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 66.

Moreover, *imago Dei* is linked with incarnational Christology. Jesus enters earth

humanly embodied and through His embodiment recovers what the *imago Dei* truly

entails.

That said, Middleton notes that most "patristic, medieval, and modern interpreters

typically asked not an exegetical, but a speculative, question: In what way are humans

like God and *unlike* [italics author's] animals?"[37] The usual classifications for surveying

the *imago Dei* include a substantive (structural, essentialist) view, a functional relational

view, and a Christological view.[38]

Under the substantive view possible capacities or properties include soul,

rationality, morality, and God-consciousness. However, scholars ask what level of

measured intensification of these capacities distinguishes human from nonhuman earthly

creatures?[39] For example, if mentally impaired individuals or those in vegetative states do

not reach the measure or degree deemed necessary for humanness, do those people lack

the *imago Dei*?[40] Problematic tensions with the substantive view involve whether the

Genesis 2:7 phrase *nefesh hayyah* is correctly translated as "living soul."[41]

The functional view emphasizes strong exegetical evidence from the Genesis 1-2

passage. Humans were given a vocational role to be God's representative ruling stewards

and custodians. Humans exhibit a God-conscious, personal relationality with the divine

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[37] Middleton, 18-19.

[38] Middleton, 19-28.

[39] Oliver Crisp, "A Christological Model of the Imago Dei," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, eds. Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), 219.

[40] Crisp, 219.

[41] Green, "Why the *Imago Dei* Should Not Be Identified with the Soul," 179-190.

and a mediatorial functional vocation with and for the divine.[42] However, some point out

that the functionalist view is grounded in the substantive view's properties. That is to say,

if a functionalist view highlights being a mediatorial representative of God to the world,

this capacity can only emerge from requisite substantive powers and properties inherent

in humanity in the first place.[43]

In a recent work, Oliver Crisp argues for a Christological view of the *imago*

Dei.[44] Crisp reaches back into the patristic era and points to an understanding of Christ

not just repairing the *imago Dei* but Himself instantiating the archetype of the divine

eikon.[45] God has ordained this from before the foundation of the world.[46] However, this

view runs up against several objections. The New Testament connects bearing the image

that Christ renews through redemption. It looks like only the redeemed bear the renewed

image of Christ. If non-Christians do not participate in this redemptive renewal, do they

still retain the image?[47] Second, how can an entity that begins later than the first in a

series be the archetype? Adam and Eve historically and chronologically precede the

humanity of Christ.[48] Intuitively, this view seems untenable and problematic.

Middleton surveys the history of Old Testament scholarship and notes that among

the scholars "the image as humanity's royal function is the most influential opinion

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[42] Middleton, 23, 28.

[43] Crisp, 222.

[44] Crisp, 217-229.

[45] Crisp, 223.

[46] Crisp, 224.

[47] Crisp, 226.

[48] Crisp, 226-227.

today"[49] and seems most promising for understanding the purpose of humanity. Although "substantive view" scholars attempt to undermine the functionalist view by noting that the functionalist position only works by drawing on requisite capacities from the substantive view, to just leave the content of the *imago Dei* in a substantive format seems too diminished. Contextually the *imago Dei* speaks to vocational function. Moreover, the historical setting for the terminology also seems to make more robust sense in terms of function rather than substance. Therefore, in line with exegetical strengths and majority scholarship, this researcher embraces the functionalist position for becoming whole and holy persons.

Becoming whole and holy in regard to the *imago Dei* requires an overcoming of destructive results stemming from the fall. One example is seen in the ongoing idolatrous propensities of humanity (1 John 5:21). Therefore, God must engage in redemptive measures as a core part of the reformation process to redeem it in Christ.[50]

This individuated human vocation of divine imaging is eventually linked to the nation Israel whose vocation is to manifest the divine through reflective holiness. Brown clarifies that this holiness is "not simply about Israel looking different from its neighbors. Israel is to look like Yahweh—to image God."[51] Eventually, Jesus the Messiah appears historically and is the full glory and image of God (2 Cor. 4:1-6, Col. 1:15-20, Heb. 1:1-4) and makes it possible for redeemed humanity to correctly reengage in this vocation.[52]

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[49] Middleton, 29.

[50] Jeannine K. Brown, "Being and Becoming: The Scriptural Story of Formation," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 69-70.

[51] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 66-67.

[52] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 67.

Brown proposes that Christians in particular can cultivate a life of responsiveness to God's ongoing saving work through interplay of dependence and discernment.[53] For Brown, dependence implies that God is already at work and invites others into the journey (process) of one's spiritual formation. We are formed and shaped in relationships with others. However, Brown warns that dependence is not mere passivity. Brown defines discernment as a lifelong pattern of listening for and living out God's directions for life.[54]

Therefore, Brown, Dahl, and Resuchling convey several themes with regard to "becoming" (i.e., formation). First, formation or becoming takes place within a narrative framework of relationships, not in isolation. The biblical story always involves a holistic narrative of embodiment and community embeddedness. Second, formation or becoming involves vocation—imaging God internally and externally. Third, formation is also reformation due to the fall. Jesus is the redemptive model for what it means to be fully human. Fourth, formation is a collaborative process with God's work. Ultimately formation is a work of God in which the human individual through scriptural practices of dependence and discernment orientates himself or herself to God.[55] These themes of narrative formation in line with divine intentionality for humans as modeled by Christ and engaged through participatory collaboration with God can be utilized by anthropological monism for pastoral care practices.

Wholeness and holiness and its teleological purpose. Moving on from "becoming" to "whole and holy," the authors give attention to five key characteristics:

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[53] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 78.

[54] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 67-81.

[55] Dahl, "Being and Becoming," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 20-24.

authentic piety, differentiation of self, emotional intelligence, humility, and

generativity.[56]

When the authors explore the meaning and implications of "wholeness and

holiness," each does so in her own nuanced way. One issue they investigate is whether

becoming whole and holy is the ultimate goal for the human person or a "penultimate

goal."[57] Whereas Brown conceives of humans becoming whole and holy as the goal of

becoming,[58] Dahl clarifies that for her becoming whole and holy is not an end unto itself

for a person, but rather becoming whole and holy is a means to an ultimate goal:

authentic individual and communal intimacy with, obedience to, and partnership with

God.[59] This researcher envisions that whole and holy human maturation (living

authentically in all relationships) should eventuate in glorification of God, and attempts

to integrate Brown's and Dahl's insights. God is glorified when humans "become"

(maturation of formation) because from this reality the human person can ultimately with

authenticity enjoy intimacy and partnership with God and others. However, a caveat is in

order. This researcher envisions that glorification of God should happen continually

during the journey and process of maturation rather than happening only after a full level

of human maturation is obtained.

Another observation is the way in which the authors explore the phrase "whole

and holy." Dahl seems to hold to a configuration of whole and holy whereby the two

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[56] Dahl, "Wholeness and Holiness: Selves in Community with God and Others," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 42-43.

[57] Jeannine K. Brown, "Wholeness and Holiness: Toward Communal Fullness of Life," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 83.

[58] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 83.

[59] Dahl, "Wholeness and Holiness: Selves in Community with God and Others," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 38.

words portray a single expression. She understands the essential nature of wholeness and

holiness as "differentiated individuals living in authentic encounter with God and

others."[60] By "differentiation" she means the individual's "capacity to maintain both

healthy non-anxious connectedness and healthy non-anxious autonomy."[61] Dahl believes

that when wholeness and holiness are truly integrated, one reality will be the "ability to

create hospitable space in which others can recognize and experience the presence of

God."[62] In line with this insight, a pastor will be able to assess a congregant's well-

orderedness and integratedness in terms of whether or not his or her life is opening space

for others to experience the presence of God.

Brown interacts with the phrase a little differently. She initially takes apart the

phrase "whole and holy" and tackles holiness first. For her, holiness is penultimate to

wholeness and an authentic and missional life lived in covenant with God.[63]

In a very helpful explication of holiness, Brown conveys that holiness has both a

positive and a negative aspect—that is, "holiness derives from notions of both

distinctiveness and likeness."[64] However, she notes that the biblical concept of holiness is

essentially about distinctiveness. Both the Hebrew word *qadosh* and the Greek word

hagios have connotations of being set apart or distinct.[65] One way for the nation of Israel

to be holy—showing distinctiveness by being unlike the nations around her—was to

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[60] Dahl, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 46.

[61] Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 13.

[62] Dahl, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 47.

[63] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 83.

[64] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 84.

[65] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 84-85.

avoid idolatry, by rejecting the impulse to make God in her own image (Exod. 20:2-6, Deut. 7:5-6, 2 Kings 17:14-15).[66] Israel was also to be like God in her embodied actions toward the poor, needy, oppressed, aliens, orphans, and widows (Deut. 15:1-5).[67] As Jesus is formed in Christian believers, this vocation of holiness becomes initiated in this present age (1 Pet. 1:16) and will be consummated in the new heaven and earth (1 Thess. 5:23-24, Jude 24-25).[68] Thus, following Brown's full-orbed explication in which holiness has both a positive and a negative aspect to it, Christian holiness will show a distinctive unlikeness with regard to following cultural pathologies and a distinctive likeness in modeling the lifestyle of Christ.

Brown also develops and envisions holiness with a communal aspect, declaring, "Holiness is utterly covenantal and communal."[69] She points to scriptural passages such as 1 Peter 2:4-10 and Ephesians 2:19-22 that use temple imagery with corporate language to establish her observation.[70] For her a corporate identity of holiness counteracts the extreme individualism in the contemporary Western church. Otherwise, a non-communal holiness would be in danger of becoming an end in itself, leading to privatization of faith or even a possible means of excluding the other.[71]

Reuschling envisions Christian holiness as an "incarnated, lived holiness. It has a shape, content, and a purpose. It is visible holiness that embodies—albeit imperfectly and

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[66] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 85.

[67] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 85.

[68] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 86-92.

[69] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 88.

[70] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 89.

[71] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 89-90.

incompletely—the concerns and character of God."[72] Reuschling places an emphasis on

the embodied morality of holiness (Rom. 12:1-2).[73] She notes that after all it is in and

through our bodies that we interact with God and other persons. So she wants to stress

that becoming more holy has an important visible, bodily dimension, just as God's

holiness does in the incarnation.[74]

Concerning "wholeness," Brown conveys that it entails completeness or integrity

primarily viewed communally and eschatologically.[75] For her the concept of wholeness is

scripturally broad and "diffuse."[76] The Old Testament speaks of "wholeheartedness"

(Num. 14:24, 32:11-12; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:8-14).[77] A sense of integration and unity is

expressed (Ps. 86:11, Ezek. 11:19) as the Psalmist prays for a unifying act on God's part

to bring wholeness.[78] Brown selects as paradigmatic the New Testament passage of 1

Thessalonians 5:23-24 to explicate wholeness involving holiness, completeness, and

blamelessness (integrity).[79] The thrust of Paul's prayer is for a unified, integrated person

in community.[80]

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[72] Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, "Wholeness and Holiness: Christian Moral Formation," in Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy: An Integrative Conversation about Christian Formation,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 131.

[73] Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 132.

[74] Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 132.

[75] Brown, "Wholeness and Holiness: Toward Communal Fullness of Life," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 93.

[76] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 93.

[77] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 93.

[78] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 93-94.

[79] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 93-95.

[80] Brown, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 93-95.

Several themes emerge from a whole and holy paradigm. First, human maturation has an end goal—namely, a heightened authentic participation with God and others. Second, holiness is best conceived as a robust expression of both distinctiveness and likeness—exemplifying God but not the world. Third, wholeness is expressed in a mutually constitutive balance of healthy self-differentiation and authentic relational encounters with others. Thus wholeness and holiness for human personhood must entail an individual and corporate-communal interplay. Anthropological monism with its emphases on a person being a unified, wholly integrated physical being is congruent with these themes and can be utilized by a pastor to counsel a congregant.

Retrieving the Hebraic Concept of Shalom for Whole and Holy Personhood

Integration may be an ancient rediscovered dynamic for human wholeness. It can be linked to the Hebraic biblical concept of shalom. G. Lloyd Carr notes that the "general meaning behind the root *sh-l-m* is of completion and fulfillment—of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship."[81] Shalom can convey unimpaired relationships—a peaceful absence of strife (1 Kings 4:25), a prosperous blessing of greeting or farewell (Judg. 19:20; 1 Sam. 25:6, 35; 2 Sam. 15:27), completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, or prosperity as the result of God's activity and presence.[82] Both Brown and Reuschling utilize the Hebraic concept of shalom for their work towards whole and holy persons.[83] Both authors highlight justice in rightly related

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[81] G. Lloyd Carr, "Shalem," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,* vol. 2, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 930-931.

[82] Carr, 931.

[83] Brown and Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 94, 138-139.

harmonious community relationships.[84] Anthropological monism with its external outward focus is able to utilize the benefits of virtue for becoming whole and holy in relationships.

Balancing Monotheism with Trinitarianism

Finally, under the patterned interplay of unity and integration, anthropological monism (oneness) can be envisioned as balancing the interplay of monotheism and Trinitarianism—one in three and three in one. The ancient Hebrew was explicitly instructed by the God Yahweh of His unified oneness. The great *Shema* passage broadcasts "hear, oh Israel, the Lord your God is one God!" (Deut. 6:4). The Hebrew term for "one" is "*'ehad,*" which "stresses unity while recognizing diversity in that oneness."[85] Adjectivally, *'ehad* carries a conceptual unity as in the marital union of a man and woman becoming one flesh (Gen. 2:24), or as when multiple tabernacle curtains were fastened together to form one unit (Exod. 26:6, 11; 36:13), or as when the men of Shechem's involvement of intermarriage with Jacob's children resulted in them becoming one people (Gen. 34:16).[86]

While many theologians highlight the Trinitarian-constituted relatedness of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), anthropological monism may in turn theologically emphasize the monotheistic integratedness of God.

In this subsection the researcher has provided the offer of integration (from an anthropological monistic lens) to pastorally help the congregant become whole and holy.

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[84] Brown and Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 94, 138.

[85] Herbert Wolf, "'ehad," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 30.

[86] Wolf, 30.

Robust integration can overcome the fragmentation and disintegration that sin brings.

Integration can help a person conceptualize himself or herself not as partitive in

constitution but rather as an integrated aspectual person, thus challenging the person to be

mindful of intra- and interrelational balance. Integration helps the congregant pull

epistemologically and collaboratively from all knowledge venues of truth for healthy

living. Integration is a helpful methodology for becoming whole and holy persons.

The Contribution of Embodiment for Whole and Holy Personhood

Another contribution of anthropological monism that may prove helpful for

human personhood entails bringing embodiment back into prominence. Joel Green notes

that all human experience is embodied and has a neural basis.[87] This statement also

addresses so called out-of-body experiences. Michael Marsh, a former clinician and

biomedical researcher turned theologian, in his book *Out-of-Body and Near-Death*

Experiences investigates what he calls extra-corporeal experiences as well as near-death

experiences and concludes, "Given the widely varying biological circumstances under

which each brain recovers, every descriptive narrative offered by NDE subjects is

idiosyncratically fashioned, reflective of the memories and lifelong impressions unique to

each professing individual."[88] He goes on to explain, "These aberrant mental images are

not culled from any other-worldly journey but as a thorough-going, this-worldly event,

occasioned by the reawakening to conscious-awareness of a brain …."[89] Green concurs

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[87] Joel B. Green, "On Doing Without a Soul: A New Testament Perspective" (paper delivered at the Neuroscience and the Soul Conference, Biola University, 2013), 5.

[88] Michael N. Marsh, *Out-of-Body and Near-Death Experiences: Brain-State Phenomena or Glimpses of Immortality?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 259.

[89] Marsh, *Out-of-Body and Near-Death Experiences,* 259.

as well when he states, "This leads to a simple, ironic conclusion: out-of-body experiences are generated in our bodies, by our brains."[90]

Moreover, Jesus' taking on of human nature, among other things, entailed human embodiment. Therefore, this idea of embodiment lends itself to the issue of incarnational Christology. Glen People's essay, "The Mortal God: Materialism and Christology" explores the tensions of an incarnational Christology from a materialist perspective.[91]

Reuschling highlights the importance of material embodiment from the perspective of Scripture. For example, the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:1-2 links the quest for renewed reason and perception as predicated upon a dedication of one's embodiment to God. The ongoing experience of interaction with God's presence is also configured as a materially embodied experience (1 Cor. 6:19)—that is, one's embodiment "temples" the presence of the living God. Consequently it can be observed that emotions, passions, and ethical behaviors all emerge from and are linked to the body (1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Thess. 4:3-8).[92]

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[90] Joel B. Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academia, 2015), 37.

[91] Glen Andrew Peoples, "The Mortal God: Materialism and Christology," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, eds. Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), 331-343. Peoples explicates a monistic incarnational Christology explaining how Christ undertook humanity in His hypostatic union along with the implications of humanly undergoing death. He avoids the twin pitfalls of Nestorianism and Apollinarianism and draws upon a solution offered by the work of Brian Leftow. For a review of Leftow's work see Brian Leftow, "A Timeless God Incarnate" in *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God,* eds. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 280-281.

[92] Reuschling, "Whole and Holiness: Christian Moral Formation," in *Becoming Whole and Holy*, 132.

Embodied Knowledge and Worship

Embodiment can also be associated with the human modalities of being, knowing, and doing. In the above subsection it was observed that Jesus' "being" human—taking on human nature and entering humanity—involved embodiment. Human embodiment can also be conceived as linked to knowledge (epistemology) and worship (embodied praxis).

Rodney Clapp notes that firsthand knowledge—knowledge of something, not knowledge about something—often comes to us as tactile knowledge involving body and habituation.[93] Thus firsthand knowing is always a humanly embodied experience.

Chandler links our embodiment to worship when she states that the "physical body made in the *imago Dei* is a conduit to be developed for the primary purpose it was designed for—to bring glory to God. Embodiment, then, is the practical vehicle for worship."[94] Stanley Hauerwas concurs when he states, "Christianity is to have one's body shaped, one's habits determined, in such a manner that the worship of God is unavoidable."[95] Clapp reminds us that the worshipful sacraments or ordinances (e.g., baptism and the Eucharist) are embodied experiences. Relational dynamics within the body of Christ such as kindness and compassion are mostly embodied actions. Clapp states, "Often our deepest and best communication is the holding of a hand or the rubbing

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[93] Rodney Clapp, "Tacit Holiness: The Importance of Bodies and Habits in Doing Church," in *Embodied Holiness: Toward a Corporate Theology of Spiritual Growth*, eds. Samuel M. Powell and Michael E. Lodahl (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 64-65.

[94] Chandler, 183.

[95] Stanley Hauerwas, "The Sanctified Body: Why Perfection Does Not Require a 'Self'," in *Embodied Holiness: Toward a Corporate Theology of Spiritual Growth*, eds. Samuel M. Powell and Michael E. Lodahl (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 22.

of a shoulder or the drying of a tear. In such acts we embody the way and the spirit of holiness."[96]

Embodiment and Habituated Formation

James K.A. Smith's two-volume work on cultural liturgies explains how embodied behaviors in a worshipful context eventuate in spiritual maturation, focusing not "on what Christians *think* … [but] on what Christians *do* (italics author's)."[97] For Smith human formation is about our heart desires as much as our minds.[98] He sees a problem in that "Christian education has absorbed a philosophical anthropology that sees human persons as primarily thinking things."[99] The result is that education is conceptualized largely in terms of information rather than formation founded upon the premise that correct cognitive thinking leads to correct embodied action. But what if this is not how humans are formed? What if body and behavior are more fundamental to formation? Smith asks us to ponder: what if formation "is not primarily a matter of getting the right ideas and doctrines and beliefs into your head in order to guarantee proper behavior; rather it's a matter of being the right kind of person who loves rightly?"[100] Although it may be conceptualized that doing flows from being, to just leave it at that is too one-way and linear. Instead one might conceptualize the need for a

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[96] Clapp, 74.

[97] James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation,* vol. 1 of Cultural Liturgies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 11.

[98] Smith, *Desiring,* 18.

[99] Smith, *Desiring,* 31.

[100] Smith, *Desiring,* 32.

reciprocal spiraling dynamic whereby being is also shaped and conditioned by doing. Both must be necessary aspects of the characterological dynamic.

Smith's volumes lay out his own taxonomy (classification and structure) to unpack this dynamic. A core claim of his work is that liturgies shape and constitute our identities by forming our most fundamental desires. Liturgies make us certain kinds of people, and what defines us is what we love (desire).[101] Smith understands that our "hearts are oriented primarily by desire, by what we love." His taxonomy by and large is constructed this way: (1) Embodied practices—by this he means liturgies, communal embodied rituals, or routines—form habits in us.[102] Habits are precognitive tendencies, proclivities, or virtuous dispositions.[103] (2) These habit-forming practices in turn give shape to our love-desires.[104] (3) Our love-desires orientate and aim our hearts towards God—His kingdom, and human flourishing (the good life).[105] Smith labels humans "*homo liturgicus.*" According to him "we are not primarily *homo rationale* … [or] … even generically *homo religiosis*. We are more concretely *homo liturgicus*."[106] By liturgy, Smith means any materially embodied habituated practice ("ritual," "routine"[107]) that forms the core of our identity.[108] Thus liturgies have a pedagogical function.

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[101] Smith, *Desiring,* 25.

[102] Smith, *Desiring,* 24-28, 47-62.

[103] Smith, *Desiring,* 24-28, 47-62.

[104] Smith, *Desiring,* 24-28, 47-62.

[105] Smith, *Desiring,* 24-28, 47-62.

[106] Smith, *Desiring,* 25, 40.

[107] Smith, *Desiring,* 26.

[108] Smith, *Desiring,* 26.

By "imagination" Smith means "a quasi-faculty whereby we construe the world on a precognitive level."[109] Thus, Smith conceptualizes that imagination happens on a gut level, in your bones, as an unconscious intuitive feel for the world. Habit-forming practices "unconsciously prime and shape our desires and most fundamental longings."[110] They are transformative. For Smith "we are what we love."[111]

Smith goes on to explain that the embodied habituated practices that shape and constitute what we desire ("love") have a teleological orientation and aim. Using a figural schematic,[112] Smith sketches how one aims for what one loves ("desires"). Smith claims that his "liturgical anthropology is rooted both in kinaesthetics and poetics—an appreciation for the 'bodily basis of meaning' (kinaesthetics) and a recognition that it is precisely this bodily comportment that primes us to be oriented by story, by the imagination (poetics)." [113] Smith wants the reader to ponder the idea that "we are actors before we are thinkers."[114] What we do is driven by the habituated kind of person we have become. He asks the reader "to appreciate the dynamics of habituation that make us the sorts of actors we are."[115] So Smith explores how we teach the body, how the body is habituated, how the body is trained to perceive, and then how the body in turn shapes, orientates, and is constitutive for our desires (loves) and identity. The key environment in

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[109] James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works,* vol. 2 of *Cultural Liturgies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 17.

[110] Smith, *Imagining,* 4.

[111] Smith, *Imagining,* 4.

[112] Smith, *Desiring*, 48.

[113] Smith, *Imagining*, 29.

[114] Smith, *Imagining*, 32

[115] Smith, *Imagining,* 33.

which this plays out is a worshipful community, a corporeal context—namely, the church.

Embodiment and Resurrection

Another aspect of embodiment that anthropological monism contributes is a focus on resurrection. Ross Clifford and Philip Johnson argue that as important as the cross is, it is not the last word. They call not just for a refocus on the resurrection but for an understanding of the resurrection as the lynchpin of Christianity.[116] The authors also affirm the death of Jesus on the cross as very important.[117] Others like John Stott have pushed back on the centrality of resurrection. In a published interview with Al Mohler he commented:

> [W]e need to get back to the fact that the cross is the center of biblical Christianity. We must not allow … the incarnation as primary, nor can we allow … the primary focus on the resurrection. Of course, the cross, the incarnation, and the resurrection belong together. There could have been no atonement without the incarnation or without the resurrection. The incarnation prepares for atonement and the resurrection endorses the atonement, so they always belong together. Yet the New Testament is very clear that the cross stands at the center.[118]

However, Clifford and Johnson maintain that the "resurrection stands as a significant bulwark against dualistic cosmologies. It is holistic precisely because resurrection involves the entire human being, renewed and embodied."[119] The foundational importance and necessity of the resurrection involve a number of things, including the justification of our forgiveness (Rom. 4:25) and the future redemption of

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[116] Ross Clifford and Philip Johnson, *The Cross is Not Enough* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 23, 35.

[117] Clifford and Johnson, 36.

[118] R. Albert Mohler, "Creating the Bridge: An Interview with John R. Stott," accessed October 6, 2015, http://www.Preaching.com.

[119] Clifford and Johnson, 32.

our bodies (Rom. 8:23).[120] The authors show the importance of resurrection by ending their book with a listing of 55 theses for its importance in the third millennium.[121] At the end of the day, rather than highlighting the central importance of the cross, the resurrection needs to be seen as equally necessary and important with incarnation and atonement, not as an add-on for our redemption and the renewal of the entire cosmos.

Implications of Embodiment for Pastoral Care Practice

By leveraging embodiment anthropological monism offers several pastoral care practice benefits. First, the pastor can alert the congregant to the importance of embodiment and embodied awareness because Christ took it on. The embodied *imago Dei* can be restored in us who look to Christ to learn how He lived out His embodied *imago Dei*. Second, the pastor can challenge the congregant with the importance of embodied habituated practices that bring forth spiritual maturation. Even embodied suffering itself has formative spiritual implications. Third, the pastor can bring hope to the congregant through bringing embodied resurrection back into prominence.

The Contribution of Community for Whole and Holy Personhood

One final contribution of anthropological monism under consideration for human personhood is community. Not only do humans enter the world physically embodied, they also enter it socially embedded and thus eventually socially constructed. Relationships shape us and through them our personal identities emerge.[122]

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[120] Clifford and Johnson, 225-251.

[121] Clifford and Johnson, 275-278.

[122] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 71-87.

Two Competing Models for Maturation

Warren Brown and Brad Strawn envision two models in operation today with regard to change and maturation. Each model is "based on different implicit perspectives of what it means to be a person."[123] The first model is a "dualist, inner-outer" (body-soul) model, whereas the second model is an "embodied-and-socially-embedded-person" model with an emphasis on the outer and relational aspects of the human person.[124]

A non-holistic, ahistorical, and individuated model of maturation. The first model is an approach based on a dualist, inner-outer (soul-body) distinction where the inner world of the person is set off from their physical being, social behavior, and interpersonal contexts. Problems are understood in terms of an inner soul, self, or mind.[125] The process of change and maturation is focused inside the person as an autonomous (ahistorical) individual person, and only secondarily related to social relationships.[126] Solutions are often sought in terms of inner knowledge of the person who is decontextualized with a loss of historical narrative.[127]

An example of this is Ruth Barton's book *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*. Written in a leadership context, her focus is narrowly on the soul.[128] Barton defines the soul as "the part of you that is most real—the very essence of you that God knew before He brought you forth in physical form, the part that will exist after your

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[123] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 98.

[124] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 98-99.

[125] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 99.

[126] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 99.

[127] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 99.

[128] Ruth Haley Barton*, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 13.

body goes into the ground. This is the "you" that exists beyond any role you play, any job you perform, any relationship that seems to define you …. It is the part of you that longs for more of God …."[129] For her, the soul—the real person—is a God-given entity, immaterial and ahistorical. To strengthen the soul, Barton calls on leaders to become solitary, to remove themselves from the company of others so they cannot project their voices on them.[130] She treats the soul or self like an onion—a person is to get alone and shed the layered voices and experiences of others that have defined them until he or she gets to the real core self. Once this is done, the much needed presence and goodness of God speaks to the individual. To be fair to Barton, she does bring in the idea of community, although it is toward the end of the book and is done so for community decisions.[131] However, an argument can be made that if one removes all the voices of and experiences with others, then there remains no self for God to address.

A holistically embodied and socially embedded community model of maturation. The second model for change and maturation that Brown and Strawn articulate and embrace is a model of the human individual as a holistically "embodied and socially embedded person."[132] The focus and intervention is "outward and relational, with the goal being to reshape automatic social behavioral patterns."[133] New relational templates are formed through interaction with healthy other Christians. The focus is not on an inner "me." The authors contend, "It is generally a distraction from genuine transformation to

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[129] Barton, 13.

[130] Barton, 47, 52.

[131] Barton,, 169-208.

[132] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 99.

[133] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 99.

view persons as an inner self (the "real me" inside), rather than as a constantly reforming amalgamation of all their interactions from birth to the present (that is, a dynamic system)."[134]

Brown and Strawn survey what constitutive elements help change and shape us. The authors acknowledge that genetic influences and basic birth temperament play a part, but for the most part "at birth we are mentally and socially … amorphous, plastic, and open to being shaped by the environment."[135] Intelligence, personality, and character are mostly open programs in the infant, similar to computer super-games that develop new game knowledge as they are played.[136] "Imitation, shared attention, emotional attunement, and interpersonal attachments"[137] shape one's intelligence, personality, and character. Development and meaning-making, according to the authors, take place by tactile interaction—"visual, auditory, touch, kinesthetic"[138]—by action more so than "passively discovered by observation."[139] This shows the importance of actions and behaviors in forming neural pathways. Observation is important but just a part of the shaping.

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[134] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 99.

[135] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 52.

[136] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 55.

[137] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 55.

[138] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 55.

[139] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 55.

Discoveries in neuroscience have shown that when it comes to imitation, mirror neurons allow the person to experience the action of another through observation; it is like performing the act or action oneself.[140] Both desires and behaviors are imitated.[141]

Brown and Strawn comment, "Shared attention refers to two individuals simultaneously paying attention to the same thing, person, or event."[142] This helps development in three ways. First, it provides a common set of sensory experiences to ground communication and learning. Second, it enhances interpersonal interactions. Third, it is conducive for bonding in relational systems.[143]

From early on newborn infants are shaped by a bonding encounter with the face and voice of their primary caregiver. Interpersonal attachment theory introduced by John Bowlby has shown that the development of children pertains to one of four attachment styles or responses from caregivers: secure, preoccupied, avoidant, or disorganized.[144] Secure attachment is a product of the parents' consistent availability and reliability. Preoccupied attachment is the product of inconsistent parental responsiveness.[145] The child develops behaviors suggesting anxiousness and uncertainty.[146] Avoidant attachment is an intensification of insecure attachment in which the child develops an expectation of

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[140] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 56.

[141] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 56.

[142] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 58.

[143] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 58.

[144] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 60.

[145] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 60.

[146] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 60.

disappointment.[147] The child exhibits disinterest in re-establishing parental connection.[148]

Disorganized attachment is the result of chaotic and abusive parenting. The child cannot

predict parental responsiveness, and as a result the child exhibits confusion and

disorganization.[149] Consequently, children learn how relationships operate and work in

community—what to expect, how to predict, and how to act based on these

experiences.[150]

One important premise of Brown and Strawn's work with regard to embodied

persons as it relates to child development and formation is that formation does not end

somewhere in later childhood or early adolescence; rather formation and maturation

continue as an ongoing process into adulthood.[151]

The authors warn that what we learn about relationships in a community setting early in

life, we will use to anticipate what to expect in later relationships.[152] We form

interpersonal templates and patterns for what to expect and how to respond to

relationships.[153] Brown and Strawn argue strongly and insightfully that for healthy life-

forming relationships to develop, a new interpersonal template needs to form, and this

takes place only through long-term healthy relations in community with others in small

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[147] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 60.

[148] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 60.

[149] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 60-61.

[150] Warren S. Brown and Brad D. Strawn, "Self-Organizing Personhood: Complex Emergent Developmental Linguistic Relational Neurophysiologicalism," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, eds. Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), 100.

[151] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 69-70.

[152] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 61.

[153] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 61.

groups.[154] We find this social science intuition in the biblical corpus as well. The Apostle Paul urges believers at Corinth to "be imitators of me" (1 Cor. 4:16). Paul, himself, is an imitator of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6). The Apostle Paul also enlarges this idea by noting how church groups can mentor other church groups (1 Thess. 2:14; Phil. 3:17) through relational imitation. The author of Hebrews encourages the same strategy (Heb. 6:12; 13:7). Conversely, the Apostle Paul and others warn the believers at Thessalonica not to follow unhealthy, pathological relational examples (2 Thess. 3:6-9; 3 John 11). Therefore, for believers these passages point to the importance of relational imitation of mentors and healthy group dynamics to transform pathological relational templates into healthy Christ-like relational templates for spiritual maturation.

The authors explore what prompts a person to want to change using the idea of "catastrophe." A catastrophe is a situation that forces the quest for reorganization or adaptation because of the mismatch between a person's pattern for relational negotiation and some crisis.[155]

Brown and Strawn encourage the Christian community to see people not as dual entities but as "whole-embodied-persons-embedded-in-the-world-relationships."[156] For them a human subject is a uniquely organized pattern that is dynamic in its developmental process of self-organization and in its continual processes of

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[154] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 92, 131.

[155] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 75.

[156] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 97.

reorganization and transformation in response to new situations and challenges.[157] Strawn calls this "selving."[158]

Implications of Community for Pastoral Care Practice

A holistically embodied and socially embedded community model for spiritual maturation can be employed pastorally through a monistic framework with benefits for pastoral care practice. The pastor can explore with the congregant her or his embodied history of being shaped socially to discover both healthy and unhealthy interpersonal templates and patterns of relating. The pastor can carefully place the congregant into a long-term small group church community setting with Christocentric, Spirit-led people in which the congregant will actively and tactilely observe, learn, and relationally enact healthy new interpersonal patterns of selving. Often these new interpersonal templates can emerge when catastrophes are stirred up by preaching, by the presence of new people in the community who challenge the ecclesiological status quo, by familial tensions, by vocational changes enacting a socioeconomic tension, and by medical tragedies. Thus anthropological monism envisions an individual as an embodied person embedded in social community relationships and emphasizes the importance of long-term redemptive and healing relationships.

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Summary

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In summary, this researcher has explicated the particular kind of monism he embraces and has clarified the purpose of this project, which entails not arguing for monism per se but rather exploring what benefits if any anthropological monism may

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[157] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life*, 123.

[158] Strawn, "'I Don't Feel Like Myself Today'," 9.

have for pastoral care practice. In this theological chapter, the researcher has offered three beneficial and helpful contributions of anthropological monism to assist pastoral care practice for whole and holy personhood: integration, embodiment, and community.

First, integration can become a corrective to sin envisioned as disintegration. Integration helps the epistemological quest for truth with collaborative engagement through a multidisciplinary framework. Rather than conceptualizing human personhood through a partitive taxonomy (structured classification), monism envisions an integrative aspectual taxonomy of the human person as an alternative.

Second, by bringing embodiment back into prominence anthropological monism reminds one that all human experience is embodied and has a neural basis. Embodiment is linked to human being, knowing, and acting. Human knowing was understood as always embodied. Human action is linked to worship, which is always an embodied experience. Embodied habituated practices forge desires and a loving orientation toward God and His kingdom. Finally, it was highlighted that embodiment brings back into prominence the necessity of embodied resurrection.

Third, anthropological monism also contributes the importance of community for human personhood. Humans are socially embedded and communally shaped. This insight warrants abandoning the model that was based on a dualist inner-outer (soul-body) distinction where the inner world of the person is set off from their physical being, social behavior, and interpersonal contexts. The person ends up being decontextualized with a loss of a historical narrative. This former model can be replaced with a new model that envisions a community for change and maturation. In this new model that embraces the human person as a holistically embodied and socially embedded person, the focus and

intervention are outward with relational reshaping. New relational templates are formed

through long-term relations with healthy Spirit-led community mentors and groups.

CHAPTER THREE

A LITERATURE REVIEW PROVIDING ANTHROPOLOGICAL MONISM

WITH STRATEGIES FOR PASTORAL CARE PRACTICE

A review of literature by theoreticians and practitioners of both Christian and non-religious persuasions involving the multidisciplinary sciences and humanities was undertaken for their contributions to the emergence of anthropological monism with regard to: (1) exploring the human self through a bio-cultural interdisciplinary approach, (2) examining embodied and socially embedded practices for spiritual formation, and (3) surveying personal eschatology for end-of-life outcomes.

Anthropological monism envisions a human subject as a unified, wholly integrated physical being devoid of any second metaphysical entity (e.g., a soul). Biblical scholars, theologians, psychologists, scientists, and pastors have explored how human capacities and activities emerge predicated upon a hierarchical complexity of brain development. Thus, these theoreticians and practitioners have inquired how consciousness and self-awareness emerge from human embodiment for environmental and social relationships to be experienced (i.e., God, others, and the cosmos).

Exploring the Human Self through a Bio-cultural Interdisciplinary Approach

The researcher uses the term "bio-cultural" to refer to the convergence of a variety of disciplines including insights from cognitive science, neuroscience, cultural

anthropology, psychology, sociology, theology, and the like.[1] In the abundance of

literature pertaining to bio-cultural studies the word "self" is fairly consistently chosen as

a conceptual term that broadly references the human subject. However agreement about

how to define a self, whether the self is real or an illusion (i.e., brain-constructed), and

whether humans consist of one or multiple selves (in terms of consensus) remains

elusive.

Exploring the Emergence of Self with Neuroscience

Todd Feinberg, a neuroscientist theoretician and practitioner from a non-religious

perspective, attempts to explain in his book *From Axons to Identity* how one's personal

identity emerges from one's neurons. Rather than relying on an immaterial soul that is

distinct from one's physiology for an emergent self and personal identity, Feinberg takes

a new approach based on his study of self-disorders. Feinberg "realized that by linking

the region of the brain that was affected by brain disease with the particular disorder of

the self that ensued, he could recreate—in reverse as it were—how nature builds a self

from neural tissue."[2] Feinberg envisions three broad categories of self-related disorders:

disorders of the bodily-self (what we are physically), disorders of the relational-self (how

one thinks and interacts with other objects and persons), and disorders of the narrative

self (one's past and present personal history), and shows what goes wrong with the self in

brain dysfunction.[3] The author defines the self as "a unity of consciousness in perception

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[1] F. LeRon Shults, *Theology After the Birth of God: Atheists Conceptions in Cognition and Culture* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 3. Shults chooses this term and notes how this term is coming into vogue as a term of coverage for all the newly emerging disciples and sub-disciplines.

[2] Feinberg, XIII.

[3] Feinberg, 1-2.

and action that persists in time."[4] Because the self is brain-constructed, some self-disorders are felt to be reversible by some psychological insight or relief from stress, whereas self-disorders due to physiological brain damage in neurological cases are usually not reversible unless the underlying neurological pathology that triggered the disorder is corrected.[5] To state it more simply, what happens to the brain happens to the self. Feinberg strongly argues that "the relationship between the brain and the self can only be understood as the result of the hierarchical patterns of growth of the neural systems."[6] Growth in neural development enables growth, maturity, and complexity of the self.[7] For Feinberg the brain creates a self by a complexity of nested and non-nested systems that give rise to a complexity of hierarchical organization. He envisions an "arranged *medial-lateral trend*, and the longitudinally organized *caudal-rostral trend*"[8] revealing a bottom-up, top-down movement of complexity with an internal-outward and an outward-internalized dynamic of integration for centralized consciousness.[9] Feinberg understands consciousness as a "property of the brain."[10] However, "consciousness is not localized in any particular zone or structure of the nervous system; rather, it is embodied within the physiological functions of the brain."[11] Thus for Feinberg "your life is what your particular pack of cells collectively do … [y]ou are not a pack of neurons; you are

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[4] Feinberg, XI.

[5] Feinberg, 49.

[6] Feinberg, 132.

[7] Feinberg, 132.

[8] Feinberg, 132.

[9] Feinberg, 152-158.

[10] Feinberg, 208.

[11] Feinberg, 209.

what your own pack of neurons collectively do."[12] In short, the brain constructs the self

so that what happens to the brain happens to the self. Thus Feinberg's work can be useful

for pastoral care practice, emphasizing the embodied neural brain and self and its

contribution to potential spirituality.

Free Will and Neuroethics

If a very tight link exists between brain functions and self-function, the issue of

free will naturally arises. Atheistic neurophilosopher Patricia Churchland conveys in her

book *Touching a Nerve* that she has come to think of her brain in more intimate terms—

"as me."[13] Thus for Churchland, "I am my brain." However, if one's brain and self are

conflated, this quickly raises the question of whether a person can have free will or not

because a person is not differentiated in any way from their brain. In such conflation,

even one's self-control is dependent on the various neurochemicals that modulate

interactions between neurons functioning properly.[14] For Churchland there are two

different kinds of free will. The first kind of free will is what she terms "contracausal"

free will.[15] This view holds that one's decisions and actions are not caused by anything at

all; there are no causal antecedents.[16] One's free will creates a decision or action.

Churchland offers a second kind of free will termed as "intentional and voluntary" free

will.[17] Although causal mechanisms may be present, they are not coercive. The author

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[12] Feinberg, 212.

[13] Patricia S. Churchland, *Touching a Nerve: The Self as Brain* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013), 11.

[14] Churchland, 178.

[15] Churchland,179.

[16] Churchland,179.

[17] Churchland, 181.

notes that we must "come to realize that decision making in the real biological world always involves causality."[18] Therefore, debates often ensue on the continuum of causality, with each person asking at what point a person crosses the threshold and loses any meaningful understanding of free will. Churchland posits the example of Tourette's disorder as an example of crossing such a threshold.[19] However, the issue of our free will as it relates to neuro-healthiness and personal responsibility can become a slippery slope in issues of criminality and punishment.[20]

Christian philosopher Nancey Murphy and neuro-psychologist Warren Brown in their book *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?* also take up the free will issue vis-à-vis neurology. The authors do not see the free will problem as a "neurobiological determinism" problem but rather as a "neurobiological causal reductionism" problem.[21] Thus the authors shift perspective from aggregates (i.e., focusing on separable parts) to dynamic systems (i.e., big picture relational complexity).[22] The human brain develops forming a hierarchy of levels of complexity.[23] Murphy and W. Brown acknowledge a bottom-up causal influence from the lower system levels of the human brain on one's body (e.g., the brain stem regulating breathing and heartbeat). However, from a higher-level dynamic mental system engaged in action-feedback-evaluation-loops (i.e., the

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[18] Churchland, 184.

[19] Churchland, 182.

[20] Churchland, 185-193.

[21] Nancey Murphy and Warren S. Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?: Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10, 238.

[22] Murphy and W. Brown, 10.

[23] Murphy and W. Brown, 9.

higher level system can go offline, evaluate feedback, and make necessary adjustments),

this brings a constraining top-down causal influence over some of the lower level

systems.[24] Thus casual agency emerges in relationship to free will. The result is a

reciprocating dynamic of downward causation (the effect of the whole on the parts) as

well as a bottom-up causation (the effects of the parts on the whole).[25] To reduce or

eliminate this complex reciprocity is to negate free will for the most part.

Some atheistic neuroscientists attempt to undermine this figuration by explaining

that our conscious evaluations and decisions are already determined at an unconscious

level. Sam Harris notes a famous study by Benjamin Libet who used an

electroencephalogram to show that activity in the brain's motor cortex can be detected

some 300 milliseconds before a person feels that he has decided to move.[26] Harris cites

other follow-up tests that confirm this finding. He concludes that moments before one

subjectively decides to act, one's brain has already subconsciously determined what one

will do. Becoming conscious of one's decisions comes afterwards.[27]

Non-religious developmental psychologist Bruce Hood calls this registered

unconscious neural spike a "readiness potential"; that is, action has already been

unconsciously triggered.[28] To address this dilemma, Murphy explains that if we are

identical to our conscious awareness, then actions performed are initiated by brains and

[24] Murphy and W. Brown, 11.

[25] Murphy and W. Brown, 12.

[26] Sam Harris, *Free Will* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 8.

[27] Harris, 8.

[28] Bruce Hood, *The Self Illusion: How the Social Brain Creates Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 128.

not subjects, and thus the resulting conclusion is we are not acting freely.[29] However,

Murphy argues that to identify a person with her or his conscious awareness is a dualist

holdover. Instead, Murphy explains that the old danger recognition system (the limbic

system) operates faster than the system that allows for conscious interpretation and

awareness of the signal. Thus the conscious awareness system operates slower.[30] Murphy

reminds us that we are more than our conscious awareness and that we must look at the

whole brain in the whole body environment, not just brain regions that interpret signals

consciously.[31] Upholding free will is important, for the functioning of one's brain and

free will has, as Hood points out, important implications for moral responsibility with the

emerging field of neuroethics—the brain basis of morality.[32] Without a sense of free will,

morality and ethics become vacuous.

Exploring the Emergence of Self through Social Neuroscience

Brain neurons are separated by small gaps called synapses. These gaps are

intermittently bridged through a complex process of electrochemical exchange resulting

in synaptic transmission of information. The triggering stimulation mechanism for this

transmission is experience. We are sculpted by experience.[33] Drawing from this reality,

psychologist Louis Cozolino introduces the concept of "social synapse"—the space

between us—a space filled with seen and unseen messages networking us together as

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[29] Nancey Murphy, "Do Humans Have Souls: Perspectives from Science and Religion" (lecture, Grand Dialogue Conference, Grand Valley State University, 2011), accessed July 15, 2014.

[30] Murphy, "Do Humans Have Souls," 2011.

[31] Murphy, "Do Humans Have Souls," 2011.

[32] Hood, 118.

[33] Louis Cozolino, *The Neuroscience of Human Relationships: Attachment and the Developing Social Brain,* 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2014), xiv.

families, tribes, societies, and the human species as a whole. Thus, one can envision the emergence of social neurology.[34]

Neural Networking and Experience

Like neurons, people excite, interconnect, and link together to create relationships.[35] Linking together the two realities of neural brain networking and social networking, when we interact with each other we are impacting each other's internal biological state. We are influencing long-term construction of each other's brains and we are impacting each other socially in relationships.[36] David Hogue notes that even the neurons that make up the brain are social by nature. At conception the fetus begins producing primitive nerve cells—250,000 per minute. These cells communicate connectively with neighboring cells. The brain is built socially as neurons either make connections and survive or fail to make connections and die. Of the total of 250 billion neurons in the brain during later stages of pregnancy, only half survive to become part of the infant's brain.[37] Thus, based on an interface between genetics and experience, Cozolino announces that the brain is a social organ of adaptation that is built through interactions with others.[38] With this interdisciplinary conversation between biological and social sciences, the field of interpersonal neurobiology emerges.[39]

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[34] Cozolino, xv.

[35] Cozolino, xv.

[36] Cozolino, xv.

[37] David A. Hogue, *Remembering the Future, Imagining the Past: Story, Ritual, and the Human Brain* (Eugene, OR: Pilgrim Press, 2003), 78.

[38] Cozolino, xvi.

[39] Cozolino, xvii.

Hebb's Law says, "When an axon of cell A is near enough to excite cell B and repeatedly or persistently takes part in firing it, some growth process or metabolic change takes place in one or both cells such that A's efficiency, as one of the cells firing B, is increased."[40] This law has become paraphrased as "neurons that fire together wire together." In agreement with this reality interpersonal neurobiology assumes that the brain is a social organ built via experience—namely, an experience-dependent plasticity constructed by experience involving attachment, attunement, and social communication.[41] This insight lends important implications for pastoral care through a monistic framework. Because of the brain's plasticity, spiritual rituals and spiritual relationships with others can wire or rewire the brain. As Cozolino declares, social interactions are a primary source of brain regulation, growth, and health. Any meaningful (and hopefully healthy) relationship can reactivate neuroplastic processes and actually alter the structures of neural networks. Relationships reshape the brain throughout life.[42] Eric Bergemann and his colleagues reinforce Cozolino's insight. They announce that neural networks are formed through experiences. With each new experience, new connections are made.[43] Neuroplasticity occurs each and every time we have a new experience. With each new experience patterns of neurons fire, and with each instance of neural firing there is the potential to create new synapses linking neurons to one another, to strengthen old synaptic connections, and to stimulate growth of new neurons that

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[40] Donald O. Hebb, *The Organization of Behavior: A Neuropsychological Theory* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1949).

[41] Cozolino, xvii.

[42] Cozolino, xvii-xix.

[43] Eric Bergemann, Daniel J. Siegel, Deanie Eichenstien, et al., "Neuroscience and Spirituality," in *In Search of Self: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Personhood,* eds. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and Erik P. Wiebe (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 90.

enable even more connections to be made.[44] These processes are called synaptogenesis and neurogenesis.[45] Relationships become key!

Mirror Neurons and Mentoring

The important discovery of "mirror neurons" teaches that in relational contexts nonverbal facial and behavioral communication, due to the activation of mirror neurons, are equally important for influential constructive and reconstructive purposes. Coupled with mimetic theory, mirror neurons make possible the responses of compassion and empathy.[46] The researcher resonates with Andrea Hollingsworth's definition of empathy as "the capacity to be affected by and share in the state of an other (or others) in such a way that we maintain self-awareness even as we 'feel into' the other's experience."[47] Then she makes a differentiation of empathy from compassion. She writes, "Compassion [is] being empathically connected with others in their suffering and taking action to ease their distress."[48] Hollingsworth notes that compassion goes "beyond empathy in that it involves a component of action, or helping behavior."[49] Therefore, compassion requires the usage of one's embodiment. With the discovery of mirror neurons an important pastoral care a strategy emerges. New Christians and struggling believers can enter into mentoring partnerships (individual or small groups) with healthy Christians who

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[44] Bergemann et al., 90.

[45] Bergemann et al., 90; Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 56, 81.

[46] Cozolino, 205-224.

[47] Andrea Hollingsworth, "Neuroscience and Spirituality," *Zygon* vol. 43, no. 4 (December 2008): 839.

[48] Hollingsworth, 839.

[49] Hollingsworth, 839.

relationally model healthy spiritual behaviors to be mimicked and mirrored by the other.[50]

The Plasticity and Usefulness of Self Memories

Human relational experiences are not only neurologically wired; they are neurologically stored. David Hogue in his book *Remembering the Future, Imagining the Past* utilizes the intersection of "memory and imagination"[51] for self-development. After noting the many different kinds of memories, Hogue explains that the brain does not store memories in a single location. How the brain pulls all the memory parts back together is currently somewhat of a mystery to neuroscientists, who call it the "binding problem."[52] Hogue notes how research shows that our brains actually reconstruct our memories each time we recall them; as a result we never remember any event exactly the same way twice. In a sense, we are re-creating an event each time we recall it.[53] Thus, memories are more plastic than we realize. Each time a memory is reconstructed, it is a new memory; the very act of (re)membering is an act of self-reconstruction.[54] Conversely, if some memories are lost or distorted, our sense of our constructed self and personal identity becomes changed.[55] Hogue acknowledges that for the most part we trust our memories. However, the modern demands of high accuracy and detailed completeness seem less

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[50] W. Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 56, 81, 96-97.

[51] Hogue, 4-5.

[52] Hogue, 60-61.

[53] Hogue, 60-61.

[54] Hogue, 65, 75.

[55] Hogue, 76.

realistic.[56] Hogue warns that memories can fade neurally and become lost, partial, distorted, and even at times false.[57]

Another pastoral care strategy can be utilized with memories. First, the pastor must use caution and probe to ensure that the counselee's memory reconstruction is indeed accurate so as to not engage in healing practice that is grounded in error. Second, a more positive usage emerges. Because memories are plastic, new perspectives can become attached or associated with them in order to remember with a new perspective conducive to self-growth and spiritual maturation.

Exploring Self, Selves, and Selving

As one is neurally and socially self-constructed in many divergent contexts, the question of whether one is a self or many contextualized selves emerges. Adjectival classified descriptions of the self in publications are numerous—nuclear self, self-in-relation, person-centered-self, embedded self, and so on—which makes the attempt to define self very difficult.[58]

The Self as Illusory and Brain-Constructed

Some still hold to a view of self as an ontological, metaphysical entity that is housed in and uses the brain. However, many see the self as an emergent capacity or property of brain development; it is brain-constructed and brain-dependent. "Some of the most compelling evidence that the self depends on the brain comes from studies of unfortunate individuals who have suffered some form of brain damage due to either aging

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[56] Hogue, 66-67.

[57] Hogue, 68-74.

[58] Strawn, "'I Don't Feel Like Myself Today'," 2.

or accident,"[59] or temporary brain alteration due to drug usage. Their personalities appear radically changed to those who know them. This insight can provide a strategy when a pastor seeks to evaluate why a congregant is habituated in a seemingly pathological behavior. If a certain brain region is damaged the resulting effect can manifest itself in unhealthy behavior, rather than just attributing it to one's sin nature.

Social scientists and neuroscientists also theorize about whether the self is real or illusory. Hood argues that brain science shows that our sense of self is an illusion.[60] He goes on to clarify that this does not mean that it is not subjectively or existentially experienced, but rather that "what we experience is a powerful deception generated by our brains for our own benefit."[61] According to Hood, "It may be one of the most, if not *the* most, difficult concepts to accept."[62] He attempts to justify this concept by showing that there is no center in the brain where the self is constructed, asserting that it emerges out of the orchestra of different brain processes in different brain regions. Hood warrants this belief by showing how the brain fills in "two blind spots, the size of lemons at arms length, just off center your field of view that you do not even notice."[63] He also shares how the brain fills in our loss of vision during the milliseconds between eye movements.[64] However, most people operate from a sense of self that is subjectively and existentially experienced as real and valid. Although the terms "real" and "illusory" may

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[59] Hood, XII.

[60] Hood, IX.

[61] Hood, IX.

[62] Hood, IX, 264.

[63] Hood, X.

[64] Hood, X.

not be the best linguistic markers, theorists use them to differentiate between the reflexive pronoun "self" either denoting: (a) a concrete ontological entity, (b) a reification (making an abstract idea concrete) of this idea, or (c) a metaphor pointing to an experience, whether real or otherwise (i.e., a sense of self).[65]

A monistic framework recognizes that one links the construction of the self with the brain; however, a reciprocating dynamic should be acknowledged. The brain plays a primary part in self-construction, but the emergent self through habituated practices also plays a part in the latter neural wiring or rewiring of the brain. This reveals both the embodied and socially embedded reality of our selves.

Self or Selves?

Theologians, neurologists, and postmodern social scientists are exploring whether the human subject is a single self or multiple selves.

Di Vito scours the Old Testament and suggests a picture of a single self quite different from that fostered by modernity. He suggests that the Old Testament self is (1) deeply embedded in a larger social world of family and tribe; (2) a self that is de-centered and permeated and porous at its borders; (3) a self that is transparent, socialized, and locally embodied; and (4) a self that is other-legislated and dependent.[66] As such this self stands against an isolated, self-contained, self-legislating, autonomous self of

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[65] Pamela Cooper-White, "Reenactors: Theological and Psychological Reflections on 'Core Selves', Multiplicity, and the Sense of Cohesion," in *In Search of Self: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Personhood,* eds. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and Erik P. Wiebe (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 148.

[66] Robert A. Di Vito, "Here One Need Not Be Oneself: The Concept of 'Self' in the Hebrew Scriptures," in *The Whole and Divided Self,* eds. David E. Aune and John McCarthy (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 81.

modernity.[67] Jack Balswick and his coauthors in their book *The Reciprocating Self* also

rails against a fragmented, lonely, isolated sense of self.[68] Balswick and his colleagues

draw upon the principle of relationality. The authors use the relational analogy of the

intra-Trinitarian life of God as their model for developing a reciprocating human self. It

is in relationship with an "other" that we more fully encounter the other, but also

ourselves. Our self emerges embodied and outwardly focused.[69]

Leon Tuner notes that "throughout the human sciences, self-multiplicity is now

commonly lauded as a positive cognitive and social adaptation to the constant

fluctuations, novelty, and uncertainty of human life."[70] J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and

Erik Wiebe acknowledge that a socially constructed self and multiple selves point out

that the human subject cannot be isolated from its various contexts. However, they warn

"would not the reality of multiple selves, therefore, enable us to relegate evil to particular

selves, or aspects of the self, and so help us avoid taking full responsibility for dangerous

evil acts?"[71] Thus many Christian theologians continue to defend a unity of the self.

Although they reject the autonomous self-creating subject of modernity and conversely

embrace the idea of social constructedness of personhood, they still resist a fragmentary

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[67] Di Vito, 81.

[68] Jack O. Balswick, Pamela Ebstyne King, and Kevin S. Reimer, *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 19.

[69] Balswick, 25-34.

[70] Leon Turner, "Disunity and Disorder: The 'Problem' of Self-Fragmentation," in *In Search of Self: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Personhood,* eds. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and Erik P. Wiebe (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 125.

[71] J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and Erik P. Wiebe, "Introduction," in *In Search of Self: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Personhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 2-3.

idea of human individuality because for them it only leads to pathologies.[72] However, Turner argues that fragmentation does not have to lead automatically to human pathologies. He notes that there is now a broad consensus among psychologists that people do experience themselves in qualitatively distinct ways over time, and that the capacity for such diachronic experiential plurality reflects the multidimensional structure of personality.[73] Following this, pastoral theologian Pamela Cooper-White acknowledges that she has been engaging the question of multiple selves and has come to call for an expanded view of the human subject as a web or conglomeration of self-states and personalities formed in identification with other objects internalizing one's experiences with them since birth.[74] Cooper-White worries that in the past theologians have conceived the self "to denote a concrete ontological entity." Hood also rejects an ontological entity of self, arguing that there can be no single individual self ("homunculus") inside an individual's head for the simple reason that if that were true, this homunculus would require an inner self as well, and this gets into an infinite regression with no end.[75]

Relational analysts have distinguished between multiplicity (normal subjective fluidity and contextual diversity) and fragmentation (a pathological sense of no cohesiveness).[76] A key way forward is to retain both contextualized subjectivities of

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[72] Turner, 125.

[73] Turner, 128.

[74] Cooper-White, 143. A much more expanded version of this is located in Pamela Cooper-White, *Many Voices: Pastoral Psychotherapy in Relational and Theological Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: First Fortress Press), 2011.

[75] Hood, 16.

[76] Cooper-White, 150.

multiplicity and a continuous self-cohesion.[77] Thus an essential core executive sense of

self can be conceptualized utilizing a narrative theory of self, where new moments of

contextual experiences can be added to and integrated with the narrative story

(multiplicity and continuity) of a human self.[78] Neuroscientist Patrick McNamara

appreciates the idea of an executive sense of self that brings coherence to a multiplicity of

contextualized subjective experiences.[79]

The Embodied and Contextualized Self: Selving

Brad Strawn argues for an understanding of self that includes multiplicity,

fluidity, and temporality. However, he still embraces an experience of unitary selfhood.[80]

Strawn explains that while we may experience ourselves as both discontinuous and

multiple, we can also experience ourselves as singular and continuous. I may not feel like

myself today, but that statement implies that there is an experience of myself to which I

can compare.[81]

Strawn also puts forth the idea of a reciprocating self. He notes that our personal

subjectivity is made up of action-related-maps of self and others in the world over time.

This influences our perceptions and actions, which in turn are continuously shaped and

influenced by the subjectivity of others.[82] With this sense of self, Strawn envisions a

function of this self as selving. "[W]hole persons … are embodied meaning making

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[77] Cooper-White, 150.

[78] Turner, 128-129.

[79] Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009), XII, 28-29.

[80] Strawn, "'I Don't Feel Like Myself Today'," 10.

[81] Strawn, "'I Don't Feel Like Myself Today'," 10.

[82] Strawn, "'I Don't Feel Like Myself Today'," 10.

creatures constantly involved in the embedded hermeneutical task of interpretation and reinterpretation of present contexts in light of the subjectivity and the interaction with other's subjectivity. This process I refer to as selving."[83] Thus, the self is both brain and socially constructed through a dynamic and reciprocal relational interactivity. With a multiple contextualized but unitary sense of self in mind, implications for spiritual formation and afterlife outcomes will be briefly explored in what follows.

Examining Embodied and Socially Embedded Practices for Spiritual Formation

In the literature pertaining to spirituality, the definitions are numerous and broad. Eric Bergemann, Daniel Siegel, Deanie Eichenstein, and Ellen Streit, after polling many people about what spirituality means, noted that a common theme emerged: people consistently spoke of an awareness of being connected to something larger than their individual embodied selves.[84] Spirituality conveys a quest towards connecting with transcendence. Lucy Bregman in her work *The Ecology of Spirituality* wades through a plethora of spirituality definitions, and is pleased that many recent definitions "avoid the traditional opposition between spiritual and material/physical. Today's spirituality helps connect people to the world of nature not to rise above it into a Platonic realm of pure Forms or Ideas."[85] A trend of spirituality is seen as becoming more holistic and embodied. Carson notes, "As a term, 'spirituality' emerged from French Catholic

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[83] Strawn, "'I Don't Feel Like Myself Today'," 10.

[84] Bergemann et al., "Neuroscience and Spirituality," in *In Search of Self: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Personhood*, eds. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen and Erik P. Wiebe (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 84.

[85] Lucy Bregman, *The Ecology of Spirituality: Meanings, Virtues, and Practices in a Post-Religious Age* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 2.

thought, though for the last century or so it has been common in Protestantism as well."[86]

Carson resonates somewhat with what he calls a coherent and all-embracing Roman

Catholic definition that entails important components: lived experience, academic rigor,

and a Christian life lived in relationship to God and empowered by the Spirit.[87] Carson

adds that Protestantism's associated contributions include godliness and a devotional life

emphasizing conformity to Christ.[88] He reminds the reader, "Spirituality is more of a

theological construct"[89] than a biblical one. Furthermore he warns, "Spirituality may

devolve into a technique."[90] It must remain connected to the gospel and work outward

from the center, entailing an affect component that focuses one on the experienced

presence of God.[91]

 With the above-mentioned intuitions in mind, the researcher envisions a

spirituality that entails an embodied life orientation towards God through Christ,

empowered by the Spirit and including embodied habituated practices in community with

others, resulting in more Christlikeness.

<div align="center">

The Practice of Contemplative Meditation
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 In this section, a brief sampling of embodied and socially embedded practices are

noted for their important contributions to spiritual formation in line with a monistic

framework.

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[86] D.A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervans Publishing House, 1996), 556.

[87] Carson, 559.

[88] Carson, 559.

[89] Carson, 562.

[90] Carson, 563.

[91] Carson, 566-567.

The promise of neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to change structure and function (neurogenesis) that is available not just to youth but throughout the lifetime of the human subject.[92] This is just one insight that drives the emerging field of neurotheology.

Neuroscientists have well documented a negativity bias, a predisposition towards anxious awareness (e.g., Matt. 6:34).[93] The brain has the capacity to detect negative information faster than positive information.[94] Researchers who study human relationships report that it takes at least five positive affirmations and interactions to balance a single negative experience.[95] Contemplative meditation can develop an "observing self" that monitors internal and reactive states of anxiety, and can begin to decouple the automaticity (default pattern) of this negativity, awaken the contemplative self to increase non-anxious awareness, and lower the stress level.[96] A contemplative centering of one's self can quiet down excessive amygdala activity. Bingaman notes that some studies have shown that 40 minutes of daily contemplative meditation over a period of years has brought permanent brain changes for the better.[97] Adding to this, in his brief book *What Your Body Knows About God,* Rob Moll notes that this kind of activity also releases healthy brain chemicals such as dopamine and oxytocin that assist our brains in

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[92] Kirk A. Bingaman, "The Promise of Neuroplasticity for Pastoral Care and Counseling," *Pastoral Psychology* 62 (2013): 549-560.

[93] Bingaman, 550-551.

[94] Bingaman, 552.

[95] Bingaman, 553.

[96] Bingaman, 552.

[97] Bingaman, 557.

wiring and rewiring our neural connections and forging a sense of wellbeing.[98] This

particular embodied practice utilizes the brain resulting in reflexive and constructive

effects on the brain with distributive physiological results throughout the body, rather

than practicing meditation in some ethereal fashion in an attempt to transform an

immaterial soul.

Other Embodied and Socially Embedded Practices for Spiritual Maturation

A second group of spiritual practices are linked together with a chosen theme of

self-giving with an other focus: table fellowship, hospitality, generosity, and mentoring

relationships. The impetus for this grouping is predicated upon the relationality and self-

giving-for-others life dynamic of the Trinitarian God.

Table Fellowship, Hospitality, Generosity, and Mentoring Relationships

Joel Green reminds us that theory and practice, thinking and doing, from a

monistic paradigm need to be integrated.[99] Practices like hospitality and table fellowship

actually generate the realities they are thought to represent. They restructure relationships

and prompt transformed patterns of human living.[100] Green follows Jesus' admonition to

use table fellowship as a means of extending grace. Jesus encouraged His hearers to

invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind to their banquets (Luke 14:14).

Those who will eat in God's kingdom are those who share their own tables with

marginalized people.[101] Table fellowship had to do with intimacy. To share a meal with

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[98] Rob Moll, *What Your Body Knows About God: How We Are Designed to Connect, Serve, and Thrive* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014), 81, 132.

[99] Joel B. Green, "Embodying the Gospel: Two Exemplary Practices," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 7, no.1 (2104): 11.

[100] Green, "Embodying the Gospel," 11.

[101] Green, "Embodying the Gospel," 17.

others involved including them as extended family, so to speak.[102] This practice

illustrates that God's grace includes those deemed by others as unreachable. According to

Green, this practice demonstrates God's character. Thus those who practice table

fellowship in this way demonstrate that they are God's children as they embody divine

grace.[103] Using one's mirror neurons to mimic the character actions of God by practicing

table fellowship in this way not only shows God's grace, but also shows that this grace

has a transformative effect on the practitioner as well.

After observing the Lukan story recorded in Luke 24:13-35, Dahl concludes that

"a significant marker of whole and holiness is one's ability to create a hospitable space in

which others can recognize and experience the presence of God."[104] Dahl points out that

hospitality itself involves formation because it requires that we learn to be sensitive to

and recognize the presence of God—especially where it is least expected— and invite

others into it.[105] Because we experienced hospitality from God when we were on the

margins, authentic hospitality requires the practice of opening our hearts to make room

for others on the margins—people we might normally ignore, or who appear invisible to

us so that we are not even aware that we are ignoring or overlooking them as potential

recipients of God's grace.[106]

Reuschling offers up generosity as a formative practice. For Reuschling,

generosity is "the willingness and capacity to give of one's self and what one has without

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[102] Green, "Embodying the Gospel," 18.

[103] Green, "Embodying the Gospel," 19.

[104] Dahl, "Wholeness and Holiness: Selves in Community with God and Other," in *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 47.

[105] Dahl, *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 48.

[106] Dahl, *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 50.

coercion or strings attached."[107] Generosity is grounded in God, who gives freely. God's generosity is didactic in that God gives so that we might learn to become joyful givers and not just self-absorbed receivers.[108] Our generosity is a faith-act intensifying our trust in God, believing that we can never out-give God. Generosity is an embodied response to others in building human community.[109] It falls in line with the other self-giving practices of table fellowship and hospitality.

From a monistic framework these embodied practices while sharing and expressing God's grace also have a reciprocal effect on the practitioner, resulting in a whole and holy person.

A final selected embodied and socially embedded practice for spiritual maturation entails mentoring in long-term small group settings. W. Brown and Strawn remind us that what we learn about relationships early in life, we use to anticipate what to expect in later relationships. If the responses of our early childhood caregivers were inconsistent and caused development of an anxious attachment style, we will tend to be anxious in later life about how others will respond to us.[110] In other words, we develop unhealthy relational templates. Neuroscientists have discovered mirror neurons that enable us to engage in observing and mimicking others to forge new neural networks for constructing new relational patterns for spiritual maturation when we forge long-term relations with spiritually healthy mentors in small groups.[111]

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[107] Reuschling, "Wholeness and Holiness: Christian Moral Formation," in *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 135.

[108] Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 136.

[109] Reuschling, *Becoming Whole and Holy,* 136-137.

[110] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 61.

[111] Brown and Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life,* 56.

These selected spiritual practices for maturation are not exhaustive, but merely illustrative of how an anthropological monistic framework can be utilized in a beneficial way. Having explored how the human self is constructed and spiritually developed, the following explores the human self in terms of possible end-of-life outcomes.

Surveying Personal Eschatology for End-of-Life Outcomes

This subsection surveys Old Testament and New Testament beliefs and behaviors concerning end-of-life outcomes, after which the researcher explores three proposed resurrection outcomes through a monistic framework.

Old Testament and New Testament Beliefs and Behaviors about End-of-Life Outcomes

Old Testament and New Testament beliefs and behaviors concerning end-of-life outcomes emerge from a rich historical tapestry of variations from surrounding cultural neighborhoods. After-life beliefs and behaviors develop historically throughout the biblical corpus and a variety of views compete against each other.

Variations and Complexities of Greco-Roman Views

Richard Bauckham in his work *The Fate of Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* examines fourteen apocalypses to decipher their "theology of personal eschatology."[112] Personal eschatology for Bauckham concerns "the future of individuals beyond death" that was developed mainly in Jewish and then Christian apocalypses.[113]

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[112] Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Boston: Brill, 1998), 1, 4.

[113] Bauckham, 1.

Wright surveys the literature of the ancient pagan culture and begins by noting

that "for many in the ancient world there was no life at all beyond the grave."[114] Wright

notes the popular ancient epitaph "I wasn't, I was, I am not, I don't care" found on many

tombstones in both Latin and Greek.[115] He adds that many others envisioned some kind

of existence after death, summing up, "Who were the dead thought to be, in the ancient

pagan world? They were beings that had once been embodied human beings, but were

now souls, shades or *eidola*. Where were they? Most likely in Hades; possibly in the Isles

of the Blessed, or Tartarus; just conceivably, reincarnated into a different body

altogether."[116] Wright goes on to probe further, "What was wrong? Nothing, for a good

Platonist, or a Stoic like Epictetus; the soul was well rid of its body."[117] For many others,

there was the need for re-embodiment since this disembodied existence was less than

"satisfying as the present one could be."[118] Wright concludes by saying, "The ancient

world was thus divided into those who said that resurrection couldn't happen, though

they might have wanted it to, and those who said they didn't want it to happen, knowing

that it couldn't happen."[119] Bauckham highlights the locational complexity of the dead in

the pagan mindset.

> In most of the ancient world, as in many other cultures, the realm of the dead was
> located in the underworld (Hades, Sheol, sometimes Gehenna). … An old
> alternative to the underworld placed the realm of the dead at the furthest extremity
> of the world in the west, where the sun goes down. Sometimes the righteous dead

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[114] N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 35.

[115] Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God,* 34.

[116] Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God,* 82.

[117] Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God,* 82.

[118] Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God,* 82.

[119] Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God,* 82.

were placed in an earthly or heavenly paradise, whereas the underworld was reserved for the wicked dead. … During the early centuries C.E., there was a tendency among pagans, Jews and Christians to relocate the place of post-mortem punishment in the upper atmosphere or lower heavens.[120]

Israelite Developmental Views

When it comes specifically to ancient Israelite afterlife beliefs, Wright notes that studies and surveys plot three distinct phases. First, "In the early period, there was little or no hope for a life of joy or bliss after death: Sheol swallowed up the dead, kept them in gloomy darkness, and never let them out again."[121] Second, at some later point some pious Israelites came to regard the love and power of YHWH as so strong that the relationship they enjoyed with Him could not be broken even by death.[122] Finally, at some later point in history a new idea came forth: namely that the dead would be raised.[123] Philip Johnson in his book *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* also comes to a similar understanding in this matter.[124] According to Wright, oftentimes Israelite kings at death were said to "sleep with their ancestors" which meant not only that they were buried in the same grave or cave, "but that one had gone to the world of the dead, there to be reunited with one's forebears,"[125] and that although they were not completely nonexistent, to all intents and purposes they were, so to speak, next to nothing.[126] Bauckham alerts the reader that during the first two centuries C.E. a

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[120] Bauckham, 9.

[121] Wright, 86.

[122] Wright, 86.

[123] Wright, 86.

[124] Philip S. Johnson comes to similar understandings. See Philip S. Johnson, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 237-239.

[125] Wright, 90.

[126] Wright, 90.

gradual change took place in Jewish and Christian belief concerning the fate of the wicked. Under the old view the wicked were detained but not actively punished immediately after death until the last judgment, but a new view emerged that the eternal judgment of the dead commenced immediately after their death.[127]

Green's review of the Hebrew Scriptures leads him to conclude that the strong idea of resurrection from the dead belongs to the later horizons of Israel's faith, with Daniel 12:1-3 being the first unambiguous reference to physical resurrection.[128] Green conveys that while there were various perspectives on death, three affirmations are common: human existence is finite, death is absolute, and death is the sphere in which fellowship with Yahweh is lost.[129] Green reminds the reader that death in the Hebrew understanding was a cessation of life in all of its aspects, the severance of all relationships because the human subject is defined in relational rather than essentialist terms.[130] Green pushes for a strong Jewish perspective of humans as psychosomatic unities; nevertheless, he acknowledges that in its later period of theological development a variety of eschatological beliefs were spawned including at times a belief in an immortal soul or spirit, or even no afterlife whatsoever.[131]

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[127] Bauckham, 34.

[128] Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 146, 149.

[129] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 147.

[130] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 147.

[131] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 151.

Competing New Testament Perspectives

In the New Testament era belief in life after death or the lack thereof was not entirely uniform. The Jewish sect of Sadducees denied any kind of resurrection.[132] Green also notes the presence of two philosophical schools, the Epicureans and the Stoics.[133] According to Green the Epicureans held that the soul was a substance of fine particles that dissipated at death; thus no belief in an afterlife would be consistent with this view.[134] However, other sects like the Essenes and the Pharisees did hold to belief in a resurrection.[135]

Belief in immortal bodily resurrection is one thing; the timing of it is another thing. Most conservative New Testament scholarship understands that bodily resurrection will be future.[136] Cooper points to John's gospel with Martha's definitive statement that her brother Lazarus will rise "at the last day" (John 11:23-24).[137] For those who embrace a physical resurrection, Cooper lays out three positions. Some hold to an immediate resurrection hypothesis. "This view maintains that the future becomes present for each person at her death, death providing entrance to the new age, which already exists beyond earthly time."[138] The next two views both agree that resurrection is future ("life after life-

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[132] Wright, 131-140.

[133] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 145.

[134] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 145.

[135] Wright, 190-200.

[136] John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Everlasting Life: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 120-121.

[137] Cooper, 121.

[138] Cooper, 120.

after-death"[139]); however, Cooper reports that the intermediate-state view understands that the human individual's soul survives death and waits in an intermediate state for his or her future immortal bodily resurrection.[140] What Cooper terms the "extinction-re-creation" view understands that when a person dies, nothing survives death. Thus, there is no intermediate state to this position. God will re-create this person sometime in the future at the second coming of Christ.[141]

More controversial is the question of whether there was a robust belief in an intermediate state in the New Testament. Both Cooper and Green in their respective books argue for their own personal eschatology views on this issue.[142] Cooper holds to a dualist understanding of human nature and believes that at death a person's disembodied soul enjoys a temporal, heavenly intermediate state with the Lord. At Christ's second coming, the believer experiences resurrection—the reunion of one's soul with one's immortal and transformed body.[143] Green, who holds to a monist understanding of the human person, believes that at death the human person dies holistically. Because a person has no second metaphysical entity such as a soul, there is no intermediate state to which the deceased person enters. The deceased Christian person's historical reality is preserved in God's own being. God will recreate the deceased person at the coming of Christ.[144]

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[139] Wright, 201.

[140] Cooper, 110-178.

[141] Cooper, 110-178.

[142] See Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Everlasting Life* and Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*.

[143] Cooper, 110-178.

[144] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 140-180.

Competing Variations throughout Church History

Stanley Grenz in his work *Theology for the Community of God* surveys a number

of competing positions the church has held throughout her history. One proposed view

collapsed death and resurrection into one event. Death was the entrance into eternity.[145]

According to this position, the boundary line between time and eternity changes at death.

A person immediately receives the heavenly resurrection body and gains the final state.

Death places the deceased immediately at the end of history and the judgment.[146] Another

position was a Protestant view called "soul sleep." This view emerged from the 1300s.

The great reformer Martin Luther appealed to the experience of sleep to explain what

happens to a person at death. Luther wrote, "We are to sleep until He comes and knocks

on the grave and says … 'Get up'."[147] A final major view holds that at death the

conscious disembodied existence of the soul goes to God. This is known as an

intermediate state.[148] Grenz exposes his hand concerning an intermediate state by sharing

an observation he learned from Wolfhart Pannenberg in a lecture. He writes,

> Placing the soul in any state of conscious existence beyond death means that the
> disembodied soul participates in new experiences apart from the body … [such
> as] disembodied relationships with other souls, disembodied experiences of bliss
> or torment. But, because the soul brings with it these additional postmortem
> experiences, the resurrected person who meets God at the judgment is not
> identical with the earthly person.[149]

Thus for Grenz the last view is problematic.

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[145] Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman
Publishers, 1994), 767.

[146] Grenz, 767.

[147] Grenz, 768.

[148] Grenz, 769.

[149] Grenz, 770.

Surveying End-of-Life Outcomes from a Monistic Framework

As noted above, dualists such as John Copper envision that at the death of a

Christian, the person's immaterial entity (i.e., soul/spirit) goes to into the heavenly

presence of God until a future time of embodied resurrection. However, for a monist the

human subject does not have a second metaphysical entity. Therefore, when a Christian

dies there is no such option as an intermediate state. There is nothing of the human

individual that survives death. Ted Peters asks, "If death means the destruction of the

body, what will be raised? A reassembling of the elements of our pre-mortem body? A

brand new and perfected post-mortem body? Will it be 'me' who is raised or will it be a

duplicate of me?"[150] This raises the question of numerical identity.[151] Therefore, pastors

will have to offer other potential outcomes for their congregants when their loved one

dies. Questions of numerical identity and continuity tend to drive discussion as to what

resurrection outcomes are Christianly plausible and probable. When it comes to the

question of establishing the continuity of personal identity, Green appeals to Luke 24. In

this chapter "physicality, relationality, and narrativity comprise an answer to this

question."[152] When the resurrected Jesus shows Himself to his disciples, first He shows

that He is not a "reanimated corpse"[153]; He is a fully embodied person. Next, Jesus

"weaves His story … [so that] his identity is lodged there in the grand story of God."[154]

Thus, "as Luke presents it, Jesus' identity is not grounded simply in His existence as a

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[150] Ted Peters, "Foreword," in *Personal Identity and Resurrection: How Do We Survive Our Death?* ed. Georg Gasser (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010).

[151] Peters.

[152] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 177.

[153] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 168.

[154] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 168.

human being, but in terms of His relationship to God, His vocation within the purpose of God, and His place within the community of God's people."[155] With these intuitions in mind, three resurrection views are explicated.

The Reassembly Resurrection View

This view holds that sometime in the future God gathers up the very last material particles that once constituted one's body at death and reassembles them into a new heavenly body.[156] However, this view runs into several problems. First of all, particles constituting one body might later constitute another body due to cannibalism or organ donation or decomposition and re-absorption of "old" molecules into new life forms. For example, Jane Doe picks and eats an apple from a tree that has its roots in John Doe's grave. How shall God proceed? Once the particles are used for one body, they are no longer available for the other body.[157] Kevin Corcoran and Joel Green raise a second concern with this view. Human bodies are constantly sloughing off bits and taking on new ones (e.g., atomic cells). The atoms that composed your body at age ten are different from those at age ninety. What principled reason is given for privileging one set from another, or using both?[158] Corcoran raises the necessity of "immanent causal condition" which he defines as: "If an organism O that exists some time in the future is the same as

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[155] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 169.

[156] Georg Gasser, "Introduction," in *Personal Identity and Resurrection: How Do We Survive Our Death?* ed. Georg Gasser (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 5. It should be noted that this view can be embraced by both Dualists and Monists; the only difference is that for the Dualist it relinks these re-enlivened particles with the person's immaterial soul, whereas for the Monist these very re-enlivened particles give re-emergence of the person's whole embodied self.

[157] Gasser, 5.

[158] Kevin J. Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 125-126 and Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 178-179.

an organism P that exists now, then the (set of) simples that compose P now must be causally related to the (set of) simples that will compose O in the future."[159]

But if God will reassemble the cellular brain structure present at a person's death, how will a person's disembodied soul having lived in an indefinite intermediate state with new heavenly relational experiences be neurally reunited without a change in the deceased brain structure, as this raises further questions of immanent causal conditions, and continuity and personal identity?[160] With these concerns in mind, the monist may need to look for other resurrection options.

The Fissional Resurrection View

This view has been propagated by Christian philosopher Dean Zimmerman and Corcoran.[161] Corcoran explains that just before death God causes a fissioning or splitting of a person into two; that is, the simples composing a person's body are causally related to two different spatially segregated sets of simples. Next one of the two sets of simples will immediately cease to constitute a life and become a corpse, while the other one continues to constitute a living body that exists in heaven.[162] As intriguing as this view is, it often is accused of failing in that the surviving set of simples really experiences no death. Except for a few who will avoid death and experience instantaneous immortal transformation (1 Cor. 15:50-58), most will undergo death. Due to a lack of scriptural

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[159] Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature,* 127.

[160] Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature,* 127-130.

[161] Dean Zimmerman, "Bodily Resurrection: The Falling Elevator Model Revisited," in *Personal Identity and Resurrection: How Do We Survive Our Death?* ed. Georg Gasser (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 33-50 and Kevin Corcoran, "Persons and Bodies," *Faith and Philosophy* 15, (1998): 324-340.

[162] Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature,* 132.

support, this view is often perceived as ad hoc in the sense of its fabrication to fit monism with end-of-life expectations.

The Recreation View

Joel Green asks, "How are we capable of traversing from life to life-after-death? Simply put, we are not. The capacity to resurrection, for transformed existence, is not a property intrinsic to the human person."[163] Personal identity sustained from this world to the world-to-come must be God's doing, and on one level it may fall under the category of mystery.[164] However, Joel Green and F. LeRon Shults point to "relational ontology" for help. Although death has temporarily undone us, our relational memory is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3-4). Shults highlights, "Your life *is* hid with Christ in God (3:3). The early believers were *already* with Christ although they still anticipated a further eschatological intensification of that 'withness' when they will appear with him in glory (3:4)."[165] Green notes, "This suggests that the relational and narrativity that constitute who I am are able to exist apart from neural correlates and embodiment only insofar as they are preserved in God's own being, in anticipation of new creation."[166] According to Shults, "the Christian intuition that we will know and be known by God in eternity"[167] and this view anticipate that God will recreate us immortal with our neural memories and subjective personality to enter into His new heavens and earth. This researcher finds this view biblically and scientifically preferable to the two views described above. However

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[163] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 180.

[164] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 180.

[165] Shults, 186.

[166] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life,* 180.

[167] Shults, 186.

the strongest argument opposing this view pertains to our physical differentiation whereby we seem to be a physically and immortally transformed duplicate of our former selves.[168] In response, two observations are given. First, even the reassembly view slides partially into a recreation situation. As decay ensues, partial cellular or atomic material may be available for reassembly, but much or most of the person's bodily material will be gone and God must recreate it anew. Thus, conceived in this way, one may ask if the reassembled person is partially recreated as well. Second, must Christians expect Scripture to spell out or address modern scientific expectations for strong bodily continuity? Is there room for surprise in how the God of the impossible might do this?

Finally, an answer to the question of how soon resurrection might ensue once death is undergone remains elusive. Some like Thomas Long argue that resurrection might be experienced instantaneously with death. Long explains that when one talks about death and resurrection, one is not working in clock time alone but rather two time frames: ordinary historical time and eschatological time.[169] The resurrection of all dead in Christ on the Day of the Lord should not be thought of events that happen one before the other in temporal sequence, but as a simultaneous event. The dead would be raised immediately.[170]

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[168] This researcher resists using the term "clone." Although neurally wired networks may be configured, cloning would not be able to match personality. It would seem to the researcher that only God is able to recreate a working, functioning, duplicate personality.

[169] Thomas G. Long, *Accompany Them with Singing—The Christian Funeral* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 51.

[170] Long, 51-54.

A Brief Examination of Funerary Practices and Trends

This subsection surveys funerary practices in Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Western Christian cultures. The researcher explores how pastoral care practice through a monistic lens might contribute to funerary experiences.

Jewish Funerals

Stephen Cook explores ancient Israelite funerary practices in cross-cultural comparisons with traditional African funerary practices because of tribal societies akin to Israel.[171] The author employs a social scientific approach in terms of kinship and genealogy.[172] To use a metaphor, one would never want to become "umbilical" and be cut off from one's land or kinship familial structures that nourished and provided love.[173] Burial places were communal experiences of kinship in caves. To have one's body separated from one's ancestors' graves would be to sever ties that formed one's identity and linkage to generational harmony.[174] Thus bodies were laid in shared family burial chambers. After a year of decomposition, the bones were gathered and placed in a box to make room on a tomb bench for another incoming deceased kin.[175] Cook draws on the idea of "memory" in biblical parlance as a loaded term that is all about maintaining personal connectedness with the dead. This entails loyalty and faithfulness in relationship, as well as caring for and being united in solidarity.[176] Thomas Long

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[171] Stephen L. Cook, "Funerary Practices and Afterlife Expectations in Ancient Israel," *Religion Compass* 1, no. 6 (2007): 660-683.

[172] Cook, 664.

[173] Cook, 671.

[174] Cook, 672.

[175] Cook, 672.

[176] Cook, 677.

highlights three periods of funerary mourning. The first period was called *shivah* ("three days of weeping") in which the tomb remained unsealed for visitation purposes and to ensure the deceased was actually dead. The second period of mourning known as *shloshim* lasted up to thirty days and included less severe forms of grief, but the family members continued to stay at home. The third period involved a ritual known as *ossilegium* in which the bones of the deceased were gathered and reburied in either an ossuary (stone container) or niche hewn in a rock.[177] For the Jewish person the period of the wasting away of the flesh from the bone represented the time of a person's gradual purification from sin and corruption.[178]

Roman Funerals

As a Roman person was near death, the closest relative would hover near the body and kiss the person as death occurred in order to catch the soul as it departed the body.[179] Then the deceased was placed on the floor and the body was washed and clothed. A coin was placed in the dead person's mouth to pay the fare of Charon, the ferryman of the dead, for the passage to the next world.[180] The body lay in state for seven days and from time to time the deceased's named was shouted aloud. At night the body was carried to the place of burial and either cremated or buried. This action was followed by a meal at the gravesite.[181]

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[177] Long, 62-63.

[178] Long, 63.

[179] Long, 66.

[180] Long, 67.

[181] Long, 66-68.

Christian Funerals

Long reminds the reader that "[c]ombing through the pages of church history, we soon become aware that there is not now, and there never has been, any single, ideal pattern for Christian funerals."[182] However, Long highlights three movements of Christian funerals: preparation, processional, and burial. The body is washed, anointed, and clothed in garments representing baptism. At the processional the community gathers and sings, prays, and reads Scripture. The body is commended to God and buried. Sometimes the Eucharist is held either at the church or at the burial site.[183]

The early church lived in contemporary society and cultural worldviews, and often incorporated cultural rituals and customs with three basic postures towards them: (1) it silently ignored what was found unworthy in secular funerary practices, (2) it denounced what it found dangerous to the faith, and (3) it welcomed what it could reinterpret in light of the gospel.[184]

Christian Funeral Theology

First, Long calls for us to honor the body. He argues, "The retreat from embodiment cuts against the grain of Christian community. The brother or sister in Christ who has died has been known to us in embodied ways—in fact, only in embodied ways."[185] Lucy Bregman in her book *Preaching Death* follows funerary sermons over the centuries and notes significant changes. Originally many understood that the primary

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[182] Long, 15.

[183] Long, 71.

[184] Long, 12.

[185] Long, 31.

purpose of the Christian funeral was to worship God.[186] The pastor was to focus primary

attention away from the deceased, away from him or her self and on God. Human

psychological needs, though important, were dealt with in a more peripheral manner.[187]

The true impact of death was not avoided. However, in time the age of "silence and

denial" fell upon the funerary practice.[188] Psychological needs demanded attention and,

sociologically speaking, funerals were meant to do something not just for the family but

for the wider community.[189] Eventually the body was removed from the funerary rite and

"celebrations of life" became focal. Biblical texts were replaced with biographical

snippets of the deceased.[190] Long advises that one of the clearest and "most needed

reforms in the funeral practices of many Christian communities is the honoring of the

body of the deceased. The Christian dead should be welcomed once again to their own

funerals."[191]

     Second, Long teaches that in the Christian funeral, there is a (re)telling of two

stories at one and the same time: the baptismal story of the deceased and the gospel story

of Jesus' death and resurrection.[192] The intermingling of these two stories makes room

for both grief and joy.[193]

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[186] Lucy Bregman, *Preaching Death: The Transformation of Christian Funeral Sermons* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 17.

[187] Bregman, *Preaching Death,* 21.

[188] Bregman, *Preaching Death,* 106-118.

[189] Bregman, *Preaching Death,* 115.

[190] Bregman, *Preaching Death,* 167-169. Bregman reminds the reader that "the definition of a funeral is when the body is present, and a 'memorial service' is when there is no body."

[191] Bregman, *Preaching Death,* 35.

[192] Long, 46.

[193] Long, 46.

Third, Long proposes that funerals become a worshipful drama with an emphasis on baptism (union and identification with Jesus' death and resurrection).[194]

Summary

The self is brain-reliant as well as socially constructed. What happens to the brain happens to or affects the self. Growth in brain development results in self-complexity as well. With a strong causal link between brain and self, the issue of free will was explored. A bottom-up and top-down reciprocal causal interaction was noted which opens up conceptual space and understanding for necessary moral responsibility.

Self-construction entails not only neural connections but also social connections—neurons that fire together wire together. Due to the brain's social plasticity, the brain can be re-wired in a healthy way through habitual relational experiences. Mirror neurons assist one in this social (re)construction.

With a neurally and socially constructed self in many divergent contexts, the question of whether one is a single self or many contextualized selves was explored. A core executive sense of self was conceptualized utilizing a narrative theory of self, where new moments of contextualized experiences are added to and integrated with the narrative story (multiplicity and continuity) of a human self. Thus, an executive sense of self brings coherence to a multiplicity of contextualized subjective experiences, upholding the idea of a unitary selfhood.

Under the rubric of spiritual maturation, a brief sampling of spiritual practices was examined. Contemplative meditation was reviewed to see how this practice could override the brain's negativity bias. A second group of practices—table fellowship,

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[194] Long, 79-103.

hospitality, generosity, and mentoring relationships—were studied for their focus on others as a means of extending God's grace, which in turn has a reciprocal positive effect on one's self, resulting in a whole and holy person.

Next the longevity of the embodied self was explored for eschatological life-after-death outcomes. Three views were examined, each with their own problems: the reassembly view, the fissional view, and the recreation view. The researcher was drawn to the recreation view for monism's handling of after-life outcomes.

Finally, various Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Western Christian funerary practices and trends were surveyed. A monistic framework calls on Christians to bring the body back into the funerary experience, returning to a full-orbed experience of the human for whole and holy personhood to be longed for and remembered.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT RESEARCH METHOD

The nature of research utilized by the researcher in this project was qualitative. The researcher specifically employed the methodology of grounded theory to obtain the desired data.

Qualitative Research Methodology: Grounded Theory

John Creswell defines qualitative research in a lengthy manner as follows: "Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study or research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem."[1]

The nature of this "problem" or exploration often determines whether the research will be qualitative or quantitative. Thus this part of his definition speaks to the "kind" of research. Creswell continues, "To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes."[2] This part of his lengthy definition speaks to the "how" of qualitative research. Creswell finishes his definition stating, "The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the

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[1] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013), 44.

[2] Creswell, 44.

researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or call for change."[3] Creswell places an emphasis on the "process"[4] of this endeavor.

Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin envision qualitative research as "any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or the means of quantification."[5] Some researchers attempt to inappropriately conflate quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Strauss and Corbin note, "Some researchers gather data by means of interviews and observations, techniques normally associated with qualitative methods. However, they code the data in a manner that allows them to be statistically analyzed. They are, in effect, quantifying qualitative data."[6] Strauss and Corbin encourage anyone doing qualitative research to be "nonmathematical" in his or her process.[7]

Paul Leedy and Jeanne Ormrod explain that the "major purpose of a grounded theory approach is to *begin with the data and use them to develop a theory*. The term *grounded* refers to the idea that the theory that emerges from the study is derived from and rooted in data that have been collected in the field rather than taken from research literature."[8] Strauss and Corbin clarify that the theory that is derived from data gathered

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[3] Creswell, 44.

[4] Creswell, 44.

[5] Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research,* 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishers, 1998), 10.

[6] Strauss and Corbin, 11.

[7] Strauss and Corbin, 11.

[8] Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design,* 10th ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2013), 146.

systematically ("collected") and analyzed through a research process all "stand in close relationship to one another."[9] The researcher's reason for selecting qualitative grounded theory was the purpose of this thesis project, which is to explore the viability and benefits of anthropological monism for pastoral care practice. The researcher anticipated generating a theory shaped by the views of a number of participants.[10]

Overview of the Research Process

The following describes the steps taken for data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation leading to emergent findings, and the rationale behind them.

Data Collection

First, the researcher determined to place a focal-limitation of the pool of data needed to fulfill the purpose of the thesis project. The project attempted to explore viable and beneficial—helpful or harmful—insights and strategies of anthropological monism for pastoral care practice in the limited areas of spiritual formation and personal eschatology.

A second step involved determining the means for acquiring data relative to the purpose of the thesis project. The researcher selected the strategy of using personal face-to-face field interviews with approximately 16 participants. Moreover, due to logistical restrictions, the researcher also conducted correspondence by means of one phone interview and one mailed questionnaire. In sum, 18 people were consulted.

The researcher developed a questionnaire consisting of 17 questions to collect the data from the participants. The questionnaire was mailed to the participants prior to their

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[9] Strauss and Corbin, 10.

[10] Creswell, 83.

personal interview so that they might have a time of reflective preparation before the interview (Appendix A: Questionnaire Guide). Furthermore, the researcher formulated a seven-question interview guide for the interview itself (Appendix B: nterview Guide).

A third step involved determining from whom the data would be drawn. Due to the researcher's location, the researcher hoped to draw from a broad cross-section of Protestant pastors, parachurch leaders, several psychologists, and funeral directors from the central Midwest region of the United States. Mainline and non-denominational church pastors who minister in both large and small congregations were selected. The denominations included Anglican, Baptist, Bible-church, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, mega-community churches, Methodist, and Seventh-day Adventist. Two of the pastors were female. The participants were both young and old. The pastors selected represented churches of diverse ethnicities. The educational level of the participants ranged from undergraduate to post-doctoral. In addition to the above qualifications, the participants were also selected based on their overall degree of interest, willingness, and openness to exploring the viability and benefits of anthropological monism for pastoral care practice pertaining specifically to spiritual formation and personal eschatology.

The researcher also opted to interview two psychologists—one believer, one non-believer—to ascertain whether they viewed and tended to individuals differently than pastors. Two funeral directors were also selected to glean insights concerning how the Midwest culture currently processes death. The way people structure and conduct funeral services reveals how they view human beings and afterlife expectations.

A fourth step involved conducting the actual interviews with the participants. Each participant was interviewed for approximately one hour. All interview sessions

were voice-recorded and transcribed later for recall accuracy. The researcher found each

participant to be cordial, thoughtful, and passionate in his or her beliefs and opinions with

regard to the thesis project. Each participant signed a written disclosure statement to

ensure a legal and ethical release of information relevant to the thesis project (Appendix

C).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A fifth step entailed compiling and analyzing the data from the interviews and

correspondence. Strauss and Corbin state, "Analysis is the interplay between researchers

and data."[11] Analysis entails coding procedures and involves "both science and art."[12]

Analysis and coding necessitate rigorous comparative grounding but also innovative

creativity.[13]

Open coding is, "The analytic process through which concepts are identified and

their properties and dimensions are discovered in data."[14] Properties refer to

"characteristics of a category,"[15] whereas dimensions provide the "range along which

general properties of a category vary, giving specification to a category."[16]

Once the data was categorically coded, each category was analyzed to discover

and discern emergent themes and patterns. Furthermore, the researcher cross-sectioned

thematic patterns with other categories, which yielded emergent findings shared in the

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[11] Strauss and Corbin, 13.

[12] Strauss and Corbin, 13.

[13] Strauss and Corbin, 13.

[14] Strauss and Corbin, 101.

[15] Strauss and Corbin, 101.

[16] Strauss and Corbin, 101.

next chapter. The analysis process was completed when "saturation" occurred—that is, when no new themes or patterns emerged.

A final step involved an evaluative analysis of data for disclosed insights, personal reflections, and future recommendations. The findings from grounded theory provided in chapter five were enfolded into chapter six. In chapter six the thesis project's three data streams from biblical-theological materials, insights from literature review, and data from field work were woven into a convergent conversation for a holistic theory for the thesis project.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELDWORK DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The researcher's analysis of the qualitatively collected fieldwork data yielded the findings described below. Two points of clarification for this chapter are in order. First, the numerical ordering of the findings in no way indicates a hierarchy of importance. Second, the people the researcher consulted are identified as "participants" or "interviewees" or "respondents" to avoid repetitiveness and these terms are to be understood as synonyms.

Seven broad findings were identified, which entail the themes of:

1. participant orientation in terms of envisioned anthropology for pastoral care (human nature configurations)

2. the viability and benefits of monism for pastoral care (misgivings and benefits)

3. pastoral multidisciplinary anemia (interactions with other disciplines)

4. outward directedness for relationships

5. embodiment for spiritual formation (embodiment awareness)

6. issues of thanatology and personal eschatology as related to holistic death

7. contemporary funerary practices

Finding One: Human Nature Configurations

The researcher's interviews of 18 participants yielded a fourfold orientation by which the participants conceive human nature for the purpose of envisioning pastoral care. The dominant pastoral care configuration entails dualism. The next dominant configuration entails quasi-dualism, followed by monism, and lastly atheism. The number in each quadrant indicates the number of participants who opted for that particular orientation (see Figure 1 below).

No Soul
(Materialism)

ATHEISM
(no soul, no pastoral care)

1

MONISM
(embodied pastoral care)

3

Non-holistic   **Pastoral Care Focus**   Holistic

6

8

QUASI-DUALISM
(immaterial monism: soul is primary/core, body is ignored or ancillary)

DUALISM
(immaterial is primary with a balanced psycho-somatic focus and awareness)
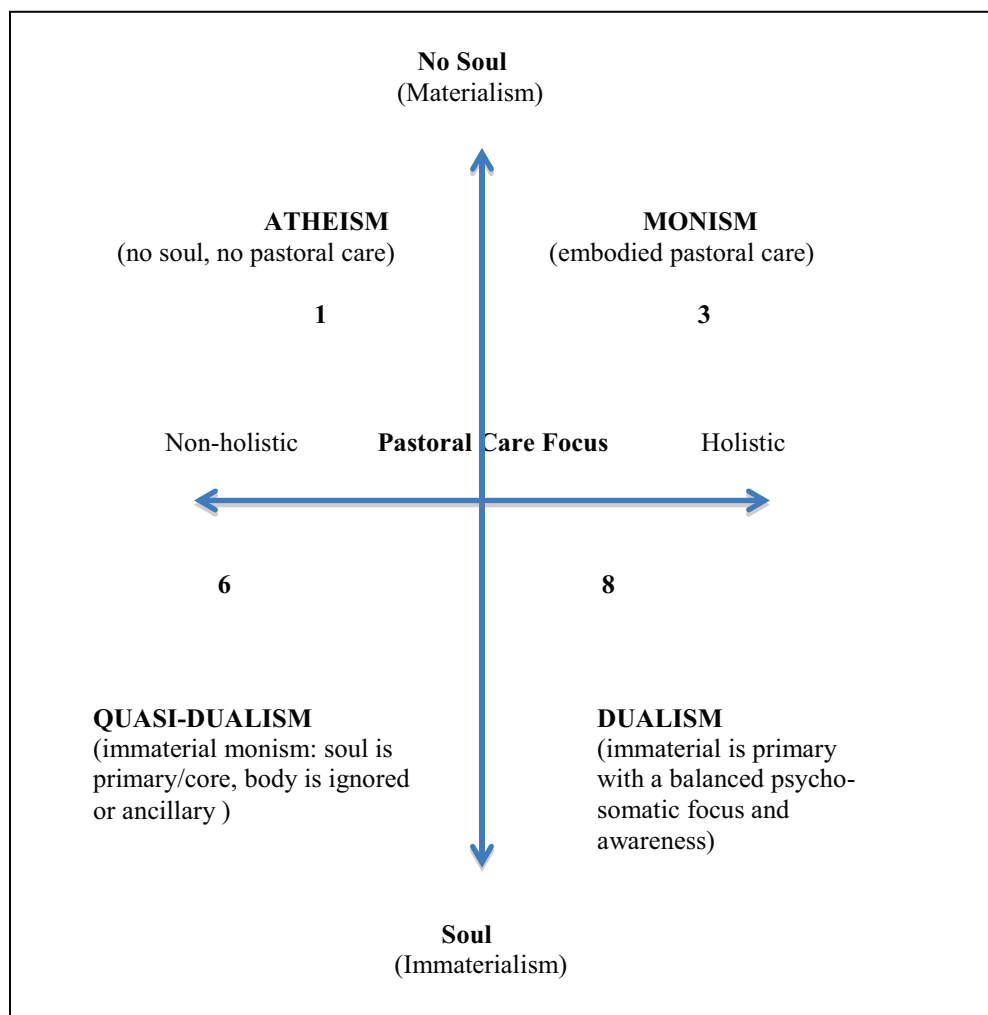
Soul
(Immaterialism)

Figure 1. Functional Human Constitutions

The upper left quadrant of the grid represents atheism—no soul and no spiritual or religious care. Only one participant held this position. Interviewee 13, a psychologist, commented, "We are a brain with behavioral results, thus I use REBT—rational emotive behavior therapy. I do not believe in any kind of conscious or personal God. The concept of God does not figure in my guiding interaction with my clients."

The upper right quadrant represents monism—embodied holistic pastoral care. Participant 1 explained, "Jesus' mission and ministry to the world was very physical, and we are to extend this physical presence of Christ in mission and ministry as His hands and His feet." Interviewee 1 also warned, "There needs to be a re-education of the popular notion of what "soul/spirit" means by the biblical writers. These terms do not refer to substance or entity, but rather address an aspect of the human." Participant 14 declared, "We are a whole entity. All our aspects are interconnected." Respondent 17 reported, "I am sympathetic to this view because it corrects reading the biblical writers in a platonic dualistic way." He goes on to convey, "Our bodies are integral to our mission. The body is the person turned outward. We are embodied beings. We are meant for an embodied outcome, this is our end game." For these three participants, humans are embodied beings with various capacities or aspects that serve our mission with Jesus, mirroring His way of mission and ministry.

The lower left quadrant represents what the researcher termed quasi-dualism. It is important to note that the researcher placed the participants in one of the four quadrants based not on any label the interviewees themselves used, but rather on the participant's "functionality"—his or her way of conceiving and pastorally tending to congregants. Six of the 18 respondents fell within this lower left quadrant. Interviewee 3 explained, "The

soul is the real us." Participant 9 reported, "The soul is who we really are, as opposed to a body." Respondent 8 declared, "The body is just how we relate to the world, but the soul/spirit is how we relate to God." further noting, "The body is dust and fallen." Participant 16 clarified that "the body is not the focus; rather, pastoral care is all about soul-care." What became clear to the researcher is that for these six participants the body is for all practical purposes treated as peripheral or ancillary. What insightfully emerged from these respondents is that for all practical purposes the quasi-dualism position is functionally a kind of "spiritual monism." Thus anthropological monism may provide a helpful correction to this position by re-emphasizing the necessity for and importance of one's embodiment for a more robust and holistic pastoral care practice.

The lower right quadrant represents the most dominant way to conceive human nature and pastoral care, with eight of the 18 interviewees describing their care in his way. This position is labeled dualism. In this view, although the immaterial is primary, it is not dominant. Rather this position fosters a balanced psychosomatic focus and reciprocity for holistic pastoral care. Interviewee 10 stated, "The body and soul are integral. Although some see the body as evil—thus starve it, or as meaningless—thus give it over to pleasure, the Scriptures are clear, our body is the temple of God. The material and immaterial are interconnected." Participant 11, a psychologist, noted, "We use a holistic approach. We don't break the human down into pieces." Interviewee 18 reminded the researcher, "God's grace and gifts always come to us through the body, so our embodiment is integral to our spirituality."

Respondent 9 shared that his upbringing entailed a strong emphasis on the soul as who humans really are. Thus his ministry puts heavy emphasis on the soul. When the

researcher probed further and asked him to define what a soul is, he responded, "It's an immaterial part of us that relates to God." Probing further, the researcher asked how the soul was known to be different from, say, the mind, especially since recent discoveries in the neurosciences have shown that much or most of the human functions attributed to one's soul are now attributed to one's brain function. Participant 9 replied, "I don't know how to differentiate the mind from the soul. I guess it is a mystery. Things like Alzheimer's and dementia make me wonder why the soul does not compensate for these embodied deficiencies. But, nevertheless, the Bible says we have a soul." The researcher asked the participant to reflect on whether holism necessarily requires one to embrace dualism.

Reflecting upon the four quadrant orientations, the data that emerges for a "quasi-dualism" discovery (which is functionally "spiritual monism") was most telling for the researcher. Anthropological monism might provide a helpful correction to this orientation with a renewed emphasis on human embodiment.

Finding Two: Misgivings and Benefits

The data collected from the respondents' questionnaires and interviews revealed that the viability (openness, usefulness) of anthropological monism for pastoral care in the central Midwest region of the United States currently remains somewhat negligible due to unfamiliarity, a charge of being unscriptural or heresy, harmful misgivings, or adherence to anthropological dualism. However, in spite of these misgivings, many participants felt that anthropological monism also provides a series of potentially helpful benefits for pastoral care. First the misgivings will be explicated, followed by the benefits (see Figure 2 below).
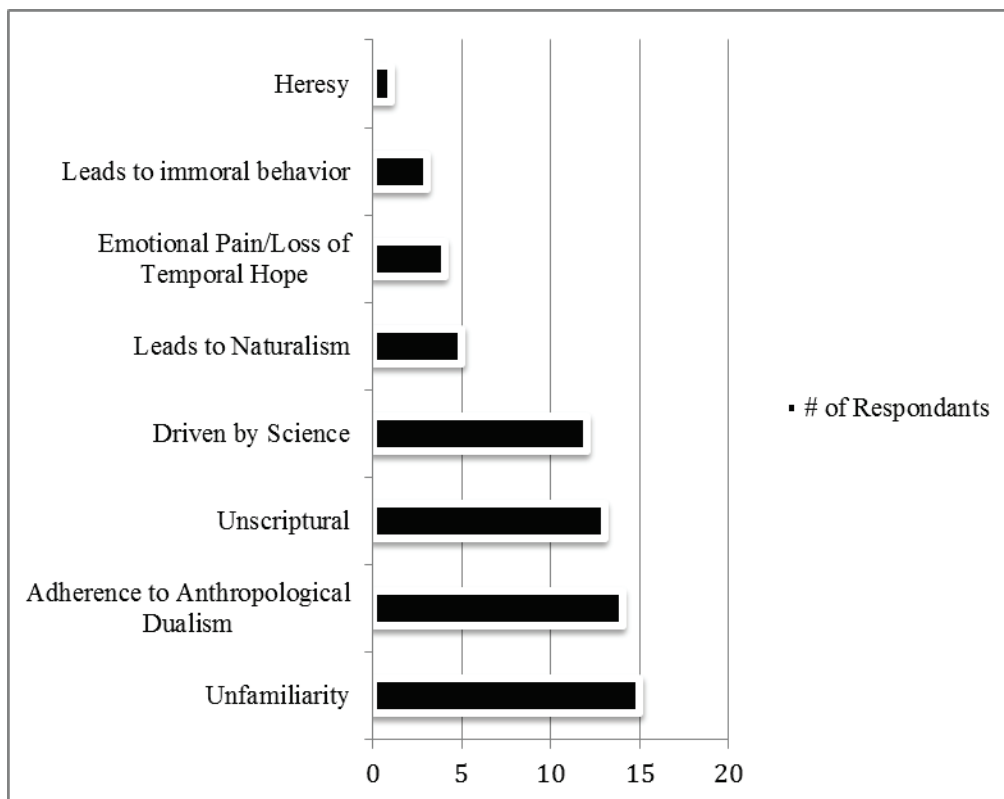
Figure 2. Potential Misgivings about Anthropological Monism

Unfamiliarity

Fifteen of the 18 participants reported that they were only somewhat familiar or not at all familiar with anthropological monism. Many of the participants pointed out that monism was often absent from many evangelical theological books. Interviewee 10, a pastor of a mega-church, reported, "I teach a Bible study class and the systematic theology book I use is Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. Grudem mentions monism but quickly dismisses it." The researcher reviewed Grudem's book and observed that the chapter on the essential nature of man provides three options pertaining to human nature: trichotomy, dichotomy, and monism. Grudem gives a two-sentence explanation of monism and then reports, "This view has not generally been adopted by evangelical

theologians"[1] because of many scriptural texts teaching otherwise. Following this

statement he quickly dismisses monism from any further commentary. Interviewee 3,

who also teaches a Bible study in his church, shared that "monism is such a minority

position I don't even research it or teach it. Because it's such a minority view, I don't see

it as viable."

While anthropological monism's strong emergence stems partly from

neuroscience and neuropsychology, eight of the 18 participants conversely acknowledged

that they were cautiously skeptical of science and thus were not aware of neuroscience

publications pointing to monism. These statements led the researcher to notice a trend of

unfamiliarity with the neurosciences and a concurrent lack of familiarity with monism.

Unscriptural or Heresy

Interviewee 8 stated, "Plain and simple, this view is unscriptural." Respondent 3

noted, "I believe this position has problems exegetically with passages like 2 Corinthians

5:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, and Luke 16:19-31." Participant 8 declared, "I feel that

anthropological monism leads to naturalism and is atheistic at its core." Towards the end

of the interview, Participant 8 stated, "Frankly this position is heresy and we would

remove anyone who taught it in our church." Heresy is, indeed, a serious charge. The

reasoning behind Participant 8's statement entailed monism's newness (novelty),

radicalness, unscriptural-ness, and the anticipated harm that it would do to the church. Of

the 18 participants, only Participant 8 used the heresy charge. The question remains

whether anthropological monism legitimately falls under the heresy charge. Interviewee

10 shared a three-fold classification of divergent beliefs. "My first category is divergent

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[1] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 473.

doctrines that challenge central, core Christian beliefs. A second category entails beliefs we feel are still important, maybe not core, but involve doctrinal integrity, worship practice, discipleship, etc., which should not be undermined with divergent teachings. A third category includes peripheral beliefs; so, we can embrace diversity concerning them (e.g., the timing of a rapture). I believe that anthropological monism falls under category two for me. It would not necessarily be outside the faith or destroy it, but it may not be healthy." With this helpful three-fold evaluation of divergent beliefs, for Participant 10, monism would still be functionally equivalent to a heresy charge because teaching it to the church body would be prohibited. Ultimately, for many of the participants anthropological monism may not fall under heresy, but could certainly be labeled as heterodoxy.

Harmful Misgivings

Other misgivings were also expressed. Interviewee 17 warned "anthropological monism could cause people emotional consternation by eliminating a conscious intermediate state with God and loved ones." Most of the participants warned that because their congregants have such strong expectations that death will bring a blissful disembodied reunion with loved ones, to remove this hope would entail a loss of temporal hope and precipitate negative emotional reactions.

Another misgiving entailed the charge leveled by Participant 7 that "monism may precipitate a movement away from supernaturalism and towards naturalism." This participant worried that a "focus on the neurosciences and monism might result in an undermining of the miraculous. Instead we might just be a bunch of chemical reactions and not be any different from the animals." It may be that many of the participants'

struggles with an imaginative conceptual sophistication stem from how to integrate the concept that God works with, in, and through what are often labeled "natural" processes in other disciplines.

Participant 3 reasoned from the principle that "bad doctrine leads to bad behavior. If monism is an aberration, sinful behavior is sure to emerge." Twelve of the 18 participants perceived that anthropological monism was too non-objective; it worshipped at the feet of science. Participant 3 warned, "We need to be careful not to create God in the image of man with science. As well as any discipline, science can become politicized by powerful interest groups. Science can be a product of man and man is evil." Respondent 6 concurred, saying, "Science needs to be interpreted and filtered through the biblical text first before it can be embraced." These participants worried that this mindset towards science will undermine the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, as Interviewee 5 surmised: "Monism will be hard to support from Scripture."

Emotional consternation from temporal loss of hope, a possible trajectory towards naturalism, a heightened allegiance to science, and a lessening of Scriptural authority are serious misgivings that anthropological monism will have to address and overcome to achieve future viability for pastoral care in certain circles of Christianity.

Adherence to Anthropological Dualism

Fourteen of the 18 participants consulted expressed a strong understanding that human nature was dualistic; most were either tripartite or bipartite. However, three of the 18 interviewees were more monistic in orientation. Participant 1 shared, "My postdoctoral research makes me wish that anthropological monism had more of an impact especially for pastoral care, especially how it can place an emphasis on addressing

embodied struggles like addictions, depression, and grief but in an interconnected way with spirituality." Interviewee 17, who did his graduate work in the area of Old Testament studies, shared, "As an Old Testament scholar, I don't tend to see the person in trichotomistic or dichotomistic terms, rather, I think the Hebraic mindset resonates with much of what monism is saying, especially how a person is viewed as a life unity. A body is a person turned outward in action. Remedies for spiritual problems will have physiological aspects, for example, depression and its linkage to a chemical brain imbalance." Interviewee 13, a psychologist and self-proclaimed quasi-Buddhist declared, "It's all about the brain. When I die, I die holistically. That's it; I am not coming back. I do not embrace reincarnation or any of the religious aspects of Buddhism, but I resonate with its emphasis on meditation, being happy and at peace, and oneness with reality. I practice REBT—rational, emotive, behavioral therapy." The participant further explained, "I am holistic in my approach. I believe that events do not upset a person; rather a person upsets oneself with the view they take of the events. I want to balance brain and body." These three respondents seem to want to bring a re-emphasis on the physical and its multifaceted aspects, which brings embodiment back into conversation as one tends to the person.

Six of the 18 participants envisioned human nature as created in the image of God. However there was a divergence of opinion as to what this phrase means. For Interviewee 3 a person created in God's image means "we are moral beings with God-consciousness and free-will." This statement was a response to a potential tendency of monism, which could conceptualize a human being as nothing but pre-determined chemical reactions. Respondent 17 understood this phrase to refer to "a functional

capacity to be custodial representatives for God to the world." This participant was

reacting to scholars who conceptualize the *imago Dei* with substantive parts. He wanted

to bring functionality in view over a substantive paradigm. Other respondents equated

being created in God's image with having a soul/spirit. Participant 18 shared, "to be

created in the image of God meant that since God is non-corporeal ('spirit'), then

humans, too, must have a non-corporeal entity or aspect ('spirit/soul'), and it's this

immaterial entity or aspect that most fundamentally relates humanity to God. This

immaterial part of humans links them to the supernatural ('God')." For this interviewee,

to remove this ontological entity from the human constitution would relegate humans to

mere naturalism and animalism. It would remove any significant relationality with God.

These six interviewees envision a robust construal of the *imago Dei* as a conscious moral

constitution of God, an assigned representational working for God, or ontologically

relating to God. Each "image" idea is an attempt at explaining a kind of relationality with

God. These six respondents with their explications of the *imago Dei* are also asking

whether monism has anything to offer conceptually for addressing relationality with God.

For these participants, dualism offers a fuller and more robust relationality with God.

The researcher asked the interviewees how they conceptualize a human being as a

strategy to determine whether they are consistent in the way they pastorally tend to a

person. Although most conceive a human being as a "psycho-somatic" unity,

nevertheless, the real and most important part is to focus on the "soul," the real part of the

person. Most of the interviewees practice the following plan while they tend to a

congregant. First, they seek to discover the context and issue the person is experiencing.

Second, they attempt to discern the individual's spiritual condition (regenerate or

unregenerate). Third, if the person is deemed regenerate, they immediately attempt to engage and deal with sanctificational spirit/soul issues. Fourth, Scripture is employed to give guidance and hope. Fifth and most telling, the pastors deal with any embodied issues affecting the person's interior soul. The body—viewed as ancillary and peripheral—is utilized only to give the pastor information for what is going on inside the person's soul.

Benefits of Anthropological Monism for Pastoral Care

In spite of many misgivings, several participants felt that anthropological monism also provides a series of helpful benefits for pastoral care. These benefits include: (1) challenging the pastor to return to a holistic model of tending to the person in line with how Jesus cared pastorally for each person, (2) a renewed awareness for pastors to balance psycho-somatic treatment of the person, (3) bringing the resurrection back into prominence instead of overemphasizing a disembodied intermediate state, (4) a push to take science and interdisciplinary dialogue more seriously, and (5) new conceptual space with which to impact the next generation for Christ (see Figure 3 below).
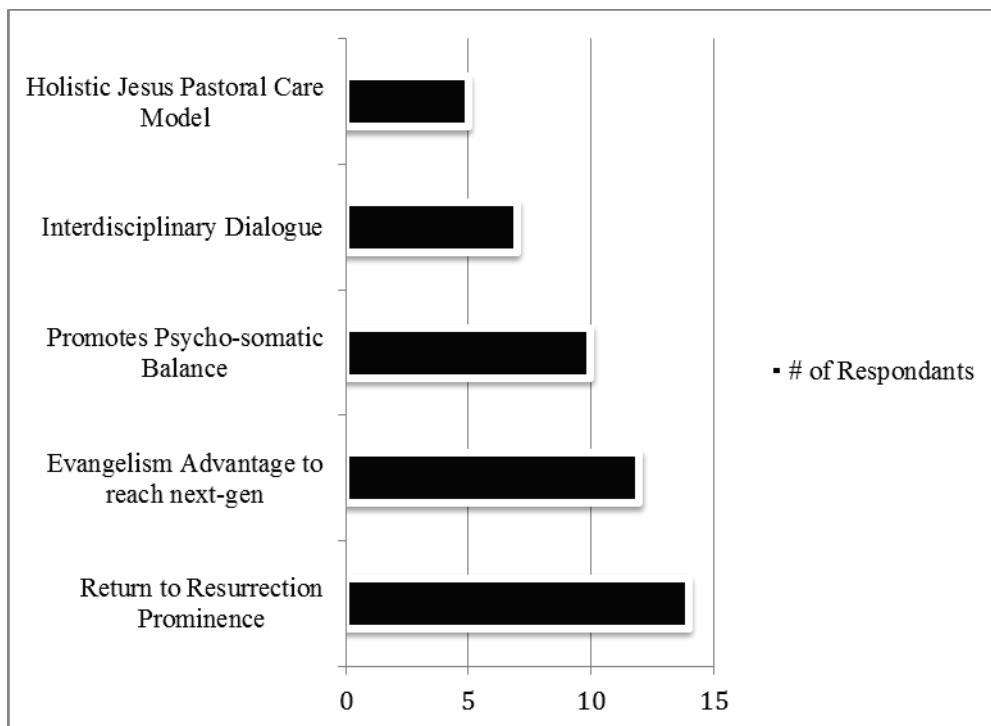
Holistic Jesus Pastoral Care Model

Interdisciplinary Dialogue

Promotes Psycho-somatic Balance

• # of Respondants

Evangelism Advantage to reach next-gen

Return to Resurrection Prominence

0   5   10   15

Figure 3. Suggested Benefits of Anthropological Monism

First, Interviewee 14 made an observation from the Gospels. Anthropological monism "re-aligns pastors with how Jesus holistically addressed and tended to the person—meeting physical needs in connection with spiritual needs. Healing was outwardly focused. Instead of leaving a person with an interior look and focus, Jesus' healing reconnected a person with one's community." The interviewee added further, "Jesus treated the whole person. He calls us to love Him and others with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. For Jesus, tending to the physical also tended to the spiritual." Upon reflection the interviewee also said, "In my opinion many pastors struggle with how Jesus seemingly just addressed the physical side of a person—healing them and sending them on their way—so, they quickly run to Paul's writings to address the person's spiritual side. But we better pay more attention to how Jesus related to the person." This participant brought forth an important reminder—namely, for the pastor to

return to Jesus' balance in tending to the whole person and not extracting them from their community context.

Second, Interviewee 18 stated, "Anthropological monism challenges pastors to pull back from becoming too platonic and gnostic in their outlook whereby human embodiment is downplayed." Respondent 7 reported, "Physical things affect spiritual life. There must be a renewed focus to tend equally to the material ('body') along with the immaterial." Participant 1 highlighted the physical or embodied presence for the way pastors must do ministry: "We should be physically present to others, rather than mostly relating to a congregant with phone calls or text messages. There is something to be said about physical proximity and touch." This respondent went on to articulate, "We take Holy Communion by being physically present with each other and we ingest the physical elements. Adding to this, we are to embody and model the love and ways of Christ to community. We are the physical hands and feet of Christ to the world. Compassionate ministry involves feeding and clothing the needy. Our bodies are necessary vehicles to do all this." These respondents attempted to envision spiritual ministry in an embodied way.

Third, many of the participants admitted that anthropological monism by nature brings the resurrection back into prominence instead of focusing on a disincarnated intermediate heavenly state. As a matter of fact, Interviewee 18 believes that on a popular level "many church congregants think they are going to heaven and will live there happily thereafter. The thought of having an embodied resurrection and living in the new heavens and earth just does not register with them." This respondent went on to say, "Often times I hear Christians offering the gospel with an opening statement like, 'when you die, would you like to have the assurance that you are going to heaven?' Why can't

they say, 'when you die, would you like the assurance that you will be resurrected to eternal life'?" This interviewee made an insightful connection: when an ethereal heaven is the focus, conversely, a gospel presentation and a diminished loss of resurrection emerge.

Respondent 1, while pondering death and grief, shared that "more emphasis should be placed on God's work of resurrection vs. some sort of innate immorality of the soul idea and a focus on a temporal disembodied state." Interviewee 14, a Seventh-day Adventist, stated, "The resurrection has always been important to us, because we do not believe in the innate immorality of the soul. So a God-provided resurrection of the whole person has always been important to us." Participant 7 reported, "When the disciples of Jesus are given a forward look into the future with the passage of the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples see a physically resurrected Moses and Elijah with Jesus." These comments precipitated the researcher to ponder how Christmas—the incarnation of Christ and how Easter—the embodied resurrection of Christ, can become so decoupled theologically from personal eschatology as to allow popular expectation of a heavenly disembodied eternity for the followers of Christ. Pastors may need to preach more messages on resurrection eschatology.

Fourth, although ten of the 18 respondents indicated they were either cautious or skeptical of science, some of the participants observed that with the emergence of anthropological monism pastors might be compelled to take science seriously and become more interdisciplinary in their approach to pastoral care. Sometimes this might mean referring a congregant to a specialist to tend to another aspect of the person's human composition. Participant 10 noted, "I am both a strong advocate of science but

also very cautious. Science is part of God's general revelation, yet humanity has struggled with its interpretation of scientific findings." Respondent 18 echoed similar sentiments, "I am an advocate of genuine science but a skeptic of pseudo-science." The researcher asked these interviewees how one differentiates what is true science and what is false science. The two participants responded that science is true if it confirms or agrees with the Bible, if its findings remain proven over time, and if enough of its respected scientific colleagues confirm it.

Interviewee 2, pastor of a mainline denomination church, reported, "There came a time in my ministry when I embraced science more fully. I believe in theistic evolution now. Most of my colleagues are also very open to science and what it has to offer for theology and pastoral ministry." The respondent went on to add, "For example, science helps inform Christians about environmental concerns and our Christian response and responsibility to it." Finally, Interviewee 2 reminded, "Let's remember, the scientific community historically has chastened or corrected the church in her doctrine—I am thinking of the Galileo and Copernicus contribution moving the church from a geocentric to a heliocentric position and moving the church from young creationism to an older earth scenario." Participant 10 acknowledged, "The psychology and counseling movement has become more mature and theologically solid and can provide pastors with helpful insights as they minister to their congregants." The above respondents showed a cautious openness to learning from and incorporating some truthful contributions from other disciplines for Christian spiritual development.

Fifth, anthropological monism can give a pastor fodder to engage the younger generation. Nine of the 18 participants feel that when it comes to an age group, college

age "millennials" will be very attuned to multidisciplinary sciences and will be drawn to some form of monism. Respondent 3 noted, "In my opinion, the higher the educational level in a secular field, the higher a youthful openness to monistic ideas will transpire." However, Interviewees 8 and 18 saw this as a pejorative challenge because they feel the younger people will naively follow and embrace any kind of science, as they are generally less informed by life experience. The interviewees conveyed a general consensus that young people are very open to and adaptive with new technologies and scientific discoveries. There was a general consensus that young people will bring science to the Bible; thus to be able to relate adequately to them, pastors will need to submerge themselves in a multidisciplinary setting as well.

Finding Three: Interactions with Other Disciplines

A less than vigorous familiarity with truth discoveries from other academic disciplines can potentially handicap any contributions of monism for pastoral care conversation with regard to spiritual formation for whole and holy personhood. This is not meant to imply that a multidisciplinary conversation with many of the natural sciences would amount to the "be-all and end-all" for contributing to spiritual transformation. However, many of the pastors consulted for the project were very cautious, skeptical, or even at times somewhat adversarial towards science. Ten of the 18 respondents were either firmly cautious or even skeptical of science. Interviewee 10 shared, "The counseling movement and psychology is becoming more mature and theologically solid." However, he goes on to state, "Historically, the interpretations from science have not had a good record, so I am somewhat ambivalent about science's role for informing the Christian faith." Participant 16 shared a somewhat agnostic or

dismissive perspective towards science when she stated, "Science and other disciplines just don't show up on my radar, my passion is to share the gospel and help people grow spiritually."

Several respondents voiced a charge against monism by what really drives it—namely, science. Interviewee 10 commented, "I feel that anthropological monism worships science." Participant 18 stated, "So much of science is really pseudo-science and not to be trusted, and so if science is driving monism, this could be dangerous." These two respondents expressed a concern that there may be some validity to the charge that other disciplines (for example, neuropsychology) are pushing and pressing theology to new directions and interpretive complexities, and as a result Christian leaders such as pastors need to exercise caution and discernment.

Interviewee 10 along with other participants echoed a common charge about science. "The problem with science is that the data has to be interpreted and one can construe or misconstrue the data to make it mean whatever one wants it to." However, what the researcher failed to hear from the participants is that the pastor, New Testament scholar, or theologian also has to interpret biblical data. Respondent 8 declared, "The Bible means what it says and says what it means." This participant is echoing the church's doctrinal understanding of the perspicuity ("clarity") of Scripture. However, the researcher wonders whether this often-quoted statement is used as a hermeneutical prophylactic in that the biblical data does not need interpreted. History shows otherwise. To hold that the Bible is immune to interpretive shortfalls but that other science disciplines are not immune (and therefore must interpret their data, which in turn this makes them susceptible) seems somewhat pastorally biased to the researcher.

Finding Four: Inward verses Outward Focus

Rather than an inward and internal focus on a human individual, anthropological monism can precipitate an outwardly directed focus utilizing the essential importance of relationships and community for spiritual formation for whole and holy personhood.

Although nine of the 18 participants were inwardly focused on a soul, most of them acknowledged that humans are social beings. Respondent 6 conveyed, "I focus on the spirit-man. My redeemed spirit must be put in charge of my body." Participant 6 stated, "What makes Christian pastoral care distinct from, say, psychology, philosophy, or, sociology is that it tends to the soul/spirit in us, not just a self or body." Respondent 15 shared, "I recently joined a group called 'soul-care'. The soul, the part inside us, is the most important thing to tend to." Interviewee 3 expressed that "humans are social beings patterned after the sociality of God and created in and for relationship. Humans are born into the world in relationship, beginning with a physical relationship with one's mother, subsequently being in relationship with primary care givers or parents, potential siblings, and extended family and friends." However, Participant 5 shared that relationality itself can be conceptualized as privatized. "For me there was time when a personal relationship with Jesus was equal to a private relationship with Jesus—just Jesus and me." Both the researcher and respondent agreed that this mindset is indicative of seeing no need for church community for spiritual maturation. It ignores how community was involved in delivering the gospel to this person. It ignores how Jesus Himself was community-conscious in His reconciliation ministry. It ignores Jesus' mandate to go to communities with the gospel.

Some participants highlighted the importance of another person's outside perspective for guidance. Interviewee 5 explained, "I need others in my life to enrich my

limited perspective and help me see what otherwise I can't by myself." Participant 18 voiced the need to have people around him to speak the Word of God afresh in his life. Interviewee 7 pointed out, "Look at all the "one-another" New Testament passages in the Bible. This speaks to the need for community for spiritual formation and maturation." These respondents' comments point to the reciprocity of outward directedness to others and inward reception of what others speak into one's life.

Finding Five: Embodiment Awareness

Awareness of one's embodiment ("physicality") and the utilization thereof is an essential and important component of one's spiritual formation for whole and holy personhood as well as end-of-life care.

Interviewee 5 suggested that a church develop a holistic training program. "Pastoral care has multiple layers to it. When a believer has a hospital stay, not only does pastoral care involve prayers for healing and spiritual insight and words of encouragement, but also tends to possible financial hardship from medical attention."

Wholeness might also be linked to the need for wellness. Interviewee 2 suggested, "We might want to utilize yoga to help the body assist a person during times of mindfulness or Scriptural meditation." He also went on to share, "I feel closest to God when I am physically serving or doing the work of the ministry. This is in line with what Paul wrote in Romans 6:13 to present the members as instruments of righteousness to God." Participant 17 conveyed that tending to the body in a healthy way has a direct spiritual benefit. "Rest overcomes tiredness. When one is tired, he or she is more susceptible to temptation and poor choices. Eating a healthy diet and doing bodily exercise can enhance positive thinking and provide optimal electro-chemical and

hormonal brain balance for positive moods and attitudes." However, other participants tempered this thrust. Interviewee 8 shared that when it comes to godliness and the body, he looks to 1 Timothy 4:8: "for bodily discipline is only of little profit." Participant 10 reflectively quoted 2 Corinthians 4:16, "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

Interviewee 18 pondered whether there was any non-embodied activity when it comes to our spiritual formation. "Every spiritual discipline is embodied. The brain is used to meditate on Scripture. Our ears are used to listen to and receive wise counsel. Our vocal cords are used to audibly communicate God's Word. Physical touch and hugs can bring encouragement to others. Church sacraments or ordinances of baptism and Holy Communion utilize physical elements and require embodied participation."

Respondent 1 surmised, "I guess that discoveries in neuroscience can help pastors understand how memories are constructed and retained for accuracy, how addiction works in the brain and how it can be treated, how depression works and how it can be brain-treated."

Participant 4 shared, "For me, most or a lot of end-of-life pastoral care is embodied. I am visiting people in the hospital with physical problems or I am in nursing homes tending to people who are physically frail. Most of my conversation with them is how the physical is affecting the spiritual. Often my congregants just want relief from their embodied suffering." All of these insights from the respondents suggest the importance of human embodiment for spiritual formation and tending to the body during end-of-life frailty and faltering.

Finding Six: Holistic Thanatology

In reference to issues of thanatology and personal eschatology, anthropological dualism was shown to uphold only partial death for human beings, whereas anthropological monism upholds holistic death of the human being.

In a context of addressing cultural trends with funerary practices, Participant 1 stated, "With all forms of anthropological dualism there is a denial of holistic death." He went on to explain further, "Even in Christian circles often there is no true admission that the person has actually died. Rather, just their bodily part of them has expired." Respondent 4 believes "although the body dies, our influence and witness continues, so we can continue to be alive by impacting and influencing others through somebody else. So, we do not die holistically, otherwise why would Jesus come back for us if we are only physical and if we have returned to dust or decayed there is nothing left of us from a monistic point of view?"

Nine of the 18 respondents revealed a consensus that anthropological monism struggles with death because it fails to provide emotional and intellectually satisfying answers for postmortem expectations. For example, Interviewee 3 shared, "Monism tries to overturn or at least ask us to abandon long held, biblical traditions about life immediately after death." Participant 4 jokingly shared, "I guess for me the monist position is like the atheistic position when it comes to the body. They are all dressed up with no place to go. How will God give you a future when there is no "you" that any longer exists?" Respondent 5 surmised, "If we die holistically into nothingness, what hope do we have? Also, 1 Thessalonians 4 says Jesus will bring those who have died back with him. How can you bring a non-existent person back with you?" Participant 6 stated, "I guess you can tell people that at death they will no longer suffer, but if they die

completely, I am struggling to envision a hope and future for them." Interviewee 7

reminded, "God is the God of the living, not the dead. How can monism address this?"

Participant 8 stated, "If monism is true, then I concur with what Paul said, let's eat, drink,

and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Respondent 10 asked, "How can monism address

what Paul says in Philippians 1 when he says that he has a desire to depart and be Christ,

for that is very much better? How can dying holistically be better?" Interviewee 15 also

asked with regard to Philippians 1, "What does Paul mean when he says to live now is

Christ, but to die is gain? How is death a 'gain' for the monistic position?" Some of these

comments from the respondents reveal a certain way of envisioning the temporal outplay

of eschatological outcomes that monism seems to take away. Furthermore, some of the

passages cited can and have been interpreted by monists differently from the way these

respondents understand them.

Fifteen of the 18 participants specifically explained that when a Christian dies,

only the body dies, the soul/spirit immediately gains the presence of God and reunion

with Christian loved ones. 2 Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:21-23 were the often-

quoted passages used to substantiate their view. Whether or not the soul/spirit is immortal

by constitution or conditionally immortal by God's grace, it does not undergo death.

None of the interviewees embrace the concept that at death a person will

experience an immediate bodily resurrection; however, two participants are convinced

that sometime after a believer's death, their next moment of consciousness will be when

God raises him or her bodily from the dead. Participant 1, who comes from a Nazarene

tradition, embraces this view. Likewise did the other participant, Interviewee 14, coming

from a Seventh-day Adventist tradition. He stated, "After a person dies, I believe the next

moment of consciousness will happen as described in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1

Corinthians 15. This will happen when the righteous dead will be raised to meet Jesus.

Jesus and other Bible writers called death a state of sleep (John 11:11; Eccl. 9:5)."

Interviewee 14 went on to strengthen the benefit of this position. "It gives the

deceased a release from suffering. It answers the question whether the righteous dead are

aware or not of on-going earthly events and whether they are at peace if they are aware. It

brings the necessity of resurrection back into prominence, rather than placing an over

emphasis on a heavenly, disembodied intermediate state with God and loved ones. And

finally, it deepens a holistic trust in God—not just for a new immortal body, but for the

whole person."

The other sixteen participants countered and claimed that monism eliminates the

temporal hope that Scripture promises and removes the emotional peace that Christians

have in expecting to immediately see the Lord and their loved ones at death. Respondent

3 noted, "Sin and death affects space, time, and matter, but God does not live in these

areas, He resides outside of them and thus can bring deceased Christians into a realm

outside of them, namely, a heaven populated with God and our loved ones. Monism by

definition can't embrace such a disembodied dimension." Respondent 10 declared, "For

me, monism's main struggle is in the area of eschatology. The Bible says to be absent

from the body is to be at home with the Lord. But, monism removes this temporal

promise and makes us wait too long for regaining the presence of God at death."

The above responses from the participants reveal that a dualistic anthropological

stance entails a partial death (only the body) but provides an immediate heavenly

conscious relocation with God and loved ones, whereas monism entails a holistic death

(the person completely dies), but provides no temporal relocation with God and loved ones until a future resurrection.

Finding Seven: Alarming Funerary Practices

Contemporary cultural funerary practices reveal a denial of holistic death and a diminished expectation for future immortalized embodiment.

When the participants were asked on a questionnaire whether they were pleased, somewhat pleased, or not pleased with how funerals are conducted in America today, ten of the 18 participants expressed their ambivalence towards how funeral services are conducted today. Participant 1 wrote, "There is a denial of holistic death. Even in some Christian circles there is no true admission that someone has actually holistically died." Interviewee 12 (twin funeral directors) stated, "We often hear people say, 'My loved one has passed on to a better place. In a sense he is more alive than we are'." Participant 17 thinks that America has a belief called "justification by death." "Every deceased person is described as 'up there in the sky looking down on us' regardless of any commitment to Christ." As the researcher and respondent discussed this mindset, it came to light that according to popular opinion, life on earth is hard and thus to some extent people accept that living through hardships on earth in the now earns them the right to future heavenly blissful cessation from suffering. Furthermore, this mindset can convey a conceptualization of God as fundamentally loving. In some way God's love will address and satisfy His righteousness and at the end of the day provide universalism—heaven for everyone. God is too loving to send people to hell for eternity.

Interviewee 4 noted, "Instead of a funeral service being a worship service focusing hope on the God who brings life from death, the gospel is mitigated. Instead, a focus on the goodness of the person is pondered and primary and dominant."

Interviewee 12, twin brothers who are co-owners and directors of a funeral home, pondered whether or not people today for the most part prefer the deceased's body to be present at funerals. "Some like it present for closure, however, many try to avoid having the body present so that they can skirt around accepting the wholeness and finality of death. Many like to quickly dispose of the body and go on with life. In our opinion, this short-circuits the grieving process." According to Respondent 12, "Cremations are trending up primarily because it's becoming more accepted by the public, oftentimes to reduce cost, but also to avoid grief." These funeral directors commented that when cremation is accorded, they notice that sometimes death is treated merely as an event to get through quickly. Seeing the deceased body and being confronted with the undeniable finality of death is something people try to avoid. Participant 18 sees "the increasing practice of cremation troubling. For me it's pagan and gnostic and does not at all reflect the scriptural understanding of God's valuing of our bodies." The respondent noted his understanding of Hebraic funerary burial customs that anointed, spiced, and clothed the body as was done for Jesus. Gentile pagans sometimes cremated their deceased. The respondent also noted how early Christianity as viewed through scriptural writings moved away from middle Platonism and incipient gnostic thought about the devaluing of the body. The respondent reminded the researcher that "the early creeds say, 'I believe in the resurrection' (of the body)."

Interviewee 12 sees that "funeral services are more personalized and non-religious today. Music is not necessarily religious. Also, there are multiple eulogies rather than just one by the minister. Many services have more of a celebration of life focus, with little thought about death, postmortem expectations, and religious connotations."

The data gathered from the participants reveals an ambivalent uneasiness with the way funeral services are conducted today. Oftentimes the culture wants to view the deceased as just "passing on to a heavenly existence because a loving God would never confine a person to hell." On the other hand, sometimes God and the gospel are mitigated and replaced with a celebratory emphasis on the departed, and the deceased's immediate and future relocation are of no concern to the funeral attendee. The respondents noted that cremations and quick closures are becoming prevalent. Contemporary cultural funerary practices reveal a denial of holistic death and a diminishment of humanly embodied future expectations.

CHAPTER SIX

EVALUATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter seeks to merge together the discoveries of the three data streams of Bible and theology research, literature review, and grounded field work findings for evaluation and conclusion purposes.

Introduction

The problem this project addressed was how might an anthropological monistic framework help pastoral care practice in a local church? In response to this problem, the researcher (1) clarified the type of monism the researcher envisioned as providing a theological view of human personhood through the lens of Christian writers in both theological and social science contexts, highlighting the distinctives that anthropological monism brings to the conversation for whole and holy personhood; (2) explored pertinent literature reviews of multidisciplinary investigations for new developments in the understanding of the human person from theoreticians and practitioners of both Christian and non-religious or secular perspectives, from which recent anthropological monism distinctives have emerged; (3) performed qualitative field research through interviews and questionnaires given to local clergy and/or parachurch leaders, psychologists, and funeral home directors to gain viable and beneficial practical pastoral care strategies in the areas of (a) spiritual formation of the human person and (b) feasible personal eschatological outcome expectations consistent with an anthropological monistic

paradigm; (d) all of which eventuated in the project outcome of leveraging practical pastoral care principles and recommendations that addresses the human person in a whole and holy way to the glory of God.

Discoveries, Evaluations, and Conclusions from the Bible and Theology

In the Bible and theology chapter the researcher offered three viable and helpful contributions in connection with anthropological monism to assist pastoral care practice for whole and holy personhood: integration, embodiment, and community.

Discoveries

Although many nuanced conceptualizations of monism exist, this researcher envisions anthropological monism as a view that conceives a human as a unified, wholly integrated physical being with emergent capacities and activities predicated upon a hierarchical complexity of brain function. From this framework the following discoveries emerged.

The idea of integration emerged when monism's unified wholeness was brought into dialogue with hamartiology. Sin, drawn from the Genesis 1-3 corpus, was conceptualized as relational disruption and fragmentation (e.g., from God, others, self, and environment).

The idea of embodiment emerged grounded in Christology, specifically the incarnation of Christ. Embodiment was also envisioned with regard to human physicality, specifically how human experience has a neural basis. The Bible links our bodies to worshipful encounters with God. Also, embodied habituated practices play an essential part in spiritual formation and maturation. Finally, our embodiment can precipitate a renewed focus with regard to the personal eschatological outcome of resurrection.

The idea of community emerged as monism was shown to uphold humans not only as physically embodied beings but also as socially embedded and constructed beings. Our community narrative shapes our personal identity. Relationships are key to life and life experience.

Evaluations and Conclusions

First, integration can become a corrective to sin, which is envisioned as disintegration. Integration can be used to put back together what sin holistically takes apart. Integration can help address and overcome a disruptive and fragmented conceptualization of the human individual, which conceives the person as a compartmentalized, isolated individual without a personal narrative framework. Even when the Bible addresses "parts" of a person, each part can stand for the whole person under a particular aspect or capacity.

Integration can be utilized to address epistemic fragmentation and encourage the academic disciplines through a multidisciplinary framework in which to dialogue and collaboratively learn and share information. This project addressed local church pastors and challenged them in their need to become more fully informed in other academic disciplines for a more fully orbed approach to pastoral care. Anthropological monism's drive to integrate wholeness can compel pastors to take science seriously and become more interdisciplinary in their approach to pastor care. Sometimes this might mean referring a congregant to a specialist to tend to another aspect of their human composition. Currently, biblical scholars and Christian psychologists are exploring ways to help their own colleagues and pastors do this. Jeannine Brown and Steven Sandage note a common "borrowing" approach where a scholar with expertise in one field studies

a scholar in a second disciplinary field and borrows information from her or him. Although somewhat commendable, some scholars caution that this approach can amount to cross-disciplinary overreach.[1] Alternatively, Sandage and Brown opt for a "relational integration" model for interdisciplinary work. This model consists of ongoing conversation between scholars in two different disciplines that can more easily maintain the integrity of each discipline as well as provide potential points of connection between them.[2]

This challenge might initially unsettle pastors due to human finitude and fallenness, an anxious temperament that avoids conflict, or a fear of losing disciplinary distinctiveness, all of which might lead to competition rather than cooperation. Brown and Sandage point a way forward, suggesting a "relational integration" model that is "integration as interdisciplinary collaboration based on differentiated relationality."[3] A key is to balance intimacy and autonomy in relational dialogue. Pastors need to take on humility and finitude, which presses them into interdependence and collaborative cooperation for truth, all the while letting human finitude push them away from autonomy and self-sufficiency. The presence of human dis-integration and anxiety need not be seen as a permanent failure; rather God can use this relational pressure to forge

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[1] K.A. Reynhout, "The Hermeneutics of Transdisciplinarity: A Gadamerian Model of Transversing Reasoning," *Transdisciplinarity in Science and Religion*, 2: 77-101.

[2] Steven J. Sandage and Jeanine K. Brown, "Relational Integration, Part 1: Differentiated Relationality Between Psychology and Theology," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 43, no 3 (Fall 2015): 165-178. Sandage and Brown, "Relational Integration, Part II: Relational Integration as Development and Intercultural," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 43, no 3 (Fall 2015): 179-191.

[3] Sandage and Brown, "Relational Integration, Part II," 179.

new relational integration. Thus, one can have an "approach of valuing differences and conflicts as illuminative and potentially transformational."[4]

One can envision that integration also plays a key role in personal relationality. Rather than conceptualizing human personhood as a partitive structured classification, monism envisions an integrative aspectual taxonomy of the human person as an alternative. Thus, integration can help overcome anthropological fragmentation in both intra- and inter-human relationships. Being fully human—that is, becoming whole and holy—addresses a well-ordered, unified relational authenticity that is ultimately the work of God in congruence with one's orientating receptivity to His work.

Second, integrative relationality can also be linked to embodiment for becoming whole and holy persons and help pastoral care in this area. "Becoming" speaks to formation—forging trustworthy embodied contexts for relational challenge and pressures for growth through embodied spiritual practices that orientate a person towards God with a receptive posture, because the ultimate goal of becoming whole and holy persons is to glorify God. Here is where the biblical concept of *imago Dei* can be utilized as an embodied functional relationality in line with the vocation of relating creation to God. This individualized human vocation became nationalized as Israel. Her holy vocation was witnessed negatively (being distinct) as Israel looked unlike her neighbors, and witnessed positively as Israel looked like her God Yahweh. This vocation was restored and fulfilled in Christ and extended as the vocation of the church. In wholeness and holiness, the church maintains a healthy non-anxious connectedness and a healthy non-anxious

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[4] Sandage and Brown, "Relational Integration, Part II," 179.

autonomy with the culture to open up hospitable space in which others can recognize and experience the presence of God.

With anthropological monism bringing embodiment back into prominence, one is reminded that all human experience is relationally embodied. Emerging from this idea that relationality is embodied is the discovery that relationships by definition lead one outward, not only or primarily inward. To overly focus a congregant on his or her interiority, pastors at times allude to 2 Corinthians 4:16 which states, "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day." With regard to this verse, several comments are in order. First, Hans Dieter Betz, after a careful historical exploration of the usage of the phrase "inner person/outer person," reports that "Paul accepted a differentiation between the two phrases but did not envision only one aspect of the two phrases to have a salvific aim."[5] Second, rather than conceptualizing a bifurcated contrast between soul and body, Brad Kallenberg suggests, "the dividing line is better understood as lying between the body and the surrounding."[6] Skin is the diving line. Third, although one could envision this particular phrase in spatial terms, Green comments that Paul's bifurcated contrast should be understood in eschatological terms.[7] Klaus Berger concurs and argues that the inner person refers to "an invisible eschatological identity, [reflecting] temporal rather than

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[5] Hans Dieter Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' in the Anthropology of Paul*," New Testament Studies* vol. 46, no. 3 (July 2000): 340.

[6] Brad J. Kallenberg, "Then Sings My Soul," in *Practicing to Aim at Truth: Theological Enagements in Honor of Nancey Murphy*, eds. Ryan Andrew Newson and Brad J. Kallenberg (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 103.

[7] Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*, 176.

spatial orientation."[8] It is new because it is a process underway now and not visible because its full manifestation is future. So the inner person refers to an invisible eschatological identity. Scott Hafemann also supports this understanding when he writes, "The inner and outer self refers to Paul in his *entirety* as one who lives eschatologically in this overlapping of the ages."[9] Thus, this verse does not necessarily support an inward thrust.

Embodiment was linked to human being, knowing, and acting. Human knowing was understood as always embodied. Human action also is always an embodied experience. When it comes to human action, embodied habituated practices forge both desires and a loving orientation toward God and His kingdom. Pastors should be encouraged to read and reflect on Smith's formerly mentioned groundbreaking work in this area.[10] Pastors might reflectively consider how to integrate the five embodied human senses (i.e., seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting) into the church's worship service. Finally, it was highlighted that embodiment brings back into prominence the necessity of embodied resurrection. Pastors would do well to reemphasize embodied resurrection in their teaching and preaching ministries.

Third, anthropological monism also contributes the importance of community for human personhood. Humans are socially embedded and communally shaped. This insight warrants leaving behind the model that was based on a dualist, inner-outer (soul-body)

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[8] Klaus Berger, *Identity and Experience in the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 8.

[9] Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians: The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 189.

[10] His anticipated more popular work, James K.A. Smith, *The Spiritual Power of Habit: You Are What You Love*, Brazos Press, 2016, is forthcoming.

distinction where the inner world of the person is set apart from their physical and social behavior and interpersonal contexts. Otherwise, the person becomes decontextualized, with a loss of a historical narrative. This former model can be replaced with a new model that envisions a community for change and maturation. A monistic framework nudges pastors toward embracing a new model that conceives the human person as a holistically embodied and socially embedded individual, where the focus and intervention are outward with relational reshaping. New relational templates are formed through long-term relations with healthy Spirit-led community mentors and groups.

After arguing that religious conversion and transformation must somehow involve our physical or embodied self—that is, a change that must be recognizable at a biological level of investigation and rooted in three interrelated levels: the phenomenal, the cognitive, and the neural—Paul Markham calls for the retrieval of a more vigorous and embodied ecclesiology for whole and holy personal maturation.[11] The author explains that ecclesiology plays a "vital role in the formation of the *narrative self*. [N]arratives or stories are a necessary component of understanding self, social groups, and their histories. These stories allow us to orient ourselves in the world by disclosing who we are, where we have been, and where we are going."[12] W. Brown and Strawn encourage Christians to move away from a privatized spirituality, which they call "dwarfed and puny."[13] The authors attempt to "supersize spirituality." Their conceptualization imagines

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[11] Paul N. Markham, "Practicing Religious Conversion: What Nancey Murphy Taught Me About Spiritual Development in a Physical World," in *Practicing to Aim at Truth: Theological Engagements in Honor of Nancey Murphy* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 96.

[12] Markham, 96.

[13] Warren S. Brown and Brad D. Strawn, "Beyond the Isolated Self: Extended Mind and Spirituality," in *Practicing to Aim at Truth: Theological Engagements in Honor of Nancey Murphy* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 78.

spirituality "as a property not bound to individual persons, but as extended beyond the person into the interpersonal."[14]

With these ideas in mind, one can link the three contributions of integration, embodiment, and community with spirituality. Spiritual formation is integrated by means of extended embodiment through the body of Christ, the church community.

Discoveries, Evaluations, and Conclusions from Literature Review

Discoveries

It was observed that the self is brain-reliant as well as socially constructed. What happens to the brain happens to or affects the self. Growth in brain development results in self-complexity as well. Human beings experience a lived reality by means of relational sensory (perception)-motor (action) orientation and interaction with the world.

In light of a strong causal link between brain and self (emergent capacities from a healthy functioning brain), the issue of free will was explored. A bottom-up and top-down reciprocal casual interaction was noted, which opens up conceptual space and understanding for necessary moral responsibility. Self-construction entails not only neural connections but also social connections—neurons that fire together wire together. Due to the brain's social plasticity, the brain can be re-wired in a healthy way through habitual relational experiences. Mirror neurons assist in this social (re)construction endeavor.

With a neural and socially constructed self in many divergent contexts, the question emerged and was explored as to whether one is a single self or many contextualized selves. An essential core executive sense of self was conceptualized

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[14] Brown and Strawn, "Beyond the Isolated Self," 77.

utilizing a narrative theory of self in which new moments of contextualized experiences are added to and integrated with the narrative story (multiplicity and continuity) of a human self. Thus, an "executive sense of self" brings coherence to a multiplicity of contextualized subjective experiences, upholding the idea of a unitary selfhood.

Under the topic of spiritual maturation, a brief sampling of spiritual practices was reviewed. Contemplative meditation was reviewed to see how this practice might override the brain's negativity bias. A second group of practices—table-fellowship, hospitality, generosity, and mentoring relationships—were employed with a focus on others as a means of extending God's grace, which in turn has a reciprocal positive effect on one's self, resulting in a whole and holy person.

Next, the longevity of the embodied self was explored for eschatological life-after-death outcomes. Three views were explored, each having their own problems: the reassembly view, the fissional view, and the recreation view. Problematic for each view is what scholars term the "spatio-temporal continuity" dilemma.[15] Bruce Reichenbach with his article, "Monism and the Possibility of Life after Death," shows that monism can address this problem theologically and philosophically as well as the other positions.[16] The researcher was drawn to the recreation view for monism's handling of after-life outcomes.

Finally, various from Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Western Christian funerary practices and trends were surveyed. A monistic framework calls on Christians to bring

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[15] Bruce R. Reichenbach, "Monism and the Possibility of Life after Death," *Religious Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (March 1978): 28.

[16] Reichenbach, 27-34.

the body back into the funerary experience, returning to a full-orbed experience of the human for whole and holy personhood to be longed for and remembered.

Evaluations and Conclusions

New findings in neuroscience can assist a pastor who may need to ascertain, for example, whether a congregant who is struggling to forge relational closeness or connection with other congregants and manifesting withdrawnness is doing so due to some sinful pathology or from a possible brain deficiency. For example, the researcher has a child with mild Asperger's syndrome. Malcolm Jeeves and W. Brown report that this disorder is characterized "by a deficiency in comprehending and responding to the social and emotional nature of situations."[17] The individual with Asperger's syndrome will always struggle with interpersonal intentionality and the ability to pick up on emotional social clues through facial communication. In this example, science assists the pastor in avoiding a potentially premature indictment of sin. Instead, science helps the congregant understand the cause of his or her relational struggle. This example shows how dialogue with science can assist the pastor with his or her congregant for whole and holy personhood.

The literature review concerning memories from both neuroscience and psychology can be both instructive and beneficial for pastors as well. Psychologist Daniel Kahnemann explains the difference and distinction between lived experience and memory. He notes the difference between being happy "in" one's life (living experience)

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[17] Malcolm Jeeves and Warren S. Brown, *Neuroscience, Psychology and Religion: Illusions, Delusions, and Realities about Human Nature* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009), 105.

and being happy "about/with" one's life (memory evaluation).[18] He shares the story of a

person who spent an evening listening to a symphony of glorious music, but at the end of

the musical event encountered a dreadful screeching sound. The person complained that

the screeching sound ruined his whole listening experience. But Kahnemann notes that in

actuality the screeching sound ruined the memory of the experience, because in terms of

lived-experience the person spent an entire evening enjoying the symphony, up to the

point of the screeching sound. So Kahnemann envisions an "experiencing-self" and a

"remembering-self."[19] The remembering-self keeps score and is the storyteller of the

experience. Often times the remembering-self can retroactively warp the reality of the

lived-experience. Erwin McManus writes, "It is not our experiences but how we

remember those experiences and even what experiences we choose to remember that

have the most profound effect."[20] Theses insights provide the pastor with strategies to

help congregants understand how they think about their experiences—how accurate and

fair they are, and if they can be re-evaluated in terms of viewing a life-experience from a

new biblically-based perspective that brings healing.

A review of literature from the social sciences highlighted the importance of

group mentoring to forge healthy new relational templates. This insight alerts the pastor

to place those struggling with pathological relational attachment templates into healthy

small groups so that they can be mentored through continuous and sustained exposure,

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[18] Daniel Kahnemann, "The Riddle of Experience vs. Memory," TED Talk, March 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgRlrBl-7Yg (accessed November 20, 2015).

[19] Kahnemann.

[20] Erwin Raphael McManus, *The Artisan Soul: Crafting Your Life into a Work of Art* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014), 83.

and can observe and experience healthy relating in community in order to build new relational templates, which is possible to due brain plasticity.

In terms of end-of-life outcomes, anthropological monism requires the pastor to remove from the congregation the temporal hope of a disembodied heavenly intermediate state with God and loved ones. However, anthropological monism also provides the pastor with a recreation view to offer the congregant. Because of strong emotional longings, especially among the elderly, letting go of the expectation of an intermediate state and embracing a recreation view for end-of-life outcomes will take time, dialogue, and gentle persuasion from the pastor.

From a funerary context anthropology and eschatology can be robustly interconnected. Charles Christian reminds all that corporeal death is true and holistic, and challenges a "docetic" (only "to seem") appearance of dying.[21] Thus pastors might encourage congregant mourners to have the deceased's body present in the funerary service. With the body present psychological needs can be addressed in conjunction with a worshipful focus on God to bring embodied eschatological longs to fruition through resurrection. This redirected refocus takes undue focus off a permanent expectation of a disembodied heavenly state and returns hope for whole and holy persons resurrected in the new heavens and earth.

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[21] Charles W. Christian, "Practical Applications of a Holistic Anthropology, Or, What Pastors Can Say at Hospitals and Funerals" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society, Pastoral Theology Section, Duke Divinity School, 2008).

Discoveries, Evaluations, and Conclusions from Field Research

Discoveries/Findings

The participants conceived human nature with a functional orientation in one of four ways. The dominant pastoral care configuration entailed dualism. The next dominant configuration entailed quasi-dualism, followed by monism and lastly, atheism.

Anthropological monism for pastoral care in the central Midwest currently remains somewhat negligible for the following reasons: unfamiliarity, the charge of being unscriptural or heresy, harmful misgivings, and adherence to anthropological dualism. However, in spite of these misgivings, many participants feel that anthropological monism also provides a series of helpful benefits for pastoral care, which include: (1) challenging the pastor to return to a holistic model of tending to the person in line with how Jesus pastorally cared for each person, (2) a renewed awareness for pastors to be balanced with a psycho-somatic treatment of the person, (3) bringing the resurrection back into prominence rather than overemphasizing a disembodied intermediate state, (4) a push to take science and interdisciplinary dialogue more seriously, and (5) new conceptual space from which to impact the next generation for Christ.

A less than robust familiarity with truth discovered in other academic disciplines can potentially handicap any contributions of monism for pastoral care conversation with regard to spiritual formation for whole and holy personhood.

Instead of an inward and internal focus for a human individual, anthropological monism can precipitate an outwardly directed focus utilizing the essential importance of relationships and community for spiritual formation for whole and holy personhood.

Awareness of one's embodiment ("physicality") and the utilization thereof is an essential and important component for one's spiritual formation for whole and holy personhood as well as for end-of-life care.

In terms of issues of thanatology and personal eschatology, anthropological dualism was shown to uphold only partial death for human beings, whereas anthropological monism upholds holistic death of the human being.

Contemporary cultural funerary practices reveal a penchant for denial of holistic death and a diminished expectation for future immortalized embodiment.

Evaluations and Conclusions

One datum finding showed that awareness of one's embodiment ("physicality") and the utilization thereof is an essential and important component of one's spiritual formation for whole and holy personhood, as well as pertaining to end-of-life care. Mark Johnson thematically argues in his book *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* that "There is no radical mind/body separation. Meaning is grounded in bodily experience. Reason is an embodied process. Human spirituality is embodied.[22] William Roozeboom notes that "Neuroscience illustrates how physiological embodiment is a central piece in this construction and, though often overlooked, we now realize that everything about us is … mediated via the embodied brain ecosystem."[23] Roozeboom means by "embodied brain ecosystem" that "the brain is literally located throughout the

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[22] Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 11-15.

[23] William Dean Roozeboom, "Rethinking Theological Anthropology: Constructing a Pastoral Theology of Wellness in Light of the Paradigm of Plasticity in Neuroscience," (PhD diss., Brite Divinity School, 2103), 1.

body via the central and peripheral nervous systems."[24] Based on this understanding, Roozeboom envisions a pastoral wellness program. His holistically embodied wellness program entails "five areas of wellness: (1) Attunement, (2) Nourishment, (3) Movement, (4) Rest and Renewal, and (5) Relationships."[25] Roozeboom seeks to bring theological anthropology into lived (embodied) experience in a pastoral context.

This project research demonstrates that pastoral care needs to become more holistic in its approach and oversight. The pastor is in a unique position of regularly (at least weekly) interacting with congregants. Holistic pastoral care oversight of the congregant should entail multiple aspects. First, the pastor might enlist a physician to explore any embodied concerns that might be manifesting from the congregant's behavior and brain function. Second, the pastor might enlist a psychologist to explore the congregant's selving. Third, the pastor might enlist an experienced mentor to help the congregant build healthy new relational templates. The pastor would serve as the integrating and overseeing lead person in this collaborating endeavor.

Conclusion

The researcher embraced the challenge of exploring anthropological monism for viable and beneficial pastoral care practice in a local church. The research challenge was first met by exploring the Bible and theology for contributions to this endeavor. The contributions of integration, embodiment, and community were deployed to address this challenge and will hopefully prove practically helpful for pastors.

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[24] Roozeboom, 1.

[25] Roozeboom, 2.

Second, the research entailed review of literature in the humanities and physical sciences to address this challenge in the area of spiritual formation and end-of-life outcomes. Many insights were gained, including the role mirror neurons play for healthy relational attachments, how habituated practices wire or rewire the plasticity of the brain, and more. Hopefully the pastoral utilization of these insights will prove rewarding to the glory of God.

Third, the researcher engaged 18 people (pastors, psychologists, funeral directors, and parachurch leaders) using the instruments of questionnaires and personal interviews to gather qualitative data to address this challenge. The data was illuminating and revealed a mix of misgivings and envisioned benefits for pastoral care practice in the local church. However, pastoral hesitancy was not unexpected. Time is needed to give careful evaluation of anthropological monism for pastoral care practice. Therefore, more work remains to be done by both theoreticians and practitioners to encourage pastors in this endeavor.

Strengths of the Research

A particular strength of this research project was that the researcher sought to be vigorously and collaboratively multidisciplinary in order to hold bias to a minimum. Rather than surveying only what biblical scholars have to say about what anthropological monism might have to offer or take away from pastoral care, the researcher sought to listen to voices from other academic disciplines that wanted to weigh in on this quest. The researcher added to these theoreticians a practitioner's input from pastors actually doing ministry in the field. Structured in this way, the project attempted to tamp down on potential subjectivity biases.

Another strength of this project was the attempt to leverage new conceptualizations of the human individual to assist Christian pastoral care. In each new generation and cultural context the Christian faith must speak to new situations. In a spirit of discernment, careful listening to the contributions of science and other academic disciplines can enrich the church's endeavors related to her faith proclamation.

A final strength of this project entailed a servant leadership dynamic. This project sought to proactively utilize a forward looking vision in conjunction with pastoral leaders of local churches to harness new theoretical materials to help congregants to become whole and holy followers of Jesus empowered by the Spirit for the glory of God and His kingdom.

Weakness of the Research

Many of the interviewees who evaluated anthropological monism for pastoral care first wanted to look at the biblical evidence for it. Because of project constraints, the researcher was not able to interact with the interviewees in this area.

Second, the geographical area for the fieldwork research was rather small—just a part of the Midwest. If the researcher had it to do over again, data would have been drawn from all geographical quadrants of the United States. This would have been a good check and balance to ensure that no one particular region was used for rejection or acceptance or anthropological monism for pastoral care practice.

Third, might future dissertation work be more collaborative in nature than individualistic? Using a cohort framework, each individual doctoral candidate could research and write a section of the dissertation in a dialogical and collaborative way with others on the same project topic. Conceived in this way, the process would require

doctoral candidates to use their interpersonal relational skills with each other,

experiencing challenge and conflict for growth, and produce a collaboratively robust

work on a particular topic or issue.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REFLECTIONS

Personal Reflections

Psalm 139:14, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made"

This researcher started the research project with a mixture of embodied emotions. One emotion entailed joy. Several faculty members counseled the researcher, "if you as a doctoral student desire to complete your program and specifically your thesis, you must chose a research topic of which you are passionate. The Lord will use that passion to carry you through to completion." With joy the researcher passionately investigated questions from his lived-experience in pastoral ministry such as: how is the soul wired into the brain/mind? Is the soul still conscious when a person is anesthetized during surgery? How is the soul affected when a person develops Alzheimer's? When a person clinically dies and then comes back to life, did his or her soul leave the body and go to heaven and then return? If so, why don't most individuals have memories of this kind of experience? Do we actually have a metaphysical soul, or is it instead an emergent soulish capacity that ebbs and flows with brain experience? Joy and curiosity impassioned the researcher to seek and discover the truth of these questions through a monistic framework for pastoral care practice.

However, the researcher also experienced another emotion: apprehension. If the research data drew the researcher to discoveries that lay outside his traditional evangelical faith heritage, would the researcher have the courage to follow and embrace

these data wherever they led? What would the researcher's church family and pastoral colleagues think?

As a matter of fact, a number of pastoral colleagues whom the researcher interviewed asked the researcher specifically whether he embraces the anthropological monism view. The researcher wanted to maintain a sense of objectivity by not specifically revealing his leanings to avoid placing the interviewee on the defensive one way or the other. Therefore the researcher indicated that he was in transition, although in all honesty, the researcher was moving more towards monism. With these pastoral colleagues the researcher found himself being vague and hesitant to "out" himself about his transitional trajectory. So both joy and some apprehension were present in the research process. The researcher continues to pray for the courage to follow the truth wherever it leads.

Reflections on the Bible-Theology Research

As the researcher searched the Bible for theological insights vis-à-vis the project, God taught the researcher that He did not create humans as angels. Conversely, humans are visible, earth-dwelling, embodied beings, neither created in heaven nor for heaven. Pastoral care will take place in relationship to the way a pastor conceives how God created human beings. Furthermore, just as the Bible exhibits theological developments, so theological anthropology will continue to develop in each new historical and cultural context.

From time to time the researcher found himself wanting to step into the theoretical scriptural debate concerning whether biblical exegesis can sustain an anthropological monistic view of the human being. This desire arose particularly when

some of the interviewees wanted to weigh in on whether Scripture even allows one to contemplate monism. Thankfully, the researcher's advisor kept the researcher on project focus.

Reflections on Literature Review

Some of the most exciting discoveries for the researcher came from the literature review. Developments in neuroscience, neuropsychology, and related fields have opened up new conceptual imagination for exploring biblical texts and strategies for pastoral care practice. Some of these insights have already shown up in the researcher's preaching ministry. As a result of the literature review the researcher intends to employ a number of strategic insights. For example, the researcher will utilize a two-pronged focus for pastoral care practice, both probing a person's salubrious embodiment and exploring the health of their social embeddedness. In previous pastoral care practice the researcher tended to downplay a person's embodiment and overly focus on their intra- and interpersonal relationality.

Reflections on Field Work Interviews

The researcher's pastoral colleagues enriched him greatly during their interviews. The researcher admired the participant's tenacity when they thought anthropological monism was off, yet they also spoke graciously what they perceived as the truth in love. However, without wanting to sound angry, judgmental, or condemnatory, the researcher hopefully desires that his pastoral colleagues might one day also employ their tenacity to listening courageously to other disciplines for imaginative resonance with the Scriptures to enlarge their pastoral care practice. The researcher also aspires to continually challenge himself to listen for God's truth in all epistemic venues. It is the researcher's hope that

this project does not conclude the conversation but instead furthers the conversation. As a result of this research project the researcher is more attuned to his own embodiment and social embeddedness in the world.

Suggestions for Further Research

A research project that links Christology with anthropological monism would seem to be in order. If a growing number of academic evangelicals adopt a materialist monistic anthropology view, what would incarnational Christology look like through this new lens? To the researcher's present knowledge, no full-orbed project has yet conceptualized this linkage. How would a monistic view of humanity make sense of the problems of incarnational Christology? Second, how can the monistic view accommodate or handle the death of Jesus?

A second potential research project might involve undertaking to answer the most prominent and valid biblical-theological arguments against anthropological monism. In academic publications many objections have been leveled against anthropological monism during the last two decades. However, a project that can streamline and categorize the many objections and provide a full-orbed response to them might bring some clarification and further the dialogue pointing out areas of weakness and needed corrections.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

Exploring the Benefits of Anthropological Monism for Pastoral Care Practice

Dear Participant:

First, I want to thank you for your willingness to share your precious time and important thoughts pertaining to this subject matter. Below are 17 questions.

Second, this questionnaire is **not** expecting you to embrace anthropological monism as necessarily true, rather, the researcher is only hoping to gain your insights as to how it might benefit the pastor and parishioner in a pastoral care relationship.

Third, please allow me to define what anthropological monism is from this researcher's perspective. Anthropological monism is a view of the human person as a unified, wholly integrated **physical** being. To be clear, this view jettisons any idea of a human possessing an additional immaterial metaphysical entity known as what we call a soul or spirit. Thus, all human capacities and activities emerge from one's physicality. Our capacity to have relationships with others and a spiritual relationship with God emerges from our embodiment. So, the adjective "anthropological" qualifies our topic as pertaining to human person. "Monism" is a term addressing the oneness and wholly integrated physicality of the human person.

1. Are you familiar with **anthropological monism**? (please mark an "x" next to your choice)

   ____ Yes   ____ Somewhat   ____ No

2. How might anthropological monism provide any **benefits** in how you do pastoral care?

3. What if any **misgivings** might you have about anthropological monism as it pertains to pastoral care practice?

4. Do you currently practice pastoral care in your **church community** using an anthropological monism framework? (please mark an "x" next to your choice)

   ____ Yes   ____ No

   If "yes," would you briefly elaborate in what way(s)?

5. Are you aware of any of your **pastoral colleagues** who are currently using an anthropological monism framework in their pastoral care practice? (please mark an "x" next to your choice)

   ____ Yes   ____ No   If "yes," how many? ____

6. What is your view of **science** as it pertains to the Christian faith? (please mark an

    "x" next to your choice)

    _____ Strong advocate   _____ Cautious   _____ Skeptic

7. Have you read any of the latest discoveries and advancements in **neuroscience**?

    (please mark an "x" next to your choice)

    _____ Yes   _____ No

8. Please elaborate on how any advancements in neuroscience might impact or

    change how you currently practice pastoral care.

9. To your knowledge, is a certain **age group** more open to anthropological monism

    than others?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

    If "yes," please specify what age group: _____

10. To your knowledge, are people of a certain **educational level** more aware of and

    open to anthropological monism?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

    If "yes," please specify what educational level: _____.

11. Based on your understanding of the human person, in terms of pastoral care

    practice, what do you emphasize and what do you tend to neglect? (please

    elaborate)

12. Our body (our physicality) is a fundamental aspect of how we exist and who we are. How can spiritual formation be done in a more holistic way that takes our embodiment and socially embeddedness seriously? In short, what embodied behaviors and/or practices would you consider most conducive for a person's spiritual formation? (please elaborate)

13. When a person dies, according to anthropological monism, there is no "soul/spirit" that goes to heaven for an intermediate state. Therefore, what "life-after-death" alternatives might you propose to a dying parishioner? (please mark an "x" by what you would propose)

____ At death a person will experience an immediate bodily resurrection

____ Some time after death, a person's next moment of consciousness will be when God raises him or her from the dead.

____ Other (please briefly elaborate)

14. Are you pleased with how funerals are done today in America? (please mark an "x" next to your choice)

____ Yes   ____ Somewhat   ____ No

15. If you see any alarming trends with funerals that need addressed and changed, would you briefly elaborate on what those might be?

16. Do you see anthropological monism having an impact on how we do funerals

today?

____ Yes   ____ No

If "yes," please briefly elaborate.

17. Please share any other thoughts you might have on how anthropological monism

might be beneficial or harmful for pastoral care practice.

Thank You!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date: _____

Name: _____
Age: _____
Ministry position: _____
Education: _____
Interview length: _____

Interview Guide

Theoretically, if anthropological monism was "in play," what ramifications would it make for how we do pastoral care practice; how might it change or contribute in terms of pastoral care emphases?

1. Talk to me about your understanding of the human person—what capacities make human beings who they are?

2. Tell me your thoughts about anthropological monism.

3. When people seek pastoral care from you, what do you tend to emphasize?

4. How can our embodiment be utilized to serve our spiritual formation/maturity? When we attempt to help people connect with God and others, do you include or focus on a person's embodiment? What might pastoral care practice theology based on embodiment look like?

5. Anthropological monism can provide an emphasis on embodiment, integration, and community. What helpful benefits might these emphases hold for pastoral care practice?

6. Do you tend to conceive pastoral care practice in terms of wholeness and wellness?

7. With pastoral care in mind, how do you see relationships as a way to help people grow spiritually?

8. How might anthropological monism address personal eschatology—afterlife expectations? How much of us dies when we experience death?

9. Do you have any other thoughts to share on anthropological monism for pastoral care practice?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

DOCTORAL THESIS/DISSERTATION INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE

You are invited to participate in a study of a Doctoral Thesis/Dissertation: Exploring Anthropological Monism for Pastor Care Practice in a Local Church. I hope to learn any insights and benefits that anthropological monism might have for pastoral care practice. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your regional location, experience, and availability for the above-mentioned doctoral thesis/
dissertation. This doctoral thesis/dissertation is in conjunction with the doctoral of leadership program at Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

If you decide to participate, first, I will provide a questionnaire via email or mail it to you in regards to the above-mentioned thesis/dissertation, to be completed and sent back to me. Second, I will meet with you personally for an interview in reference to the above-mentioned thesis/dissertation. The interview will take no longer than an hour. The interview may be audio-recorded for data recall purposes. The questionnaire should take no longer than a half hour to complete.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only aggregate data will be presented. Any information resulting from the questionnaire and personal interview will only be released to my doctoral thesis/dissertation advisor and technical reader, and my doctoral thesis/dissertation examination board and to Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. The audio recording will be destroyed once the thesis/
dissertation is complete and accepted by Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

_____

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

_____
Signature Date

_____
Signature of Witness (when appropriate)

_____
Signature of Investigator/Researcher
8/2015

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