

"MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER" A MULTITUDE OF ERRORS

A Critique of *Uncovering the Mystery of MPD*, by Dr. James G. Friesen

Introduction

There is a growing emphasis in Christian counseling on the area of childhood abuse. Within this general focus, many counselors are increasingly diagnosing their abused counselees with "multiple personality disorder." *Uncovering the Mystery of MPD* provides a detailed discussion of the nature of MPD and what the author believes to be its causes, along with his recommendations for treatment.

Various forms of child abuse are assumed to be at the root of MPD. Friesen notes the increasing awareness of the existence of child abuse, incest, MPD, and now satanic ritual abuse. A significant portion of the book is devoted specifically to satanic ritual abuse, demonic possession (as distinguished from MPD), and exorcism. Due to the graphically described case histories contained in the book, the author urges caution for any reader who has been abused (p. 69). He claims that reading the material may cause a breakdown, and insists that a victim must be in a *professional therapeutic relationship* in order to handle the violent feelings that could potentially be aroused.

This book certainly addresses real problems. The incidence of child abuse, and even satanic involvement, dare not be ignored. We can join the author in his concern for those persons whose lives have been ravaged by the practice of evil. However, there are serious theological problems in his understanding of human nature, as well as his theories about what *causes* particular responses. His confidence is clearly in psychotherapy as the ultimate answer, thus undermining the power of God *using His Word* as the basis for restoration. It is these issues which must be addressed and clarified biblically. In doing so, we intend to arrive at a truly biblical understanding of the problems and a godly manner of addressing them in counseling.

Definitions: What is MPD?

Initially, the author cites the official psychiatric definition provided in the DSM-III (p. 43):

"1. The existence within an individual of two or more distinct personalities, each of which is dominant at a particular time.

2. The personality that is dominant at any particular time determines the individual's behavior at that time.
3. Each individual personality is complex and integrated with its own unique behavior patterns and social relationships."

Believing this definition to be too general to help him in treating MPD, the author pursues more specifics, outlined in the following discussion.

General Characteristics. Friesen lists a number of characteristics that he claims are typical of MPD counselees: high intelligence, high creativity, high suggestibility, urgency about time, a sense of extreme deprivation, a high need to please others, secretiveness, amnesia, headaches, sudden shifts in mood and/or voice, flashbacks of traumatic experiences, inner dialogue, uneven school achievements, sleep disturbances, difficulty finding parked car, indecision about clothes to wear, and denial of actions clearly observed by others (p. 123). A high incidence of these factors may indicate dissociation.

Dissociation. Crucial to the author's definition is an understanding of dissociation, "the act of defending against pain" wherein the person "separates from the memory of a painful event." He considers it to be "the most effective defense people can use, since it is 100 percent successful" (p. 62). In fact:

"Since dissociation so effectively blocks out the painful memories, the victimized child grows up knowing absolutely nothing about the abuse." (p. 65)

More specifically, the author speculates that the process occurs as follows:

"A child goes through a trauma, and then pretends to be a new person, or alternate personality (alter), to whom those bad things did not happen." (p. 63)

Subsequently:

"The dissociator grows up with healthy alters who know nothing about the abuse. Those alters are the ones who come to therapy, believing they have had a simple childhood. They go through a lot of denial when the truth breaks through the amnesia." (p. 65)

Thus, there is sometimes amnesia between the various "personalities," or "alters," but not always. At times, there is no information shared between the mind, emotions, body, and will (p. 115). In other cases, Friesen maintains, there is

dissociation from *feelings* even though the events are remembered (p. 62).

Certain "traumatic dissociators" are described as those who:

"...have just one or two dissociated personality states, and the other ego states do not show separateness from each other. They know how the others feel, and seem to resolve their conflicts between themselves without much need for therapy." (p. 119)

"Dissociative ability" is something the author believes to be possessed by every child (p. 116). He considers it "genetically determined" and related to "intelligence, creativity, and suggestibility" (p. 117).

Voices. MPD counselees, it is claimed, hear voices *inside* their heads. This contrasts with the "psychotic," whose hallucinatory voices are heard as coming from external sources (p. 53).

Use of Time. Because of the existence of competing personalities within one person, the MPD's body becomes exhausted when all of them attempt to accomplish their separate tasks (p. 112). Such exhaustion is often what brings the person to therapy, and it normally takes a few months to establish a workable equilibrium (p. 112-3).

SRA Victims. Many multiples are said to be victims of satanic ritual abuse (SRA). They quite often believe they are "hopelessly on the way to hell" because of having supposedly "sealed their fate when they were only children" in the context of SRA (p. 189).

Demons vs. alters. The author is concerned that alter personalities be clearly distinguished from demons. Demons, he says, are arrogant and have no sense of relationship. They are always outside the person, rather than within. They create confusion, fear, and lust. Their voices are always negative. Demons may take either a human or a non-human form. (See chart on p. 222.) As we will discuss later, Friesen wants to ensure that only demons be cast out of a person, never alters.

Causes of MPD

The author notes four ways in which an alter personality may be formed (p. 108-9):

1. "When an event is traumatic enough to cause a dissociation."

2. The individual may "model after an important person."
3. Forming alter personalities may become the "preferred method of coping" in "*new life situations*."
4. "Cult members are instructed in how to *create MPD intentionally in their children*" through "electric shock, drugs and hypnotherapy."

Abuse, and/or occult involvement, may occur either within the family or in an extrafamilial setting such as a day care setting.

The author assumes that abuse, whether incest or SRA or something else, is the cause of MPD. Examining this biblically, he fails to recognize the inherent nature of sin, and the fact that each person is responsible before God for his *response* to the sins of others. That response is not *determined by* the actions of others, however evil. This is a fundamental issue that has a crucial impact on counseling methodology.

Treatment

The author's recommendations for treatment are grounded in the teachings and methods of psychotherapy, in spite of the author's mention of biblical passages, and his extensive discussion of spiritual restoration.

Diagnosis. The author is reluctant to disclose an MPD diagnosis with a counselee until the therapeutic relationship is firmly established, preferably at least two months into therapy (p. 139), and not until the person is ready (p. 43). He also cautions against the counselee discussing the diagnosis with others:

"It is not a good idea for people with MPD to talk about their condition openly, at least until therapy has brought them through the dividedness." (p. 106)

Friesen notes that his counsees are often eager to know the expected length of their therapy. His answer is indefinite, but he indicates that it can be quite lengthy (p. 134). He fails to mention the exorbitant cost that accompanies lengthy psychotherapy. This lengthy process should be contrasted with the *hope* offered by God to those who seek Him and look to His Word for wisdom.

Correct diagnosis is a critical issue for the author, because:

"When the correct diagnosis is MPD, treatment for any other diagnosis will usually hurt instead of help." (p. 106)

Specifically, he considers it "religious abuse" when a multiple is "accused of being infested with demons" (p. 107). He explains that:

"Alters cannot be erased, and they cannot be cast off. Life takes a plunge if that is attempted." (p. 107)

"The direction of MPD therapy should be toward establishing self-control, and the accusation of spirit possession seriously contradicts that direction." (p. 107)

Unfortunately, these two alternatives--demons or alter personalities--do not leave room for the biblical view, that an individual may have developed several different *sinful response patterns* to different life situations.

Human Nature. The author's basic assumptions about human nature are essential to a critique of his treatment methods. These assumptions are fundamentally contrary to what the Scripture teaches about the sinful nature. Observe his belief in the inherent goodness of man:

"MPD therapy is known to have very good results because it uncovers and uses the client's natural talents" ("creative and intellectual abilities"). (p. 66)

"MPD therapy is directed toward affirming the health and strength of the uncontaminated alters and then decontaminating those with traumas so that they all can be restored to use the abilities they were born with." (p. 66)

"The positive approach to MPD therapy is founded on a genuine truth--a person's natural abilities can be recaptured." (p. 67)

Because of the author's view of inherent goodness--"every alter is basically good" (p. 164)--he makes the claim that "no matter what happened, *the client has the inner resources necessary to control the memories*" (p. 169). This is opposed to the biblical necessity of relying on the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer to empower change. It is a form of striving in the flesh, depending on man rather than on God. Friesen's unbiblical view of man leads directly to unbiblical methods of change.

The author notes how difficult it is for the MPD counselee to discern between his own internal voices (good though they may be!) and the voice of God:

"For those who routinely hear voices in their heads, it is confusing to think about hearing the voice of the Lord. It is hard enough for those of us without alternate personalities to be able to discern when the Lord is imparting a message to us. There are competing voices. Those who try to follow the voice of the Lord find themselves with calls from other voices. *Which shall I follow? Is that my own 'inner child' calling out for the approval of my Christian friends, or is God telling me to help those who are homeless?* A simple answer would be misleading. On the one hand, it seems easy enough to advocate that listening to God's voice is something that can be learned. However, that is not always simple. When inner voices are in disagreement and the roar of discontent drowns out the voice of God, it is difficult to recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd." (p. 218)

There are serious problems with this analysis. The author fails to mention God's Word as the authoritative source of God's voice, and the necessity to test everything by its wisdom. Faithful study of Scripture, and practice of its teachings, leads to an increasing discernment of God's truth:

"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."
Hebrews 5:14

Also, he is somewhat inconsistent in maintaining that every alter is basically good, yet recognizing that an "inner voice" might be in error. Furthermore, he is addressing here the motives of the heart, which only God is able to judge, using His Word to pierce the inmost thoughts and imaginations:

"I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." Jeremiah 17:10

"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7b

"For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

One of the major problems with man's psychological "wisdom" is the attempt to speculate about the inner motives of a man's heart, something only God is able to do.

Unbiblical Divisions. One of the fundamental assumptions of MPD (and much other psychological theory) is that the inner man can be divided into a number of separate parts or personalities:

"Every alter is a real personality with real problems. Each has real feelings to work through and real needs that must be attended to." (p. 164)

"They (the alters) need to get to know each other and accept each other, in order to work together." (p. 164)

Especially disturbing is the view that some of the "alters" may have received eternal salvation, while others have not:

"Particularly in cases where the client was raised in the occult, there can be alter personalities who are loyal to Satan." (p. 238)

"There can be disagreement between the personalities about loyalties, or worse yet, the host alter can be loyal to God, but there are other alters, amnesic from the host, who are loyal to Satan!" (p. 238)

This view, which has absolutely no scriptural support, leads to the absurdity of inter-alter evangelism:

"The process of turning over each part of one's heart to God is the preferred therapeutic pathway. As new alters are uncovered, they are introduced to Jesus. Many of the younger ones have never heard of Him so the faith of the adult alters is important. When the Christian alters are able to share their life-giving Christian experiences with the other alters, the system becomes progressively more unified." (p. 261)

There is enough real evangelism desperately needed in today's world, without the costly, time-consuming distraction promoted by such inter-person "evangelism!"

Friesen also speaks extensively of the person's *divided heart*, and the need for unity:

"When the heart is divided, chaos prevails." (p. 258)

"When the personalities do not know each other, a heart remains divided. Until the alter personalities become unified, or at least until they pool all their information, a divided heart is inevitable." (p. 259)

"There are times when the Host alter, or some other powerful alters, are not in alignment with the will of some alters who want to unify the heart." (p. 261)

The author claims to find support for his theories in Scripture: "Jesus warned about this kind of situation in Matthew 12:43-45." Here, our Lord speaks of an evil spirit going out of a man and later returning with seven more wicked spirits when he discovers that the house (man) is unoccupied. However, the author must presuppose an unbiblical division of the inner man in order to read his theories into this text. Jesus was speaking of a *whole man* possessed by an evil spirit, and the same *whole man* being later possessed by seven more wicked spirits. That *whole man* is either unsaved--and thus not having the indwelling Holy Spirit and leaving room for additional demons to gain entrance--or he is saved by God's grace, occupied by the Holy Spirit, and therefore unable to be possessed by demons.

Scripture does speak of divided loyalties and conflicts within the inner man. The biblical viewpoint is not compatible with Friesen's MPD theories, as we will explore in the concluding section. For now, be aware that an unbiblical division of man forms the foundation for the concept of MPD. Since that foundation is cracked, the theories built upon it are not trustworthy. A biblical view must be sought to understand the behaviors being observed and to formulate a counseling methodology based on God's truth.

Counseling Goals. The author warns that MPD therapy is likely to lead to a time of continuous fear during the process of "getting in touch with flashback feelings" (p. 154). There may be intense pain to the point of despair (p. 153) and an extreme fear of abandonment (p. 156). Perhaps that is why he raises the question, "Why can't we just leave the memories hidden?" (p. 65). Holding out a "promise of unity" at some vaguely distant point, he describes the multiple as "a fragmented person, usually unable to develop a career or a life as an effective parent, unable to remember important things that have happened, and unable to have a trouble-free sex life" (p. 65). Therapy is directed toward *integration*, "the process of bringing the separated alters together," leading to *fusion*, "the point at which two or more alters actually become one" (p. 178).

Certainly, the lifestyle described is one which necessitates radical change and godly counsel. However, the biblical counselor must disagree about the view of man underlying MPD therapy, the author's understanding of what causes the chaotic behavior, the methods of change, and the *goals* of counseling. The Christian's goal is to grow into the image of Christ and to lead a life that glorifies God. Unity within oneself, in this system, replaces the

reconciliation with *God and others* that is required by Scripture.

Counseling Methods. One of the most serious errors in MPD counseling methodology is Friesen's insistence that any approach using confrontation must be abusive:

"Non-confrontation is a necessity with these people, because abuse spawned their condition in the first place." If confrontation is employed, "the alters who most desperately need therapy will go into hiding." (p. 107)

"A lot of trust needs to be developed before the wounded child alters will sense enough safety to be able to seek help." (p. 107)

"There are alters in every system who have been traumatized and who will be alert for the earliest sign of danger." (p. 164)

"Therapists and friends of multiples must take care not to be judgmental. If an alter picks up non-acceptance because of its displays of anger or because of its sexual behavior, that alter will be certain to undermine therapy behind the scenes in subtle ways." (p. 164)

This basic stance is consistent with the author's view of the inherent goodness of man. However, it fails to consider the biblical reality of sin. It is important to develop a trusting relationship in counseling, and confrontation must be employed in a spirit of love and gentleness, demonstrating concern for the counselee's welfare. Nevertheless, effective biblical counseling cannot be accomplished without acknowledging and confronting sin in the life of the counselee. Friesen's approach is unbiblical.

The author further develops his nonjudgmental method when he emphasizes an extremely supportive, positive manner of relating to the counselee:

"Constantly encourage, support, and reward with lots of positives for the work being accomplished during the sessions." This is more than mere "positive reinforcement," but rather "really believing in the person in front of you and helping that person realize there are good reasons to believe in herself (or himself), too." (p. 137)

"Do your best to produce a positive experience for every alter on every occasion, every time you have contact with each one." (p. 139)

"Be careful not to minimize the feelings of such an alter."
(p. 138)

Although biblical counseling cannot be an exercise in bible pounding, conducted with a "shape-up-or-ship-out" callous attitude (as it is often inaccurately portrayed), it is erroneous--and not loving--to maintain this eternally positive approach in the face of real sin. The author exalts emotion beyond the bounds of scriptural compassion. The focus here has been shifted away from the Lord and His power to recreate in the image of Christ, and placed instead on man. The person overtaken in sinful patterns must be *lovingly* confronted with the need for repentance and change, and he ought to be offered real help in making the necessary changes. The experience can and should be positive, in the sense that *hope* is given for the counselee to live a new life.

Group Alter Work. Growing out of the author's unbiblical division of the inner man is his insistence on a group teamwork efforts amongst the alters in therapy. He attempts to get the alters to work together. For example, he promotes such group efforts in recovery of memories, because "no alter should be stuck with the task of working through a memory alone" (p. 168). Specifically, he suggests:

"Get some comforting adult alters to be present with the traumatized alter during the imagery, and allow as many alters as possible to learn about what happened." (p. 168)

"Encourage coconsciousness and group efforts...get a comforter alter to be coconscious with the alter who has to work through the memory." (p. 174)

This "teamwork" within the inner man is apparently considered as important as relationships with other persons:

"External work--how the client relates with others--must be accompanied by internal work--how the alters relate with one another." (p. 149)

This is contrary to the biblical emphasis on reconciliation with God and others, as noted earlier.

Growing out of his general view of man as inherently good, and his notion that every alter is "basically good," he willingly allows the alters to actually counsel one another, rather than directly confronting distortions in the counselee's thinking:

"In general, it is probably not a good idea to try to talk an alter out of a distortion. Keep the positive, supportive posture going. If reality is revisited, and if healthier

alters can be called upon to help assess the reality, the solution will come from within the individual's system."
(p. 190)

One of the results of this approach is that "subordinate conditions," such as substance abuse peculiar to certain alters, are placed in a secondary position:

"If the bodily complaints or the chemical abuse constitute a relatively minor part of the system, those problems tend to clear up as the therapy focuses on the dividedness."
(p. 148)

This is an unfortunate and unscriptural method, because major sinful patterns are thus omitted from the counseling process and not confronted biblically.

The author regularly gives a "cast of characters" assignment to his MPD counselees, which he says "allows me to find out how much separateness there is between the personality states" (p. 161). The person is "instructed to organize the maps according to the amount of power each alter has, or according to how old each one is, or any way they see fit" (p. 163). Due to this type of assignment, Friesen notes that other therapists sometimes accuse him of *creating* MPD by means of his suggestions. He defends his position, claiming that "the client is merely using this framework to describe how life really is for her (or him)" (p. 161). However, this criticism ought to be taken more seriously. Much of the materials in this book consists of highly subjective data provided by counselees. The author does not acknowledge the opportunity for blame-shifting that exists in the MPD diagnosis, particularly in view of his totally non-confrontational counseling methods. The sin inherent in the human heart is not considered as it should be according to Scripture. There very well *could* be a creation of "multiple personalities" when a trusted counselor suggests the possibility to a desperate counselee. While it is not possible to totally discount all of the experiential data provided by counselees as to *what* they experience, it is also highly unreliable to build a counseling theory and methodology around such subjective sources. It is *particularly* unreliable when the resulting theories and methods contradict the view of man taught in God's Word, which is the one and only fully trustworthy source of information about the nature of man, his basic problems, and how he can change.

Family Relationships. Friesen notes that many MPD counselees:

"...come from families with evil parents. There is so much resistance to change in these families that it is often

necessary to stop all contact with perpetrating family members during the course of therapy." (p. 151)

Friesen recommends using phone answering machines to avoid calls, and even throwing away letters unopened (p. 151). To those who would object that such behavior is not Christian, he responds by saying that "Jesus taught that a person's true family is the family of God" (p. 151, citing Luke 8:21 and Matthew 10:37-39). Furthermore:

"The Christian thing to do is to gather people around you who are willing to hear God's Word and put it into practice, and to let go of 'family members' who are unsafe. After all, family is only 'family' in the Christian sense of the word when it adheres to Christian principles." (p. 151)

This type of teaching is typical of psychological systems that view man more as a *victim* than a *sinner*. There is an element of truth here, in that God's family, consisting of all believers, is indeed where the Christian belongs. God graciously provides others in this spiritual family to give counsel, encouragement, teaching, admonition, and such. His provision is no doubt especially significant to the individual whose family of origin is characterized by violence, sexual molestation, or other major sins. However, Friesen has gone *too far* in his recommendations for cutting off contact so completely. Perhaps a brief time of withdrawal could be appropriate, so that the counselee can be instructed in righteousness and begin to practice handling life God's way. However, there are opportunities here to evangelize unsaved family members, as well as obligations to lovingly confront the sins of others. Since the counselee is also a sinner, he may very well need to be counseled to ask forgiveness for his unrighteous responses--even though *humanly* speaking his own sins seem to him smaller by comparison. Friesen's approach to family relationships is biblically unacceptable.

Memories Relived. Memory retrieval, similar to that recommended by David Seamands (*Healing for Damaged Emotions*) and other "inner healing" methods, is a key element of Friesen's counseling approach:

"Pulling unconscious, dissociated memories into the client's awareness lies at the heart of therapy for dissociators." (p. 167)

"The wounds must be thoroughly exposed, under the proper therapeutic conditions, so that the client can receive healing." (p. 167)

The author insists that the counselee "confront the trauma" and

"re-work the memory, including what the client was doing to try to protect himself or herself" (p. 167) The counselor is to "provide consolation" and "allow for confession so the client can express any feelings of guilt about whatever happened" (p. 168). He must also "encourage concentration in the memory work," urging the counselee to set aside "certain times of the day for grieving and self-imaging" (p. 168). He is to "give the client control" over the memories, as he ensures that the whole past experience is brought into *conscious* memory (p. 168).

It ought to be evident that this methodology lacks compassion. Biblical counselors are accused of lacking compassion in their emphasis on personal sin. Yet this sort of "memory work," which finds no support whatsoever in Scripture, causes the counselee to totally re-experience something that was sufficiently excruciating in the first place. Such focus on the past is highly destructive and detrimental to sanctification. This doesn't mean that the counselee ought to pretend the abuse never happened, if indeed it really did. (It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully review the possibility of false memories created in psychotherapy, but it happens often, and it destroys families!) There are biblical reasons for a *brief* truthful review of one's past. The counselee may need to confront another person's sin out of love and concern for that person's welfare. He may need to repent of his own sinful responses, and perhaps go to someone to ask forgiveness. However, this need not involve endless weeks (or months or years) of archaeological digs into the "unconscious," digging around for memories that have supposedly *caused* the adult person's present behavior. The behaviors and attitudes of today *can be changed* by the power of God through His Spirit and Word. Such change is absolutely guaranteed to the believer (Romans 6:1-14, for example), quite apart from the methods of psychoanalysis, based on unbiblical assumptions about the nature of man.

Other Techniques. In the process of resurrecting memories, Friesen recommends artwork, journaling, and imagery. The latter is perhaps the most dangerous. Note the following concerning this practice:

"For Christians, it is good to have Jesus waiting there to help in any way He sees fit." (p. 175, in context of counselee visualizing a "safe place")

Does this mean it's equally acceptable for the Buddhist to visualize Buddha, or some other substitute? The implication is clearly yes. This technique is highly questionable and extremely subjective. It is unlikely that the *real* Jesus Christ is present in such exercises, but rather a figment of the imagination. Perhaps a deceptive and short-lived relief must result from such imaginations, but certainly not the godly changes that God

requires. This methodology must be rejected by the biblical counselor.

Exorcism. Earlier, it was noted that Friesen is careful to distinguish between real demons and alter personalities. Since he believes demons may be present in some cases, he discusses the practice of exorcism, summarized in the following steps (p. 263-4):

1. The host alter must be willing (if counselee is MPD).
2. Bind the spirits.
3. Get the spirit's name.
4. Find out how it obtained access to the person.
5. Ask the spirit's function.
6. Send the spirit out.
7. Determine whether there are other spirits.
8. Seal the work with prayer.

The author recommends exorcism whenever "the person believes he or she is in a spiritual union with Satan, or when a demonic stronghold has been built" (p. 256).

We can agree with Friesen that demon possession is a reality. The Bible records accounts of demonization and exorcism of the demonic spirits. This area cannot be discussed fully here, but it is important to note the crucial distinction between believer and unbeliever. The Christian *cannot* be demon possessed, since the Holy Spirit indwells him. Thus, exorcism should never be an option for genuine believers. (Since only God knows the heart, there are times when the biblical counselor must at least question a person's salvation and review the basics--if there is evidence that perhaps he has not truly trusted Christ as Savior.) For unbelievers, demonization is a possibility. It is critical here to *evangelize*, since merely casting out demons, without salvation, is inadequate. It is also crucial not to confuse demons with the lusts of the flesh, as some do. Sometimes it is easy to shift blame to demons rather than examine the sinful desires of the heart. Sinful lusts are much more common than actual demon possession.

Spiritual Restoration. The author claims that "healing for the whole person must include the spiritual element or it will be incomplete" (p. 220). However, his perspective seems ambiguous and far too open to the possibility of *not* bringing spiritual matters into counseling:

"If 'spiritual restoration' is helpful, that will become evident. If it is harmful, that also will be evident. There is no study that I am aware of which demonstrates conclusively that people progress better when their therapy

includes a spiritual component, but I believe that spiritual restoration helps." (p. 220)

"I believe that if spiritual growth promotes health, that will be an important consideration for therapists. If, on the other hand, bringing spiritual issues into therapy is a source of confusion and damage, that will also be an important consideration." (p. 220)

Friesen seems to vacillate between two positions here. His view of spiritual restoration appears to be more grounded in "what works," or in the results of research studies, than on what God says in His Word. He *believes* that spiritual restoration "helps," yet is open to the possibility that "confusion and damage" might result from "bringing spiritual issues into therapy." It is evident here that the psychological theories of man, and results of experience, weigh more heavily than God's Word in this author's counseling methods.

Sanctification. Truly biblical counseling focuses on the process of sanctification in the life of the Christian, wherein he becomes increasingly conformed to the image of Christ. Such counseling is a type of discipleship.

Friesen makes *some* mention of this growth process. When he distinguishes three increasing levels of participation in the occult, he says this concerning the first level (flirtation):

"Restoration from this level is no more complicated than choosing to follow the Lord. Living a life of faith in Christ causes the demonic nature of temptations to be exposed."
(p. 249)

Regarding the next level, he says:

"The power of God is sufficient to deliver people from spirits without much of a struggle at this level of demonization. The hard part is growing in the Lord and establishing a maturing life among His people." (p. 255)

The third and final level is demon possession necessitating an exorcism, as discussed earlier.

At these less intense levels, Friesen at least notes the concept of sanctification. He also rightly notes that:

"There is danger when some people in the survivor's support network pay too much attention to demonic issues and not enough to growth and discipleship." (p. 262)

This is a real danger, and not only among those diagnosed "MPD." We might add, however, that there is an even more serious and subtle danger when counselors and others place so much stress on events in a person's past and on psychologically oriented concepts, rather than on living a life of obedience to God. The problem here is one of major proportions. Too many of God's people are being sold an exorbitantly priced psychological package that minimizes, postpones, or even destroys sanctification.

Biblical Background for SRA

Friesen observes that "worshiping false gods and killing infants have been connected for a long time" (p. 99). He cites the following biblical evidence: Leviticus 18:21, Deuteronomy 12:31, Isaiah 57:3-5, Jeremiah 19:4-5, Ezekiel 16:20-21, 2 Chronicles 28:1-4, and Psalm 106:36-39.

It is not the purpose of this critique to deny the reality of such horrendously sinful practices, nor to dispute statistics about the frequency of occurrence. Also, it would be a hopeless task to attempt to refute the vast amount of subjective data compiled concerning the experiences recounted by counselees in MPD therapy. The Bible does attest to similar practices in ancient times, and God abhors such evil deeds.

However, a significant observation must be made here. Many today claim that the Bible is not sufficient for the counseling needs of those who have survived horrendous abuses such as incest or SRA. Yet such sins are described time after time in Scripture, and the Bible does *not* mention anything remotely like MPD as the inevitable result. Nowhere in His Word does God excuse the *survivors* from ungodly behavior later in life, and nowhere does He prescribe the "inner healing" or "MPD therapy" so popular today. Theorists like Freud were not yet born, nor was the field of psychoanalysis yet founded. *Clearly, God's resources were considered fully sufficient for both victim and perpetrator.* The omission of "MPD," and therapies related to this modern "disorder," speaks volumes.

Science and Christianity

The author includes a brief section discussing the relationship between science and the Christian religion. It is important in terms of one's most basic assumptions in approaching an area of counseling such as MPD.

Friesen states that "contrary to the popular scientific position...I do not believe science is opposed to religion" (p. 200). Further explaining how he differs from those modern

scientists who have substituted science for religion, he says:

"A 'science as religion' person rejects whatever cannot be fit into his or her framework. However, a pure scientist is open to whatever is true, even if it doesn't fit a framework." (p. 200)

"If I want to believe in God and believe in things that cannot be seen, that doesn't automatically make me anti-scientific. It is possible to be faithful in gathering data and still to believe in God. A true scientist does not have to hold on to science as a religion, because the scientific method does not automatically block out belief in God." (p. 201)

"I take a 'pure' scientific approach--I want to be open to all the data, without fitting them into a narrow framework. When it comes to religion, I am open about what I believe. I believe that God made everything, and that ever since the fall of man, He has been in the process of reclaiming this planet." (p. 201)

It is necessary to make some challenges to these statements. First, the concept of "pure science" as a strictly *religiously neutral* position is a fallacy. No one is able to maintain such neutrality in the area of religious faith. The person who has not received Christ is not, and cannot be, religiously neutral. He lives in rebellion against God, holding down the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18-32 [note particularly verse 18], Romans 3:10-18).

In addition, the scientific method does not merely "not automatically block out belief in God." On the contrary, it is impossible to conduct science *at all* without presupposing the transcendental, sovereign God of Christian theism. Without the God who reveals Himself in Scripture, the scientist has no basis for proving anything. He cannot be sure that any of the natural "laws" he has discovered will continue to operate with any regularity. The scientist who claims to be an atheist must *borrow* the Christian worldview in order to conduct his business. Friesen doesn't go nearly far enough in his conclusions.

Another concern here is the author's openness about what he believes. The Christian ought to be open to whatever *Scripture* teaches him, or whatever conclusions may be drawn from scientific research in harmony with Scripture. However, it is crucial to hold faithfully to the truth of God's Word, testing everything else by its standards--or "framework," to use Friesen's term. Excessive "openness" is no doubt a factor in the current widespread acceptance of psychology within the church. A huge amount of psychological "wisdom," supposedly "scientific," has

been swallowed with little critical evaluation in the light of Scripture. Freud's speculations, for example, are anything *but* scientific, yet many *Christian* psychologists have uncritically wedded them to Scripture. Good science is not characterized by total openness, but by submission to the Creator and His truth.

Biblical Answers

For this section, I am indebted to Dr. Bob Smith for his excellent presentation on MPD at the annual conference of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors in October 1993. It is important to follow the critique of the psychological view with a truly biblical perspective.

The Nature of Man. The various "personalities" are actually varied responses to different situations in the counselee's life. Thus the "personality" evidenced at a particular time is dependent on circumstances, and "MPD" ought to be seen as a rather elaborate method for shifting blame.

Man is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27, 9:6). The Christian must be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10). The only "personality change" to be sought by the believer is to be increasingly more like Christ. "MPD" is not a biblical concept.

The inner man is never to be divided in the manner required by the MPD diagnosis. We are whole persons before God, responsible to Him for our actions and attitudes.

The curse of sin impacts both the outer and inner man. Human thinking and logic are effected (Genesis 6:5, 8:21; Proverbs 4:19, 12:15, 16:2 and 25, 22:15, 29:15; Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 3:19). Even from childhood, the imaginations of the heart are evil. The natural man's response to evil is to seek revenge.

Sin also impacts the desires (Ephesians 4:19) and results in unbiblical responses such as ignorance and the failure to thank or glorify God (2 Peter 3:3-5; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23; Romans 1:21).

Noting the vast and all-encompassing effects of sin, we can expect that an abused child will naturally develop sinful patterns of response which are carried into his adult years. Only the power of Christ can break this bondage and enable righteous responses to replace those patterns.

In adult years, failure to apply God's Word--sin--produces deception (James 1:22). Reality is distorted by the failure to see situations through God's eyes (Deuteronomy 1:21; Numbers 13:33, 14:9). Attempting to solve problems without God's wisdom

does not produce victory (Judges 6 and 7 [Gideon]). Satisfaction comes only from living to please God (John 4:14, 34; John 6:35; 2 Corinthians 5:9, 15). Whatever is sown is what will be reaped (Galatians 6:7). The mind must be controlled by biblical thinking (2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8). The believer, walking in the Spirit, is enabled to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26). Christ has broken the power of sin and death which formerly ruled over him (Romans 6:1-14).

Counseling. The salvation of the counselee is crucial. There is no basis for successful biblical counseling and no power for godly changes apart from Jesus Christ. Next, the counselee must recognize that God's Word is absolutely trustworthy and *sufficient* for handling his problems, and he must submit to it. He needs to see how Scripture provides far superior responses, and to understand that he has been using unbiblical methods for handling his problems. With the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the wisdom of God's Word, he must practice applying biblical responses to his problems, replacing the sinful use of "alter personalities." Most importantly, the biblical counselor must give *much* hope--much *more* hope than provided by costly, time-consuming psychotherapy.

MPD therapy has a goal of bringing unity amongst the various "alter personalities." Biblical counseling seeks reconciliation of the counselee with God and other real people, not the pseudo inter-self reconciliation of MPD counseling.

Friesen focuses much on the issue of the "divided heart." Scriptures such as the following are cited:

"Therefore say: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again." They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD.'" Ezekiel 11:17-21

In a different context, James also speaks to this issue:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt,

because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does." James 1:5-8

The quote from Ezekiel is typical of Old Testament passages that address the issue of idolatry. It has nothing to do with a personality division within the inner man, but rather a *whole heart* that is not wholly devoted to the true living God. James speaks also of putting one's complete trust in the Lord, without being blown about by doubts. Many other verses could be cited, but it should be evident that Friesen is reading his theories about MPD onto Scriptures that address a totally different issue.

Conclusions

Abuse of children is a very real and serious issue, one that cannot be ignored or minimized. However, books such as this one address the problem from a cracked foundation. The biblical view of the nature of man is opposed to the view inherent in the MPD diagnosis, and the counseling methods founded on that view are equally unbiblical. The biblical counselor must provide hope that is grounded in a biblical view of man, and his methods must be consistent with the infallible Word of God.

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