

Understanding the Phenomenology of SRA/DID as it Pertains to the Image of God in Man

Introduction

In working with people who are SRA/DID, I have tried to understand this complex phenomenon within the context of the Bible. The Biblical account of God's creating man in His own image is essential to our understanding of the phenomenology of SRA/DID, and the resolution of those with whom we are counseling.

I have found that with the understanding of the Biblical revelation, that man was created in the image of God, we as therapists and counselors, with God's guidance and power, possess an effective tool to lead our clients to full resolution and integration. It is through the application of the Biblical revelation of man as he was created in the image of God, that within the context of SRA/DID I have found a strategic protocol in the resolution of those with this type of abuse history.

Man Created in God's Image

In order to lay a foundation for the topic of this paper, I will quote Genesis 1:26-27 along with Genesis 5:1-2 from the New American Standard Bible. "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created him; male and female He created them." "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created." From these passages the Hebrew noun/pronoun and verbal construction is very illuminating. Verse 26 begins with "God said." 'God' in the Hebrew is the plural noun Elohim. The plural may be understood as the 'plural of majesty.' With the New Testament revelation of the Trinity we might now retrospectively understand this as a 'plural of Trinity.' Next, we have the qal imperfect third masculine singular of the verb amar, translated "said." Therefore, God is a plurality (Trinity) who speaks (sing.) in unity as one Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Continuing, the verse states, "Let Us make" which is a qal imperfect verb, asah, first common plural suffix, again depicting the creative activity of the Godhead, acting in the triunity of their being in the creation of man. The word "man" is the masculine singular noun, adam, followed by the phrase "in Our image and according to Our likeness." The descriptive phrases, "image" (tselem) and "likeness" (damuth) are both singular nouns with plural suffix endings. This indicates that God in His triunity is unified as to His image and likeness. God further states in this verse that "man" (Heb. sing.) is also a plural or a "them", who are to exercise dominion over the lower creation. Furthermore, in verse 28, God (Elohim, pl.) "created", (qal imperfect of the verb bara, 3rd. masc. sing.), "man"; this verb in the singular indicates that God, in His triunity, created man as a manifestation of the unity of His essence. Here we have, in contrast to verse 26, the masc. sing. noun "image" followed by the masc. sing. pronominal suffix "his". This is followed by the repetition of the subject, Elohim (Heb. pl.) "creating" (sing. verb) "man" (sing.). Man is further defined as male and female, i.e., a unity in plurality or diversity. "God created them" (pl.). In Gen. 5:1-2 the text states that the same God, Elohim, created

man (Heb. Adam) to manifest the unity of the divine image. This verse further states that this man, Adam, is also a "them", i.e., male and female - a plurality corresponding to the plurality of the Godhead, and that their "name" (sing. noun shem) is man, adam. In other words, man, created in the image of God, shares the unity which corresponds to the essence of God, described as image and likeness, which in turn manifests itself in diversity as male and female. Furthermore, the male and female, in Gen. 5:2, share one name - "man" (sing.). In summary, I would like to quote John Sailhamer from Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol.II, pg.38: "In v. 27 it is stated twice that man was created (bara) in God's image and a third time that man was created (bara) "male and female." The same pattern is found in Gen. 5:1-2a: "When God created man,...he created (bara) them male and female." The singular man is created as a plurality, "male and female". In a similar way the one God ("And God said") created man through an expression of his plurality, "Let us make man in our image"). Following this clue the divine plurality expressed in v. 26 is seen as an anticipation of the human plurality of the man and woman, thus casting the human relationship between man and woman in the role of reflecting God's own personal relationship with himself. "Could anything be more obvious than to conclude from this clear indication that the image and likeness of the being created by God signified existence in confrontation, i.e., in this confrontation, in the juxtaposition and conjunction of man and man which is that of male and female, and then to go on to ask against this background in what the original and prototype of the divine existence of the Creator consists?" (K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, New York: Scribner, 1956, 3/1, p. 195). We may conclude from these passages from Genesis that God (plural of trinity) speaks and creates in unity as one Godhead; that man is created in the image (sing.) and likeness (sing.) of God as to his unified essence and nature. Man as a created being in his unified essence and nature, is a plurality of expression as male and female. As individuals, both male and female have the capacity to manifest our unified essence and nature through our personalities in great diversity of thought, communication, creativity and self-determination.

The point I want to emphasize is that man, created in the image and likeness of God, is a unity of essence but expresses that essence in plurality as mentioned above. This plurality or diversity of expression is designed by the triune Godhead to be expressed through a unified or a whole personality and identity. When a person is subjected to chronic abuse in early childhood his/her personality and identity is fragmented. This fragmentation of the identity and personality does not destroy the underlying nature and essence of that person created in the image of God. I have discovered in the process of my work with SRA/DID clients, that wherever there is a plurality of phenomena presenting within the context of their dissociation, there is always a unifying essence, center, source, and beginning of whatever the dissociative/phenomenological metaphor may be. To help understand what I am seeking to communicate, I will give you several examples of how this principle of man, created in the image of God, applies when working within the phenomenological context of SRA/DID.

Illustration #1: Your client describes that they see a castle within their program structure. I ask them to tell me if there are any parts off their humanity contained within the castle (the answer is usually yes). Then I ask how many, and they may say 12. I immediately know, based on the fact that man is created in the image of God, that the reference to 12 is an

example of plurality; so I ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, where is the unifying center, source, essence, and beginning to the I2? In other words, these I2 have a common origin, source and beginning somewhere within the person's mind. I have never found an exception to this principle when adequately understood and applied. Usually these I2 will answer to an authority within this system and it will be, for example, a I3th entity that may be on a throne of control within this structure. We then, in the name of Jesus Christ, seek to dismantle and remove all demonic components of this power structure and internal image. I then ask for the origin, source, essence, and beginning of this I3th entity. This type of inquiry usually always leads to an original primal dissociative experience. I then ask the host or whoever represents the core, and all cooperating alters, to 'go into' the primal split and then ask them to 'touch' or 'pull' the I3th part in association with the I2 back into the heart and essence of the one who represents the core (may be the host).

Illustration #2: I am working with a person and together we have released as many alters as possible from demonic captivity and constructs within a given session. I then ask, out of all the alters who are present and can hear my voice, who has the final say or who prevails if there is an argument or disagreement among these alters? When that alter is determined, I ask, from whom does that alter take its orders or to whom does it report? You may get an answer like "Satan" or some internalized abuser like the father (which usually has familial or ancestral spirits attached). I then, in cooperation with the host and all other cooperating alters (who may or may not be presenting), do spiritual warfare by commanding the spirit of Satan or the ruling familial spirit attached to the father, to be removed from the human alter that may be identified as Satan or the father. I then will ask God to reveal the unifying center, source, essence, and beginning of Satan or the father. This again usually leads to some primal dissociative experience. I then ask the host or whoever represents the core (it may be a whole group of alters, depending on where you are in the therapeutic journey), to 'go into' the original split and then to 'reach out' and 'touch' or 'receive back' all alters that emerged within that particular session. It is important to remember that each person and session is unique and both counselor and counselee need to be led by God. The complexity and diversity of this population of people demands that God be in control of the process and that the counselor or therapist have adequate knowledge and experience in working with SRA/DID.

Illustration #3: The client begins to report seeing a diversity of colors or spinning objects (usually because of some programming issue). We together command all demonic activity to be bound and separate out from all that is human within this phenomenology. I then ask God to reveal to the client the origin, source, essence, and beginning of the above phenomena. The client may begin to feel some affect, such as fear or nausea; I ask the host or representative of the core and all cooperating alters to 'go into' the source of the affect or the colors, etc., in order to get 'connected.' During this process you may meet some protectors or enforcers. Take time to find out who they are and why they were created. I then ask God to reveal the primal origin, source, center, essence and beginning of the alters involved within the context of the presenting phenomena. I then seek to bring about as much consolidation and unification as possible before closure. It is important that the client is grounded and oriented to the present. Go over the session and allow the host to 'process and connect' with what occurred during the session.

Illustration #4: The client presents a picture or a map consisting of a variety of occult phenomena and images, such as pyramids, obelisks, pentagrams and hexagrams. We ask God to reveal the human source, center, essence and beginning of the presenting phenomena. You and your client may need to do warfare and speak to the phenomena, whatever it may be, and command, in the name of Jesus Christ, all that is demonic be separated from that which is human, so that you can identify the human essence, source, center and beginning of that which is presenting. Another thing that may be necessary to determine is the power source behind these occult images, and remove that power source. Then, you need to find the human base to which the power source was/is attached. The human base of this power source will usually have an adult representation (protector-alter) within the system. When you find out who that is, you may need to work with that alter and then find the origin, source, essence and beginning of that alter. Then ask the host or the one who represents the core and all cooperating alters, to 'go into and connect' with that source which is usually some primal split off from which the other alters and fragments were created that make up the presenting phenomena. This presenting phenomena, whatever it may be, is usually always some combination of human and demonic elements of the system which were demonically engineered through programming and abuse into these occult-constructs within the client's mind.

The above illustrations are only representative of how this 'protocol' may work. I have used this protocol based upon my understanding of how man was created in the image of God and how that principal is applied within the treatment and resolution of SRA/DID. Many other examples could be sighted, but I do not want anyone to assume that this is some kind of formula! God alone knows how this protocol is to be applied within any given individuals' phenomenological-dissociated-framework. If any of you reading this paper have any questions about what has been presented, please don't hesitate to ask me, and I will do my best to help you in any way I can.

In summary, I want to quote three passages of Scripture and comment on them. John 17:5: "I do not ask thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." I John 3:9: "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I John 5:18: "We know that no one who is born of God sins; but he who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him." We see from these passages there is that human essence and identity within each born again child of God that is intimately associated with God and protected by God. This is the person's true identity. I furthermore believe that this identity is associated with the person's human spirit. Within the heart and essence of every SRA/DID person there is that which has never been touched by evil, kept by God, and identified with God's seed. I believe that this essence and identity is also the most protected by the system of alters within the client's mind. This essence and identity is also the most hated by Satan. Whatever this essence is, it is not an alter. This essence or identity is the ultimate unifying center, source, and beginning into which all dissociative aspects of the SRA/DID client must be integrated. Only God has the power and the wisdom to accomplish this goal of integration or unification of your clients. According to Psalm 139:14 we are all "fearfully and wonderfully made." When that which was "made" or created is broken, only God has the wisdom, love and

power to put that person back together again. When working with any client it is important that you are working in cooperation with them, and that you and your client are working together in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. God alone has the big picture and He alone knows how to heal the broken hearted and put these people back together! The more you, as a therapist or counselor, are able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit within any given situation with your client, the more you will see and experience the miraculous works of God! Remember, only the Lord Jesus Christ is the Wonderful Counselor, not you or me (Is. 9:6); only the Lord is the Master Physician or Doctor (Mt. 9:12; Mk. 2:17); only Jesus Christ is the "wisdom and power of God" (I Cor. 1:24). So, the most intelligent thing you or I could do as counselors or therapists is to let Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, lead us and our clients to His desired end, which is complete unification and healing. For this to occur, we must allow Him to lead the process and it is inevitable that He will do all that He has promised. We as counselors and therapists are, at best, just facilitators or coaches in this process with our clients. The moment you or I think it depends upon us to do only what Jesus Christ can do, we are heading for frustration, failure, and burnout! I am constantly learning and seeking to teach my clients how to work in collusion and harmony with God. He must be at the helm, while myself and the client allow Him to lead the process, and amazingly, He does! And the results are amazing! Amazing to us because we are slow to let God be God!! When we see God working what we call "miracles" in the lives of our clients, is it really a miracle? Maybe from God's perspective it is just normal; normal in the sense of who He is and His amazing love and capacity to really deliver, restore and heal people who have experienced the worse that Satan and sinful man can do to another human being. God will use us best when we learn how to collaborate with Him, get out of His way, and begin to participate in and be a witness to the "greater works" of Jesus Christ (John 14:12), which are nothing less than the "wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11b). My prayer is that God will richly bless you and your clients as you grow together on your journey towards wholeness in Christ.

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