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## Another Look at *Imago Dei*: Fulfilled in the Incarnate One

Burnell F. Eckardt Jr.

The Lutheran Confessions refer to the image of God as the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth (Ap II 18); this reference is commonly considered to be the complete definition. The 1943 edition of *Luther's Small Catechism* essentially provides this interpretation and follows the Confessions in declaring that therefore the image was lost entirely.<sup>1</sup> Nathan Jastram has provided a comprehensive study of how the term has been variously understood among Lutherans.<sup>2</sup> Jastram notes that while some prefer this narrow definition, others have used a wider one that includes various characteristics.<sup>3</sup> He also quotes Francis Pieper, who, while preferring the former, states, "It will be seen that these two interpretations do not differ materially."<sup>4</sup>

There is considerable warrant for understanding the image of God in what Jastram refers to as the wider sense, although he prefers not to use this terminology.<sup>5</sup> This study proposes that *imago Dei* has additional, especially physical, facets that expand upon the narrow definition and provide additional information concerning what it means to be human, to be redeemed, and to be Christian.

If one restricts the image of God to the narrow definition, then it is necessary to say that the image was altogether lost, for this is nothing else than to say that all righteousness in man was lost due to the fall. Hence the Formula of Concord avers:

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), 96-97. The 1991 and 2005 editions of the Small Catechism have maintained this definition.

<sup>2</sup> Nathan Jastram, "Man as Male and Female: Created in the Image of God," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (2004): 5-96.

<sup>3</sup> Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 8-18.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 1:518-520, quoted in Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 9.

<sup>5</sup> Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 55-56.

[Hereditary evil] is an entire want or lack of the concreated hereditary righteousness in Paradise, or of God's image, according to which man was originally created in truth, holiness, and righteousness. . . . [O]riginal sin (in human nature) is not only this entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things, but . . . instead of the lost image of God in man, it is at the same time also a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable, and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its power. (FC SD I 10–11)<sup>6</sup>

But if the image of God may be defined in the wider sense—a sense, I submit, that is more compatible with the biblical and patristic data—then it does not seem necessary to declare that the image was entirely lost.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly the image of God has to do with righteousness, but according to its context in Genesis 1:26, it seems also to have to do with the plurality of persons in the Godhead, according to the words, “Let us make”; with dominion, according to the words, “and let them have dominion”; and, in some way, with appearance, according to the very word “image.”

Reformed scholar Millard J. Erickson has labeled three general schools of interpretation regarding the image of God as the substantive, the relational, and the functional.<sup>8</sup> According to the substantive view there are certain qualities in mankind that mirror or reflect God, such as rationality, volition, affections, and morality; that is, psychological similarities between God and man. The relational view, espoused by neo-orthodox proponents, rejects this view and counters with the contention that the *imago Dei* is seen in man's capacity, as Karl Barth put it, to reflect “the internal communion and encounter present within God.”<sup>9</sup> Neo-orthodox theologian Emil Brunner also understood portraying the image as having to do

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<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of the Lutheran Confessions are taken from *Concordia Triglotta: die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, trans. W.H.T. Dau and F. Bente (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921).

<sup>7</sup> Jastram not only concedes this point but explains it as compatible even with the catechism's definition (referenced above): “When the [catechism's] ‘Explanation’ poses the question of whether people still have the image of God and then briefly answers, ‘No, this image was lost when our first parents disobeyed God and fell into sin,’ it should not be understood as denying that natural man has the image of God *in any sense*. Otherwise it would be in conflict with the biblical passages that teach that all people are made in the image of God” (Jastram, “Man as Male and Female,” 15); emphasis original.

<sup>8</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 520–527.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 525–526.

with man's freedom.<sup>10</sup> The functional view, preferred by Erickson himself, sees the image in what one does, especially in the exercise of dominion, in accordance with Genesis 1:26–28.<sup>11</sup> Certainly this view has merit, most clearly because of its reading of the text, which has “and let them have dominion” coming immediately after “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”<sup>12</sup>

But it is remarkable that in none of these views is any credence given to the idea that image and likeness might have to do with form or shape.<sup>13</sup> Gannon Murphy has even gone as far as to say that “only very radical, indeed heretical, fringe groups have held to any kind of literal physical similitude.”<sup>14</sup> Reformed Scholar Angus Stewart declares,

The anthropomorphites . . . err grievously. Since Jesus expressly declared that “God is a spirit” (John 4:24), man's body cannot be the principle thing in his being the image of God. Furthermore, according to Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10, the *imago dei* must, at the very least, be located primarily in spiritual characteristics.<sup>15</sup>

John Calvin himself declared, “The Anthropomorphites were too gross in seeking this resemblance in the human body; let that reverie therefore remain entombed.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption: Dogmatics, Vol. II*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), 55–58. Reformed scholar Gannon Murphy provides a helpful refutation of this view, and indeed of neo-orthodoxy itself, which is beyond the scope of this study. See Murphy, “On the Doctrine of the Imago Dei (Man in God's Image),” *Free Republic*, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/698208/posts>.

<sup>11</sup> Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 527. The question whether image and likeness are exegetical terms seems to have existed between medieval Rome on the one hand, which drew a distinction between them (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, 93, 9, quoting Augustine favorably, QQ. 83, qu. 51), and John Calvin and Martin Luther on the other, who saw them as synonymous, a hendiadys. This debate is also beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>12</sup> Jastram goes into some detail on the association of the image of God to dominion in the biblical text (“Man as Male and Female,” 23–25).

<sup>13</sup> Jastram acknowledges that מְצַדֵּק most commonly has to do with “concrete” meaning (“Man as Male and Female,” 41).

<sup>14</sup> Murphy, “On the Doctrine of the Imago Dei.”

<sup>15</sup> Angus Stewart, “The Image of God in Man: A Reformed Reassessment,” from the website of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, <http://www.cprf.co.uk/articles/imageofgod.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 2 vols., trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), 1:94.

It is true, to be sure, that there are some radical groups that have held to the notion that God has a kind of eternal, divine body. The Swedenborgians, for instance, view the image of God as indicating that God has a kind of eternal human form. Emmanuel Swedenborg (d. 1688) considered heaven to have a human form, the *Maximus Homo*.<sup>17</sup> So too, the Mormon canonical book *Pearl of Great Price* declares, “In the image of his own body, male and female, created he them” (Moses 6:9).<sup>18</sup>

Undoubtedly the lack of serious attention accorded the idea that image and likeness might have to do with form or shape is attributable to the fact that, as Stewart reminds us, God is a spirit (John 4:24), that he is said to be invisible (1 Tim 1:17), and that no one has seen the Father except the only-begotten Son (John 1:18). Various Old Testament theophanies—to Abraham (Gen 17:1; 18:1–2), to Jacob (Gen 28:13), to Isaiah (Isa 6:1), and the like—are temporary visible appearances, although it is worth noting that in several instances the temporary form is that of a man.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, dating back at least as far as Augustine (AD 354–430), explanations of the image of God have generally been bereft of any reference to form or shape, and this in spite of the fact that textual study of the Hebrew **צֶלֶם**, the term that occurs in **בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים** (“image of God,” Gen 1:27), generally yields the concept of something seen: a semblance, or a resemblance.

The term is used elsewhere of a representative figure, as of an idol, such as when the Philistines set the ark of the Lord on their cart with gold rats and images of their tumors (1 Sam 6:11) or when Amos chastises Israel for their images of the pagan deities Sikkukh and Chiun (Amos 5:26). Other examples include Moses’s instruction to tell the Israelites to destroy all the

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<sup>17</sup> “Universal Human,” *Swedenborg Foundation*, <http://www.swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/explore/universal-human/>.

<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, this book also contains a paraphrase of Gen 1:26–27 that reads, “And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so . . . . And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them” (Moses 2:27). Unfortunately, for Mormonism this Only Begotten, whom they identify as Jesus Christ, is not himself the eternal God: “Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is called the Only Begotten Son because He is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. He inherited divine powers from God, His Father.” See “The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: The Only Begotten Son,” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, [https://www.lds.org/liahona/2013/12/the-divine-mission-of-jesus-christ-the-only-begotten-son?lang=eng#footnote1-10792\\_000\\_006](https://www.lds.org/liahona/2013/12/the-divine-mission-of-jesus-christ-the-only-begotten-son?lang=eng#footnote1-10792_000_006).

<sup>19</sup> See Charles A. Gieschen, “The Real Presence of the Son before Christ: Revisiting an Old Approach to Old Testament Christology,” *CTQ* 68, no. 2 (2004): 105–126.

molten images they would find in Canaan (Num 33:52), a reference to images of the Chaldeans portrayed on the wall (Ezek 23:14), Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold (Dan 3:1), and David's words, "Surely a man goes about as a shadow" (Ps 39:6). This term is translated into Greek with the word *εἰκών*, from which, obviously, the English "icon" is derived.<sup>20</sup>

Augustine seems to have been the first to see a trinitarian connection between God and man, namely in man's intellect, memory, and will—three faculties in the unity of the soul.<sup>21</sup> What is noticeable in his definition is something Erickson failed to notice in his dismissal of the so-called substantive view of the image of God. Where Erickson sees in this view mirrors or reflections of the *mind* of God—rationality, volition, affections, and morality—Augustine sees in the mind of man reflections of the *essence* of God—namely, that he is triune. For although Augustine is talking about aspects of the mind, he is seeking something triune in the mind in order thereby to see the trinitarian image stamped somehow on man. Augustine's conception of this trinitarian stamp, as it were, is tied to his discussion of "let us make," which he sees as an inter-trinitarian dialogue.<sup>22</sup>

Luther expanded on this definition of the image of God in his commentary, suggesting that while Augustine's search for reflections of the Trinity in man need not be set aside, it seems less than entirely useful.<sup>23</sup> What Luther sees in the image, also fixing his attention on the essence of God, is beauty and perfection:

Therefore the image of God in which Adam was created was . . . of the purest kind. His intellect was the purest, his memory was the best, and his will was the most straightforward—all in the most beautiful

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<sup>20</sup> The term *פֶּסֶל* (*pesel*, "idol") seems to be a cognate, though this term is generally used in the negative: e.g., when God said, "You shall not make for yourselves a carved image" (Deut 4:16) or when Manasseh made a carved image, an idol (2 Chron 33:7). The term *דְּמִיּוּת* (*likeness*), found beside *פֶּסֶל* in Gen 1:26, also has to do with resemblance, model, or shape. The word "likeness" is translated differently in the Septuagint each time it occurs: In Gen 1:26, it is *ὁμοίωσις*; in Gen 5:1, it is *εἰκών*; and in Gen 5:3, it is *ιδέα*.

<sup>21</sup> Augustine, "De Trinitatis" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 3:143; see also 3:186. Thomas Aquinas follows with a similar interpretation, seeing the Trinity in the intellect, in the understanding, and in love (*Summa Theologicae* I, 93, 4).

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, "De Trinitatis," 113.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-1986), 1:60; abbreviated AE henceforth.

tranquility of mind, without any fear of death and without any anxiety. To these inner qualities came also the most beautiful and superb qualities of body and of all the limbs, qualities in which he surpassed all the remaining creatures. I am fully convinced that before Adam's sin, his eyes were so sharp and clear that they surpassed those of the lynx and eagle. He was stronger than the lions and bears, whose strength is very great; and he handled them the way we handle puppies . . . Therefore my understanding of the image of God is this: that Adam had it in his being and that he not only knew God and believed that He was good, but that he also lived in a life that was wholly godly; that is, he was without the fear of death or of any other danger, and was content with God's favor."<sup>24</sup>

Thus Luther, like Augustine, locates the image of God in the essence of God more than in the mind of God.

Still, even the Reformer seems to have taken the matter only as far as seeing in man a reflection of something eternal in God, and thus does not seem to have considered the term *צֶלֶם* according to its seminal and normal usage. God has no shape; therefore, the image of God must be something else. So the thinking goes.

Luther, however, does note that in Genesis the things declared are spoken of darkly until the birth of Christ,<sup>25</sup> although he says this as a response to the Jews and others who would object to his seeing the Trinity in the plural pronoun ("Let *us* make man") and in the plural noun for God (*אֱלֹהִים*). Perhaps this is precisely what needs to be applied to gain a better understanding of the image of God, as Augustine had done, and even in a further sense than Augustine had done.

We should not be so swift, it would appear, to dismiss the seminal usage of *צֶלֶם*. Although certainly it is true that when God created man he did not have an image in any corporeal or visible sense, it is just as true that God's incarnational purpose was as eternal as God himself. What could prevent us from seeing the image of God in man as referring, at least among other things, to what God would look like at some point in the future? Adam, according to this interpretation, would be a kind of template for the Incarnate One, a prefigurement of the coming of God in the flesh. What this would mean, then, is that the incarnation is not so much a

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<sup>24</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, AE 1:62-63.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5*, AE 1:62-63.



condescension of God to man's place as it is a fulfillment of God's original desire: to form a bond with his prime creature.<sup>26</sup>

This interpretation, it turns out, is by no means a novel one. Irenaeus, among the foremost of ancient authorities, had this to say:

For in times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore also did he easily lose the similitude. When, however, the Word became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.<sup>27</sup>

Here Irenaeus makes much of the time factor: before the incarnation, "it was not actually shown," and this because "the Word was *as yet* invisible." But at once he ties this to the image of God. This is the ingredient that is, somewhat surprisingly, altogether absent from the later interpretations of the image of God. God is invisible, they say, therefore  $\text{אֱלֹהִים}$  cannot be a reference to anything visible. But what if God was here looking forward? What if he was already foretelling things to come? What if, as Luther has said, the things declared in Genesis, and indeed in the entire Old Testament, were spoken of darkly, to be fully revealed at and by the birth of Christ?

This interpretation is attractive not only for the convincing manner of its interpretation of  $\text{אֱלֹהִים}$ , but also for its helpfulness in setting forth from the very opening chapter of Genesis the manner in which we should be well advised to look at the entire Old Testament. According to a late medieval rhyme, "in the Old the New lies concealed, in the New the Old is revealed." Abigail Ann Young provides a concise and helpful summary of the continuous strain of scriptural interpretation leading up to the twelfth century—a tradition derived ultimately from the New Testament itself, especially from the words of Jesus—that sees the Old Testament as being in a sense entirely typological, or forward-looking toward the coming of

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<sup>26</sup> Here, in my opinion, is where Jastram errs, namely, in failing to see the complete compatibility of God himself with his prime creature, for he appears to balk at the idea of complete unity of God and mankind: "Finally, at the resurrection, he comes as close to the likeness of God *as is humanly possible*." Jastram, "Man as Male and Female," 58; emphasis added.

<sup>27</sup> Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Book V: 16, 2, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1:544.

Christ in every way.<sup>28</sup> Jesus said, “search the Scriptures . . . it is they that bear witness about me” (John 5:39, ESV), and again, “everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). Much of patristic and medieval exegesis can be seen as a working out of how the concealment in the Old Testament and the revelation in the New are to be understood in accordance with the messianic character of all of the Scriptures.

For Irenaeus, whose high Christology is evident, the creation of man in the image of God is a clear instance of this: at the nativity of our Lord the fulfillment of the Scriptures declaring that man was made in the image of God becomes evident. Here the invisible God finally becomes visible as man, since the Word has become flesh and is manifested to us: “He became himself what was His image,” says Irenaeus; and not merely this, for through the incarnation man is assimilated “to the *invisible* Father through means of the *visible* Word.”<sup>29</sup>

Likewise Tertullian sees in the creation of man as the image of God a foretelling of the Incarnation. After speaking of the plurality of “us” as referring to the Trinity, he says:

He purposely adopted the plural phrase, “Let *us* make;” and, “in *our* image;” and, “become as one *of us*.” For with whom did He make man? and to whom did He make him like? (The answer must be), the Son on the one hand, who was one day to put on human nature; and the Spirit on the other, who was to sanctify man . . . . But there was One in whose image God was making man, that is to say, Christ’s image, who, being one day about to become Man (more surely and more truly so), had already caused the man to be called His image, who was then going to be formed of clay—the image and similitude of the true and perfect Man.<sup>30</sup>

Here, too, as with Irenaeus, the matter of time’s passage—before the incarnation as opposed to after—is taken into account. The image of God was not to be fulfilled until the time when the Son would put on human nature, until that “one day” when he would become man. When referring

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<sup>28</sup> Abigail Ann Young, *The Fourth Gospel in the Twelfth Century: Rupert of Deutz on the Gospel of John* (Toronto: University of Toronto, Computing in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 1984); <http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~young/text.html#part2>.

<sup>29</sup> Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” 1:544; emphasis added.

<sup>30</sup> Tertullian, “Against Praxeas,” ch 12, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 3:606–607.

to man's being fashioned "out of clay," Tertullian refers to Adam as "the image and similitude of the true and perfect Man." In short, the creation of Adam is the first and most prominent of all the ways in which Scripture foretells the coming of Christ the perfect man.

As we have seen, Augustine does not seem to have carried this idea into his own conception of the image of God, tending rather to emphasize an eternal aspect of the Godhead, namely, that it is triune. Two of the Cappadocian Fathers, who were roughly contemporary with Augustine, similarly tended to do this, although with a greater emphasis on similitude than he, following more closely the thinking of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Basil of Caesarea, in particular, refers to Christ as "the image of the invisible God," declaring then that "Let us make" was the Father speaking to the Son, that is, "to His living image, to Him Who has said, 'I and my Father are one,' 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,'" and that "[M]an was created in the image of God, and . . . shares this resemblance . . ." <sup>31</sup> For Basil it is evident that image is something seen.

Basil's younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa, sees the matter more as Augustine sees it, declaring that "the Divine beauty is not adorned with any shape or endowment of form, by any beauty of colour, but is contemplated as excellence in unspeakable bliss." Hence the adornment of man consists for Gregory in other divine characteristics: "purity, freedom from passion, blessedness, alienation from all evil, and all those attributes of the like kind which help to form in men the likeness of God: with such hues as these did the maker of His own image mark our nature." <sup>32</sup>

Taken together, this evidence, especially that there are prominent early fathers who have seen in the image of God a reference to the as then future incarnation of God, and the fact that  $\text{דְּבָרֵי}$  in common biblical usage has to do with shape and form, gives us ample reason to reject the refusal of Erickson and Calvin to see *imago dei* as having anything to do with similitude, their dismissiveness notwithstanding, and if we couple this ingredient with other aspects of it, we can come to a richer understanding of what it means to be man.

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<sup>31</sup> Basil of Caesarea, "The Hexaemeron," Homily IX, 6 in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952-1957), 8:106-107.

<sup>32</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, "On the Making of Man," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952-1957), 5:391.

Luther might easily have gone further. We could add to his delightful ruminations on Adam before the fall, as having eyesight like the eagle, strength surpassing the lion, and enjoyment of goodness, tranquility, and utter contentedness, by saying that man must also have been an utterly beautiful specimen, indeed the most beautiful of all the good things that God created, in that he was the very embodiment, or picture, of the invisible God. Indeed, the term “embodied” is used in the Apology, where it defines the image of God as having to do with wisdom and righteousness:

Scripture testifies to this, when it says, Gen. 1:27, that man was fashioned in the image and likeness of God. What else is this than that there were embodied in man such wisdom and righteousness as apprehended God, and in which God was reflected, i.e., to man there were given the gifts of the knowledge of God, the fear of God, confidence in God, and the like? (Ap II 18)

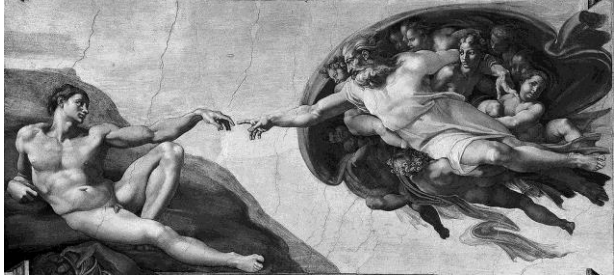
The term “embodied” here is a translation of the German “*bildet*,” literally, “pictured.”

What I maintain, therefore, is that we understand the image of God to be more than only righteousness, though it must include that. The declaration of Genesis 1:26–27, that man was made in the image of God, must above all be understood according to its own context and usage. The fact that God does not say “Let us make” until he creates man, and that, when he does so, also says, “in our image,” must at least give some weight to Augustine’s argument that there is something trinitarian in man. What likely cautioned Luther about opining as far as Augustine had is that the question as to what that trinitarian thing might be is open to speculation—always a dangerous enterprise. But the contributions of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Basil are well worth considering, if we wish to take *εἰκόν* in accordance with its customary usage. Then the trinitarian language of “let us make” also makes perfect sense, for, as Basil put it, here the Father is then understood as speaking to the Son, who would later say, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” For Jesus is himself the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).

Adam, therefore, was made from the dust of the ground to be the expressed and wonderful representation of God himself, both as he himself is, and as he would one day appear. Adam speaks because God speaks. Adam has dominion because God has dominion. Adam is in command of all the earth because God is in command of all his creation. Adam loves because God loves (consider how Adam rejoices on first seeing his wife, Gen 2:23). Adam is an enfleshed, living soul because God would one day

enflesh Himself in the Virgin's womb. Adam as man, bearer of human flesh and soul, is therefore holy—not merely because he is without sin, for even the beasts are without sin—but because he is set apart from all other creatures.<sup>33</sup> Adam alone represents God, and this, because God wills to bind himself to Adam in the Incarnate One.<sup>34</sup>

The famed artist Michelangelo had it right when he painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Leave it to a painter to understand the meaning of images, for his depiction of Adam re-



clining on earth, as the mirror-image of God surrounded in heaven by angels, seems to me to be very close to the meaning intended in “Let us make man in our image.” This perspective can be a powerful and comforting governing factor in our own enfleshed lives, for as the Psalmist says, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14). We are fallen creatures, so the image of God is marred in us: speech becomes lies (Psalm 116:11), dominion becomes tyranny, love becomes lust, and even flesh becomes ugly and ultimately grotesque in its mortality. But vestiges remain: we are still occasionally, if minimally, capable of integrity in speech, thought, self-control, and selfless love, and these features become more evident in our regeneration.

But as long as we live in our fallenness, we struggle with our immense distance from our ideal, from the image of God in which we were once

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<sup>33</sup> This is the likely reason for Paul's admonition that a man should not cover his head, “forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God” (1 Cor 11:7).

<sup>34</sup> The question of the image of God in woman is beyond the scope of this study, though a consideration of the relation of man and woman is clearly in view in 1 Corinthians 11, according to which we may propose, while acknowledging male and female as both being created in the image of God, that priority is accorded to the male as bearing the image of God more fully. Here especially is it helpful to set aside a narrow definition, which would require an untenable proposition of male as somehow more righteous than female; on the other hand, image as prefigurement of Christ is perfectly sensible here: physically a man is more like another man than a woman is. Jastram notes the importance of the wider definition in his discussion of male and female, though he emphasizes authority and order and does not reference the fact that Christ is male except within a quotation from Bonaventure on which he makes no comment. Jastram, “Man as Male and Female,” 82–96, esp. 87–88.

created. Nevertheless, we remain even now, because we are still mankind, embodiments—pictures—of the invisible God. At least we still look like Jesus, and even if it is only in this way, we still retain a vestige of the image of God. Not only so, but we also may look forward with joyful anticipation to the full restoration of that image in us, according to the truth we confess daily, “I believe in the resurrection of the body”; at that day we, like Adam, shall see like the eagle, have the might of the lion, and enjoy the perfect righteousness, contentedness, and beauty not merely of Adam but of the man Jesus Christ, who is the eternal image of the Father, now risen from the dead, and ascended to his right hand on high.