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ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

# CTQ

Volume 48, Numbers 2 & 3

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APRIL-JULY 1984

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# The Grace of God as the Foundation for Ethics

Jeffery Gibbs

There can be no doubt in the mind of any observer of the modern American scene that a void exists in the areas of individual and social ethics. In society today, there is no agreement, no consensus, no basis for developing and articulating norms for the ways in which human beings ought to be viewed, and how they ought to be treated. The widespread influence of disciplines such as behavioristic psychology and evolutionary theory has reduced the scene in discussions of social and personal ethics to a shambles. Such blatant contradictions as a burgeoning peace movement in the West, side by side with abortion on demand, indicate our modern society's inability to arrive at a consistent and adequate foundation for a system of human ethical behavior.<sup>1</sup> The scenario, if it were not so tragic, would be comic. We live as a society of human beings who are unable to agree on what it means to be a human being, and how human beings ought to deal with one another.

In the midst of the confusion and the inconsistency, the church finds herself with a golden opportunity to proclaim and to demonstrate the existence of an adequate, compassionate Biblical foundation for ethical behavior. Christians everywhere have the chance to give an answer to the question, "Who are we?" Perhaps never has the chance been greater for the church's light to shine, as she answers the question, "How ought I to treat my neighbor?"

But the danger also exists that the church will bring forth an inadequate answer; that Christians will seize upon and use an inappropriate Biblical concept for the building of an ethical perspective. The purpose of this article is to argue that, at least in significant sectors of American Christianity, such an error has taken place. There does exist something of a visible consensus within large portions of the Christian community. The same answer is being given over and over again. For many, there is an accepted Biblical and Christian foundation for viewing persons as valuable and worthwhile. I am willing to call it a consensus because the concept occurs in such diverse contexts as the Marriage Encounter movement (originally a Roman Catholic

phenomenon), *Christianity Today* (the leading “evangelical” publication in America), the 1982 national convention of the prolife group, Lutherans for Life, and the writings of leading Protestant theologians and philosophers. But the question must be raised; is this Biblical concept an adequate foundation upon which the church can offer a view of mankind? Does this preferred alternative adequately correspond to the spirit of the Christian faith, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

The concept to which reference is here made is the Biblical view of mankind as created in the image of God. Here, we are told, lies the key to Christian views of ethical questions, political issues, social questions, and individual behavior. The value of human beings, and the rationale for treating them as valuable and worthwhile, originates in the understanding of mankind’s reception of and present possession of the *imago Dei*. George Ladd clearly sets forth this position:

The Bible reveals something else about men which evangelical Christians have too often neglected. It is both that I myself and every other man are created in the image of God, and this fact should be determinative of my relationship to other men whatever their status in life....Here is a staggering thought. There is something divine about all men. And the divine element consists in the fact that we are all God’s offspring.<sup>2</sup>

Ladd goes on, then, to draw the obvious (and popular) conclusions from this emphasis:

All men, whatever their race or social status, yes, even whatever their religion, are like us, the offspring of God. It follows, therefore, that I should regard every man and treat him as my brother, whoever he may be. Here is a biblical basis for a social ethic. I must be concerned about the welfare of my fellow man, for he, like myself, is God’s offspring.<sup>3</sup>

This same line of reasoning is central to the writings of Francis Schaeffer, the popular and widely-read conservative Protestant theologian. In *Escape from Reason*, Schaeffer maintains that

we cannot deal with people...on the high level of true humanity, unless we really know their origin—who they are. God tells man who he is. God tells us that He created man in His image. So man is something wonderful.<sup>4</sup>

And, in a later work, Schaeffer consistently advocates this basis

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for a Christian view of man and human affairs:

On the other hand, if one begins with the Bible's position that a person is created by God and created in the image of God, there is a basis for that person's dignity. People, the Bible teaches, are made in the image of God....Each is thus Man with dignity.<sup>5</sup>

And, as the preceptive observer views the scene, this argument rears its head constantly. It occurs as an accepted part of all manner of reasoning. Thus, in a recent article in which he argues for a "humane" treatment of obnoxious cult evangelists, Robert Morey writes this (my emphasis):

[Christians] seem to have concluded that the Watchtower publicist is somewhat subhuman, beyond salvation, and a dangerous expert in seduction. It is also assumed that he knows the Bible better than most Christians. His zeal and sacrifice make orthodox believers feel inferior. Consequently, they avoid him or roughly rebuke him as though the cultist were not *a man made in the image of God*.<sup>6</sup>

The view of many Christian writers and thinkers appears to be that the image of God in man produces the needed basis for ethical behavior. Because man in some sense still possesses the divine image, he therefore is of supreme worth, and ought to be treated with love, respect, and responsibility.

I should like to argue, rather, that it is theologically inadequate and unfaithful to the primary New Testament witness to base a social or personal ethic upon the image of God in man. My argument will take two directions. The negative task will demonstrate that the uncertainty which surrounds the definition of the *imago Dei* can lead to dangerous theological conclusions which, at their root, are the very antithesis of the Christian Gospel. The positive alternative argument will show that, on the basis of the clear New Testament witness, the redemption accomplished for all mankind in Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Christian ethics and not the creation of man in the image of God.

What exactly is meant by the "image of God in man"? There has never been complete agreement on this point, either in reference to pre-Fall or post-Fall mankind. Genesis 1:27 records the fact of mankind's unique creation in the image of God. And the debate begins at this point. Most have agreed that a significant part of the image included a moral perfection. (Luther, indeed, apparently held that this righteousness *com-*

*pletely* constituted the image of God. He therefore regarded the divine image as having been completely lost through the Fall.)<sup>7</sup> But there are other emphases often included in the discussion and definition of the image of God in man. Many have pointed to man's rational and intellectual powers as a part of the image.<sup>8</sup> Apparently some early church fathers thought that some of man's bodily traits also should be included.<sup>9</sup> Some have championed the dominion of Adam and Eve over the creation, granted by God in Genesis 1:28, as part of the divine image.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that, even when the exotic opinions of some are ignored,<sup>11</sup> there is nothing that even approximates agreement in defining the image of God as Adam and Eve first possessed it in the garden. The objection, then, naturally comes to mind; if no one knows exactly what it is, how can it occupy such an important place in the area of Christian thinking?

The waters become even muddier when one attempts to define in what sense human beings have retained the image of God after the Fall. Two oft-cited references are Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9. But again there is no agreement about what these passages say about the continuation of God's image.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, only a vague distinction between mankind and the rest of creation can be drawn.<sup>13</sup> And it is precisely this inability to define the image of God in fallen man which leads to a number of serious difficulties. To emphasize that fallen mankind is still the possessor of an undefined, vague "image of God" is tantamount to saying, "there is something nice about fallen mankind." And when one thinks through the implications of a system of ethics that so completely depends upon this concept, the shortcomings and dangers of this approach become immediately evident.

The most obvious difficulty that occurs when the image of God in fallen man is emphasized is the tendency to trivialize and minimize the reality of sin. Although the church does not teach that sin is of the very essence of what it means to be a human being (also Christ, in partaking of our nature, could then be said to have become sinful), nevertheless the Scriptural testimony concerning the deep and all-pervasive corruption which sin works in fallen humanity is an essential dogma in the Christian faith. Those who insist upon the divine image in fallen man as the source of man's worth run the danger of reducing sin to the status of a subordinate clause. Thus, Harold Kuhn writes (my emphasis):

History may in the long run undergird the imperative necessity for recognition of the biblical view of humankind as God's special creation. *Even if now marred by sin*, men and women assume a new worth when recognized as bearing the marks of a high image and ancestry.<sup>14</sup>

Pertinent to this discussion is the recent activity of Robert Schuller, pastor of Garden Grove Community Church. In mailing his new book, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, to 250,000 clergymen free of charge, he has brought his views forcibly to the attention of many. In this rather confusing book, Schuller aggressively attacks the traditional view of sin. He maintains that the classic Christian and Reformation views of sin have robbed people of their rightful dignity as those who have been created in the image of God.<sup>15</sup> He gives his own definition of sin: "Any human condition or act that robs God of glory by stripping one of his children of their right to divine dignity."<sup>16</sup> Schuller totally rejects any view of sin that would cause me to "feel bad about myself." Thus, in a noteworthy comment in which he claims to give "a clear and Christ-like understanding of sin," Schuller writes:

...at the deepest level, the heart of sin is found in what it causes us to do to ourselves. The most serious sin is the one that causes me to say, 'I am unworthy. I may have no claim to divine sonship if you examine me at my worst.' For once a person believes he is an 'unworthy sinner,' it is doubtful if he can really honestly accept the saving grace God offers in Jesus Christ.<sup>17</sup>

How does this potential (and in at least Schuller's case, actual) de-emphasis and downplay of human sin square with the view of the Holy Scriptures? Refraining at this time from the endless listing of proof texts, perhaps a telling comment by Martin Franzmann would suffice. The reference in his comment is Matthew 7:11:

"If you, then, *who are evil (sic)* know how to give good gifts to your children..." Jesus is here taking man at his very best, in his fatherhood, where the very structure imposed upon his life by the Creator forces a certain selflessness upon him—Jesus is taking man as the giver of good gifts to his children and is *there* calling him evil. Man's incapacity for real righteousness, for a real actualization of the will of God, could hardly be more strongly stated.<sup>18</sup>

And, of course, the confessional view of sin's serious and pervasive corruption matches the quotation above.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, a heavy emphasis upon the present possession of the *imago Dei* in fallen man runs the risk of losing a clear and Biblical doctrine of sin and its effects. Sin is not just something that partially obscures and dirties creatures of innate "divine dignity" (Schuller's phrase.) Rather, sin affects every aspect of who we are, what we think, and say, and do. Any anthropology which does not reckon adequately with this reality is to be avoided.

A second difficulty with the "image of God" approach to human worth and ethics stems from this first one. And it is, in its essence, antithetical to the Gospel itself. Simply stated, it is perilously easy to reason thus:

*Proposition 1:* I (and all other human beings) are of worth and significance because we are made in the image of God.

*Proposition 2:* God loves me, and all other human beings, and He sent His only Son, Jesus, to be our Savior.

*Conclusion:* Therefore, God loves me and sent His Son to die for me *because* I am of worth and significance.

When men insist that they themselves are of special worth because they possess, even in the fallenness of sin, the divine image, the anthropocentrism of such a view inherently seeks to assert itself idolatrously. Even though the divine image is originally God's gift, nevertheless, "it belongs to me." And, most naturally, then, sinful men can fall into the error of perverting and changing the nature of God's love as expressed in Jesus Christ. For, to insist, however subtly or mildly, that God loves me because of some wonderful quality in me, is to destroy the Christian faith.

God's grace, by its very nature, is free from any influences caused by the nature of its objects. The love of God for sinful men is not only undeserved—it is undeservable. Although one fears to say dogmatically what God cannot do, it seems consistent to say that conditional love, evoked in some way by some quality in love's object, is never present in God. He cannot love in that way. Even if there existed a humanity, confirmed in bliss like the holy angels, and therefore perfectly worthy of God's love, still God would not love that humanity *for that reason*. But rather, the love of God is a free giving which is not increased, decreased, or changed by the qualities possessed by the recipients of that love. "You did not choose me; I chose you" (John 15:16). C.S. Lewis writes most beautifully on that aspect

of God's "gift-love":

In God there is no hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desires to give. The doctrine that God was under no necessity to create is not a piece of dry scholastic speculation. It is essential.<sup>20</sup>

Lewis himself was aware of the dangerous tendency in man to misunderstand God's grace in exactly the manner of which I have spoken above. He writes again:

No sooner do we believe that God loves us than there is an impulse to believe that He does so, not because He is Love, but because we are intrinsically loveable. The Pagans obeyed this impulse unabashed; a good man was "dear to the gods" because he was good. We, being better taught, resort to subterfuge. Far be it from us to think that we have virtues for which God could love us. But then, how magnificently we have repented! As Bunyan says, describing his first and illusory conversion, "I thought there was no man in England that pleased God better than I." Beaten out of this, we next offer our own humility to God's admiration. Surely He'll like *that!* Or if not that, our clear-sighted and humble recognition that we still lack humility. Thus, depth beneath depth and subtlety within subtlety, there remains some lingering idea of our own, our very own, attractiveness. It is easy to acknowledge, but almost impossible to realize for long, that we are mirrors whose brightness, if we are bright, is wholly derived from the sun that shines upon us. Surely we must have a little—native luminosity! Surely we can't be *quite* creatures!<sup>21</sup>

Now, lest anyone think that I have here erected a convenient "straw man," let me assure you that not only have I heard people and counselors reasoning in the manner described above, but I have also read it. In the *Portland Oregonian* July 24, 1982, Robert Schuller is credited with this statement: "But Christianity's central point is that humans are of such value that God forgives and saves." Granted, this statement could be merely a reporter's misunderstanding of Schuller. (That in itself would be important to note—that others could *draw these conclusions!*) *But the book, Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, just barely stops short of saying the same thing. Schuller describes the plan of salvation thus (my emphasis):

How can God forgive us when we are sinful? How can

he save us? The biblical and theological answer is by grace—"God's love in action for people who don't deserve it." (*I may not deserve it, but I am worth it, so don't say I am unworthy.*)<sup>22</sup>

To begin by emphasizing an intrinsic worth in mankind, stemming from any source, is to begin falsely. And to infer, as Schuller seems to do, that the cause for the incarnation and the redemption resides in the worth of human beings is to create a new religion, not a new reformation.<sup>23</sup> The love of God in Christ is "disinterested" (Lewis' phrase). It is not brought forth, or changed, or destroyed by anything in us.

"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son" (Heb.1:1-2a). God's final and full word to mankind is Jesus Christ. It is precisely the lack of an appropriate Christocentric awareness which is the greatest weakness of the perspective with which this article has been dealing. On the basis of the assertion that fallen man still retains the divine image, some would build a system of human ethics and value and worth. The dangerous anthropocentrism of this view alone makes it suspect. Christ, God's final Word, is not part of it. The church must not be satisfied with this answer. It does not square with Christian theology. It has not the strength to bear the load which many desire to put upon it. And, most importantly, it does not reflect the thrust and message of the New Testament. For the New Testament documents do not focus chiefly, or even significantly, upon the image of God in man as the basis for ethical assumptions and behavior. Rather, the apostolic writings insist that the love of God for men and the redemption accomplished for all mankind in Jesus Christ provide the perspective within which human beings can be valued and prized and loved.

It is the express teaching of the New Testament that Christ's sacrifice on the cross has effected a dramatic change in the vertical relationship which men have with the living God. But, not only has the atonement accomplished this vertical change; it has also brought about a new relationship of human beings, one with another. It is on the basis of what Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection have wrought that the apostle Paul makes his appeals to his churches. Paul explicitly follows this line in his letter to Rome. The context of the most obvious example is the Christian's duty to set aside cheerfully his own rights in order to defer to and care for his weaker brother in the faith. "For if

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because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died''(Rom.14:15). The brother is to be treasured, valued, and loved—*because Christ died for him*. This is the theme which again and again appears in the ethical sections of Paul's correspondence. The basis for mutual acceptance of one another is Christ's gift of forgiveness and acceptance (Rom.15:7). The appeal for kind, harmonious relationships between Christians flows out of the tenderhearted forgiveness which all Christians have received (Eph.4:32). Long-standing social and religious prejudice crumbles before the onslaught of Christ's reconciling love; Jews and Gentiles are reconciled into one body through Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Eph.2:13-22). The perspective toward others which Christians are now to exhibit grows out of their awareness of the new creative work which Christ has wrought. "Therefore, from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh... Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Cor.5:16-17). In no place does Paul base his ethics for his churches upon the present possession of the image of God. For Paul, all of God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus. "For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes" (II Cor.1:20). For Paul, it is the great act of salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ which provides the base and rationale for human relationships in the church.

For Luke as well, this is the obvious conclusion. Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders includes the charge to tend the flocks entrusted to their care. The necessary motivation for fulfilling their pastoral responsibilities is stated: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock...to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). It is hard to imagine a substitution such as, "...shepherd the church of God which is created in the image of God."

The manner in which the Spirit is bestowed in the book of Acts also provides insight into Luke's approach. There are four "signal" receptions of the Spirit in Acts. With each occurrence, Luke demonstrates that the coming of the last days has ushered in a new era also for relationships within the church. Of course the Chosen People, the Jews, receive the gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). It is just as crucial that the Samaritan believers should receive the same gift; Peter and John are sent to insure this happening (Acts 8). And, as astonishing as it was to Peter and his companions that even the Gentiles were to receive the Spirit, Peter himself draws the inference that a new

era of human relationships has begun: “If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” (Acts 11:17). This new era embraces all kinds of people—even the “oddball” group of “John’s disciples” who heeded the preaching of Paul (Acts 19:1–7). The redemption accomplished for all in Jesus Christ has created a new way of dealing with one another. The old hatreds between Jew and Gentiles, Jew and Samaritan, have been erased by the blood of Christ. Forgiveness and love are now the hallmarks of relationships in the church. It is Christ’s sacrifice on the cross which has created this ethical system.

The obvious objection which may be raised at this point is this: what about unbelievers? All the citations above are applied specifically to the dealings of Christians with one another. The blessings of Christ’s work have not yet been received by unbelievers. They are not “in Christ.” Can the redemption wrought by God in Jesus be the foundation for dealing with them also?

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal.6:10). All persons, regardless of their present spiritual state, are to receive love, respect, and care. Even those who are naturally the least loveable—our enemies—are to benefit from our loving concern. Why? Does their value spring from their possession of the divine image, even though horribly marred by sin and corruption? Are we to love our enemies, and all other people, because of their “high ancestry”? No. There is not a word of that from the lips of Jesus. Rather, it is the love of God for all men, even His enemies, which moves the Christian to a position of universal human value and human rights (Matt.5:44–45):

But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

It is the grace of God, not the creative power of God, which provides the rationale for Christian ethics. Just as men must receive an “alien righteousness” through faith in Christ in order to be saved, so has all mankind received an “alien value,” coming from the outside, by being the objects of God’s love in Jesus. This is the plain teaching of the New Testament. The love

and concern which Christians must offer to all human beings grows out of the universal love of God for all. Christ's death has purchased forgiveness for all mankind. All persons are the objects of His love. And so they are to be for Christ's people.

Given the heavy, uniform emphasis in some circles upon the divine image as the foundation for ethical behavior, the question must be asked almost incredulously, "Does the New Testament have *anything* to say about the image of God?" There is the oft-cited verse, James 3:9. And it cannot be denied that James does draw ethical implications by describing men as originally made in the image of God. But a study of the concept of the "image of God" in the New Testament as a whole reveals that the predominant use of this idea (and it is only Paul who develops it) occurs as a description of Christian sanctification. For Paul, the concept of the image of God as a possession of mankind in general has no importance at all.

First, a few statistics would be appropriate. The use of *homoioosis* in James 3:9 is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament; *homoiooma*, "likeness," is never used in reference to humans. It is the use of *eikoon*, "image," which demonstrates Paul's theological development of the concept of "the image of God."

When Paul uses the idea of the divine image, it is primarily a reference to the deity of Christ. Because the use of *eikoon* (as opposed to *homoiooma*) emphasizes a sharing in the essence of the original,<sup>24</sup> Paul uses *eikoon tou theou* to express Christ's divine nature (II Cor.4:4, Col.1:15). Paul is not at all concerned with human beings as possessing a likeness to God.<sup>25</sup> Rather, he makes the connection of Genesis 1:17 with Christ as the second Adam.<sup>26</sup> The only application of the concept of the divine image to sinful men occurs in the discussion of the Christian's sanctification. Believers are in the process of being transformed into the image of Christ (II Cor.3:18). Redeemed men and women are being renewed after the image of Christ (Col.3:10, Rom.8:29). Part of the glory of the resurrection will be the attaining of the image of the heavenly, second Adam—Christ himself (I Cor.15:49). Exclusively, then, Paul connects the concept of the divine image with being "in Christ."<sup>27</sup> Nowhere does he even mention the present possession of the divine image, much less use it as a source for ethical injunctions. Only the believer shares in the image of God, and that only because of his fellowship with Christ.

If the teaching of the New Testament is so firmly oriented

toward the grace of God in Jesus Christ as the foundation for human ethics, why does the emphasis upon the *imago Dei* exist at all? Although one can only guess, some suggestions can be made. The Calvinist doctrine of the limited atonement certainly would lean in that direction. Since, according to this teaching, Christ did not redeem the whole human race, a more universal concept such as the creation must serve as a source for ethics.<sup>28</sup> Calvin himself did not build upon the redemption; rather, he built his social ethics upon "the endurance of the divine image even in fallen man."<sup>29</sup> This Reformed emphasis upon the sovereign power of God the Creator probably is at work in leading many to an un-Biblical emphasis upon the present possession of the image of God.

Another possible source for this perspective on human worth is Roman Catholic anthropology. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the essential freedom of fallen man's will as "an exceptional sign of the image of God in man"<sup>30</sup> leads in this direction. Thus, one modern Catholic catechetical text makes this statement under the subtitle, "Dignity Rooted in Freedom":

Since the rise of modern totalitarianism, the main theme of Catholic teaching about the human person has been the subject of liberty. Individuals have rights because they are persons endowed with freedom to co-operate with God's grace in working out their immortal destiny. Three documents—two papal and one conciliar—stand out in a series of statements that read like a Gospel proclamation in today's world: "You are persons, not pawns! You are free, not slaves! You have rights that no one, under God, may take away!"<sup>31</sup>

With all due respect to others' sensibilities, this is an example of a "Gospel proclamation" without Gospel content. For it is precisely the Gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ which is lacking from the emphasis upon the divine image in man. And yet, as we have seen above, the New Testament derives both social and personal ethics from the love of God, especially as it is expressed through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

One other comment might be offered. The original sin in the garden was the attempt to express an existence independent from God. "You will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen.3:5). As C.S. Lewis so marvelously describes it,

...they wanted, as we say, to "call their souls their own." But that means to live a lie, for our souls are not, in fact, our own. They wanted some corner in the

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universe of which they could say to God, "This is our business, not yours." But there is no such corner. They wanted to be nouns, but they were, and eternally must be, mere adjectives.<sup>32</sup>

And, without necessarily imputing this conscious motive to any particular individual who might stress the image of God in man as the reason for ethical behavior, is not this perspective at least somewhat attractive for the reason mentioned above? "We possess it; even as sinners, the image belongs to *us!* We are to be loved, by God and others, because of something that we possess." Sinful human nature, ever repeating the error in the garden, wants to block God out. By stressing the divine image in man in an unwarranted fashion, it can be done.

The Christian church must resist this view, if she is to remain faithful to her Biblical moorings. Jesus Christ must be the source of every aspect of Christian thinking, and the ultimate answer to every question. To glory in what we have become because of His saving actions on our behalf—this is the Christian's response. "In Him you have been made complete" (Col.2:10). And to know that every person is also the object of such love and sacrifice provides the necessary base from which ethical behavior may spring. Even though many are the unwilling or ignorant object of the love of God in Jesus Christ, still He loves them. For *that* reason, so must we.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 . Bernard Nathanson, in his book, *Aborting America* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1979), p.255, writes, "It is worth pondering that the abortion ethic contrasts with the new ecological sensitivity. The same society (and some of the same individuals) that lavishes great care over the peregrine falcon or the Furbish lousewort is willing to accept mass alpha-cide with equanimity. We worry about technological control over nature, while it occurs daily in the vacuuming out of wombs."
- 2 . George Ladd, "Why Did God Inspire the Bible," in Gasque and Lasor, eds., *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p.52.
- 3 . Ladd, *ibid.*, p.53.
- 4 . Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1974), p.22.

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- 5 . Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1976), p.86.
  - 6 . Robert A. Morey, "A Jehovah's Witness? Next Time Open the Door," *Christianity Today*, September 3, 1982, p.37.
  - 7 . David Scaer, "Man Made in the Image of God and Its Relationship to the First Promise," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 41:3 (July 1977), p.33. See also Louis Berkof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p.202.
  - 8 . H. Cremer, "Image of God," in S.M. Jackson, ed., *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), V, p.451. Also Gordon Clark, "Image of God," in Carl Henry, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Baker Book House, 1973), p. 312.
  - 9 . Berkof, op.cit., p.202. Interestingly enough, no less an Old Testament scholar than Gerhard von Rad, when pressed for an answer, holds to an emphasis upon man's physical nature as essential to the image of God concept in Genesis 1. He writes in Geoffrey Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, : Eerdmans, 1964), II, p.391, that "the debate whether the divine likeness refers to the spiritual or physical being of man is not very helpful. If we had to think in terms of such an alternative, we should have to decide in favour of a predominantly physical likeness, not in the sense of speculation of God's form or corporeality, but in the sense of a reference to the Elohim nature proper to man. Man is here designated as a creature whose being is not from below but who belongs by nature to the upper region. There are two passages in particular in P which prevent us from interpreting the theologoumenon of the divine likeness in a one-sidedly spiritual sense. In Gn.5:1ff reference is made to the physical progeny of the first man, and it is said of Seth, Adam's son, that he was begotten in the image and likeness of Adam. This statement is most important. It ensures the theological actuality for all generations of the witness to the divine likeness. For in itself the story of a being originally created in the divine likeness would be of no great significance for OT faith. In relation to the particular question, Gn.5:3 tells us that the transmission of the divine likeness is thought of in terms of the physical sequence of generations and therefore obviously in a physical sense. The second passage is Gn.9:6, where the prohibition of murder is grounded in the divine likeness. Here the thought is the same. Attack on man's body is violation of God's honour."
  10. Berkof, op.cit., p.205; Cremer, op.cit., p.451; Henry, op.cit., p.312; Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976), p.128.

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11. Larry Christiansen, *The Christian Family* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1970), p.63. Christiansen writes, “He created man in His own image (Genesis 1:26), and part of the image of God in man is found in this, that we share His fatherhood [i.e., that we are able to become fathers and mothers].”
12. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, pp.518–519. He comments, “The Lutheran theologians are agreed that the image of God, which consists in the knowledge of God and holiness of the will, is lacking in man after the Fall, since Col.3:10 and Eph.4:24 distinctly say that it is being restored in the believer. They differ, however, on the question as to whether in Gen.9:6...and James 3:9...a divine image is still ascribed to man after the Fall. Some deny this and take the passage to describe man as the noble creature who once bore the image of God and in whom God would recreate this image through faith in Christ. Thus Luther...Philippi, Gottfried, Hoffman. Others say that these passages describe man as he is after the Fall, a creature endowed with intellect and will, and contend that this constitutes a certain similitude with God. Thus Baier...Quenstedt...and others. The latter distinguish between the image of God in a wider sense, according to which man, in distinction from the animals, is still a rational being even after the Fall, and the divine image in the proper sense, consisting in true knowledge and service of God, which was lost through the Fall...

“It has been maintained that not a lost image of God, but only a still extant image could be a sound reason why we are not to shed man’s blood or curse him. But Luther and those who share his position see in these texts not only the lost image, but the image that is to be restored again in Christ...”

13. Scaer, *op.cit.*, p.33.
14. Harold Kuhn, “Human Rights, Yes; but Why?”, *Christianity Today*, July 16, 1982, p.57. Kuhn’s reference to fallen man’s “high ancestry” indirectly refers to another line of reasoning that can characterize this perspective. It says this: “Even if I am sinful—very sinful—still I can remember the image of God that Adam and Eve possessed, and I can draw worth and self-esteem from that original image.” Francis Schaeffer, in *Escape From Reason*, *op.cit.*, p.21, writes, “Man has value because of who he was before the Fall.” But surely this is ludicrous! Can I boast in the distance which I have fallen? Can I assure others that, because they have taken God’s marvelous gifts of reason, intellect, and morality and consistently *misused* them, they are of value? The fact that a hardened criminal comes from a well-bred, cultured, moral family is not a cause for boasting—it is a cause for shame.

15. Robert Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982), p.38. Schuller writes, "Where the sixteenth century Reformation returned our focus to sacred Scriptures as the only infallible rule for faith and practice, the new reformation will return our focus to the sacred right of every person to self-esteem!"
16. *Ibid.*, p.14.
17. *Ibid.*, p.98.
18. Martin Franzmann, "Studies in Discipleship," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXVI:11 (November 1960), p.68.
19. *Concordia Triglotta* (Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p.477, Article I of the Smalcald Articles: "This hereditary sin is so deep and horrible a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be learned and believed from the revelation of Scriptures." Also pp.875-876, the Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article I: "Luther himself explains that by nature-sin, person-sin, essential-sin he means not only the words, thoughts, and works are sin, but that the entire nature, person, and essence of man are altogether corrupted by the root of original sin."
20. C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1960), p.175.
21. *Ibid.*, p.180.
22. Schuller, *op.cit.*, pp.99-100.
23. The Biblical view of God's love always emphasizes its unilateral nature; that is, it comes from God, because of who God is. Thus the perfectly typical statement from Ezekiel 39:25, in which the prophet predicts the future salvation of God's people: "Therefore thus says the Lord<sup>1</sup> God, 'Now I shall restore the fortunes of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I shall be jealous for My holy name.'"
24. So G. Kittel, in Geoffrey Bromiley, ed., *op.cit.*, II, p.395, "In the NT the original is always present in the image...When Christ is called the *eikoon* in 2 C.4:4; Colossians 1:15, all the emphasis is on the equality of the *eikoon* with the original." So also J. Schneider's article on *homoiooma* in TDNT, V, p.191: "There is often a distinction between the two words [*eikoon* and *homoiooma*]. This may be formulated as follows: *eikoon* represents the object, whereas *homoiooma* emphasizes the similarity, but with no need for an inner connection between the original and the copy."
25. The one place in which Paul uses *eikoon* in reference to man is in his discussion at I Corinthians 11 on the submission of wives to husbands. He does refer to the man as "the image and glory of God," *eikoon kau doxa theou*. But Paul cannot be referring the divine image in the sense of Genesis 1; else he would be guilty of saying that only males possessed this image.

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26. Kittel, op.cit., pp.395-396.
  27. Kittel, p.397. In referring to Paul's usage at Colossians 3:10, he writes, "Here it is quite clear that restoration of the divine likeness of creation is identical with the establishment of fellowship with Christ."
  28. Robert Brinsmead, "Justification by Faith and Human Rights," in *The Christian Verdict*, Essay 3, 1983, pp.5-6. "Some Christians base their stand on human rights upon creation rather than upon Jesus Christ and His redemption. They probably do this because they see that God is the Creator of all but hesitate, out of deference to their systematic theology, to think that Christ is the Redeemer of all."
  29. B.A. Gerrish, "The Mirror of Man's Goodness," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 45:3 (July 1981). I was present when Professor Gerrish presented the lecture which later appeared as the article referred to above. After the lecture, I asked him if he was aware of any tendency of development in Calvin's thought which would have based social ethics upon the redemption rather than the creation. His answer was, simply, "No."
  30. Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1980), p.917. Included in the Vatican II statements concerning human worth is this statement which embraces both redemption and creation as foundational: "All men are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny; there is here a basic equality between all men and it must be given ever greater recognition."
  31. John Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975), p.107.
  32. C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1973), p.80.

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