

Doctrine of Humanity

- Why study humanity?
- Humanity as a creation of God
- The image of God
- The nature of human beings

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Why Study Humanity?

- Anthropology = doctrine of humanity.
- Grenz's summary:
 - We are the good creation of God.
 - We are marred through our fall into sin.
 - We are also the object of God's redemptive activity.

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Why Study Humanity?

- We need to ask who human beings are in relation to God.
 - Only then can we truly understand who we are.
 - We do have a God-given identity that gives our life meaning and purpose.
- We can also understand more about God by reflecting on humanity.

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Humanity as a Creation of God

- We are contingent beings.
- We are related to the rest of creation.
 - We are stewards of creation.
 - Unique place in creation (the image of God).
 - God is the Father of all by creation.
 - There is a human community.
 - But this is not as intimate as the community established among God’s adopted children.

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Humanity as a Creation of God

- We should accept finiteness as part of who we are.
- Humanity is not the ultimate value; God is.
- God, not we, decides what it is to be human.
- We don’t have the right to decide the value of anything God has made.

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Humanity as a Creation of God

- Human beings have a paradoxical condition.
 - We’re not necessary to the universe.
 - Yet we have worth as reflections of God.
 - And we have infinite value to God.
- We bear the image of God.
- We’re the objects of God’s love.
- We have a place in God’s purposes.

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Humanity as a Creation of God

- What are the implications of all this?

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Humanity as a Creation of God

- What are human beings for?
 - “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever” (Westminster Shorter Catechism).
 - We’re created to be a people for God’s glory.
 - We’re created to have a relationship with God, with one another, with the rest of creation.

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The Image of God

- Human beings are made in the image of God - the *imago dei*.
- Three main views of the image of God:
 - Structural or substantive
 - Relational
 - Functional

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The Image of God

- Structural or substantive view
 - Something humans are or possess.
 - Characteristic(s) of human nature.
 - Can't be lost in the Fall, but can be damaged.
 - Most dominant view.
 - E.g., reason, spiritual sense, moral sense, social capacity, aesthetic capacity.
 - Some distinguish image from likeness (image is natural, likeness is supernatural).

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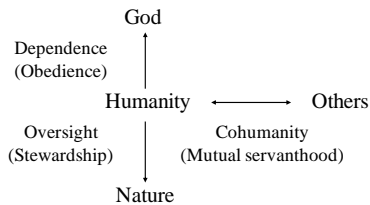
The Image of God

- Relational view
 - Something that characterizes human relationships with God or other human beings.
 - Display the image when in relationship.
 - Can be lost in the Fall.
 - Barth: relationality is the image of the relational Trinity.

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The Image of God

- Tom Finger: characteristics expressed in relationship with God, others, natural world.



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The Image of God

- Functional view
 - Something that human beings do.
 - Most common: dominion over creation (based on connection between image and dominion in Genesis 1:26-28).
 - Humans as icons of the Lord.
 - Can be lost in the Fall.

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The Image of God

- What does Genesis 1-2 say?
- Being a “living being” (*nephesh hayah*) does not distinguish humans from animals.
- Only the image of God is for humans only.
- Both male and female are in God’s image.
- This means that we belong to God.
- This image may be why God asks to have no images of himself made. He has one!

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The Image of God

- Image of God in salvation history
 - We’re created in God’s image.
 - Image was damaged in the Fall.
 - But something of the image still remains.
 - Christ is the complete image of God.
 - We will be conformed to the image of Christ.
 - We have a new nature by redemption.
 - The resurrection will complete our renewal.
 - This brings an ethical responsibility.

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The Image of God

- Theological significance of the image?

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The Nature of Human Beings



Are humans free?

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The Nature of Human Beings

- Views of the parts of human nature?
- Trichotomy - body, soul, spirit (two verses: 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12)
- Dichotomy - body and soul/spirit
 - Sometimes have disparaged the body
 - Immortality of the soul vs. resurrection of body
- Unity – no “parts” but whole self.

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The Nature of Human Beings

- Body - corporeal or material part of person.
- Spirit - incorporeal or immaterial part.
- Soul - life principle or immaterial part.
- Flesh - body, human being, sinful nature.
- Heart - center of person (thinking, willing).
- Mind - cognitive abilities.
- Conscience - arbiter of right and wrong.
- Paul - inner/outer dichotomy.

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The Nature of Human Beings

- Scripture generally pictures persons as a unity seen from multiple perspectives.
- These terms are not a scientific analysis.
- Not so much metaphysical as relational and ethical.
- We do have inner and outer aspects.
- Our identity survives apart from the body.
- God's ultimate goal for us is resurrection.

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The Nature of Human Beings

- Theories of the origin of the soul:
 - Preexistence of the soul (Platonism, Mormons).
 - Creationism (God creates soul with body).
 - Traducianism (inherit soul along with body).
- Impetus for this comes from discussion of original sin.

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The Nature of Human Beings

- Humanity as male and female:
 - Both in God’s image, called to dominion.
 - Female subordination is a result of the fall.
 - Patriarchal view.
 - Egalitarian view.
 - “Complementarian” view is misleading.
 - Complementary in terms of power.
 - Subordination based on essence, not function.

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The Nature of Human Beings

- Individualism vs. community
 - Human beings created to be in community.
 - Biblical view: interdependence with one another and dependence on God.
 - Individualism affects all Western theology.
 - It can blind us to social and structural sin.
 - We need to make community integral to the gospel.

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The Nature of Human Beings

- Implications of our view of human nature?

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Case Study

- You are on staff at a church that has a strong counseling ministry. A young woman comes to talk with you. She says that she has difficulty forming close relationships. She was orphaned at an early age and grew up in a series of foster homes. She often has feelings of worthlessness and depression. She wonders how God could possibly love her. What do you say? On the basis of what theological convictions?

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