

HUMANITY – DIVINE DUST

... created in God's image
Genesis 1 & 2
WEFC September 21, 2008

Small Card on Genesis on the number of species that God created.

...and then we come to these statements that help all of humanity get its bearing.

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them ...

Genesis 2:4-7

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens- and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground-

the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

On that sixth and final day of creation, the God who had already made a name for Himself by all that He had already created in His marvelous "universal studio", makes one final addition to it.

This is His finale, the work that would be the best of the best, He saved it for the very last.

In His last creative act He would make His most bold move, by putting into His climatic work a distinct and obvious "God mark" or "God distinctiveness".

This would for all eternity be the evidence that God really had done what His Word said He did.

This creation would resemble or reflect on Him as it would be a "cut out" (the definition of IMAGE) of Himself.

... and God created people.

That God made us special, is to say only part of the truth.

He made people so special that our very existence proves God's realness.

... and yet today people are still asking, "Who are we?"

God's Word in **Genesis 1 & 2** tells us life transforming facts.

The statements we go through in these two opening chapters once again contribute heaps of excellent information to our WorldView.

WorldViews

Secular Humanism

Cosmic Humanism

Biblical Christianity

Theology:

Atheist
(No God)

Pantheism
(Everything is God)

Theist
(God is His Own Being)

Philosophy:

Natural Things Only

Focuses on Spiritual Nature Of Natural Things

Supernatural

Biology:

Darwinian Evolution

“t”heistic Evolution

Creation

View of Man:

Too Low

Too High

Balanced

Only Material

Becoming a part of “God”

Distinct from God yet “marked by God”

Ethics

Relativism

Relativism

Absolutes

A little girl asked her father, "How did the human race come about?"

The father answered, "God made Adam and Eve and they had children and so all mankind was made."

Two days later she asks her mother the same question.

The mother answered, "Many years ago there were monkeys, and we developed from them."

The confused girl returns to her father and says: "Dad, how is it possible that you told me that the human race was created by God and Mom says we developed from monkeys?"

The Father answers, "That's simple, honey. I told you about the origin of my side of the family, and your mother told you about her side."

Just in case you are wondering whether this is practical or relevant, read the newspaper.

Most of what you find in the paper deals with this whole area of who we are and essentially how we have not done very well in it all.

The stock markets ... reflect something significant about mankind – especially of late.

The big issues? ... consider the following:

Slaves ... are they real people or just creatures who do work?

Abortions ... is what the doctor takes out of the womb merely flesh or a baby?

Seniors who are unable to contribute economically to society ... should they be killed, or put more politely, "euthanized"?

Ethnic Cleansing ... legitimate or merely a cover-up for murder?

People ... are they merely animals or are we at least one up on them?

You and I ... are we just "machines" or is there in each of us a "soul", that which is far more complicated and better than a machine?

... closer to home.

What we learn here shapes how we treat our spouse, our children, the people with whom we work.

Is it okay to get angry with others?

Do you ever feel that life is not worth living?

Have you ever struggled with the absolutely ridiculous things people have done and then wonder how to respond to them?

That is what **Genesis 1 & 2** are about.

This is as practical as it can get.

That is important.

That is why God told us about it.

Key Thought:

God has placed His mark on each person ... our correct response to this introduces us to the richness of life.

Let us note what God has told us about ourselves. We will first pick out the facts and then we will attempt to unpack them.

Genesis 1:27

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.**

GOD'S FACTS ON WHO WE ARE

- 1. God created us**
- 2. We are made in God's image.**
- 3. Both man and woman carry God's image.**

Drop down to **Genesis 2:7** and let us keep adding to our list of who we are.

... the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

- 4. God made us out of dust / clay**
- 5. God gave us "life"**
- 6. God made us "persons"**

We will take these up in a different order than we listed them.

As we understand these realities, then we can fill out who we are.

Implications Of The Realities

1. God created us

We are solely God's idea and creation.

- There exists a direct link between God and us

Yes, our parents brought us into the world, but God is the genius behind it all.

He worked it out back at the start and continues to do so to this very day.

He had never removed Himself from the process.

Between God and us there is a tie, a relationship.

- God is the most knowledgeable source of information on us.

God has a "patent" on us. He designed and brought us into existence.

He **knows** how we operate. He **knows** all the "in's", "out's" and "why's" that we puzzle over.

He **knows** our limitations and possibilities.

Though it may seem at this point in history that God has gotten into mass production, His **knowledge** of each and everyone of us has not diminished.

He **knows** where we have come from and where we are headed. He **knows** our present status.

Anything about us, God **knows**.

Problems that we face are best understood and deciphered by God.

- We are under God's authority

Our relationship with God is not one of equals, but of One who is superior.

What God says, goes.

We may think that we can do away with God's authority, but that is never the case. It remains firmly intact.

- All people are of equal worth

III. of Israelite who saved the Palestinian

2. God made us out of dust / clay

Genesis 2:7 indicates that God **FORMED** us.

Carefully, deliberately, and intentional, with great skill God made the first man from dust, and woman from man.

The material does seem to leave something to be desired.

We are made from some rather down to earth goods – dust!

One little guy having learned that we are made of dust, one day bent down and looked under his bed. What he saw was dust that had gathered.

He said to his parents: "Well someone is either coming or going."

- This dusty part of us is rather humbling ... common.

Being made of dust is not much about which to brag.

3. God gave us "life"

God breathed into us His breath ... and this specially packaged "dust" was transformed.

- God "activating" the "dust" points to complete dependency

As has been said, we are "divine dust".

Should we want further proof of God's existence and His authority over our lives, we do not need to look to the galaxies or the nanotechnology which is present in our bodies.

Rather, every time we breath, we are confirming the fact that God has a claim, a right, that His authority over us is not merely something we dreamed up, but is very real.

If we think that we can live independent of God, try holding your breath.

... God gets His point across in some rather obvious ways.

4. Both man and woman carry God's image

We hope to get into this in a number of weeks, so we are going to just recognize that ...

- In God's eyes man and woman share equally in His image.

The remaining two we are going to combine for I think that they carry the same truth.

5. God made us "persons"

6. We are made in "God's image".

Here we come to one of the best things that God has done for us.

MANKIND - THE PINNACLE OF GOD'S CREATION

IMPACT No. 133 July 1984 by Jerry Bergman, Ph.D. Institute for Creation Research

Chemically, the body is unequalled for complexity. Each one of its 30 trillion cells is a mini-chemical factory which performs about 10,000 chemical functions. And every cell has 10 to the 12th power (one trillion) bits of data equal to every letter in ten million books! Each one also replaces itself every seven years. Each one is independent, yet cooperates with many millions of other cells.

The body's billions of parts all work together as a team its 206 bones provide the framework and its 639 muscles enable it to move with incredible split-second timing.

Our body is controlled and coordinated by over 16 billion neurons and 120 trillion "connection boxes" packed together into an unfathomably complex set of neuro-passways. The system is much like a modern nation, inter-connected by billions of telephone wires. All of this in a brain and spinal column that weighs slightly over three pounds! In comparison, a bee has only

about 900 nerve cells, an ant only 250. In the large gauge fibers, nerve impulses flash along at 300 miles per hour. All told, the human brain and nervous system is the most complex arrangement of matter anywhere in the universe.

The whole body system functions as a unified whole to enable a human to run, sing, remember, create and achieve the myriads of other phenomenal tasks we usually take for granted.

One scientist estimated that our brain, on the average, processes over 10,000 thoughts and concepts each day and some people process a much greater number.

To work this marvelous machine, we need energy and building materials. Our three and one half pounds of daily food intake is chewed by 32 teeth (one of our most precious possessions) where it is mixed by saliva, a mild digestant secreted from five glands located in the mouth area. Down the esophagus, digestion continues in the stomach, an amazing organ which must dissolve food and yet not dissolve itself. The acid in it would eat the varnish off a kitchen table in seconds. If this precarious balance is lost, ulcers (the process of the stomach digesting itself) results. The food then moves into the small intestine, a 20-foot tube which absorbs vitamins, minerals, and food into the bloodstream, then through the 5-foot long large intestine which absorbs water and other liquids. This then, is the 35-40 foot long alimentary canal.

For eating and in-between, in every 24-hour period, the average person swallows about 2,000 times. Our heart beats over 100,000 times daily to move blood 168 million miles around our body. We take about 23,800 breaths per day to bring 438 cubic feet of air to our lungs. The airways to the lungs are lined with glands which secrete a sticky mucous film. The mucous acts like flypaper, catching germs and dust so it can be swept away by cilia. Cilia are thousands of microscopic hairs which flow back and forth 12 times a second. They move faster when they sweep towards the throat than when they move towards the stomach, pushing the thousands of bacteria in the system upward, toward

the throat, where they are harmless in the digestive tract.

THINKING ABOUT THE BRAIN

IMPACT No. 200 February 1990 by Dr. Don DeYoung and Dr. Richard Bliss Institute for Creation Research

But there is one particular aspect of design which is so powerful, so convincing, that it almost seems unfair to challenge evolution with it. The reference is to our brain, the greatest concentration of chemo-neurological order and complexity in the physical universe.

It is a video camera and library, a computer and communication center, all in one. And the more the brain is used the better it becomes! A detailed picture of the human brain is slowly emerging, the origin of which seems entirely beyond comprehension from a naturalistic point of view. We see remarkable purpose and interdependence within the brain every part works for the benefit of the whole. Such features are not totally understood; the brain is unable fully to understand itself. As always, we cannot fully understand the created, intricate details of the present-day world.

Description of the Brain

The adult brain weighs about 1350 grams, just three pounds, yet it handles the information of 1000 supercomputers. The fundamental unit within the brain is the neuron, or nerve cell. Each cell, about 10-6 meter in diameter, contains a nucleus and branching fibers called dendrites and axons. When a cell "fires," it sends electrochemical impulses along its axon extension to neighboring neurons. These signals, or brain-wave patterns, are in the range of microvolts. Figure 1 shows two neurons with dendrite-axon contacts called synapses. Our brain contains about 10 billion neurons (10¹⁰). During the first nine months of life, these neurons form at the astounding rate of 25,000 per minute.

Dendrites

Figure 1. Two neurons are shown, representing the ten billion cells within the brain. Axons are fibers that interconnect the cells. Axons are long in motor neurons; the dendrites are long in sensory neurons. The number of branching dendrites is large and variable.

Each neuron is in dendritic contact with perhaps 10,000 other neurons. The total number of neurological interconnections is on the order of 10^{14} (100 trillion). This number is equivalent to all the leaves on all the trees of a vast forest covering half of the U.S. The total length of the nerve dendrites in an adult brain is over 100,000 miles!

At any given moment the many dendrite connections can be visualized as light switches that are either on (firing) or off, controlled by a chemical transmitter. Thus the brain holds at least 10^{14} bits (binary digits) of information. Actually, it is a much greater number, since the neurons also show intermediate firing states, somewhat like a light-dimmer switch. Consequently, the brain shows both digital and analog characteristics. At any given moment, perhaps 10% of the brain cells are firing, at a frequency of about 100 hertz. This implies a rate of 10^{15} signals or computations every second. For comparison, the Cray-2 supercomputer's speed is 109 computations per second, with a storage capacity of 10^{11} bits. Thus, the storage capacity of this supercomputer is 1,000 times less than that of the human brain. Table I shows the memory capacity of several systems. Note that the potential brain capacity is estimated as at least equivalent to that of 25 million volumes, a 500-mile-long bookshelf! Clearly, the brain is far more advanced than any computer ever produced. This computer analogy should not be carried too far, however, because brain organization is unlike anything else encountered in technology or nature.

Computer designers have attempted to mimic brain structure with "neural networks," a type of artificial intelligence (AI). Success has been very limited; one leader has concluded that some facets of our thinking will never be duplicated by a machine.⁴

Storage Device	Information capacity (words)
1 typed page	300
3.5" double density compact disk (CD)	40-200 million
Library of Congress - 20 million volumes	2 trillion
Brain - 25 million volumes	2.5 trillion

Table 1. Memory of various systems in terms of words. (One word = 5 bytes = 40 bits, or binary digits.)

Evolutionary Explanations

A.R. Wallace was a natural historian and an acquaintance of Charles Darwin. In an exchange of letters in 1869, Wallace wrote, "Natural selection could only have endowed the savage with a brain a little superior to that of the ape whereas he possesses one very little inferior to that of an average member of our learned society."

Darwin realized the threat of this statement to evolution, and replied, "I hope you have not murdered completely your own and my child."

Darwin feared the death of his evolution theory because the human brain far exceeded his view of early man. Why did the brain evolve with potential which never has been utilized to its fullest extent? This "murdered child" threat greatly troubled Darwin in his later years. Perplexed by what he observed, Darwin described the brain of even the lowly ant as the most remarkable speck of matter in the world.

How does modern secular science explain the assumed "explosive development" of the human brain? Very creatively! One traditional idea is that man's discovery of complex tools and

speech led to higher thinking and increased brain size. However, this explanation is a tautology: Which came first, the increased thinking ability or increased brain capacity? Today there are new ideas emerging for man's intelligence, some of them quite humorous. For example, consider the suggestion that early man had his brain "baked" and damaged by spending too much time in the hot sun.⁸ The brain compensated by evolving additional neuron connections to make up for the deficit. When our ancestor finally came in from the sun (or perhaps put on a hat!) his full brain began to function once again!

The Two Brains

One active area of research involves the separate functions of the brain's left and right hemispheres. These mirror-image halves are joined together by a massive bundle of perhaps twenty million nerve fibers called the corpus callosum. The left side of the body is mainly controlled by the right hemisphere, and vice versa. The left hemisphere is found to be specialized for language and analytical problem-solving. The right hemisphere, in contrast, controls visual and artistic ideas.

A standard secular explanation of this brain division is that the two hemispheres evolved to provide backup systems for each other in the event of injury to one side.⁹ One might ask, however, why there is just one division of the brain, when four or six backup parts would provide even greater survival value. And if the two halves indeed evolved as backups for each other, then why are they specialized for different activities? The arbitrary and conflicting ideas of brain evolution are obvious. Much evolutionary thinking appears to be the result of dominant right hemisphere activity, where creativity reigns, and the neglect of the left hemisphere, where logical reasoning occurs!

Conclusion

The beautiful complexity of our brain contrasts sharply with all simplistic, secular attempts to explain it away. Our brain remains a frontier of science; we actually know very little about it, but what

is known is overwhelming. In addition, every single neuronal cell within the brain contains a trillion atoms. This is like a microscopic universe within each cell, complete with order, purpose, and interdependence of components.

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God did an absolute amazing thing when He put our bodies together.

Yet when we talk about THE IMAGE OF GOD, we are not talking about being literally God's physical look "alike".

- Has nothing to do with physical likeness for God is invisible

There is something "about" and / or "in" us that God has inserted into our make-up that clearly indicates that we are His creation, His signature work.

- Has to do with responsibility

Reading on in **Genesis 1:28-30** God gives an assignment ... one that indicates that we have a job to do.

We will look at that next week, but just mention that this means that what God created, we keep up and develop.

God is the PRIME MINISTER, but He gives to us the privilege of serving as DEPUTY MINISTERS.

We serve as His visible representatives to the world.

- Has to do with a generously given “specialness”

Nothing else in all of creation is made in God’s image, just people.

We are neither God’s equal’s, nor are we His slaves.

We are somewhere in the middle, ... given a position of honor and partnership with a tremendous and outstanding Senior Partner.

We are not machines, nor are we animals.

Neither are we angelic or divine.

We are human, but our humanity is connected to God.

God generously assigns to us a special worth, a worth that is not duplicated in the entire creation.

We do not earn this, we do not work for it.

It is gifted to us by God way back at creation.

The IMAGE OF GOD in us is ...

- Those qualities that allow us to connect with God

We, people, imagine, use logic, communicate in abstract terms ... and a host of other unique characteristics.

Animals do not have these qualities. Animals do not sit around asking what their purpose in life is and how they can better the world.

They were never given a God-consciousness, a right and wrong checklist for their hearts.

Yet, these are the very qualities that allow us to connect with God as people.

This is **what God has built into us** so that we might appreciate Him and cooperate with Him in the big picture, that we might never say, “God doesn’t matter.”

This is that which in us keeps on nagging our intellectual brains to get to that which is most important.

This “God-package” prior to the entrance of sin is diminished today, but not entirely removed.

Before sin there was a ...

- cohesiveness, a togetherness that cooperated with God

- clicking with God

We sinned and the entire whole became messed up ... and in a split second what once worked was not complicated and confusing.

The result ... we became living contradictions.

We are getting ahead of ourselves in **Genesis**.

Follow along with **Ephesians 4:24**

Colossians 3:10

Mark the use of the words IMAGE and LIKENESS.

Taking these insightful statements indicates that part of the IMAGE OF GOD has to do with our **CONSCIOUSNESS AND PURPOSE** as people.

Emotion, Mind, Will, Desire ... all of these are elements of what we are going to label **CONSCIOUSNESS**.

This CONSCIOUSNESS is what gets us to dig into questions like WHO ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Today, though we have been created to be responsive to God, we are anything but.

We argue over

-where to put the peanut butter – in the cupboard or the fridge;

- whether our dirty socks should be thrown in the laundry basket or if they have a right to remain where they have fallen

- nothing, but just because we are ticked off, we are going to be cantankerous and just argue

This is important stuff, because the way we respond is from our WorldView.

We are going to tie THE IMAGE OF GOD into our HUMAN NATURE, not our SINFUL NATURE, but our GOD-GIVEN HUMAN NATURE.

The IMAGE OF GOD fits into our HUMAN NATURE.

If we can prove that we do not have in us the IMAGE OF GOD, that we have no nature, then we free ourselves.

We become people without limits as to progress or restrictions to hold us back and curtail our expressions.

There is then nothing that we cannot do.

This is where our society is today.

This is how **a secular** humanist thinks.

“That may be good for you, but it’s not my cup of tea.”

What happens is that we take that which God made in us to connect with Him and we twist it out of intent.

We make desire and human will the most important things in life.

If we want it, we will work at it and get it.

But the problem is this: **Human desire is not self-limiting.**

Desire cannot control itself.

Experience and reason are God's watchdogs that set the limits.

To let feelings be supreme in our lives is to live in an unreal world ... a fantasy.

We just cannot do whatever we desire to do.

Try living under that principle and life crashes fast.

The reason we are in the situation we are today is because **moral knowledge (the God-connection; His image) has disappeared from our WorldView.**

Now, we say that there is no God-connectedness, and more so, a step down from there, no real right and wrong other than what we decide or agree upon.

Therefore, homosexuality is acceptable, swapping marriage partners is not wrong, living together before marriage is acceptable because we no longer are living in the dark ages under the taboos of religiously oppressive morals.

We end up with what we have today ... a hodge-podge.

Since we **feel** differently on various issues, **feelings** take over.

... and we end up with saying that the only thing that we can know is what we feel, what we can measure.

This God-consciousness restricts and restrains us from being free and stuffs us into molds into which we do not want to fit.

... and if we cannot be free we squawk loudly.

So what we end up is with POLITICAL CORRECTNESS because that is the only consciousness with which we can end up.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS rules because the majority run the show.

They have the power to vote – they run politics – they makes the laws.

The law is led by the sentiment of the majority of the people.

So in the end, what we want – DESIRE – degrades us into being just a person with a body, getting what we want – consumer junkies getting one fix after another – satisfying our DESIRES, because they rule and run our lives.

If we leave behind our GOD-IMAGE from our WorldView, we end up only with our BODIES. Pleasure is all that we have.

... and so we will wring out these bodies of ours and that of others for the sake of pleasure.

But God gave us a MIND, THOUGHTS, FEELINGS to connect to Him.

Put all these together and we begin to see that here is where our GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS is made alive.

Sin wreck us up, and so there needs to be a radical, revolutionary, major change in us so that what we have misused, might be brought back into right order or relationship to God.

God REORDERS our lives.

God comes to us through our mind through DIVINE REVELATION.

He does not let DESIRE, unrestricted desire, to run our lives.

**HIS WORD SETS THE STANDARDS / ABSOLUTES ...
because He knows that to which we need to respond to keep
us enjoying life to its max.**

God unifies our lives.

Consider how life works between parents and children. If they could, children would eat chocolate bars, chips, and wash it all down with pop.

But as parents, we have KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE that tells us if they eat like that we will not have any grandchildren. So we inform them and direct them towards brussel sprouts, peas, turnips and the like.

At a young age, when we tell them to eat their veggies, we are giving them “divine revelation”, because we know something they do not know. This prepares them for the future, though it may seem harsh at the moment.

DIVINE REVELATION knows that about which it talks.

... in a sense, the Great God, acts as the IMAGE CREATOR, and keeps us informed of things that we would not come to conclude on our own.

... He knows where it is all headed.

Our MIND is given God’s Truth to which our WILLS submit and to which our FEELINGS then adjust ... supporting our CHOICE.

At this point we are ALIVE to God.

This is the FRAME WORK, the IMAGE OF GOD, that once again becomes sensitive to God’s truth

The IMAGE OF GOD is God’s built in gift to us that gives us the capacity to KNOW AND LOVE God and others correctly and with feeling.

We do not order our own world.

God does.

Society has set apart God’s understanding of who we are but it has not replaced it with anything of worth.

Our moral life must be based on KNOWLEDGE, not feeling or political correctness.

It is not enough to have beliefs.

We must have true beliefs.

So here is what we end up without God.

We end up with rules without a relationship.

We can be nice people, yet the IMAGE OF GOD in us may not be alive.

We are not maxing out on life as God would has us to do.

Are we good people or is God’s image alive in us?

Compare yourself to the list:

MORALITY	GOD-CONNECTEDNESS
demands obedience	volunteers obedience
responds to law	responds to the Law-Giver
responsibility in this world	response to revelation beyond this world
duty	worship
points to our weaknesses	helps us overcome our weakness
leave us with guilt	introduces us to grace
tells us what to do	helps us get things done
what we SHOULD do	what we WILL do
commitment to people	commitment to God

WorldViews

<u>Secular Humanism</u>	<u>Cosmic Humanism</u>	<u>Biblical Christianity</u>
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<u>Theology:</u>	Atheist	Pantheism	Theist
<u>Philosophy:</u>	Natural Things Only	Focuses on Spiritual Nature Of Natural Things	Supernatural
<u>Biology:</u>	Darwinian Evolution	“t”heistic Evolution	Creation
<u>View of Man:</u>	Too Low	Too High	Balanced

... IN CONCLUSION ...

Key Thought:

God has placed His mark on each person ... to respond to it introduces us to the richness of life.

We live out our lives on the basis of our WorldView.

These are some of the things that we want to skip over.

This is complicated stuff for a Sunday morning.

But now we begin to see who we are.

People are not “just” people.

When we look at each other, if we just see people, life gets awfully messed up.

Should I get angry with you, that is not all that happens.

If I scream at you, hurt you, ignore you, what is happening is that I am belittling God’s workmanship.

It’s not just you.

You are made in His image ... and that leads us to having to live with this reality.

Being made in God’s image is what makes us special and life sacred.

We are not merely molecules of flesh.

We are not merely bodies with no future.

We are people who after our birth live forever ... with God in heaven, or without God in hell.

A person is the property of God

We are not our own masters.

We cannot just do whatever we want to do.

We may act independently, but we are responsible to our God ... fully accountable for our thoughts, words, actions.

That is why this whole thing of accepting Jesus Christ is so important.

Here is the PERFECT IMAGE OF GOD – JESUS CHRIST.

He becomes OUR KEY TO LIFE.