

Statement on Humanity

HUMANITY: We believe God created humankind immutably as male and female to reflect and bear His image. As such, human beings of every ethnicity, age, ability, as well as the pre-born deserve dignity, protection, honor, respect, and Christian love. Because of Adam and Eve's free choice to sin, God's image in all humankind has become distorted and relationship with God has become disrupted.

Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 139:13-14; Romans 1:18-27; Romans 5:12; Colossians 3:12-14; Titus 3:1-5; Revelation 7:9

Explanation:

We feel it is important to affirm a statement on the theology of humankind. This is a very common topic in the Affirmation of Faith for most churches and denominations. In a way, it is surprising that such a statement does not already exist in the Converge Affirmation. Our contemporary culture is wrestling with issues related to gender identity and racial conflict. Converge in its history has adopted resolutions on gender, abortion, child protection, and human worth, yet at this time, it also seems wise to express this conviction as a sincerely held doctrinal distinctive in our movement.

We believe that God created humankind in his own image as it clearly states in the Genesis account. Only people are described this way in the Bible. It distinguishes humans from the rest of creation, and it explains humankind's special relationship with God. We *bear* God's image in that it defines our very nature, that is, what it means to be human. People also *reflect* God's image as the attributes of God, in a limited degree, can be seen in human action. (Ref. Genesis 1:26-28, Acts 17:28, Colossians 3:12-13)

The Scripture says that both men and women are made in God's image. It is not greater in one person than another. Furthermore, we believe that human gender and sex are a gift from God and should not be redefined or altered by anyone's preferences. It is immutable. Even if someone were to behave like a different gender or have themselves surgically changed, it would never change how God created them to be. A person's genetic makeup in the sex chromosomes remains the same. Even in rare cases involving genetic disorders, we affirm that God does not make mistakes. Each person is God's workmanship, and by his will they were created and have their being. (Ref. Genesis 1:27, Deuteronomy 22:5, Deuteronomy 32:4, Ephesians 2:10, Revelation 4:11)

God's image also affects how we ought to treat our fellow human beings. We belong to God, and therefore all people are innately valuable. The sacredness of human life is an important principle in the Bible. God foreknows every person's existence, and each life begins in the womb. Homicide is condemned specifically because people bear God's image, and according to James, so is verbal abuse. Racism and injustice are evil because it denies people their God-given worth, and God is rescuing for himself people from every culture and nation. God's image in humankind is the basis for the great commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. (Ref. Genesis 9:6, Psalm 139:13-14, Habakkuk 2:12, Luke 10:27, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 1:4, James 3:9, Revelation 7:9)

Finally, the image of God in humankind has become corrupted by sin. Adam and Eve were the first people to disobey God by their own free choice. Since then, all people have exhibited the tendency to sin. Disobedience and sin has become part of human nature, and it separates people relationally with God and each other. Our sinful condition requires our salvation in Jesus Christ. (Ref. Genesis 3:6, Isaiah 59:2, Romans 5:12, Romans 7:18, Titus 3:1-5)