

Made in God's Image...

In my younger days, I was often curious and concerned as to what this means - as it seems more-than-a little presumptuous for human beings to say such a thing! The Latin phrase that's often used in this context, *Imago Dei*, does indeed mean **the image of God** - but not in the sense of any sort of physical likeness.

We're told in the Bible that **God is Spirit** - and **God is Love**. Furthermore, God describes himself in these words: "**I am**". The fact that He **is** should be sufficient in itself, yet so many aren't content with this - and these days require, more than ever, proof (most often through scientific investigation).

Being made in God's image is meant to imply that humans should possess characteristics that reflect God's nature; for example: His capacity for love and creativity; His capacity for reason and morality; His capacity for caring and nurturing.

By implication, human beings were created to be God's representatives on His world, gifted to us as our earthly home... We've not been spectacularly successful as stewards of the world's resources; nor its inherent beauty; nor as caring, sharing friends to each other (within nations, let alone between them).

So, humankind's relationship with God (which is His wish) is 'shaky' (to say the least), or non-existent. He loves us still, and wants us to 'come back to Him' - through faith in Jesus.

He'll never give up on us; believers have no cause to give up on Him.

Thought for the Week: To what extent can we demonstrate to others, who don't share our belief and faith, what God's really 'about'?

Well, we can think back on that phrase 'made in God's image' from the point of view of reflecting His character as Jesus did 2000 years ago (as a man), and learning from those He's inspired ever since:

- We were created to reflect God's attributes such as love, compassion, justice (righteous living), and creativity
 - That creativity includes a willingness to create and maintain loving, caring, sharing relationships with anyone and everyone who has the will to listen
- We have to strive to make the right moral and ethical choices, in spite of the myriads of emotions that might be triggered (some may, of course, be negative these days), and in spite of any human instincts to the contrary.

I think wavering- and non-believers really need to 'get it, deep down' in their hearts, that we are, indeed, representatives of the God who created us. And as such, we are all called on to take individual, as well as corporate, responsibility for caring for the Earth's inhabitants, as well as for harvesting and sharing its resources.

One thing's for sure, God not only created us 'in His image', to reflect His nature; He also created us with the potential to develop and grow (as individuals, and as a human race) to become more like Him. Whether or not the human race (as a whole) understands the implications of being made in God's image - and the challenges that undoubtedly lie ahead - remains to be seen.

Lord, may we seek to live our lives as You would have us do, in these uncertain and dangerous times; may we live up to Your wish for us to truly reflect your capacity for love and creativity - and walk the path shown to us by Jesus. Conform us to the likeness of Your Son. Amen.