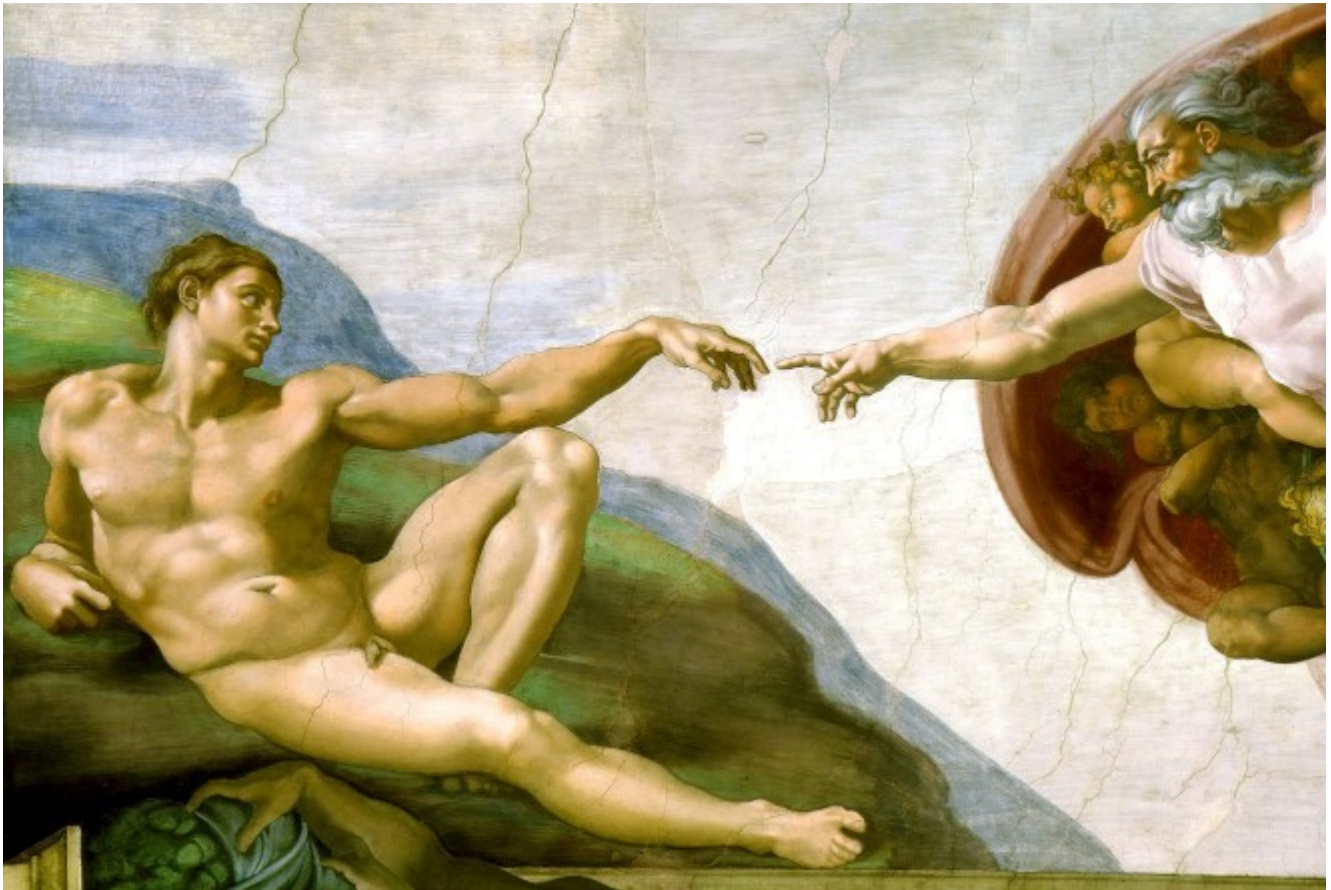


*This document is offered for discussion of basic Christian views and does not represent policy or officially agreed views of Anglican Essentials Wales or any of its member organisations.*

## Human dignity



The question of “Human dignity” for each person was back in headlines at the end of last month. More detail about the Industrial tribunal concerning Dr Mackereth had been revealed.

In one of the newspapers (the Belfast Newsletter) Adam Kula reported on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 that:

*Paragraph 197 of the ruling handed down by judge David Alan Perry states that “... belief in Genesis 1:27, lack of belief in transgenderism and conscientious objection to transgenderism in our judgment are incompatible with human dignity and conflict with the fundamental rights of others, specifically here, transgender individuals”*

Genesis chapter 1 verse 27 says:

*So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God He created them;  
male and female He created them*

So what does that actually mean?

In the Christian view we are all created equal. Christians do, however, expect people to become better (to constantly change for the better).

The verse quoted also means that men and women are created equal and are equally important to God. Now God created man from dust and God created woman from the man and so they are actually created from exactly the same creation and from the same dust: They, i.e. we, are equal.

This view that everyone is created equal is exactly where Genesis chapter 1 at verse 27 belongs at the very beginning of the Bible in which we are told:

*So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God He created them;  
male and female He created them.*

That fundamental concept, that we are all created in God's image, is then used throughout the Bible. If we are all created in God's image then we are all equal and all equally valuable. Jesus Christ tells us (Matthew's gospel chapter 5, verse 48):

*"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

We are all of equal worth, and all of us carry in us a part of the image of God. Together we know more about God because we can piece together all the different parts of the images we have encountered.

We are not independent, we are all of equal worth and we are complimentary to each other.

None of this means that the human being is God at all, it just means that everybody is equally valuable and as we look, and understand, each person, we can see something related to an aspect of God in them. Therefore, everyone is equally valuable, but none of us is God. This is precisely why Michelangelo painted God and Adam's fingers not quite touching each other. Not quite there.

We cannot reach God, but it is God who reached out to us. We still have free will and we still make mistakes but we are all completely valuable according to the Bible.

We are not perfect people and do not always get everything right. That is what makes Christianity so accessible to everyone because it offers forgiveness for getting things wrong. In fact it offers anyone forgiveness no matter who they are.

St Paul wrote, in the letter to the Romans at chapter 7 at verse 21, that he wanted to do good but kept on getting things wrong:

*<sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right therewith me. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am!*

*Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

So if even St Paul who is a really good person and a Saint keeps getting it wrong then who are we to suggest we are better than St Paul ? It follows that all us keeping making mistakes and getting things wrong, just as St Paul did.

If even St Paul constantly needs the forgiveness given by Jesus Christ then so does every one of us. This means that all of us need to constantly repent of the wrong we do and receive the forgiveness that Jesus Christ freely gives to every one of us. What matters is the recognition that we are imperfect and realising the value of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

The fact that we make mistakes doesn't make any of us unimportant in the Bible. All of us are still important and all of us are still valuable to God. Mistakes are instead a natural fact of life for every one of us. What we need to do is constantly repent and seek forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ, just as St Paul did.

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020