

# EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE: Reflections of the *Imago Dei*

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Reflections are remarkable. This summer I watched in awe as the sun rose over the ocean and created a path of reflected light that climbed and fell on the waves. The reflection of light from the Son is a good metaphor for this issue of the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)*. Together, the articles in your hand emphasize the *Imago Dei*, the reflection of God's likeness and characteristics in the human race. "Then God said 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...So God created man in his own image...male and female he created them'" (Genesis 1:26, 27 NIV). The *Imago Dei* is one of the basic assumptions of this journal.

The *JBIB* strives always to be an accurate, scholarly reflection of the *Imago*. For example, the Bible, which is one of the most direct ways God has revealed Himself (Heb. 1:1, 2 NIV), is a large part of each article. When we integrate the Bible with the appropriate academic literature, we understand more completely how men and women reflect God in the business of business.

## The Articles and the *Imago Dei*

Two essays in this issue emphasize this point. First, Randal Franz argues that many theories about organizations are incomplete because theorists ignore important aspects of the *Imago Dei*. A proper understanding of God's nature, as reflected in humanity, can deepen theories as different as transformational leadership and the Balanced Scorecard. Next Kevin Brown suggests that God's creativity is echoed in human production. Dr. Brown uses the notion of spontaneous order popularized by Friedrich Hayek, the well-known Austrian economist, and extends it to show how spontaneous order displays the *Imago Dei*.

This issue also includes four articles that demonstrate how God's characteristics echo in organizations. Two of the articles are theoretical, two empirical. First, Dov Fischer and Hershey Friedman map Dose's model of trust (2012) on three Psalms that apply God's traits of ability,

benevolence and integrity to leaders. Using Psalms to discuss God's image in leadership is particularly thought-provoking. Jennifer Dose responds by suggesting that these reflections of God can also be spread throughout the organization, and that they echo throughout Scripture.

In a significant development for integration scholarship, a growing number of researchers have responded to calls (Hamilton, 2005; Martinez, 2004; Smith, 2005) for the empirical testing of integration theory. In the first article in the issue, John Kilroy and his colleagues discuss how they developed a reliable instrument using the Beatitudes to test virtues in leaders, including some of the virtues suggested in the Fischer and Friedman article. As a test of the *Imago Dei*, this instrument could become a valuable addition to leadership studies.

Matthew Earnhardt, in a noteworthy contribution, reports the results of his research using an instrument developed from the Romans 12 motivational gifts. He tested person-job fit and job satisfaction in military leaders. The article may make us reevaluate what we think we know about the *Imago Dei*. Though marred by sin, the image of God is at the core of each human, which means that these gifts given to the Church, arguably, resonate in people who are not necessarily Christians.

Finally, Clive and Cara Beed tackle a topic that has received much attention in CBFA over the years: How should God's people reflect His image in regard to lending, indebtedness and interest? Their article is titled simply, "Jesus on Lending, Debt and Interest." Enjoy.

## Colleagues, Students, and the *Imago Dei*

Many of the people who read this journal are university professors and administrators. As we approach another school year, it is helpful to remember that the image of God is part of us, our colleagues, and our students. In regard to "how shall we then live," Calvin is possibly one of

the most practical theologians who has discussed the *Imago Dei*. Here is what he says:

The Lord commands all men without exception “to do good” [Hebrews 13:16]. Yet the great part of them are most unworthy if they be judged by their own merit. But here Scripture helps in the best way when it teaches that we are not to consider that men have merit of themselves but to look upon the image of God in all men, to which we owe all honor and love. However, it is among members of the household of faith that this same image is more carefully to be noted [Galatians 6:10], in so far as it has been renewed and restored through the Spirit of Christ.

Therefore, whatever man you meet who needs your aid, you have no reason to refuse to help him. Say, “He is a stranger”; but the Lord has given him a mark that ought to be familiar to you, by virtue of the fact that he forbids you to despise your own flesh [Isaiah 58:7, Vg.]. Say, “He is contemptible and worthless”; but the Lord shows him to be one to whom he has deigned to give the beauty of his image...Say that he does not deserve even your least effort for his sake; but the image of God, which recommends him to you, is worthy of your giving yourself and all your possessions. (Calvin, *Institutes* III. 7.6, p. 364)

Glory Be to God.

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