The Implications of the Imago Dei

In this talk...
I am going to argue that what we believe about the *Imago Dei* (Image of God) in us makes a significant difference to the way we view ourselves, others, the weak, the unborn, the elderly, the poor, the disfigured, war, genocide, euthanasia, racism, human rights and more.

I am also going to argue that while the Bible provides a ‘lofty’ view of humanity because of the *Imago Dei*, all that our secular society can provide is a pragmatic and ultimately vacuous, arbitrary and irrational justification for morality and human dignity. This simply follows from the *Imago Animalia* (Image of Animals) in us.

I am not going to attempt to prove God’s existence; I am arguing only for implications.
What the Bible says about the image of God?

Jesus (the God-man) is FULLY in God’s image:

- “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” (Colossians 1:15)
- “… the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

We were originally created in the image of God:

- “…Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness … God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:26-27)

Post-fall, we still bear the image of God but in some lesser way. Therefore, even post-fall, we cannot kill another human as if an animal:

- "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.” (Genesis 9:6)

Though distorted or cracked, the image of God in believers is being repaired to the original state:

- “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son…” (Romans 8:29)

Conclusion: *Imago Dei*

*We are still (to some degree) in the image of God*
What does secular/evolutionary thinking say?

• We have no idea how life started, (but it certainly wasn’t God! – my summary). (See for example Wikipedia’s *Origin of Life* entry.)

• Humans originated in Africa about 200,000 years ago and belong to the *Animalia* kingdom. (See for example Wikipedia’s *Human* entry.)

• Humans are thus made in the *Imago Animalia* (image of animals). This *Imago Animalia* is bio-historical – our history is carried in our genes.

**Conclusion: *Imago Animalia***
*We are made in the image of animals*
**What are the Implications?**

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<th><strong>Imago Dei (Image of God)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Imago Animalia (Image of animals)</strong></th>
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<td>We are made in God’s image, thus we have intrinsic dignity. We are special in the created order because we harbour God’s image. We are unlike the animals.</td>
<td>We are highly evolved animals that have managed to come out on top thru <em>natural selection</em>, and carry that image in our genes. We are no more special than any other animal.</td>
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<td>We have obligations to God as our creator, and also toward each other as spelt out in the Bible.</td>
<td>We have no obligations except toward ourselves the survival and propagation of our genes. (We can only <strong>appeal to pragmatism</strong> by claiming it is better for society if we all work together.)</td>
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<td>&quot;Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.” (Genesis 9:6)</td>
<td>Some say not to murder, but animals kill other animals every day. (<strong>Appeal to pragmatism</strong>: It would not be good for society’s stability if free murder were allowed.)</td>
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<td>“You shall not murder” (God). <strong>Psalm 139:13</strong> For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. <strong>Luke 1:15</strong> &quot;For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.</td>
<td>Foetus’s are animals and it is ok to kill animals. (Note: Peter Singer and post-birth abortion versus Peter Singer and animal rights.) (This cell needs clarification – Liz W).</td>
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### What are the Implications?

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<td>“Love your enemies … pray for those who persecute you … take care of the sick and poor” (Jesus)</td>
<td>There is nothing morally wrong will killing your enemies. They are just complex arrangements of atoms in motion -- and there aren’t any moral atoms in the periodic table.</td>
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<td>God made all men and women in His image, leaving no place for racism.</td>
<td>Racism is not PC in 2007 but that may differ in 2008. Because we are not bound by transcendent God-given law, we are free to change the rules as society and culture evolves.</td>
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“The time has come to take seriously the fact that we humans are modified monkeys, not the favoured Creation of a Benevolent God … we must recognize our biological past in trying to understand our interactions with others.”

“…the basis of ethics does not lie in God’s will … it is an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes to get us to cooperate. It is without external grounding. Like Macbeth’s dagger, it serves a powerful purpose without existing in substance.”

**Ruse and Wilson, 1991**
!! Clarification !!

- I am NOT claiming the secularist/evolutionist is any more or less moral than the Christian.
- I am claiming that the secularist/evolutionist is inconsistent and irrational, living as if ‘moral values’ exist while believing as if ‘moral values’ do not exist.
Questions: Human Rights

Statement:
The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." (emphasis added).

Questions:
• Who gives human beings equality/dignity/rights?
  – For the Christian: God (we are made in His image)
  – For the Secularist/evolutionist: The UN? Society? Culture?

• See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights
Questions: War

Statement:
Several ‘human rights’ organizations have condemned the US invasion of Iraq and the so-called ‘Israeli occupation’.

Question:
• From the secular/evolutionary worldview, what is inconsistent about the big guy beating up the little guy? Isn’t this just a continuation of the evolutionary process of natural selection extrapolated out to its logical conclusion?
Questions: Genocide

Statement:
In the last 70 years, we have had the atrocities of Hitler’s Germany, the war in the Balkans, Rwanda and so on. All involved genocide.

Question:
From the secular/evolutionary worldview, what is inconsistent about the strong wiping out the weak if it results in the progress of the strong?
Questions: Child Abuse

Statement:
It appears that most New Zealanders find “child abuse” totally unacceptable. In New Zealand, “child abuse” now extends in law all the way from killing a child through beating a child and now to even lightly smacking a child. In bygone times, horrendous acts of child sacrifice were perpetuated in various cultures.

Question:
Given the secular/evolutionist worldview, what is wrong with killing a child if it results in the betterment of society?
Some have recently attempted to show a correlation between abortion and crime in the USA. Given the secular/evolutionist worldview, what is wrong with using abortion as a crime preventative?
Conclusion 1

In this talk, I have attempted to show that:

Being made in the *Imago Dei*
- leads naturally to a lofty view of humanity.
- leads naturally to human rights, the care for the weak, the poor and so on.

On the other hand:

Being made in the *Imago Animalia*
- leads to a confused, inconsistent view of humanity since secularists/evolutionists behave as if ‘rights’ exist while denying the foundation of these rights.
- These claims have no foundation other than pragmatism. **Pragmatic solutions change as society changes.**
Conclusion 2

The *Imago Dei* is a simple and coherent part of the Christian worldview.

However, our secular/evolutionist society claims to believe in human rights, women’s rights, children’s rights, minority rights and so on while the foundations for their belief system are strangely absent (other than pragmatism).

Therefore, our secular/evolutionist society leads a Schizophrenic existence, claiming on the one hand the benefits of being made in the *Imago Dei* while on the other hand insisting we are made in the *Imago Animalia*.

In essence, secularists/evolutionists borrow our Christian values, picking and choosing which ones to keep and which to discard, all the while condemning the source of these values.
Dr. Peter May: What is the Image of God?

Dr. Peter May makes six points regarding the Image of God in us:

1. Creativity
2. Intelligence
3. Aesthetics
4. Morality
5. Relationships
6. Spirituality
Further Questions

What does the Imago Dei say about:

• Finger nail biting?
• Body piercing?
• Eating?
• Exercising?
• Dress?
• Language?
Systematic Theology

- BIBLIOLOGY: The Doctrine of the Scriptures
- THEOLOGY PROPER: The Doctrine of God
- CHRISTOLOGY: The Doctrine of the Son
- PNEUMATOLOGY: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
- ANGELOLOGY: The Doctrine of Angels (Elect & Fallen)
- **ANTHROPOTOLOGY: The Doctrine of Man**
- HAMARTIOLOGY: The Doctrine of Sin
- SOTERIOLOGY: The Doctrine of Salvation

From: *The Theology Program*, www.bible.org
References

Theopedia: Image of God:

BeThinking: What is the Image of God, Dr. Peter May
Amnesty International’s vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards…(emphasis added)

– Statute of Amnesty International, 27th International Council meeting, 2005

Ref:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amnesty_International