
Fundamental anthropological principles for Christian universities:

The image and likeness in Adam's beatific vision

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Opsomming

Die universiteitswese verkeer in 'n krisis. Een van die hoofredes wat aangevoer word vir hierdie krisis, is die universiteite se onvermoë om studente te onderrig oor wat 'n mens is. Hierdie bring mee dat universiteite se funksie verskraal word tot die opleiding van hiper-individualistiese spesialiste, wat gebrek het aan 'n etiese begroning. Christelike universiteite kan die krisis van onetiese individualistiese spesialiste binne universiteitswese aanspreek deur die onderrig van fundamentele Christelike antropologiese beginsels. Om die krisis binne universiteitswese dieper te verstaan word gekyk na wat aanleiding gegee het tot die krisis, met die fokus op die wyse waarop die gebrek aan fundamentele antropologiese beginsels bygedra het tot die krisis binne universiteite. As antwoord op die krisis binne universiteitswese word fundamentele antropologiese Christelike beginsels vanuit 'n Reformatoriese lewens-en-wêreldbeskoulike raamwerk bespreek. Daar word spesifiek gefokus op die Skoonheidsvisie van die eerste en tweede Adam. Laastens word gekyk na die unieke bydrae wat die Christelike universiteitswese kan maak ten opsigte van die onderrig van Christelike antropologiese beginsels vanuit die implikasie van die Skoonheidsvisie van Adam. Die praktiese implikasies van die onderrig van Christelike

antropologiese beginsels vanuit die implikasie van die Skoonheidsvisie is dat studente deurlopend in die aktiwiteite en kurrikulum van die universiteit gekonfronteer word met 'n Christian lewensvisie in alle aspekte van die lewe. Verder behoort Bybelonderrig 'n kernrol te speel in die samestelling van die kurrikulum, maak nie saak watter veld van studie studeer word nie. Laaste is dat universiteitspersoneel, dosente en studente doelbewus geleenthede moet skep om saam die Here te aanbid.

Abstract

Universities are in a crisis. One of the main reasons for this crisis is the inability of the universities to teach students what human beings are, reducing the function of universities to the training of hyper-individualistic specialists who lack an ethical foundation. This article looks at the current crisis within modern university life, focusing on the lack of fundamental teaching of anthropological principles. It explores the unique contribution that Christian universities can make with regard to teaching fundamental anthropological principles. Focusing on humans created in the image of God and specifically the beatific vision of Adam, three implications for the teaching of anthropological principles within Christian universities are highlighted, namely the created divine consciousness as part of the image of God, knowledge of God in the repositioning of humans before God, and the importance of worship within Christian universities. The article seeks to demonstrate that the teaching of the beatific vision should occupy a prominent place in the Christian university's curriculum. The practical implications of teaching Christian anthropological principles from the implication of the beatific vision is that students are constantly confronted in the activities and curriculum of the university with a Christian worldview in all aspects of life. Furthermore, Bible teaching should play a key role in the composition of the curriculum, no matter what field of study. Lastly, university staff, lecturers and students must deliberately create opportunities to worship the Lord together.

Keywords:**Adam, Anthropology, Image of God, Christian universities, Multiversity, Likeness, Beatific vision**

1. Introduction

Works from secular universities, as well as criticisms from Christian academics, show that there is a crisis in modern university education due to a feeling of purposelessness (Readings, 1997:15; Glanzer, Alleman & Ream, 2017:10). Christian universities can address the crisis of unethical individualistic specialists created by modern university education by the teaching of fundamental Christian anthropological principles. To understand the crisis within universities more deeply, this article looks at what gave rise to the crisis, focusing on how the lack of fundamental anthropological principles contributed to this crisis. In response to the crisis within the university system, fundamental anthropological Christian principles are discussed from a framework of creation, fall and redemption, with a particular focus on the beatific vision of Adam. Finally, this article looks at the unique contribution that a Christian university can make in teaching Christian anthropological principles from the implication of Adam's beatific vision.

2. Problem statement: A crisis within the university system

The great interest in university historiography over the past few years is an indication of the search for what the nature and task of a university should be (Dhondt, 2015:234). Kerr's (2001) famous book *The uses of the university* is an essential work in discussing the crisis that has arisen within universities. Kerr introduced a new word into the historiography of universities, namely, the "multiversity". Kerr points out that the modern university can no longer be considered a university and has rather turned into a multiversity. By the term multiversity, Kerr refers to the multiple functions of the modern university and the multiple communities that serve the university. The multiversity no longer has a uniform vision like the universities of old, but multiple visions; it no longer holds one belief, but multiple religious beliefs. Separated from its historical roots, the multiversity seeks to make sense of its task and function.

A task that the multiversity has imposed on itself is the training of specialists who contribute to the service of the state and filling the country's shortage of professionals. The problem that has emerged, however, within the multiversity, is that these particular subject specialists show a lack of ethical grounding and judgment. The multiversity, which emerged within the Postmodern era, with its plural views of life, multi-religiosity, multiple cultures and lack of a view of truth, has made the teaching of a uniform ethical assessment of right and wrong impossible. What is considered as acceptable ethical behaviour for the atheistic lecturer in one classroom is unethical behaviour for the Christian lecturer in the classroom next door. As a result, students receive a pluralistic education, without any fundamental frameworks to help them make an ethical assessment.

The result of this type of education is exceptional subject matter specialists, who, for example, know how to make a great deal of money and are good at marketing, but who do not have any ethical foundation. Lewis (2007:1) describes the modern multiversity as a university that produces "excellence without a soul". Problems are tackled immorally, and a selfish attitude of "what makes the most money" becomes the moral basis against which creativity is measured. The smart students produced by modern multiversities are extremely dangerous to society. They are almost like smart robots that become more intelligent than humans, but without a moral function. The thought of millions of students being trained in this way is frightening (Glanzer, Carpenter & Lantinga, 2011:723).

Schindler (2013:77) explains that the modern university with its multifaceted approach is focused on specialisation in the sciences and that this specialisation is leading to fragmentation within the university. However, it is not new that universities today are largely specialised. According to Schindler, this is an aspect that was pointed out in the 1960s. The problem that academics like MacIntyre (2006) and Marion (2013) point out is that the effects of specialisation and fragmentation have destroyed the university's sense of community. If a student does not know what a community is, how can a student apply his service to a community? The university's essential task of being in the service of a community becomes a service to a world community with more than one ethos, multiple approaches, multiple religiosities and multiple cultures. The problem, however, is that these multiversities with their "everything for all" vision ultimately lead to a "nothing for no one" methodology, as Kerr (2001:1) notes: "The multiversity, is so many things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself."

Students who receive education in the multiversity are trained for the “choice culture”, where there are millions of choices. Within these choices, there are no boundaries, a “beyondness”, as Goosen (2015:89) refers to it. The irony of Goosen’s point is that these students fall into meaninglessness. The fear of the whole or the global without borders makes the students afraid of participating in the whole; to put it more simply, the students would rather sit in their rooms and play computer games than participate in the campus culture. These students become hyper-individualists cut off from being intrinsically dependent on others. These individuals are henceforth surrendered to the constant threat of existential loneliness, anxiety and feelings of meaninglessness.

Goosen (2015:89) describes hyper-individualists as ‘monsters’. In fairy tales, monsters are dangerously mysterious figures who live on their own in a forest. They do not live in communities but are a threat to the community. They come out of the forest at night and attack the community located in a town, looting, killing and stealing for their survival. The problem with the self-centred, individualistic “student monsters”, however, is that they do not live in the forests, but in the communities, destroying the communities from within. With their exceptional specialist talents and unethical actions, they can cause a world recession at any time.

Underlying the training of these ‘monsters’ is the inability of the multiversity to teach students what human beings are. Throughout the centuries, it has been a core task of the university to teach students a fundamental anthropology. Ream and Glanzer (2013:9) identify the inability of modern universities or multiversities to teach a fundamental anthropology as one of the key aspects contributing to the crisis within universities. The inability of modern universities to answer the question “what it is to be human?” causes the university to lose its purpose and contributes to the education of self-centred, individualistic students. Christian universities using God’s Word as the basis for the formation of fundamental principles, such as anthropological principles, can and should, according to Ream and Glanzer (2013:97), make a valuable contribution to students’ identity formation.

2.1 Fundamental anthropological principles for Christian universities: Humans created in the image of God and the implications of the beatific vision of Adam

To compile fundamental anthropological principles for Christian universities, a variety of approaches and frameworks can be considered. In this article, a general systematic theological framework is combined with a framework of

creation, fall and redemption. The systematic theological main framework is the threefold division of:

1. Humans created in the image of God.
2. The composition and faculties of human beings (which include the aspects of which humans consists, for example, body and soul, gender and the faculties of intellect, will and desires).
3. The task of humans.

This article focuses only on the fundamental anthropological principles regarding humans created in the image of God, and more specifically the beatific vision of Adam. Humans created in the image of God is discussed within the framework of creation, fall and redemption (Wolters, 2005:10), whereas this article focuses only on the creation of Adam and Adam's beatific vision. Although the frameworks help in the exposition of concepts, the related aspects between the different concepts in the frameworks are part of the full understanding of the anthropological principles. In this sense, the "fullness of being human" should be discussed in every framework, with the Word of God as the basis for determining each principle.

2.2 Humans created in the image of God: the Beatific Vision of Adam

The doctrines of the beatific vision are about humans being in the presence of God. Allen (2018:72) notes: "The beatific vision does not appear out of nowhere, canonically speaking, but comes amidst a narrative wherein God is occasionally 'seen'. Genesis 3:8 recounts the walking of God in the garden of Eden, suggesting that he was ocularly available for engagement by Adam and Eve." According to Allen (2018:59) the beatific vision is a doctrine that receives little attention in modern Protestant theology. The beatific vision is discussed mainly under Prolegomena and Eschatology. The doctrines of the beatific vision not only deal with the ultimate hope of humanity but also filter into other topics such as epistemology, doctrines regarding revelation and in connection with the topic of this article, anthropology (King, 2018:93).

From the subject of Biblical Theology, clear temple images are highlighted in the creation account and especially the composition of the Garden of Eden (Wenham, 1986). Eden is described as a temple, where Adam, formed after the image of God, as the head and root, or representative of the whole human race, stands in a covenant agreement with God. Adam stands in the presence of God, and in this covenant relationship, Adam finds meaning in who he is, and his life has a purpose. The meaning of Adam's life lies in his covenant with God and in living in the presence of God. Adam's life

has a purpose because he responds to the calling of God. Only in this intimate covenant relationship does Adam's life make sense; outside of the covenant relationship, Adam's life lapses into total meaninglessness. It is in the covenant relationship that the image of God comes into its own (Witsius, 2014:61). Humans, created in the image of God, should of course not only be reduced to the covenant relationship between God and Adam, but the covenant relationship, where Adam lives in the presence of God, is the starting point for understanding the image of God.

The first text in Scripture that introduces the image of God is Genesis 1:26-27: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." The Hebrew word "adam" refers to the man Adam and not the entire human race, although Pop (1958:49) places the emphasis in the translation on "adam" referring to the entire human race, he acknowledges that "adam" is standing here in the singular form. The image of humans lies first and foremost in the covenantal headship of Adam. As Witsius (2014:44) notes: "This covenant is an agreement between God and Adam, formed after the image of God, as the head and root, or representative of the whole human race."

It is important to understand that Adam was the first human created in the image of God, especially in terms of issues surrounding the doctrine of original sin and the doctrine of the second Adam, Jesus Christ. Adam's image does not refer to the image of every male figure. Adam's image is unique in the sense that he was created as the covenant head of all mankind, Eve as well as Seth (Gen. 5:3). The fall of mankind, therefore, does not take place in Eve, but in Adam (Rom. 5:12-21). This does not mean that Eve, Seth, Cain or all of mankind were not created in the image of God, but it does mean that mankind's image cannot be considered separate from Adam. Adam, as the first person created in the image of God, contains a common element that binds all mankind together (Van Til, 2003:120). In a sense, all people are created in the image of God, believers and unbelievers, and all are bound to one another because they are bound to Adam (Stoker, 1967:93).

The two words used to explain the image of God are 'image' (*tselem*) and 'likeness' (*demût*). Two important passages that mention image in connection with likeness are Genesis 1:26 and 5:1. These verses are about Adam who was created in the image and likeness of God. Then there is Genesis 5:3, where Adam begets a son according to his likeness and image. Nowhere

else is the Bible does image and likeness stand in parallel with each other as in these texts. The term *tselem* is used sixteen times in the Old Testament. The word refers mainly to 'representative'. Five times it is used as humans being made in the image of God. Most of the time it is used as an image. Numerous terms are used for depiction, but *tselem* is mostly used as an image that represents a divine figure. In the context of the Ancient Near East, there was a *tselem* (image) in the temples of the various religions that represented a 'god' (Archer, Harris, & Waltke, 1980:191).

Demût (likeness) is the substantive form of *damah*, which means 'comparison'. Likeness should not be confused with the idea that when one looks at humans, one sees God (Pop, 1958:46). Following texts such as Isaiah 40:18, 25; 46:5 and Psalm 50:21, it is clear that there is nothing with which God can be compared. Ezekiel and Isaiah, for example, are very careful not to say that they have seen God; therefore they rather say that they have seen the likeness of God, not God himself, but rather an image of God, or something that represents God.

The treatment of the image of God in Systematic Theology usually attempts to determine a connection between the concepts of image and likeness. Roman Catholic theology states that "image" refers to human's structural equality with God, which was not affected by the fall. "Likeness" then refers to human's moral image that he received from God; this image was destroyed by the fall (Archer, Harris, & Waltke, 1980:191). Others, like Humbert (1940), regard *demût* as an addition to *tselem*, intending to soften *tselem* so that the image of God is not seen as an exact copy of God. Schmidt (1964) believes that there is no difference between the concepts and that they are used as synonyms. Clines (1968:103) further feels that 'likeness' rather reinforces the concept 'image'. Thus, according to Clines, man is not just an image, but it is a likeness-image, which rather emphasises the uniqueness of man's position.

Important concepts are formulated from the etymological development of the words *tselem* and *demût*. The danger, however, is that the image of God is narrowed down to specific parts of human beings, which causes the concept of humans as a whole to be lost. According to Smith (2017:381) "No part of man is emphasized as independent of other parts; not because the various parts are not important, but because the Word of God is concerned precisely with the whole man in his relation to God." Focusing on the image of God being in the presence of God, the emphasis of the image of God shifts to the demands which God's glorious presence places on the image of God. Unlike the beliefs of the Ancient Near East, there is not a man-made image

of an idol in God's temple, but a God-made image of God in the temple of God. The image of God is in this sense firstly relational or rather covenantal, bound to the presence of God. For Adam to be a true image of God, he must be in the tabernacle, in the temple, before the throne of God, in other words in the presence of God.

In the history of salvation, God reveals that it is extremely dangerous to be in his presence. It is dangerous in the sense that God's glory is a consuming fire (Ex. 24:17). Anything or anyone who is not holy or pure will be consumed by God's holiness (Alexander, 2009:150). Examples of the dangers that God's holiness poses for unholy people approaching God form an important part of the Pentateuch. For example, God warns Moses: "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). At Mount Sinai during the establishment of the covenant with the people of Israel, the Lord warns: "Moses alone shall come near to the LORD, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him" (Ex. 24:2). Moses could not even enter the tent of meeting after the glory of the Lord had filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35). And with the death of Nadab and Abihu, God reveals the obvious danger that his glory poses if He is approached in an unclean manner: "Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. And they put strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And fire went out from the presence of the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (Lev. 10:1-2).

From these passages, it is clear that God's presence places demands on being human. God is not going to adapt His glory to fit human beings. Humans must change to be in the presence of God. Adam was in the presence of God as an image of God without being consumed. The image of God should therefore first be understood from the created state in which Adam was before the fall, in the covenant relationship with God. Adam was truly image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demût*) in the Garden of Eden (also represented as a temple) in the presence of God. Adam was truly image and likeness in the sense that it included his composition (body and soul), faculties (intellect, will, affectivity) as well as his task. The qualities that Adam possessed as image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demût*) of God are identified by Witsius (2014:48) as true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. For humanity to be a true image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demût*) of God, they must be in the temple.

Therefore, humans must be able to stand in the presence of God and stand in a covenant relationship with God.

While the words image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demût*) are used by Clines (1968:103) as synonyms, it seems that there is a clearer distinction between the words in the work of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. From the doctrine of the beatific vision, it appears that the word likeness rather refers to the ability of humanity to stand before God (Allen, 2018:106-107). To look at "likeness" from the narrative of Eden as a temple and humans as the image of God in the presence of God, the concept "likeness" should also be understood from the specific position of humans being like God. The biblical concept of likeness is not the same as the Modern-Western concept of likeness, which refers to a sense of being equal (Fessler, 2008:8). The biblical concept of likeness indicates "positioning towards". An example of this is Israel's different tribes, each in its own place, in equal standing or position before God (Num. 2).

For Christ to work out the salvation of the church, He had to become equal to or like man. "Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6-7) and also: "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebr. 2:17). The words like and likeness carry a semantic but also conceptually related idea. Christ, as it were, accepted the likeness of man, but without sin, to make the fallen man conform to his image. Jesus Christ is the second Adam, the true image of God (Col. 1:15). Although all mankind is not separate from the first Adam, the restoration of the image of God is not found in the first Adam, but in the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

When Adam as the representative of humanity was banished from the garden, away from the presence of God, the first Adam's likeness to God was lost. In the second Adam, Jesus Christ, the likeness is restored. But according to Beale (2011:879) in the restoration of the likeness of humanity, the eschatological principle of "already, but not yet" applies. God's people has already been restored in Christ and His people in union with Christ can appear before the throne of God, but not yet in perfection, because God through his Spirit causes His people to change into the image and likeness of Christ. That is why John says: "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we

shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). We will be completely equal to Jesus Christ as the new Head of humanity and we will be to his likeness, because we will see Him as He is. Being in the likeness of Christ should not, according to Simango (2006:88), be understood that the believers will be little christs, but that believers will be able to stand in the presence of God because they are changed into the image of Christ. Spurgeon (1856) titled his sermon on this text (1 John 3:2) "The Beatific Vision". In the sermon, he expands the powerful concept of the change that must take place in humans to be able to see Christ as He now is. "And yet there are some of you that I know in my heart, and you know yourselves, will not see him, unless you have a change—unless you have a new heart and a right spirit."

2.3 The unique implications of teaching the beatific vision within Christian universities

One of the core components of Christian universities is the teaching of a Christian anthropology. In the teaching of a Christian anthropology, concepts such as student identity formation come into play. Students are therefore confronted in their studies with the question "Who am I?". From Adam's beatific vision, numerous implications for teaching anthropological principles within Christian universities can be deduced. In this article, only three are highlighted, namely, the divine consciousness as part of the image of God, knowledge of God in the repositioning of humans before the face of God and the importance of worship within Christian universities.

The first implication is the divine consciousness as part of the image of God. Calvin (1984:1.3.1) deduced from the image of God that there is a created divine consciousness (*sensus divinitatis*) in humans and that this divine consciousness was not lost after the fall of Adam and Eve, although the fall has a definite effect on the created divine consciousness of humans. If the *sensus divinitatis* were applied as a principle within Christian universities, it would mean that the university teaches from the presupposition that there is a divine consciousness in their students, and that in their curriculum, the university can speak to the divine consciousness of the student.

The second implication that can be highlighted is the knowledge of God in the repositioning of humans before God. The teaching regarding the created divine consciousness in humans is closely related to the positioning of humans before God. Human beings' sinful nature after the fall causes humans to suppress the created divine consciousness (Rom.1:19-21), but God, through his grace and the light of his Word, makes humans aware of

their lost condition. Only through the repositioning of humans, by becoming conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, will humans experience meaning in their lives. This repositioning of God's people is part of the doctrine of the beatific vision. In the beatific vision, human's positioning before God and also the implications of being restored in the image of Christ are considered.

The teaching of the beatific vision is, as it were, an answer to the question "Who am I before God?" Calvin's famous answer to the question "Who am I?" is still just as relevant today. According to Calvin (1984:1.1.1), humans will only know who they are if they know who God is. This is also why the teaching of God's Written Word, the Bible, should be an important source of knowledge within the Christian university's curriculum. Humans can only come to a deeper knowledge of God by the knowledge of God's Word. A Christian university cannot claim the title Christian if the teaching of God's Word does not form part of the curriculum (Van Til, 2003:19).

The last implication deduced from Adam's beatific vision is the importance of worship. Worship and the implication of worship should occupy a central place in the teaching of a Christian anthropology. Ream and Glanzer (2013:14) state that a Christian university cannot call itself Christian if there is no worship within the university. Human beings' worship of God is an orderly structuring of their identity. The order of understanding the image of God does not begin with the composition of human beings' constitution, faculties or task, but in the worship of God. Students and lecturers worshipping the Lord together forms what Ream and Glanzer (2013:14) call the "*telos*", the purpose of a Christian university. If a group does not know what the purpose of their gathering is, then their gathering loses its meaning, and it soon degenerates into meaninglessness. The main purpose of the Christian university is to worship God and do everything to His glory. But worshipping God requires a lot of practice, and without this practice, however, the Christian university loses its purpose. Ream and Glanzer (2013:24) notes: "Failure to place Christian worship at the center of our lives, and in the case of the Christian university, at the center of our common educational experience is to allow us to run the risk of being re-enslaved to gods of our own creation."

The practical implications of teaching the beatific vision within Christian universities is that students are constantly confronted in the activities and curriculum of the university with a Christian worldview in all aspects of the students' lives. Furthermore, Bible teaching should play a key role in the compilation of the curriculum, in all types of subject fields. Last practical implication of teaching the beatific vision within Christian universities is that

university staff, lecturers and students must deliberately create opportunities to worship the Lord together. This worship can take place in the form of joint set apart events for specific Christian holidays throughout the year.

3. Conclusion

This article investigated the current crisis within modern university life with a specific focus on the lack of fundamental teaching of anthropological principles. Thereafter, the unique contribution that Christian universities can make to the teaching of fundamental anthropological principles was explored. There was a focus on humanity being created in the image of God and specifically the beatific vision of Adam. From the beatific vision of Adam, three implications for the teaching of anthropological principles within Christian universities were highlighted. These three implications are the created divine consciousness as part of the image of God, knowledge of God in the repositioning of humans before God, and the importance of worship within Christian universities. The article sought to demonstrate that the teaching of the beatific vision should occupy a prominent place in the Christian university's curriculum.

The modern-day Christian university is not a return to the primitive thoughts of the first universities, but is a recognition of the diversity in God's creation and with it the recognition that God is Creator. Furthermore, the unity and diversity studied within the universities cannot be understood outside the knowledge of God. According to Glanzer, *et al.*, (2017:5) to understand the identity and essence of university life "includes its central identity and the story that connects that identity to the transcendent story of the universe and its Author". The multiversity's problem is that it has lost the bigger picture. For people to understand their own identities (husband, wife, child, student, parent, Christian, lecturer, and so forth) they need an overarching identity and story in which they can find their own identity. Apart from this overarching whole, humanity is like a helpless dog floating on the waters of a great ocean. Christians find their identities and order of their identities in their covenant relationship with God, in the first and second Adam.

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