

Humans, the *Ad Imaginem*: A Constructive Study in Building Human Relations with Other Created Beings

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ABSTRACT

This article examines human identity as *ad Imaginem* by Niels Henrik Gregersen¹ as an approach to build social relations between humans and non-humans. The author uses qualitative research methods by explaining the theological meaning of identity imposed on humans from biblical sources and the thoughts of theologians. Furthermore, the author describes the opportunities to build social relations between humans and non-humans as the implications of his identity as *ad Imaginem*, shown by Christ, the Imago Dei. Christ as Imago Dei becomes human inspiration as *ad Imaginem*, in every day. This study shows the process of reflecting on the theology of believers that Gregersen carried out in building human consciousness that cares and is willing to embrace other creations.

Keywords: Imago Dei, *ad Imaginem*, relation, creation, eco-theology

¹ Niels Henrik Gregersen. 'Deep Incarnation: Why Evolutionary Continuity Matters in Christology'. Toronto Journal of Theology Vol. 26, No. 2 (2 June 2016): 173–88.

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars understood *Imago Dei* as human imagery with God (cf. Gen. 1:26-28). For a long time, people believed that humans were entirely the image of God. Gregersen explains that the word *Imago Dei* only refers to Christ alone, not all human. Karl Barth referred to humans as a similitude. It means resembling Christ, while Christ himself is *Imago Dei*.² Christ incarnates to save and embrace humans and all other creations. He incarnated to save the earth, which is contained all creation. Jürgen Moltmann expresses that *Imago Dei* refers to Christ as the mediator:³ Christ came to save the world from sin. The world not only relates to humans but also all creation.

If *Imago Dei* refer to Christ, then what is the actual status of humans? Hilary of Poitiers calls humans *ad Imaginem*. That is to say that God created humans in His image.⁴ Humans are on the way to being like Christ, the *Imago Dei*. This paper interprets humans' status as *ad Imaginem* to construct social relations with other creations. We can see the relationship of Christ's salvation for the world (humans and other creatures). He invites humans to participate actively in saving other creations from destruction. Humans have space in Christ to work on that caring role.

We utilize qualitative research by doing a literature study. We describe the definition of *Imago Dei* and *ad Imaginem* as approaches to building social relations between humans and non-humans. Furthermore, we explain some principles of such relation. In addition, we analyze the *ad Imaginem* approach to see its relevance in everyday life. Finally, this article offers

² Nathan Macdonald, 'The *Imago Dei* and Election: Reading Genesis 1:26–28 and Old Testament Scholarship with Karl Barth', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10 Number 3 (July 2008): 319, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2400.2007.00283.x>.

³ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation an Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (St Albans Place, London: SCM PRESS LTD, 1985), 218.

⁴ Gerald P. Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology* (Madison Avenue, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 37–38.

theological steps to build harmonious social relations between humans and all creation.

DISCUSSION

Niels Henrik Gregersen argues, "Imago Dei refers to Christ. He is the fullness of invisible God. He in human form, repaired relationships between God, humans, and non-humans damaged by sin."⁵ Humans understand their relationship in two ways: vertical (relation to God) and horizontal (relation to neighbours). However, many people ignore human relations with other creations. Therefore, we raise some research questions. Do humans need to have relationships with non-human beings? How do humans build such relationships? In examining these questions, we offer a theological basis for understanding humans' identity as *ad Imaginem* instead of Imago Dei.

Many texts in the Bible mention Imago Dei. Here we chose Genesis 1:26 and Colossians 1:15-16. According to Charles Lee Feinberg, Genesis 1:26 does not define Imago Dei as humans. Feinberg assumes that several interpretations did it from various approaches and interests.⁶ Those interpretations designate humans as Imago Dei, representing God in the world. Such a notion gives humans the power to share in God's government and sovereignty to rule the earth. In other words, God uses His image in humans as administrators to manage the earth.⁷

We understand Genesis 1:26-27 by exploring two Hebrew words: tselem (image or likeness) and demuth (similar). Walter Kaiser defines tselem as an engraved or carved copy.⁸ In

⁵ Niels Henrik Gregersen Gregersen, 'Deep Incarnation: Why Evolutionary Continuity Matters in Christology', *Toronto Journal of Theology* Vol. 26, No. 2 (2 June 2016): 177-78, <https://doi.org/10.3138/tjt.26.2.173>.

⁶ T. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Michigan, USA: Brazos Press Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2005), 17-18.

⁷ Middleton, 26-27.

⁸ Middleton, 45-46.

Genesis 1:26, *tselem* expresses man's resemblance to God. It is also used to describe Adam's resemblance to Seth's Father in Genesis 5:3. So *tselem* and *demuth* were used as a predicate to regulate other creations, as stated in Genesis 1:28. Then *Imago Dei* referred to humans, resulting in a role to care for the earth.⁹ It also points out responsibilities to manage nature in the name of God. As a result, humans being created in the image of God does not show similarity but in treating other creations. Humans are also called *secundum Imaginem*, an image in progress towards perfection.¹⁰

The word *Imago Dei* also contains a priestly dimension. Humans not only act as guardians and caretakers of the rest of creation but also as priests over the rest of creation. It means to link and share heavenly blessings with non-humans until the day when heaven and earth are redeemed, filled with justice and peace.¹¹ Imitating God the Creator, humans are concerned with the needs and struggles of other creatures.

C.L. Crouch sees *Imago Dei* in Genesis 1:26-27 as a phrase with a linguistic and cultural background. It contains the relationship and responsibility of parents to children. The image of God in humans is seen as a parent-child relationship to generate duties and responsibilities. Herein lies human's identity as *ad Imaginem*, to continue the work of the Father. The Hebrew words *tselem* and *demuth* are not intended in the literal sense, as if God gave birth to the first human (Adam). It is a metaphor to explain the relationship between God and humans.¹² God is the Creator and the parent. He bequeathed His face in the form of a human for the responsibility as a guardian.¹³

⁹ Middleton, 88–89.

¹⁰ Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology*, 73–75.

¹¹ Boersma, 95.

¹² C. L. Crouch, 'Genesis 1:26–7 as A Statement of Humanity's Divine Parentage', *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 61, Pt 1 (April 2010): 1–2.

¹³ Crouch, 12–13.

Humans are living beings who submit to God's words.¹⁴ The particularity of humans is that God gave breath to humans' nostrils. Therefore humans must depend entirely on God, live in humility, and imitate His actions. As the first man, Adam had to care for the earth because he was formed from its dust. Humans need to be close and friendly with the earth as their origin. As a matter of fact, humans damaged the earth as their origin.¹⁵

The word *Imago Dei* in Colossians 1:15-16 affirms Christ as the image of the invisible God. Christ is the *Imago Dei*. He is the radiance of God's glory. In Him contained the nature of the Father, which has been perfectly manifested. He made everything invisible about the Father visible. The old Adam was corrupted by sin, so God renewed His creation with the second Adam (cf. 1 Cor. 15:47).

Besides being the image of God, Christ was the firstborn of all that existed even before creation.¹⁶ These words affirm that it was with Him that all creation came into being. The term "Firstborn" in Colossians 1 refers to the pre-existence of Christ who existed before anything else. He is the owner of the cosmos. The word firstborn states that Christ not only existed before but also as the Cosmic Christ. All creation is in Him.¹⁷

Paul states that Christ, who died to redeem His people, is the Sustainer of the universe. He is also the Unifier of cosmic life. Christ was the firstborn for the creation of the heavens and the earth. God pleased to "reconcile all to Him through Christ." This atonement is a universal reconciliation of creation. If God created "everything" (both in heaven and on earth) through Him, then "everything" was reconciled to God through Him. There is

¹⁴ Macdonald, 'The *Imago Dei* and Election: Reading Genesis 1:26–28 and Old Testament Scholarship with Karl Barth', 314.

¹⁵ Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology*, 318.

¹⁶ Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The *Imago Dei* in Genesis 1*, 103–4.

¹⁷ Middleton, 108–9.

no difference in saving creation.¹⁸ The universe has been involved in humans' conflict (sin and evil) with their Creator, so it needs to be reconciled with Him. Christ replaced the conflict with peace by shedding His blood on the cross. Everything in the universe has been subject to Christ just as it was created for Him.¹⁹

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST:

RECONCILIATION FOR ALL CREATION

Hilary of Poitiers called the divinity of the Father and the Son identical. Both are one name and one nature (*naturae unius nomen unum*). The risen Christ sent the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 28:19).²⁰ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be understood as merely a single divinity but as a plurality of God's attributes in divine persons. For Hilary, God has three names, but one person: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. ²¹

Poitiers emphasized that the Son is the Father; The Father is the Son. Humans cannot see the Father directly, then the Son (Christ) is present so that humans can see God. When God appeared and acted in the Old Testament stories, He referred to the Son.²² If the Son does things that use His natural powers, then we know He has His Father's nature. Everything the Son does stems from the one nature of His Father. He uses the power of His Father because they are the same. ²³

Gregersen emphasized the profound meaning of Christ's incarnation as *Imago Dei* for all creation. The New Testament

¹⁸ Middleton, 110.

¹⁹ Middleton, 111.

²⁰ Tarmo Toom, 'Hilary of Poitiers' De Trinitate and the Name(s) of God', *Vigiliae Christianae* 64 (2010): 3–4.

²¹ Toom, 7.

²² Mark Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*, vol. 89 (Leiden, Boston: IDC Publishers, 2007), 126.

²³ Weedman, 89:129.

never states that God became flesh. Nevertheless, the Logos of God became flesh (John 1:14a). The entire presence of the Divine Logos in Jesus acknowledges that the incarnation of God also extends to every material existence. Otherwise, Jesus could not live among us (John 1:14b). Paul told the Colossians: "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Col. 1:19–20). God's fullness happened because He deigned to dwell in all creation, not only humans. Gregersen's profound incarnation declared Christ to be human and embraced the whole creation. He did not only become a human being but became (all) the rest of creation. Christ's incarnation brings "all creation" into reconciliation, where Jesus is the forerunner of salvation for the sake of the cosmic. 24

The incarnation of the Logos in Jesus Christ takes over the entirety of material and biological existence through the specific humanity of Jesus. In this view, God's eternal Logos includes not only the uniqueness of humankind but also the continuity of humankind with other creatures, such as animals, and with other creatures in the world.²⁵

Australian Catholic theologian Denis Edwards has extended the idea of the incarnation into an eco-theology, underlining the atonement of Christ present in the more expansive and cosmic ecosystem. Even Lutheran theologians Norman Abel, David Rhoads, and Paul Santmire formulated the argument in response to climate change as follows:

If we recognize the earth as a living organism, can we also accept God incarnate with the earth? Does the incarnation of Jesus represent all of creation? The answer is yes. God incarnate in Jesus. He pierces the dust that moves from the

²⁴ Gregersen, 'Deep Incarnation: Why Evolutionary Continuity Matters in Christology', 172.

²⁵ Gregersen, 173.

ground. His body touched, united, and concentrated with the earth in His incarnation. He united His flesh and blood with the earth and the earth.²⁶

By becoming flesh in Jesus, the eternal Logos of God entered into all dimensions of His created world. Flesh in Greek, *sarx* primarily denotes specific bodily organs (in John 1:14, the blood and body of Jesus), with particular connotations of weakness and vulnerability. In ancient Greek, substances or *sarx* are considered as part of all material creatures that are always in contact with one another. *Sarx* also means all that consists of the essential elements of the earth: water, air, and fire are interconnected and inseparable. ²⁷ So the Divine Logos became human, with the implication of Christ entering a world consisting of fields, animals, and sparrows on earth. The incarnation of Jesus shows that He fused with the material world in which He was (John 1:11).

Furthermore, the flesh or *sarx* assumed in Jesus Christ is not only the human Jesus but also the entire universe of humanity, animality, plant life, and soil. The incarnation signifies the coming of God into the flesh. In the death of Jesus Christ, God connects all vulnerable creatures, such as sparrows, grass, and other biological creatures. The Son of God became Jesus, and in Him, the Son became human; He became God of sparrows, grass, and earth (to the cosmos). ²⁸

The Holy Spirit, as a manifestation of God's love, shows that He not only embraces creation in its existence but also organizes creation in a beautiful and directed manner according to the logocentric plan of the Father.²⁹ Augustine stated that the Holy Spirit did not come later and complete what the Father and the Son had begun. In His work, Scott Dunham wrote that the Holy

²⁶ Gregersen, 175–76.

²⁷ Gregersen, 177.

²⁸ Gregersen, 178.

²⁹ David Vincent Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 12.

Spirit did not come after the fact of creation was completed. The work of the Holy Spirit is also from the Father. He does the work for the Father in the light of His good creation in the Father's eternal word.³⁰ For Dunham, the Son saves all creation, while the Holy Spirit raises all creation to the Father so that he can shine within himself as God's creation. In the concept of the Trinity, the Father initiates the existence of all things, Christ grants existence and salvation, and the Holy Spirit embraces all creation in its original purpose. He interconnects all existence with the cosmos.³¹

Christ came to save the world from sin, destruction, and the destruction of all creation.³² The cosmos becomes the object of the holistic salvation Christ works as *Imago Dei*. Hilary of Poitiers refers to man as *ad Imaginem*, which means that man was created based on Christ the *Imago Dei* and is heading towards Christ as *Imago Dei*. That is, humans are not yet in the image of God but are on the way to fullness as humans heading towards Christ, the *Imago Dei*.³³ Humans were not created equal to Christ, just as Christ was equal to the Father.

Nevertheless, man continues to grow to be like Christ by imitating the *Imago Dei*. God created humans to resemble and approach Christ, the *Imago Dei*.³⁴ Humans can look at the fruit of Christ's incarnation and death to be in God's image. The incarnation of Christ has reconciled Himself to the cosmos, repaired the damaged cosmos, and reestablished a harmonious relationship with the natural environment.

All creation comes from God, which means that it is clear that there is no other creation equal to God, including humans.³⁵

³⁰ Meconi, 13.

³¹ Meconi, 14.

³² Gregersen, 'Deep Incarnation: Why Evolutionary Continuity Matters in Christology', 181.

³³ Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology*, 10–11.

³⁴ Moltmann, *God in Creation: an Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, 259–60.

³⁵ Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification*, 16.

One of the efforts in building social relations is understanding the identity of two related people. The Church has long built a paradigm that humans are the image of God with uniqueness, characteristics, and privileges that make them the most valuable of all creation.

If humans understand that God created them in the image of God, the noblest and wisest of other creatures, it can hinder human social relations with non-humans. Such an account seems to make humans superior and have the legality to dominate other creations. Dominic Robinson invites us to see the relevance of *Imago Dei* as a whole in anthropological theology. He argues that it covers issues such as grace, salvation, and the relationship between God and the world. Therefore, humans must bring grace and salvation to other creatures.³⁶

The meaning of salvation that Christ did as *Imago Dei* is not only intended for humans alone but the entire creation. Humans as *ad Imagination* are individuals who are constantly imitating the actions of Christ, who saved the cosmos and the whole creation. As *Imago Dei*, Christ is like the Father, who is already perfect. He does not need any more perfection. On the other hand, man will be in a continuous process towards perfection when he thinks and acts like Christ the *Imago Dei*. Man as *ad Imaginem* is constantly moving towards equality with Christ through social relations with the rest of creation.³⁷

Lynn White, Jr. sees that the root causes of the ecological crisis arise from ideological and cultural factors, especially religion. West Christianity has always interpreted man as the image of God who has made himself ruler over the rest of creation.³⁸

³⁶ Dominic Robinson, *Understanding the "Imago Dei" The Thought of Barth, von Balthasar and Moltmann* (2011: Heythrop College, University of London, n.d.), 1-2.

³⁷ Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology*, 76.

³⁸ Todd LeVasseur and Anna Peterson, *Religion and Ecological Crisis :The Lynn White Thesis"at Fifty* (Routledge, New York, 2017), 19.

White argues that the interpretation of humans dominating the creation has caused ecological crisis and exploitation. He encouraged Christian theology to pay attention to the rest of creation.³⁹

Peet van Dyk also shared a similar understanding with Lynn White regarding the idea that the Church preached from the text of Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 8, namely that humans must conquer the earth and rule over it.⁴⁰ The above statements impact human domination over the earth, where God commanded humans to "conquer" and "rule" nature. Such an understanding is contrary to the task of building social relations with the natural environment because humans always seem to be the subject. At the same time, other creations continue to be objects. The author has not found the views of experts on whether there is an influence of humans being created as *ad Imaginem* and other creatures non-*ad Imaginem* so that prominent characters tend to be seen in humans to predicate to dominate and dominate other creations. However, from the implicit explanation of several theologians above, the tendency for humans to be created as *ad Imaginem* seems to provide opportunities for humans to feel "more" than other creatures, not in pursuit of Christlikeness.

According to Arne Næss, we need to complement ecology with ecosophy. It is an experiential understanding of oneself as part of a prosperous natural relationship far beyond humans. So nature should not be used only as a means for self-serving human utility. In theology, we see them as our neighbors. For this reason, humans should establish unified communication and relationships with their "neighbors" by maintaining their feelings, existence, and comfort. Humans must live in harmony

³⁹ LeVasseur and Peterson, 20–22.

⁴⁰ Gunther Wittenberg, 'In Search of the Right Metaphor: A Response to Peet van Dyk's "Challenges in the Search for an Ecotheology"', *OTE* 23/3, 2010, 890–91.

and harmony not only with their fellow human beings but also with non-humans. 41

God has equipped humans with reason, intellect, and mind to do good things in a continuous process. Humans can reflect God's image according to Christ Jesus's image from his daily life and behavior pattern. Herein lies human identity as *ad Imaginem*; Humans are in the process of actualizing the way of life and the example of the Imago Dei (Christ) in their lives.⁴²

One phrase that needs attention from the mandate given by God to humans is "to protect and care for creation" because human life depends on other creations. Man is alive, in the midst of, and with the rest of creation. This statement is the author's main focus, namely how humans' role in maintaining and preserving the natural environment (ecology) from destruction due to human actions. The Church must report human identity as *ad Imaginem* in building social relations. Humans need to be in the process of imitating Christ's footprints for all of creation.

The Church has for too long locked in the understanding that humans are Imago Dei. God's image is more noble and precious than any other creation. This doctrine does not make humans friendly with the universe. On the contrary, it triggers an ecological crisis in various aspects, both ecological crises on land and at sea. This understanding is still open for rethinking from different theories focusing on related biblical texts. Several events in the Bible point to Christ as Imago Dei is evident from what He did. He also takes care of and cares for the plants (cf. Matt. 6:28-30) and animals (the sparrows; cf. Matt. 10:29). He shows Himself as Lord of creation in calming the storm in Mark 4:35-41. He walks on water (cf. Mark 6:45-51). Jesus as Imago Dei has the power to bless and curse creation, such as an unfruitful fig tree, in Mark 12:12-24. Jesus also punished a herd of pigs by drowning to save someone possessed by a

⁴¹ Arne Næss, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 27–28.

⁴² Christopher Carter, 'The Imago Dei as The Mind of Jesus Christ', *The Joint Publication Board of Zygon* 49, no. 3 (September 2014): 756–58.

demon. The role of Jesus as the image of God contains a radical belief, namely the parallel between God's guarantee for the birds of the air and human needs. We can also see Jesus as the Messiah from the eschatological hope that is now expressed but not yet fulfilled. It means the element of God's truth is coming and approaching the entire creation.⁴³

Jesus' relationship with the earth continues to be harmonious. Jesus compared the growth of God's kingdom to a mustard seed (cf. Matt. 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32; and Luke 13:18–19). He told the disciples not to worry, like the birds and the lilies (cf. Matt. 6:25–34 and Luke 12:22–31). He taught them to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:2). He required the disciples to be "the salt of the earth" (cf. Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:50; and Luke 14:34–35). To those who were not part of the inner circle of disciples, Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (cf. Matt. 5:5 and Luke 6:20). From the Bible texts above, we see that God communicates and relates to all creatures on earth. Likewise, God invites believers to be close and friendly with other earth creatures. God wants life in heaven to be realized on earth, one of which is to live in harmony and coexistence between humans and non-humans.

The sum of Jesus' life as *Imago Dei* is evident in the redemption and salvation of the earth from the ravages of human sin. The atonement made by Jesus Christ redeemed the world due to the mortal sins of humans and non-human environments.⁴⁴ It means the presence of Christ applies to all creatures on earth.⁴⁵ He is present and becomes the Savior of the cosmos, universally, not partially. Christ is the subject for the salvation of all creation on earth. If Christ is the basis of salvation for all creation, He is also the basis for saving for the universe's

⁴³ Celia Deane Drummond, *Teologi Dan Ekologi* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2015), 33–34.

⁴⁴ Drummond, 36.

⁴⁵ Moltmann, *God in Creation an Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, 218.

existence as His creation.⁴⁶ Christ as *Imago Dei* does not focus on salvation only for humans but for the entire creation.

AD IMAGINEM TOWARDS IMAGO DEI:

HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN RELATIONS

From the explanation above, the writer wants to build a perspective from the theology of God incarnate in Christ for the world's salvation. First, the deep incarnation of Christ, as expressed by Gregersen, becomes a creative model for restoring the damaged earth and creation, including the disharmonious relationship between humans and other creatures. Christ has embraced and embraced the whole of creation through His incarnation, reconciling the disharmony due to sin (cf. Col. 1:20-23). He has reconciled the entire creation damaged by sin and human actions. Second, one of the actions that humans can take as *ad Imagem* is to play an active role in realizing the salvation that Jesus did for the world. Humans think and act like Christ. So one way is to relate socially to other creatures: to love, care for, care for, protect, and heal the damaged creation.

Christ, the *Imago Dei*, has bestowed the grace of God on man and the world. God endowed grace in humans with intellect and speech in imitation of Christ. Man as *ad Imagem* is a friend of Christ *Imago Dei*, who is also friends with the whole universe through His incarnation.⁴⁷ That is, just as Christ relates harmoniously to the rest of creation, it is also possible for humans to imitate Him. Thomas Aquinas stated that the *Imago Dei* elements in humans have the potential to manifest intrinsic supernatural happiness. It means that humans strongly desire to do natural and supernatural good. So human finds *Imago*

⁴⁶ Drummond, *Teologi Dan Ekologi*, 95.

⁴⁷ Steven A Long, 'Creation Ad Imagem Dei : The Obediential Potency of the Human Person to Grace and Glory', *The Catholic University of America Press* 14, Number 4 (Fall 2016): 1178.

Dei in themselves by how he thinks, acts, and leaves his mark.⁴⁸

Christ builds relationships between humans and non-humans (cosmos). As *ad Imaginem*, humans follow the relational pattern. Only by doing this do humans realize their identity as *ad Imaginem*.⁴⁹ It is a concrete step for humans to interpret themselves as being in the process of being in the likeness of Christ.⁵⁰ God gave human space to become like Christ through active participation in preserving the natural environment as other creations that God has also saved.

Jean Vanier argues that becoming human contains two realities. First, this concept refers to becoming someone who has meaning and develops the gifts in him. Second is the openness of humans to their fellow human beings, without seeing them with a feeling of superiority but with an attitude of respect.⁵¹ That is, humans have the awareness to need help from outside themselves. Man can predict what crises await him by how he treats the earth; greedy, reckless, careless, greedy, or otherwise, take care of the earth on which he stands.⁵² Thus, Becoming human is played with the full awareness that human social relations with other creations are a prediction of their relationship in the future. Becoming human has a close meaning also with imitation Christi by following Christ in an imitation of His behavior. When a man lives as an *ad Imaginem*, he can imitate Christ in several behaviors involving volition, imagination, identification, and religious reorientation.⁵³

⁴⁸ Long, 1779.

⁴⁹ Moltmann, *ibid.*, 220.

⁵⁰ Robinson, *Understanding the "Imago Dei" The Thought of Barth, von Balthasar and Moltmann*, 220.

⁵¹ Jean Vanier, 'Becoming Human' (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2010), 14.

⁵² Vanier, 15.

⁵³ Claudia Welz, *Humanity in God's Image An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 143.

CONCLUSION

Earth and soil are the origins of Adam, the first human being formed *ad Imaginem* by God. However, the first humans failed to relate and live side by side with their origins or "ancestors." Sin and evil make humans superior to the earth on which he stands and the rest of creation. The Son of God was incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ to restore creation that was damaged by human sin. Christ is the Imago Dei, while humans are *ad Imaginem*, who lives a continuous process to be like the Son.

The purpose of the Son of God, incarnated in Jesus, was to repair the broken relationship between human and God, human and human, as well as human and non-human. The deep incarnation of Christ is all-encompassing and makes Him the cosmic Christ. He died, merged with the earth, and embraced all creation on earth to show that the salvation He wrought was cosmic. The incarnation of Christ, which embraces the entire creation, becomes a foothold for humans in building relationships with other creatures.

God not only created humans as *ad Imaginem*. He also bestowed the status of Imago Dei on them so that humans could imitate and direct their lives to approach or resemble Christ. Humans who are in the process of resembling the Imago Dei are invited to actively participate in caring for other creations as Christ did in His incarnation, instead of dominating or exploiting them. Humans as *ad Imagination* play an active role in saving the earth from damage. Human as *ad Imaginem* thinks and acts as Christ thought and acted. Relating socially to other creatures means loving, caring for, protecting, and healing. Finally, humans need to renew their relations with non-humans from the perspective of faith. Relationship with the universe is seen as faith in Christ, who has been incarnated. The believer's faith can be seen in his social relationship with the other creations.

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