GENESIS AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

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Genesis tells the story of the creation from two angles, each one emphasising different aspects of the relationship between God, mankind and creation.

The first story (Genesis 1:26) highlights something about the nature and purpose of human beings. This story says that human beings, all of them, are made in the image of God. On one level, this means that we have the same capacity for freedom of thought, creativity and morals as God himself. Like God we can think for ourselves, we can imagine things that donâ€™t exist and then bring them into existence, and we can make moral and intellectual choices. Being made in Godâ€™s image is a real privilege, but that isnâ€™t all there is to it.

Why do people put photographs on Facebook? For most of us the idea isnâ€™t to show off the photograph itself; the point of the photograph is to show off a place or an event. This is what our family reunion looked like; this is me on the beach in Spain and so on. Photographs are images and they exist to demonstrate the reality that lies behind them. God made us in his image, for just that purpose. Our role is to bear Godâ€™s image in the world and to demonstrate to the whole of creation how good, wonderful and caring God is. God doesn't need a Facebook page â€“ his image is all over the earth, every human being shows something about God.

The second creation story, in Genesis chapter 2 adds to our understanding of human beings. In this account, God first creates the man, Adam. He then looks at the man and says â€˜it is not good for man to be aloneâ€™ before going on to create Eve. In this little story, we see how, at the most basic level, human beings reflect the nature of God. Like God, we are relational beings; we weren't created to be on our own and God creates a partner for Adam. Like Adam, Eve is human and shares much of his character and form, but there are subtle differences too.

By the way, in writing about Genesis this way, I'm not staking out a position in the endless creation v evolution debate. If that's something you want to argue about or comment about, there are plenty of blogs to keep you happy!