

Imago Dei in Genesis 1:26. Anthropology and Human Life in the Context of Contemporary Nigerian Experience

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Abstract

This article poses as a response to contemporary precarious state of human life in Nigeria. National violence, militancy and terrorism among other manifestations of dehumanization have reduced the value of human life and in recent time made life more precarious in Nigeria. Bearing in mind the current trend of events in Nigeria where an animal's life appears more valuable than that of a human being, this academic paper becomes timely and resourceful. By implication and exegetical analysis of Genesis 1:26, this paper argued that man in generic sense occupies unique position in all God's creation. Not only was he created after other creatures, the divine pronouncement about his creation, the nature of his creation and the divine responsibility entrusted to him at creation, all make him unique among all of God's creatures. To destroy plant life may be considered careless, to destroy animal life cruel, but to destroy the life of another human being means to destroy an image of God which becomes an offence against Him. Consequently, the paper recommended that government, corporate bodies, individuals and religious groups should hold human life with utmost value, safe-keep life and sustain all creatures at all cost.

Introduction

To destroy plant life may be considered careless, that of animal cruel, but to destroy the life of another human being is to destroy an image of God. It becomes an offence against the one whose image is borne. Bombing of churches and mosques, killings and kidnapping, child-trafficking and abuse, murdering of youth on service to their father land, all practices of militancy and terrorism in the society have in recent years made life more and more precarious. Contemporary religious groups are faced with the task of adapting their teachings in revaluing human life in the light of contemporary scientific and technological advancement in which human life is seen as of less or no value.

Man in generic sense is unique in creation. He was not only created after other creatures, the divine pronouncement about his creation, the nature of his creation and the divine responsibility entrusted to him at creation, all make him unique among all of God's creatures.²¹⁴ Consequently, he has been the subject of study for generations.²¹⁵ The creation account in Genesis 1:26 presents him as a creature in God's image. This assertion has drawn diverse interpretations from different perspectives. To some, he takes after God physically. On the other hand, another school of thought holds that image of God in man should be restricted to spiritual viewpoint.²¹⁶ Human divine responsibility in the created world becomes possible only when the concept of image of God in man is rightly interpreted and understood. The fact remains that every affirmation that man makes about his stature, virtue or place in the cosmos becomes involved in contradiction when fully analyzed.²¹⁷ For man to have a conscious recognition of himself means that he is aware of being part of the creation through which God's plans and purposes best can be manifested, expressed and actualized.

²¹⁴ Adetoye Faniran and Emiola Nihinlola, *A Creation Sacred to God* (Ibadan: Daybus, 2007), 38.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Joel B. Green, *The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (London: Lion, 2008), 11.

²¹⁷ Hans Hofmann, *The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr* (New York: Scribner's sons, 1956), 143.

Nevertheless, the value on human life seems to have been bastardized in the contemporary age. Little value is placed on human life. Life is taken without hesitation. Killings and child trafficking abound. Action that means physical, sexual or psychological maltreatment or neglect to a man becomes abuse to humanity. In general sense, this could include any act or negligence that ultimately leads to actual or potential harm to human life and existence. The geometric proliferation of churches and other religious bodies have contributed to religious fracas and schism, doing more harm than good to peaceful co-existence. Religions serve as links between humanity and other larger network of certain phenomena out of which issues of life arise. Attempts to solve certain crises of life such as that of human life devaluation would require religious involvement.²¹⁸ The concern is, in the light of the happenings in Nigeria presently, how should human life be viewed or predicated from biblical perspective especially with respect to the accounts of creation in Genesis.

Biblical Concept of Humanity

Biblical anthropology is an aspect in Christian theology that discusses the nature of mankind in the light of the Bible. It maintains as basis that: Man is created in God's image (Gen 1:26-27). He is a fallen creature (Rom 5:12) and born in a corrupt state (Psalm 51:5). He has a material aspect, the body, and a non-material aspect, the spirit. Although marred by the fall, nevertheless, man retains God's image in his non-material nature (Gen 9:6). Biblical concept of humanity has drawn diverse assertions. Some people differentiate the soul from the spirit resulting in a trichotomous view of man's nature namely; body, soul and spirit. Others hold that the soul is diametrically synonymous to the spirit resulting in a dichotomous view of man's nature; body and soul or body and spirit (Green, 14).

Trichotomists believe that the spirit has a range of capacities within the soul. The primary text used by proponents of this view is Gen 1:26-27 thus appealing to the analogy of the trinity, comparing the three natures of man to the three persons of God.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ George P. Marsh, *Man and Nature* (New York: Viking, 1864), 37.

²¹⁹ Friedrich Baumgartel, "Spirit of God" *Bible Key Words* (New York: n.p.n., 1961), 1.

The Bible makes a distinction between soul and spirit by using two totally different words. The Hebrew word *rûach* is clearly translated “spirit,” whereas the *nephesh* is translated “breath” first and also “spirit” “life” or “soul”.²²⁰ *neshamah* is also translated “breath” “spirit” or “soul”.²²¹ The Greek word, *psychē* (breath) is clearly translated “soul”²²² while *pneuma* (wind) is translated “spirit”.²²³ In addition, the Bible seems to make distinction between the spirit and the soul in Luke 1:46-47 and Matthew 26:38-41.

In contrast, Dichotomous idea of humanity holds that man consists of two parts, a material aspect and a non-material aspect. The non-material part is called by many different names: soul, spirit, mind or any equivalent scriptural words. In the opinion of Joel Green, these are not separate parts of a person but just different words for the metaphysical.²²⁴ One of the Greek words translated body or flesh is *sarx*.²²⁵ Relevant Bible texts include 1Thess 5:23 and Matt 10:28. Views on the origin or creation of soul in man has attracted diverse theological opinions. While some believe that man derives his soul and body from his parents (Traducianism), others hold that soul is a direct creation from God of which the time cannot be precisely determined.²²⁶ The soul is supposed to be created pure but to become sinful even before birth by entering into that complex of sin by which humanity as a whole is burdened.

This view is common in reformed circles. It is favoured on the fact that scripture presents the body and the soul of man as having different origins (Eccl 12:7 Isaiah 42:5 Zech 12:1 Heb 12:9).²²⁷ Moreover, it is more in harmony with the spiritual nature of the

²²⁰ Alexander Harkavy, *Students' Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary to the Old Testament* (New York: Hebrew Pub., 1938), 463.

²²¹ *Ibid*, 473.

²²² William E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (New York: Oliphants, 1940), 54.

²²³ *Ibid*, 62.

²²⁴ Green, *The Nature of Humanity in the Bible*, 22.

²²⁵ Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 63.

²²⁶ Francis Turretin, *Creationism or Traducianism* (Chicago: Freewill, 2002), 27.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, 33.

soul and safeguards the theology of sinless of Jesus Christ. It is however, not free from difficulties. It does not explain the inheritance of family traits, and may seem to make God the creator of sinful souls.²²⁸ All these theological views have not only made man a subject for lifetime study, they have also established effectively the assertion that man in generic sense is unique being among all creation. In the opinion of John Piper, “If a person realizes that image of God in man is his ineffably profound fitness through everlasting joy in God, then he will cherish the great gospel of its inner life and power”.²²⁹

For centuries, theologians have debated precisely what it means to be created in the “image of God.” The most common interpretation has been in terms of spirituality, although other proposals have included dominion (inter-testamental Judaism), original righteousness (Luther) and even sexuality (Barth).²³⁰ Whichever way this idea is interpreted, it brings with it certain other facts very helpful for illumination. From beginning, the Bible tells us that man is created as an image. An image is never the same as the reality. Man is only the image because God is the ultimate reality.

The question posed by the Psalmist “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” is one of the most fundamental questions that anyone confronted by humanity nature could consider. It is fundamental because the answer given to it determines the way humanity, this world, redemption and ultimate destiny will be viewed.²³¹

In the New Testament, the image of God in man is never associated with physical resemblance or a non-material spiritual soul but rather with moral and rational capacities. In Apostle Paul’s words, “Put on the new nature which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col 3:10 Eph 4:24). Similarly,

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ John Piper, *God’s Passion for His Glory* (Cardiff: Easy Press, 1996), 39.

²³⁰ H. Blocker, *In the Beginning* (London: Houlton Press, 1984), 80.

²³¹ Samuel Bachiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection?* (New York: Freewill, 1982), 62.

conformity to the image of Christ is generally understood in terms of righteousness and holiness, none of which is possessed by animals (Rom 8:29). Man has inherent God-like possibilities. By virtue of the image of God, human beings are capable of reflecting His character in their own lives.²³² Thus, humanity is viewed as intrinsically valuable and richly invested with meanings, potentials and responsibilities.

Philosophical Concept of Humanity

Philosophers like Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics championed the course of philosophical view of humanity. The emphasis of these philosophers is on the distinction between the material and spiritual components of human nature. In Platonic thought, man has both a material and a spiritual component. The material component is the body, which is temporary and essentially evil, and the spiritual component is the soul or the mind which is eternal and good.²³³

In the words of Joseph Omoregbe, “Plato’s conception of man is heavily influenced by that of Pythagoras, which is in turn influenced by Orphism”.²³⁴ The soul pre-existed in another world (the world of forms) before it came into the physical world. Here in the physical world it is imprisoned in a material body. Death is therefore, a liberation for the soul, a release from its prison. It leaves the body (its prison) and goes back to the spiritual world (the world of forms) from which it came. Thus, the union between the soul and the body is a loose one, an accidental and temporary union. In this loose union the soul is certainly the superior part since it is spiritual, and it is the essence of the human person. The body, being material is clearly inferior to the soul. The soul moves the body and makes use of it until the day it leaves it. Therefore, there can be no question of the body also moving the soul since it is inferior to the soul.

²³² Bachiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection?* 23.

²³³ Joseph I. Omoregbe, *Philosophy of Mind* (Lagos: Joja Press, 2001), 1.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

Hence, the concern of the soul-body interaction does not arise since it is only the soul that acts on the body, and never *vice-versa*. This philosophical assertion and that of science that man began gradually to ascend from the lowest creature on the life scale²³⁵ is diametrically negated by the scriptural accounts which indicate most emphatically that man was created by God on the very highest plane of living creatures. Throughout the Bible, the idea of man as created by God being initially the high watermark, the very pinnacle of creation is reiterated.²³⁶ The Psalmist asserts, “For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honour. Thou made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou has put all things under his feet” (Psalms 8:5-6).

It was Rene Descartes who brought the problem of soul-body interaction to the focus in Western philosophy. He was a dualist, a modified Platonist in the conception of man. Like Plato, he conceived the soul as the part of man. He however did not view the soul and body as a prisoner in prison. “Nature teaches me” he once said, “that I am not only lodged in my body as a pilot in a ship but that I am very closely united to my body that I form as it were, a single whole with it”.²³⁷ The philosophical dualistic view of human nature has enormous doctrinal and practical implications.

Doctrinally, a host of beliefs derive from or are largely dependent upon classical dualism. For instance, the belief in the transition of the soul at the moment of death to paradise, hell or even purgatory rests on the belief that the soul is immortal by nature and survives the body at death. The belief that at death, souls of the saints ascend to the beatitude of paradise have fostered the Catholic belief in the intercessory role of Mary and of the saints. If the souls of the saints are in heaven, it becomes feasible to assume that they can intercede on behalf of needy sinners here on earth. Such a

²³⁵ Robert P. Benedict, *Journey Away from God* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1972), 56.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 57.

²³⁷ Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* vol. 11 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 159.

practice or belief runs contrary to the biblical teaching that there is only one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:5).

The concept of nature as a standard by which to make judgments was a basis presupposition in Greek philosophy. Specifically, “almost all” medieval philosophers agreed that a good human life is a life in accordance with nature.²³⁸ On this subject, the approach of Socrates, which sometimes is considered to be a teleological approach, came to be dominant by late classical and medieval times. This approach understands human nature in terms of final and formal causes. Such understandings of nature see it as an “idea” or “form” of a human.²³⁹ By this account, nature really causes humans to become what they are and so it exists somehow independently of individual humans. The existence of this invariable human nature is however, a subject of much historical debate in continuity into modern times. Against this idea of a fixed human nature, the relative malleability of man has been argued especially in recent centuries – first by early modernists such as Thomas Hobbes and Jean – Jacques Rousseau. Since the early 19th century, thinkers such as Soren Kierkegaard and Fredrick Nietzsche have also sometimes argued against a fixed or innate human nature. In more recent scientific perspectives such as behaviorism, determinism and the chemical model within modern psychiatry and psychology, seem to be neutral regarding human nature.

Philosophy in Greece is the ultimate origin of the Western conception of the nature of a thing. The philosophical study of human nature itself originated according to Aristotle at least with Socrates who turned philosophy from study of nature and matter to study of man.²⁴⁰ Socrates is said to have studied the question of

²³⁸ Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 93.

²³⁹ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1948), 137.

²⁴⁰ S. E. Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre: “A History of Philosophy”* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 31.

how a person should live best but he left no written works to that effect. It is so clear from the works of his students, Plato and Xenophon that Socrates was a rationalist and believed that the best life most suited to human nature involved reasoning.²⁴¹ The Socratic school was the dominant surviving influence in philosophical discussion in the middle ages among Islamic, Christian and Jewish philosophers.

Aristotle, Plato's most famous student, made most of the significant and influential statements about human nature. To him, reason is not only what is most special about humanity compared to other animals, but it is also what we were meant to achieve at our best. Much of Aristotle's descriptions of human nature are still influential today but the particular teleological idea that humans are meant or intended to be something has become less popular in modern times (Smith, 1887, 189).²⁴²

One of the defining changes occurring at the end of the middle ages is the end of the dominance of Aristotelian philosophy and its replacement by a new approach to the study of humanity. In this approach, all attempts at conjecture about formal and final causes were rejected as useless speculations. Also, the term "law of nature" now applies to any regular and predictable pattern in nature, not literally a law made by a divine law-maker. In the same way, human nature becomes not a special metaphysical cause, but simply whatever can be said to be typical tendencies of humans.²⁴³ Although this new realism applied to the study of human life from the beginning, the definitive argument for the final rejection of Aristotle was associated especially with Francis Bacon and then Rene Descartes whose new approach returned philosophy or science to its pre-Socratic focus on non-humanity.²⁴⁴

Thomas Hobbes and David Hume claimed to be the first to properly use a modern scientific approach to humanity. Hobbes famously

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Norman Snaith, *The Politics of Aristotle* (Cardiff: Clarendon Press, 1887), 189.

²⁴³ Stephen Priest, *Philosophy of Mind* (New York: Haughton, Mifflin, 1991), 77.

²⁴⁴ Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre: "A History of Philosophy"* 31.

followed Descartes in describing humanity as matter in motion just like machines. He also very influentially described man's natural state as one where life would be solitary poor, nasty, brutish and short. Following him, John Locke's philosophy of empiricism also saw humanity as a *tabula-rassa*. In this view, the mind at birth is a "blank slate" without rules, data and rules are added by our sensory experiences.²⁴⁵ Rousseau pushed the approach of Hobbes to an extreme and criticized it at the same time. He was a contemporary and acquaintance of Hume and wrote before the French revolution and long before Sigmund Freud. He shocked Western civilization with his second discourse by proposing that humans had once been solitary animals without reason or language or community, and had developed these things due to accidents of pre-history.²⁴⁶ In other words, not only was man not fixed, but not even approximately fixed compared to what has been assumed before him. Humans are political and rational and have language now but originally, they had none of these things.²⁴⁷ This in turn implied that living under the management of human reasoning might not be a happy way to live at all and perhaps there is no ideal way to live.

Rousseau was also unusual in the extent to which he took the approach of Hobbes, asserting that primitive humans were not even naturally social. A civilized human is therefore not only imbalanced and unhappy because of the mismatch between civilized life and human nature but unlike Hobbes, Rousseau also became well-known for the suggestion that primitive humans had been happier.²⁴⁸ Rousseau's conception of humanity has been seen as the origin of many intellectual and political developments of the 19th and 20th centuries.²⁴⁹ He had great influence on Kant and Hegel and the development of German idealism, historicism and

²⁴⁵ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Dover Pub., 1959), 6.

²⁴⁶ Paul Tournier, *The Meaning of Persons* (London: SCM Press, 1957), 97.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Richard Velkley, *Philosophy and Culture in Question* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 36.

²⁴⁹ James Declaney, *Rousseau and the Ethics of Virtue* (London: Continuum Pub., 2006), 49.

romanticism. Humanity according to Rousseau and other modernists of the 17th and 18th centuries were like passionate animals and that led them to develop language and reasoning and more complex communities.

In contrast to Rousseau, David Hume was a critic of the over-simplifying and systematic approach of Hobbes. Influenced by Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, he argued against over-simplification. On one hand, he accepted that for many political and economic subjects, man could be assumed to be driven by such simple selfishness. He also mentioned some social aspects of humanity as something which could be destroyed. On the other hand, he rejected what he called the “paradox of the skeptics” saying that no politician could have invented words like honourable and shameful, lovely and odious, noble and despicable except there was some natural original constitution of the mind.²⁵⁰

After Rousseau and Hume, the nature of philosophy and science changed, branching into different disciplines and approaches and the study of humanity changed accordingly. Rousseau’s proposal that humanity is malleable became a major influence upon international revolutionary movements of various kinds while Hume’s approach has been more typical in Anglo-Saxon countries including the United State of America.

Generally, it appears to have become somewhat hazardous to hang the title “human” on some particular traits. For instance, to say that a human is a being capable of reasoning, rationalizing and introspecting, it could also be argued that a person who is in the state of coma is still a human being and yet unable to do any of these. Indeed, human is and will remain the subject of study for generations.

Humanity in the Contemporary Time

In the present time, more developed nations like the Western world do invest so much in order to better and safe-guard human life.

²⁵⁰ C. D. Broad, *The Mind and its Place in Nature* (London: Routledge, 1962), 127.

Some articles treated the worth of human life in view of the present day cost of life insurance in more developed Western countries. In countries like Russia, estimated life value varies from \$90,000 up to \$4 million.²⁵¹ On the result of opinion poll life value (as the cost of financial compensation for death), in the beginning of 2013 was \$118,900, ensuring 2% increase compare to that of 2012.²⁵² All these point to the sacredness, uniqueness and special value attached to human life in recognition of his unique position among other creatures.²⁵³ Ultimately, the emphasis is not to establish a certain amount of money in exchange of life, but to buttress the fact that human life is priceless.²⁵⁴ The potency of life (or cost of life) is an economic value assigned to life in general or to specific living organism.²⁵⁵ It does not suggest a true financial worth of life. It is a statistical term, the cost of reducing the average number of deaths by one.²⁵⁶ Human life cannot be bought for any price.²⁵⁷ However, stories of killings and destroying of human life for diverse reasons ranging from money rituals, dirty politics to religious schism abound on the streets, radio, television and newspapers in the contemporary time.

Generally, from the opinions gathered in the course of writing this paper which space will not allow for the analysis, it appears that reason for human life devaluation in the present day like in the case of Nigeria, is not only as a result of ignorance, end time or wickedness rather, a combination of them all.

Short Exegetical Analysis of Genesis 1:26

²⁵¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odinani>, Human Life Valuation” Retrieved January 23, 2019.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Kip Viscusi and Joseph E. Aldy, “The Value of a Statistical Life: A Critical Review of Market Estimates Throughout the World” *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* vol. 27, 1, 2003, 5.

²⁵⁵ Kevin M. Murphy and Robert H. Topel, “The Value of Health and Longevity” *Journal of Political Economy* vol. 114, 2006, 871.

²⁵⁶ J. R. Mrozek and Laura Taylor, “What Determines the Value of Life? A Meta-Analysis” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* vol. 21, 2, 253.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

Man's creation was more signal and immediate act of divine wisdom and power than that of others (Church, 1960, 4).²⁵⁸ Genesis 1:26 begins with the verb *wayyo'mer* meaning "and he said"²⁵⁹. For emphasis sake, as a verb with *waw* consecutive, the word could be translated as "and he proceeded to say" for the purpose of maintaining the narrative sequence which presupposes that the creation activity was on-going as it got to the point of creating man.

As the creation continues on the sixth day, God brought His work to the climax when He declared for the creation of the prince of all creatures. In the words of Leslie F. Church, "Let us make man, for whose sake the rest of the creatures were made: this is a work we must take into our own hands"²⁶⁰. The divine pluralistic declaration has been a subject of no small debate. To some, it is a reference to polytheism; an indication of the trinity; a plural of deliberation; a plural of majesty; ... God addressing angelic being in heaven.²⁶¹ Vanter Bruce viewed it in three ways, one of which is that God is pictured as a king, addressing a heavenly council, expressing what He wants to do along with those who serve Him.²⁶²

Although, F. Bruce sees the rabbinic interpretation that God was speaking to the angels because man's creation affects them (Ps 8:5; I Cor 6:3) as attractive, nevertheless, he asserts that there was no suggestion of angelic cooperation.²⁶³ He (Bruce) however is of the opinion that the divine pluralistic declaration could be intended above all, to draw attention to the importance and solemnity of God's decision. However, the most attractive

²⁵⁸ Leslie F. Church, "Book of Genesis" *Matthew Henry's Commentary* (London: Marshal Morgan and Scott Press, 1960), 4.

²⁵⁹ Harkavy, *Students' Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary to the Old Testament*, 131.

²⁶⁰ Church, 4.

²⁶¹ Thomas Nelson, "The Book of Genesis" *King James Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Press, 1999), 16.

²⁶² Bruce Vanter, *On Genesis: A New Lead* (Garden City: Double day, 1977), 53.

²⁶³ F. F. Bruce, "Book of Genesis" *The International Bible Commentary* (New York: Morgan and Scott Press, 1986), 115.

interpretation to this researcher is that of Keil and Delitzsch as cited by Thomas Nelson which suggests that God was speaking of Himself and with Himself but with reference to the fullness of the divine powers and essences which He possesses. The truth that lies at the foundation of the Trinitarian view, the potencies concentrated in the absolute Divine Being are something more than powers and attributes of God ...²⁶⁴

The element in the creation of man is that he was to be “in the image and after the likeness of God,” which would show itself above all, in his dominion over the rest creation. In the immediate context, it is made manifest in his ability to have communion with God. Ultimately, it made the incarnation of the word of God possible.²⁶⁵ Throughout the scriptures, the word “image” signifies resemblance, as when Christ spoke of the resemblance image of Caesar on the coin (Mark 12:16). The aspect of resemblance in Genesis 1:26b is that man is uniquely conscious of God as that according to the scriptures, he is destined to live forever.

The Hebrew word translated “image” *tselem* is used figuratively here for God does not have a human form.²⁶⁶ According to F. Leslie Church, image *tselem* and likeness *d^emut* are two words to express the same thing and making each other the more expressive. Image and likeness denote the likeliest image.²⁶⁷ In the opinion of F. Davidson, no difference is to be found between the two terms. The phrase conforms to the Hebrew style of parallelism in poetry.²⁶⁸ However, this assertion does not in any way suggest that man is equivalent to God. There is an infinite distance between God and man. Jesus Christ is the only express image of God. More so, although the phrase “*living nephesh*” is used equally of animals and human (Gen. 1:21, 24, 30; 2:7), the superiority of man is expressed by his being made in the image and likeness of God.

²⁶⁴ Nelson, “The Book of Genesis” *King James Bible Commentary*, 16.

²⁶⁵ Bruce, 115.

²⁶⁶ Harkavy, *Students’ Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary to the Old Testament*, 131.

²⁶⁷ Church, “Book of Genesis” *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, 4.

²⁶⁸ F. Davidson, “Book of Genesis” *The New Bible Commentary* (New York: Cushing Malloy, 1958), 78.

This means that life is not merely an inevitable outcome of the evolutionary process but is gift from God.²⁶⁹ What is very clear however is that man as God made him was distinctly different from the rest creatures. He was constituted to have the privileged of choice even to the point of choosing to disobey his Creator.

God's purpose of creating man in His image was functional. He is to rule or have dominion over the earth.²⁷⁰ Negative interpretation should not be given to this God-given authority to which man is accountable. The grace to exercise authority over the creatures should be seen as a divine responsibility of stewardship to which godliness and faithfulness are major requirements. As man is entrusted with the government of the inferior creatures, his government of himself by the freedom of his will, has in it more of God's image than that of the rest creatures (Church). Throughout the Old Testament, it is seen that God and man can communicate. By the reason of the divine responsibility entrusted to him, he enjoyed close relationship with God to whom he is accountable. He is to be God's responsible representative and steward on earth, to work out his Creator's will and fulfill the divine purpose.²⁷¹ Thus God honoured man above all other creatures, making him the prince of all creatures and as sacred to Him.

Conclusion

This research work has critically looked into Biblical concept of humanity in Genesis 1:26. A swipe was taken on philosophical and contemporary concept of humanity with concern to the value of human life. It concludes that destroying human life for whatever reason should be discouraged at all cost. The Bible records that man is created in the image of God which means to recognize some special qualities of human nature which allow God to be made manifest in the universe. He is the creation through which God's plans and purposes best can be expressed and actualized.

²⁶⁹ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, "Book of Genesis" The Bible Knowledge Commentary (London: Cook Com. 2004), 29.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Charles F. Pfeiffer, "Book of Genesis" The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), 4.

In addition, this work concludes that the divine responsibility to man from God should not be bastardized or abused. God requires peaceful co-existence of all His creatures vis-à-vis man and his fellow with the rest creatures including the upkeep and sustenance of the open earth surface. It takes spiritual insight to understand that God created all things dependent one to another for existence and survival. In all that man does, he must remember that he is accountable to God.

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