

Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God. By John F. Kilner. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp xii + 402. \$35.

Efforts to ascertain the meaning of Genesis 1:27, in which we read that human beings were created in the “image” (*selem*) and “likeness” (*demut*) of God, have preoccupied theologians and Scripture scholars for centuries. Such inquiries have not resulted in apodictic elucidation or even a clear consensus of scholarly, theological, or exegetical interpretation. Instead, as has been the case for nearly two millennia, disparate and even contentious theories continue to be advanced, ranging from the unqualified assertion of the biblical passage’s inherent paradoxical status to the naively reductionist predication of some human attribute (e.g., rationality) as constitutive of the term’s meaning. It is into this fray that Kilner steps with his own addition to this ongoing discussion: a monograph that thoroughly surveys the manifold perspectives about the *imago Dei*, while seeking to make a modest constructive contribution to theological anthropology and ethics.

Like J. Richard Middleton and others before him, K. acknowledges the dearth of contextual clues and explicit meaning of *selem* and *demut* within Genesis in particular and the canonical Bible in general (chap. 1). The absence of clear identification of what precisely constitutes the *imago Dei* has led to numerous instances of eisegetical error over the centuries, such as the reliance on philosophical speculation about the uniqueness humanity projected into the Hebrew Bible. Subsequently, interpreters have identified various attributes with the *imago Dei* in an absolute manner, which has led to a well-known catalog of prejudices, discrimination, and dehumanizing rhetoric and practices. In light of this persistent risk of devastating consequences such as racism, sexism, ableism, and so on arising from misunderstanding *imago Dei*, K. advocates for adopting the New Testament definition of the image of God as descriptive of Jesus Christ in the first instance (chap. 2). In fact, early in his introduction, K. offers readers a glimpse of this Christocentric vision, stating, “Ultimately, the image of God is Jesus Christ” (xi).

For K., christological exemplarity is the missing hermeneutical insight. Accordingly, to affirm that humanity has been created in the image of God is to suggest that, “people are not God’s image now the way that Christ is; however, they are intimately connected with God because God’s image is the very blueprint for humanity” (92). The three chapters (3–5) that compose the second part of this book explicate what K. means by humanity’s “intimate connection” with God and the relationship between Christ and humanity as created *imago Dei*. In sum, K. argues for a theological anthropology that affirms human beings always maintain the *imago Dei* in a unique way by virtue of their creation, but because of sin they are no longer able to reflect being “conformed to the divine image,” which is seen perfectly in Christ. “Sin has severely damaged people, who desperately need renewal according to the image of Christ” (132).

The final part of the book (chaps. 6–7 and conclusion) takes up the task of describing what this renewal in Christ looks like for humanity. Drawing on New Testament passages to highlight how humanity is called to repair the damage to persons caused

by sin, K. argues that we must begin to view ourselves and others as already created in God's image, treat one another accordingly, and allow this outlook to inform our advocacy and action in the modern world. K.'s primary interest is inviting Christians to consider the ethical consequences of seeing one another as always already bearing the *imago Dei*.

This volume accomplishes its purpose in providing the most thorough compendium of resources on the *imago Dei* to date, but nevertheless falls short of contributing much new insight into the still-elusive and confounding meaning of the *imago Dei*, at least as it first appears in the Hebrew Bible and in non-christological New Testament references. While the ethical impetus for human renewal and conformity to Christ resonates with the best of Pauline theology, the *imago Dei* discussion is limited by long-standing anthropocentric presuppositions about human uniqueness and exclusivity within God's plan for creation and salvation. Absent from the otherwise impressive 50-page bibliography of sources was the work of scholars including David Clough, David Cunningham, and others who have argued compellingly for a more capacious theological reading of the *imago Dei* that might include the rest of creation.

Although it would have lengthened the book, fuller references in the footnotes would have improved the overall accessibility of this volume tremendously. That said, anyone interested in theological anthropology, interpretations of *imago Dei*, or theological ethics would benefit from this text.

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The One and the Three: Nature, Person and Triadic Monarchy in the Greek and Irish Patristic Tradition. By Chrysostom Koutloumousianos. Forward Andrew Louth. Cambridge, UK: James Clarke, 2015. Pp. xvii + 238. £25.

This book is comprised of three chapters divided into two parts: chapter 1 sets forth K.'s understanding of the nature of God, while chapters 2 and 3 examine the anthropological and ecclesiological implications of the theological principles outlined in the first chapter. Perhaps surprisingly for a Greek theologian, K. embraces what has been called "the Latin model" of trinitarian theology—that is, a theology that unfolds by taking as its point of departure God's oneness and seeks to ground the unity of Persons on the basis of God's one divine nature—as opposed to the "Greek model" that is supposed to follow the opposite direction (for the two "models," see Bouyer's *The Invisible Father*). The reason of that preference soon becomes clear, for already from its opening pages, it becomes evident that this is a book directed against the theology of John Zizioulas.

As a result of this motivation, the book is organized around a critique of two positions that have become hallmarks of Zizioulas's theology: (1) "the monarchy of the Father" and (2) the primacy of the bishop. Ironically, by singling out these two points