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EFCA Statement of Faith 3, The Human Condition

Article 3, The Human Condition, states “We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.”

To be created in God's image and likeness according to Gen. 1:26 means that we are patterned (OT, demut, signifying the original after which a thing is patterned) after God Himself as “the crown of all creation (Vine's).” God breathed life into Adam to give the dust of the ground His life to become a living being with a spirit from God. This implies that we were morally made in ‘original righteousness (Ecc. 7:29, JFB)’ to be like God. Our sin tarnished this original design, however, resulting in an image unlike God in righteousness and holiness.

Eve was first tempted as both 2 Cor. 11:3 and 1 Tim. 2:13-14 tell us, being deceived by Satan (Gen. 3:1) and responding with disobedience (Gen. 3:13) to God's clear command with a definite consequence that she would certainly die, not just possibly (or not at all). Such craftiness of the Serpent allowed Eve to believe the lie and question what God truly said. Satan apparently went to Eve first to sow doubt instead of to her and Adam, because she heard God's prohibition second hand from Adam who was the one who heard it directly from God Himself.

Every child of Adam and Eve are united now with Adam as sinners from birth (nature) and by choice as we all disobey (Rom. 3:20-23). Sin, disobedience to God, tarnished the image in man with sin. This sin came initially by the willful choice of Eve, followed by Adam's consent, to go against God's clear command, which was then passed down to all of Adam and Eve's children. Romans 5:12 tells us that sin came into the world and us by Adam, which brought death by that sin to us all. Furthermore, Rom. 5:18 goes on to reveal that Adam's offense of sin condemned us all, but that hope in Christ as the second “Adam” (Man) provided a sinless life to justify us in God's sight (see 1 Cor. 15:22 also).

Because of this condition we are all born into (inherited), we are alienated from God, separated by our sinfulness that cannot abide with the righteous image of God Adam was created with. Isaiah 59:2 reminds us that our sin separates us from God, and Col.1:21 points out that our wicked or evil actions (and thoughts) alienate us from Him. Our understanding we are born with therefore is darkened and blinds our hearts to understand all God is and commands us to do (Eph. 4:18). We are all under His wrath, deserving our due and fair punishment for sin (Rom. 3:23 and Heb. 9:27). We are children of His wrath by nature (Eph. 2:3), sinning by living by our unrighteous and imperfect standards in place of God's.

Only through a new creation can this image be restored to its former intended glory, renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24). Jesus is the only way to be made right with God once more as Acts 4:12 makes clear. He alone can mediate for us because He became our ransom to buy us back (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

So Jesus Christ provided a way for us to be rescued, saved from a hopeless death of sin, the power of Satan, and the Hell we deserve; in Him we find forgiveness. 1 Thess. 1:10 shows the saving from wrath, and Acts 26:18 tells how He opens our eyes to see, bringing us to the light of His original righteous image. We find forgiveness for sin and a sanctified inheritance by faith.

So also are we reconciled, made right before God, by Jesus' sacrificed blood spilled to cover our sin (Col. 1:20-21). This reconciliation means that we are no longer alienated, no longer enemies, but saved from sin by His death (Rom. 5:10). We are also renewed, made again into the original image (along with the old man), so that we can be sanctified more each day to be like Christ until we are like Him in spirit and body after our resurrection at the end of time. Romans 8:29 shows His plan in this, and 2 Cor. 4:16 affirms that we are being sanctified by this daily renewal. We will be transformed into that image (2 Cor. 3:18) and our bodies will be remade by His power as well (Phil. 3:21). The hope is that we will be like Him when we see Him (1 Jn. 3:2).

All of these things give me hope and comfort from the Scriptures, knowing that God in Jesus Christ has provided the covering for my sin by His choice and mine, making me right while restoring me to His original design in Christ by my re-creation for His glory. Until then, Selah!