

*Embracing the Other*

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# THE THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION

January 26, 2016

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# THE THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION

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- ❖ Content
- ❖ Community
- ❖ Challenge



# *The Theology of Reconciliation*

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## CONTENT

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- ❖ SBC
- ❖ PCA
- ❖ Repentance



## *The Theology of Reconciliation*

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### CONTENT: SBC

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- ❖ We still have a long way to go in our efforts to live out the kingdom aspirations of diversity and racial reconciliation made known to us in Revelation 7. Thus we need to continue to give much attention to these matters. We need not only focus on what it means to become faithful Great Commission followers of Christ, but also Great Commandment followers of Christ who are called to love those around us.

## *The Theology of Reconciliation*

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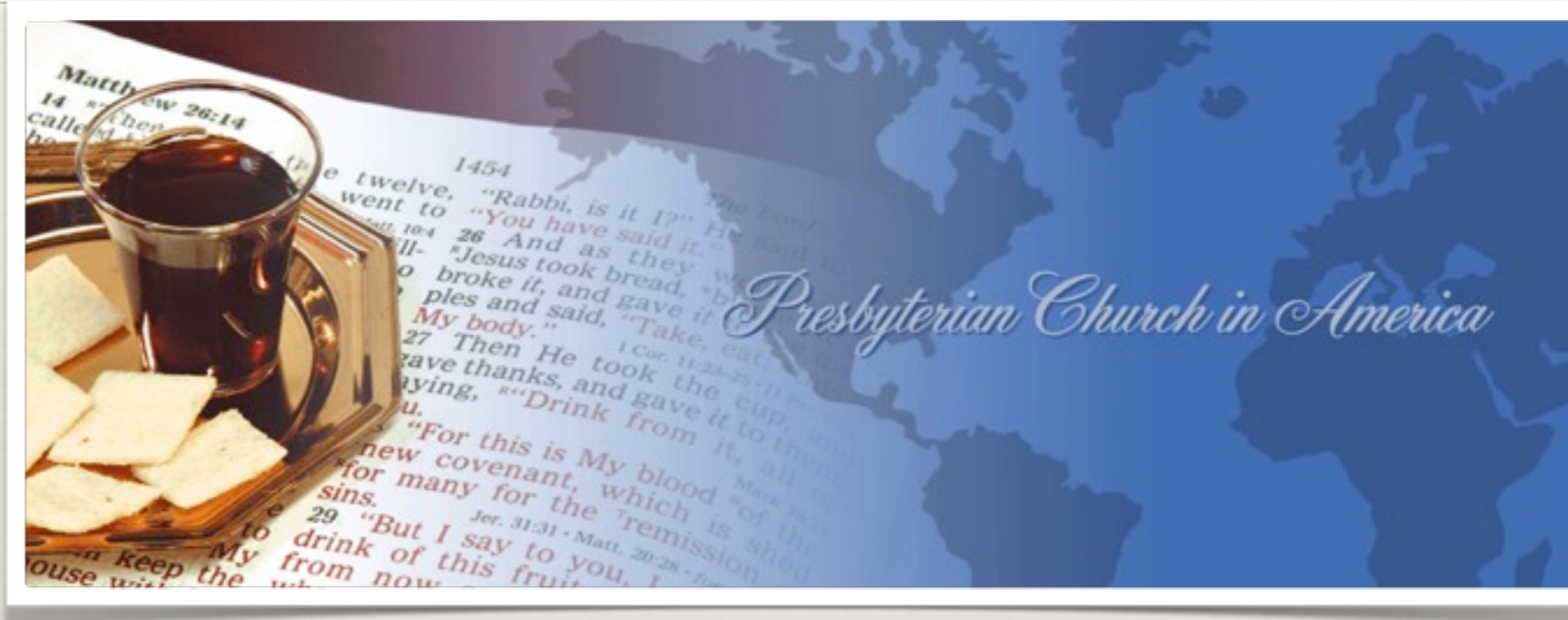
# CONTENT: PCA

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- ❖ The 2010 Strategic Plan was written to help “the PCA identify its challenges, address them with strategies that are consistent with our biblical values, and build denominational support for implementing these strategies.” One of the external challenges the denomination faces is the transition in the US from an Anglo-majority culture. Two of the denomination’s internal challenges, according to the report, are “maintaining biblical worship with cultural diversity,” and “ethnic homogeneity both in general membership and denominational leadership.”

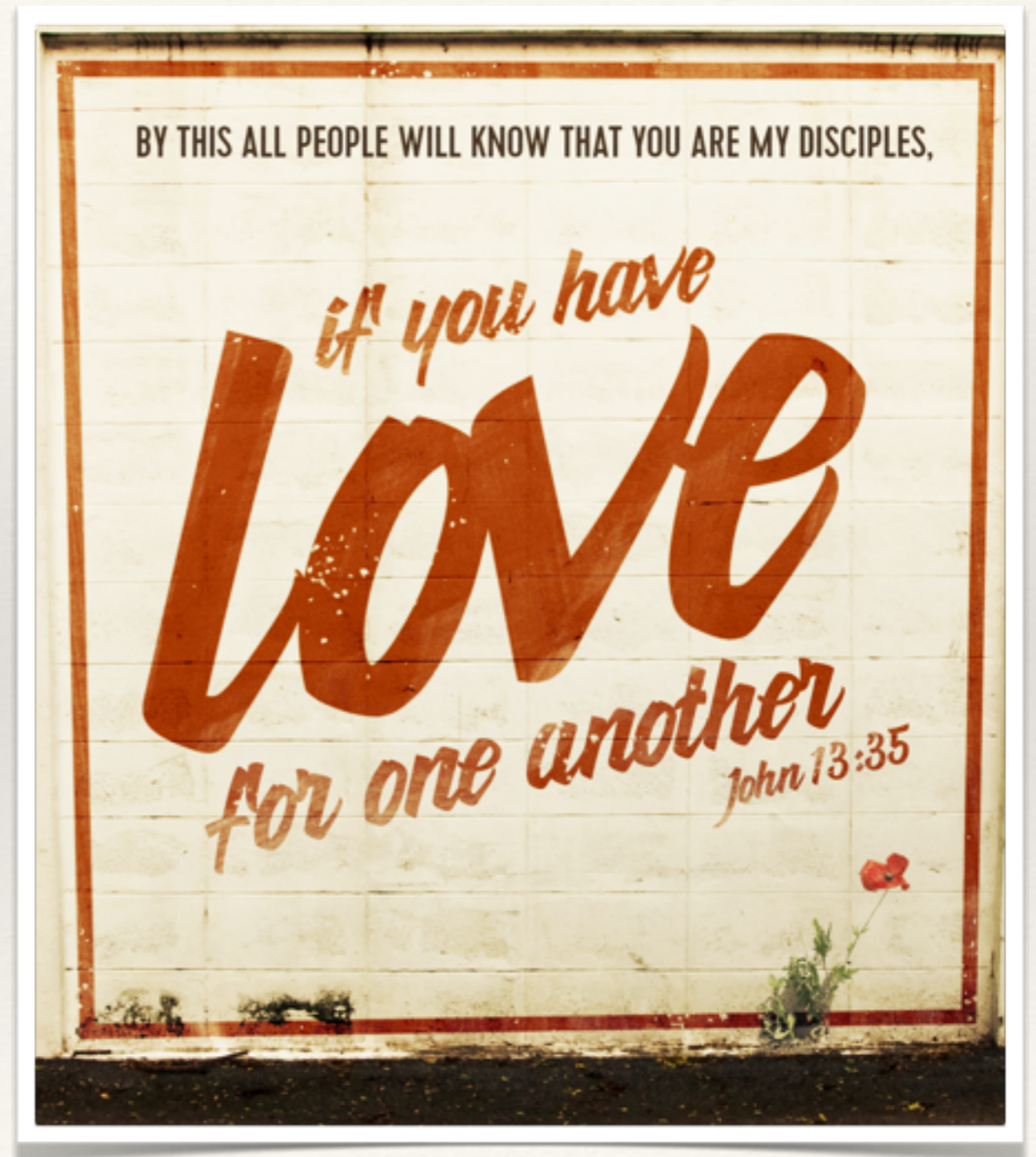
# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: CONTENT



Whereas, God has once more given the PCA a gracious opportunity to show the beauty, grace, and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through confession and through the fruits of repentance: such as, clarity that racism is a sin requiring formative and corrective discipline; **growing into cultural intelligence regarding minority cultures**; establishing interracial friendships and partnerships inside and outside our denomination; renewing our church's commitment to develop minority leadership at the congregational, presbytery, and denominational levels; and encouraging a denomination-wide vision for and commitment to a more racially and ethnically diverse church in the next twenty years;

# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: CONTENT

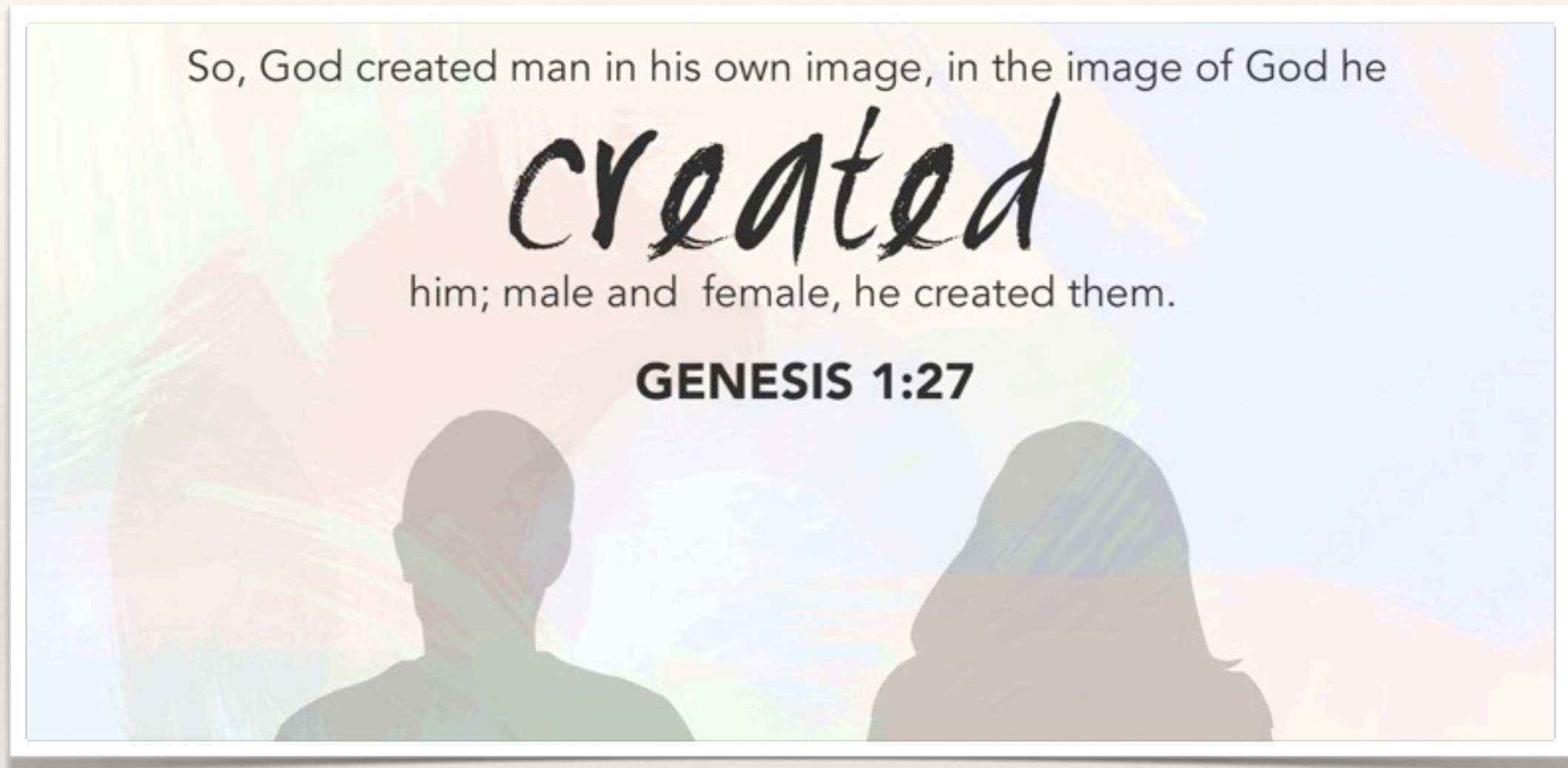
- ❖ CQ is loving the Other
- ❖ “Other” simply means those not like us
- ❖ Reconciliation is deeper than diversity
- ❖ Striving to be people bathed in the love of God in Jesus Christ whose heart is to love our neighbors



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# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: COMMUNITY

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- ❖ What is the first thing the Bible says about humanity?
- ❖ What does it mean for humanity to image God?

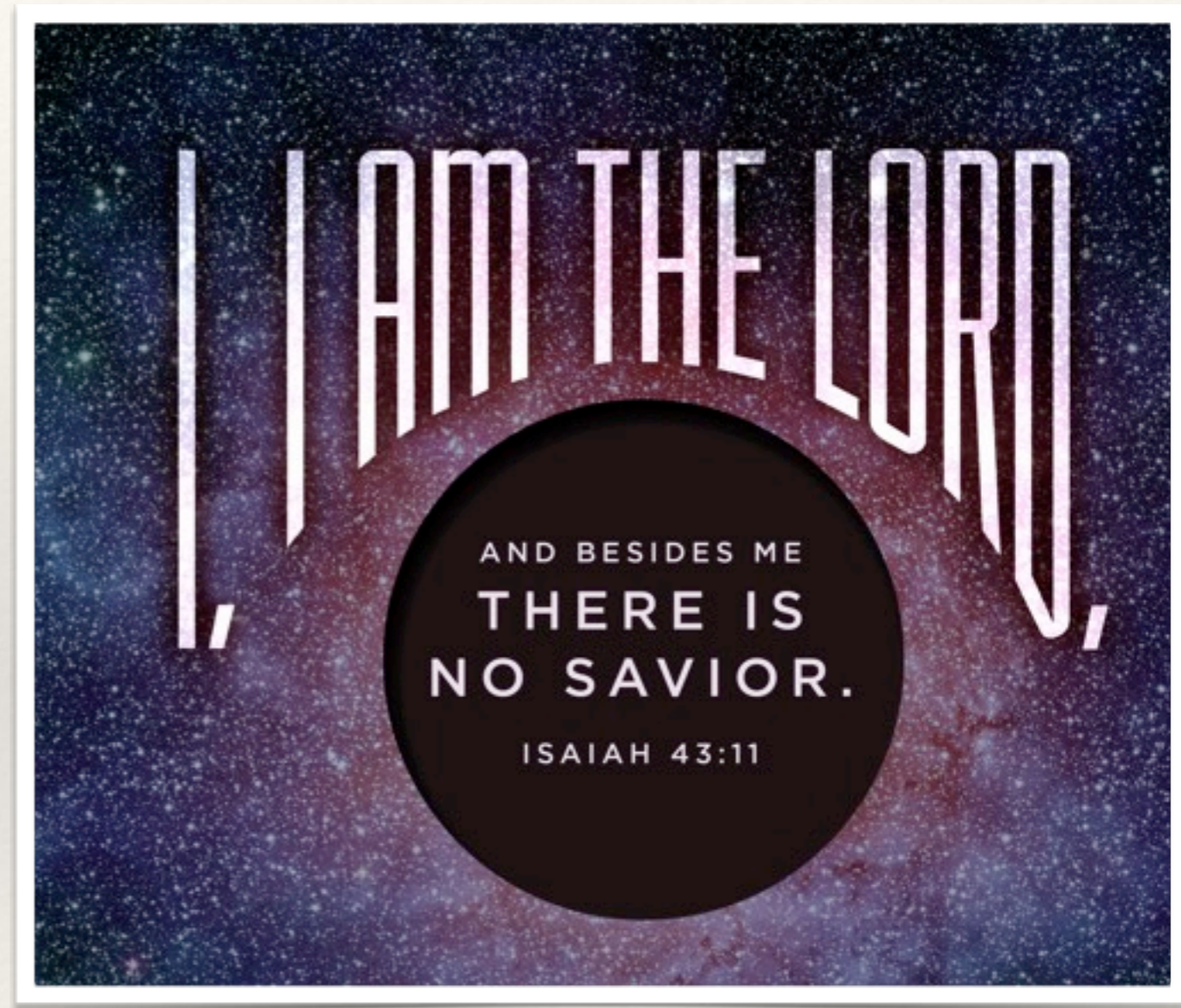


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# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: COMMUNITY

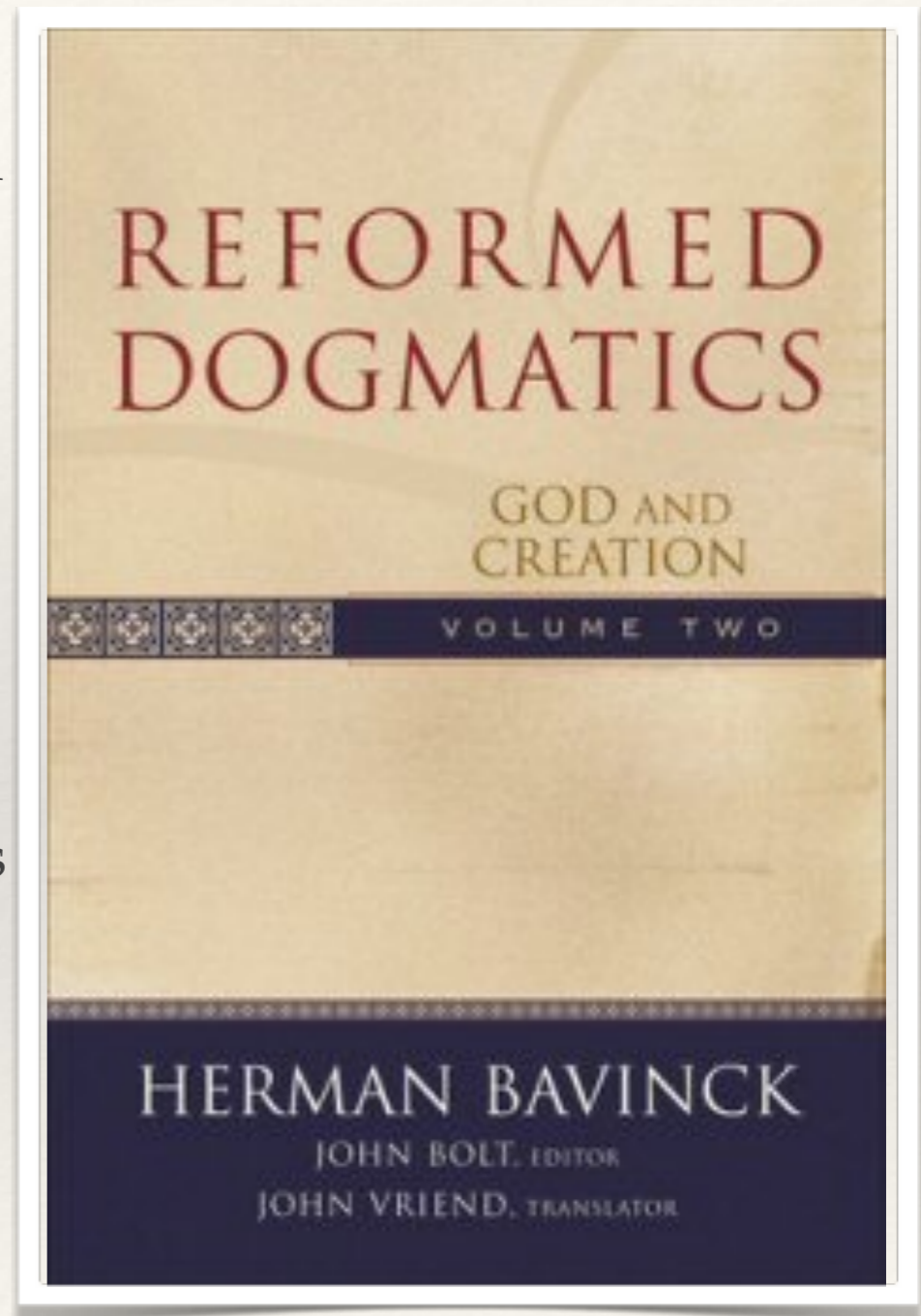
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- ❖ Exodus 20:4-6
- ❖ You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.



# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: COMMUNITY

- ❖ The image of God is much too rich for it to be fully realized in a single human being, however richly gifted that human being may be. It can only be somewhat unfolded in its depth and riches in a humanity counting billions of members. Just as the traces of God (*vestigia Dei*) are spread over many, many works, in both space and time, so also the image of God can only be displayed in all its dimensions and characteristic features in a humanity whose members exist both successively one after the other and contemporaneously side by side... Only humanity in its entirety—as one complete organism, summed up under a single head, spread out over the whole earth, as prophet proclaiming the truth of God, as priest dedicating itself to God, as ruler controlling the earth and the whole of creation—only it is the fully finished image, the most telling and striking likeness of God.



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# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: COMMUNITY

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- ❖ Liz Vice - “How can I contain you, when you contain everything? The house of my soul is far too small”



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# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: COMMUNITY

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- ❖ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16–17 ESV)
- ❖ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (1 Peter 1:1–2 ESV)



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- ❖ Wayne Grudem - “Because God in himself has both unity and diversity, it is not surprising that unity and diversity are also reflected in the human relationships he has established...In the church we have ‘many members’ yet ‘one body.’”
- ❖ Matthew Vos - “Fellowship is not just something nice to have over coffee after church. It is, in fact, the basis for identity itself. To be made in the image of God is to be made in relationship.”
- ❖ Randy Woodley - “The reflection in human beings of both unity and diversity is part of what it means for us to be created in the image of God.”



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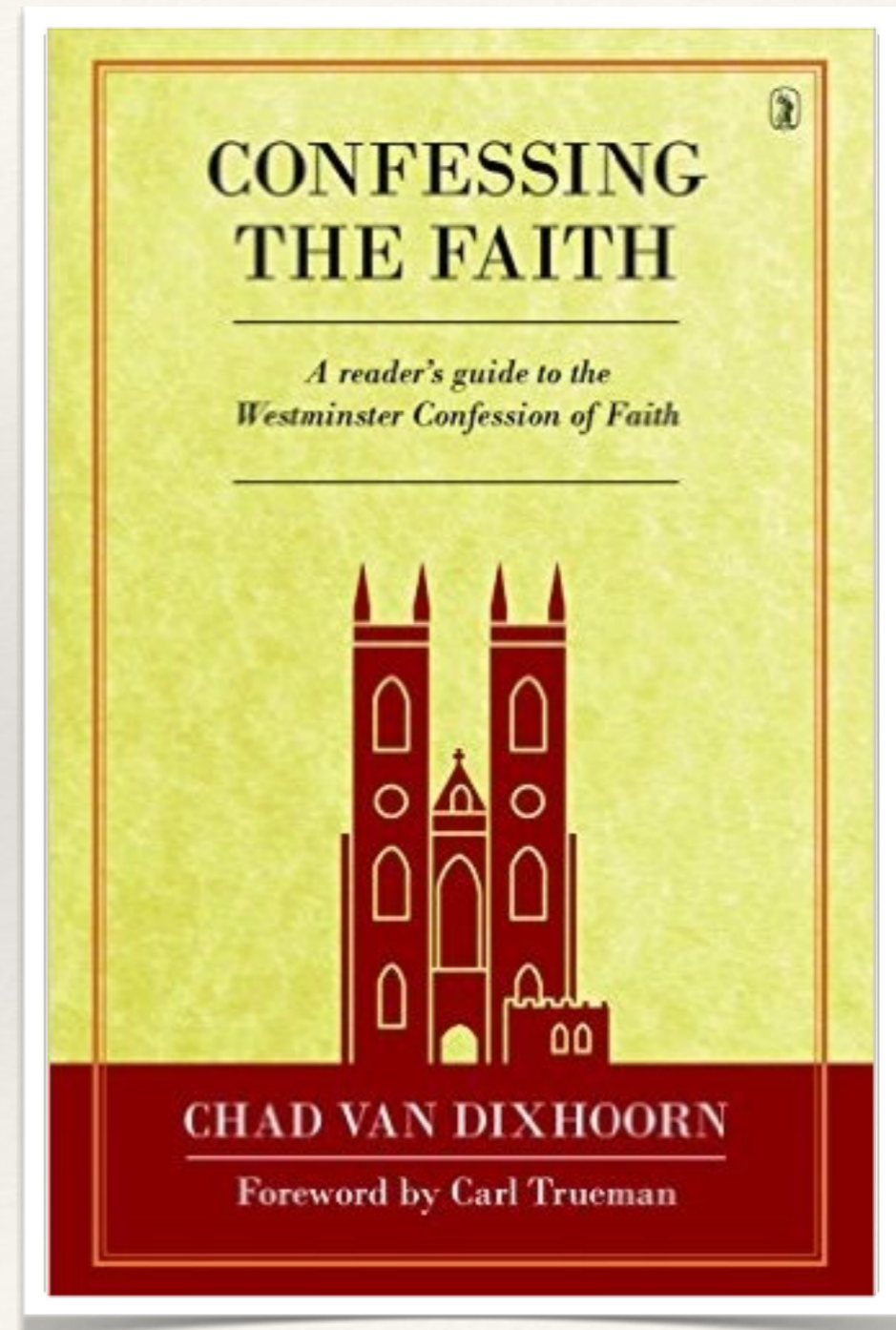
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- ❖ Verna Harrison - Just as the Trinity is an unfathomable mystery, the mysterious and irreducible uniqueness of each person joined together in human diversity serves as the image of God.
- ❖ John Frame - “the concept of mutual glorification suggests an important way in which Christians can be like members of the Trinity: we, too, are called to defer to one another in this way, to glorify one another, to be disposable to one another’s purposes—that is, to love one another as God loved us.”



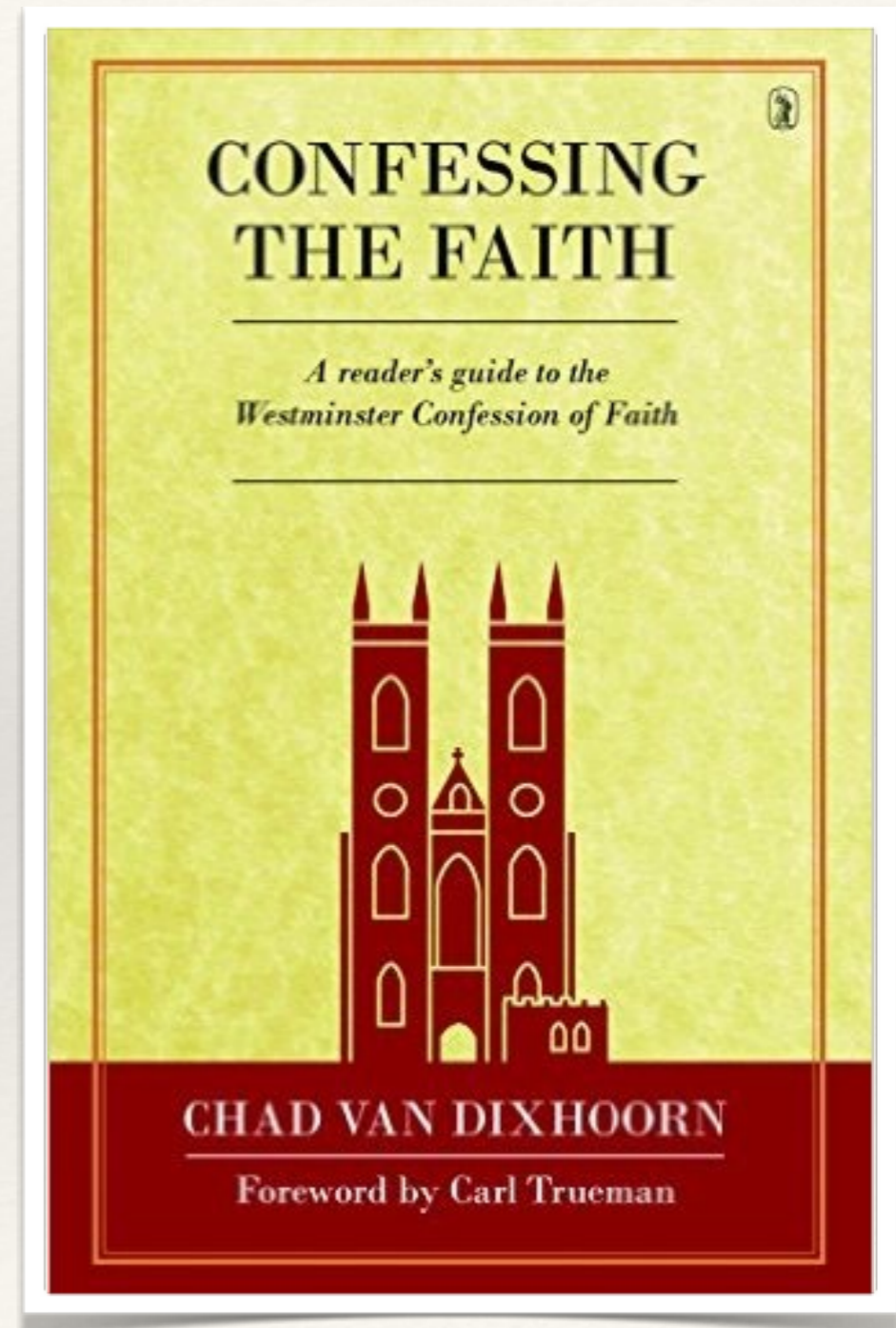
# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: COMMUNITY

- ❖ The Communion of the Saints - WCF 26.1, 2
- ❖ All saints—who are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit and by faith—have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. And, being united to one another in love, they participate in each other's gifts and graces and are obligated to perform those public and private duties which lead to their mutual good, both inwardly and outwardly.
- ❖ It is the duty of professing saints to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing such other spiritual services as help them to edify one another. It is their duty also to come to the aid of one another in material things according to their various abilities and necessities. As God affords opportunity, this communion is to be extended to all those in every place who call on the name of the Lord Jesus.



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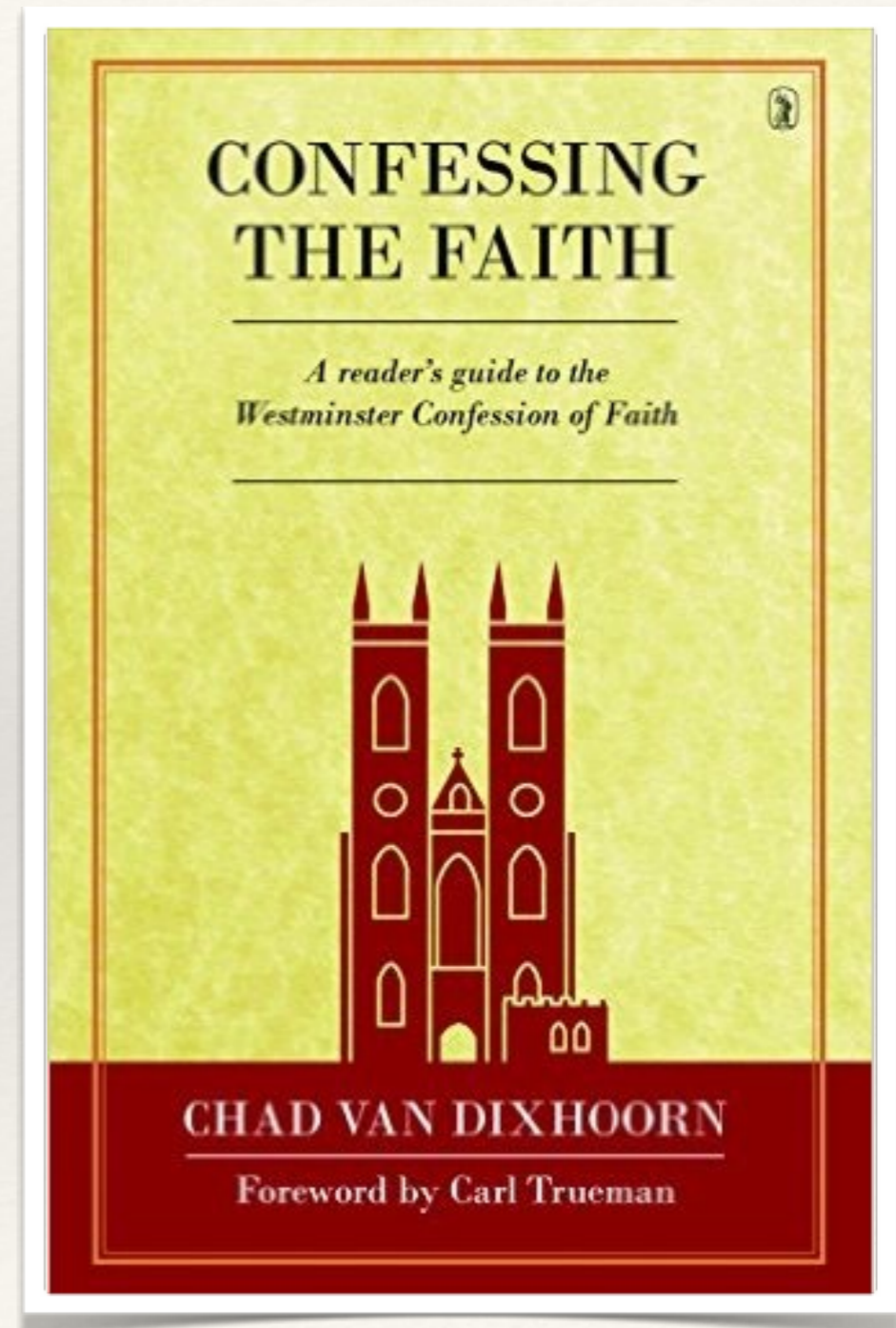
- ❖ Robert Letham - the “communion that the saints enjoy with each other does not erode or destroy the integrity of the individual...This is an outflow of the doctrine of the Trinity: there is unity (and union), but in diversity.”
- ❖ Chad Van Dixhoorn - “Ultimately this love for each other cannot be restricted to what we have; it needs to encompass who we are.”—who are united to Jesus Christ their head by his Spirit and
- ❖ William Perkins - “We must here be admonished not to seek our own things, but to refer the labours [sic] of our callings to the common good...Lastly, considering we are all knit into one mystical body...our duty is to redress the faults of our brethren, and to cover them... Love covers the multitude of sins.”
- ❖ George S. Hendry - this love as one “not based on mutual attraction...but a love that overcomes division and reconciles contraries and brings into communion those who have nothing in common save the fact that Christ gave himself for them.”





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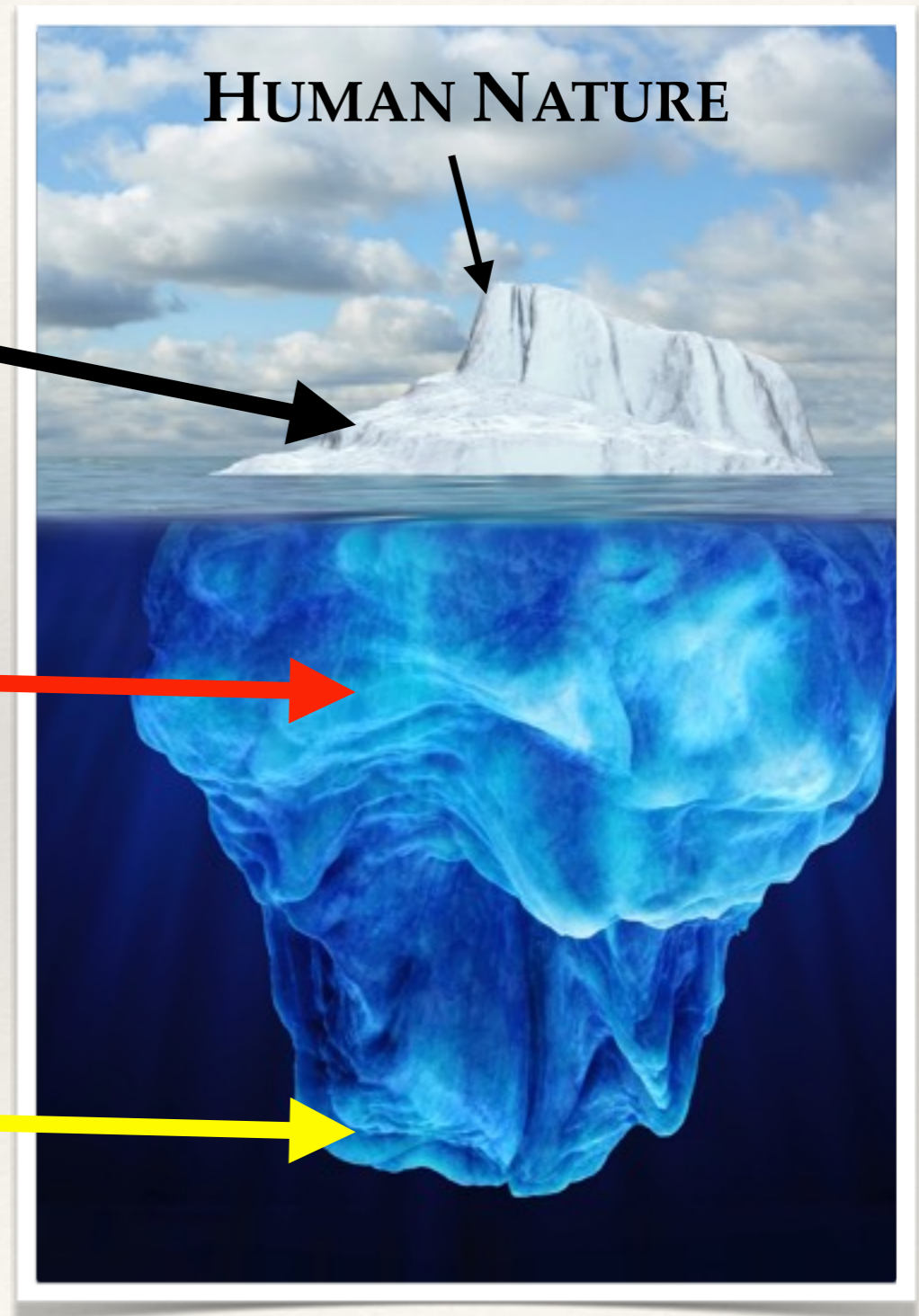


# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: CHALLENGE

CULTURAL  
ARTIFACTS

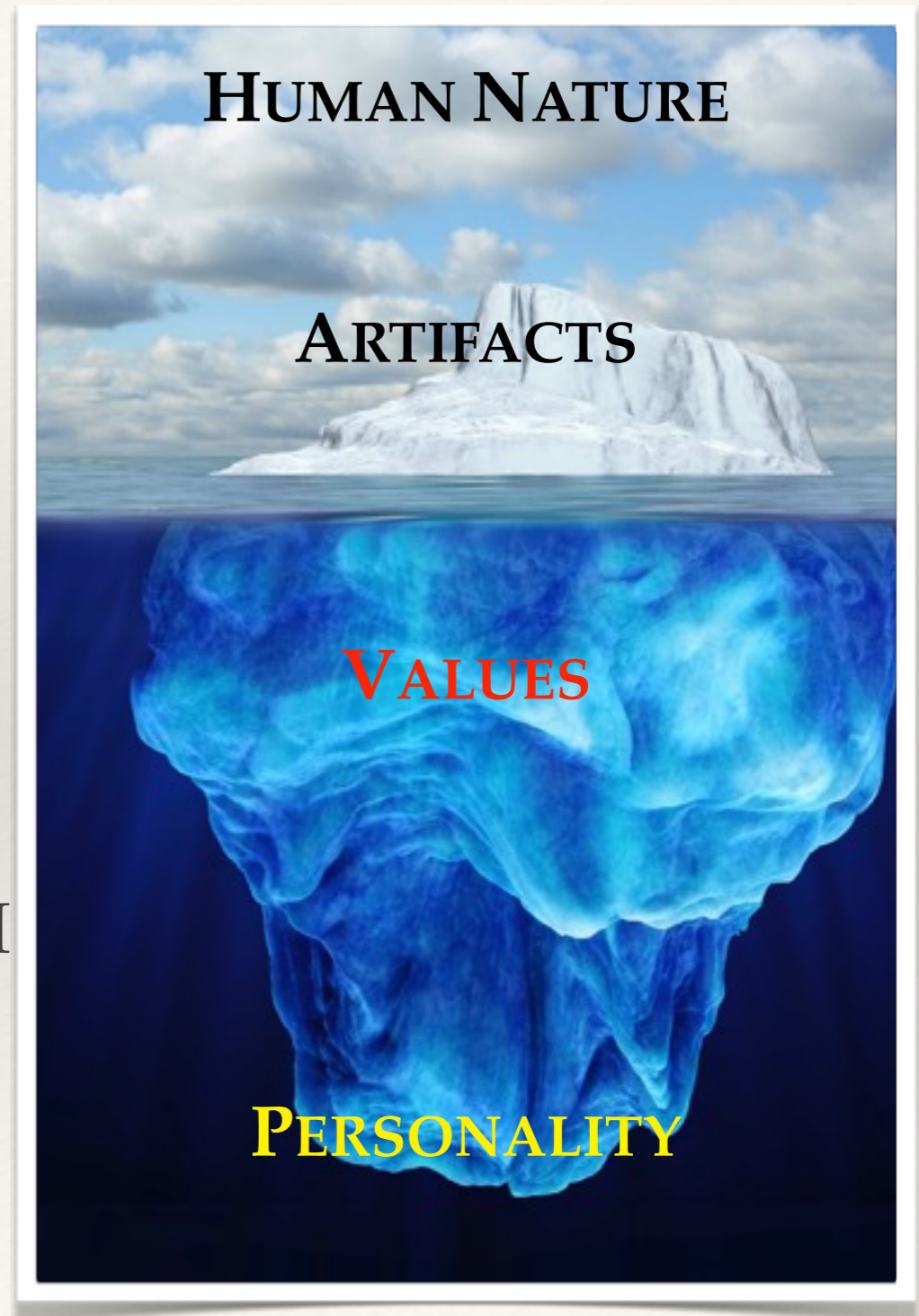
CULTURAL  
VALUES

INDIVIDUAL  
PERSONALITY



# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: CHALLENGE

- ❖ Wondering whether he, as Croatian, could embrace a 'četnik' (Serbian fighter)—the ultimate enemy—Miroslav Volf asks, “What would it do to my identity as a human being and as a Croat?”
- ❖ Yet, when it came to the thought of embracing a četnik, he admits, “No, I cannot—but as a follower of Christ I think I should be able to.”

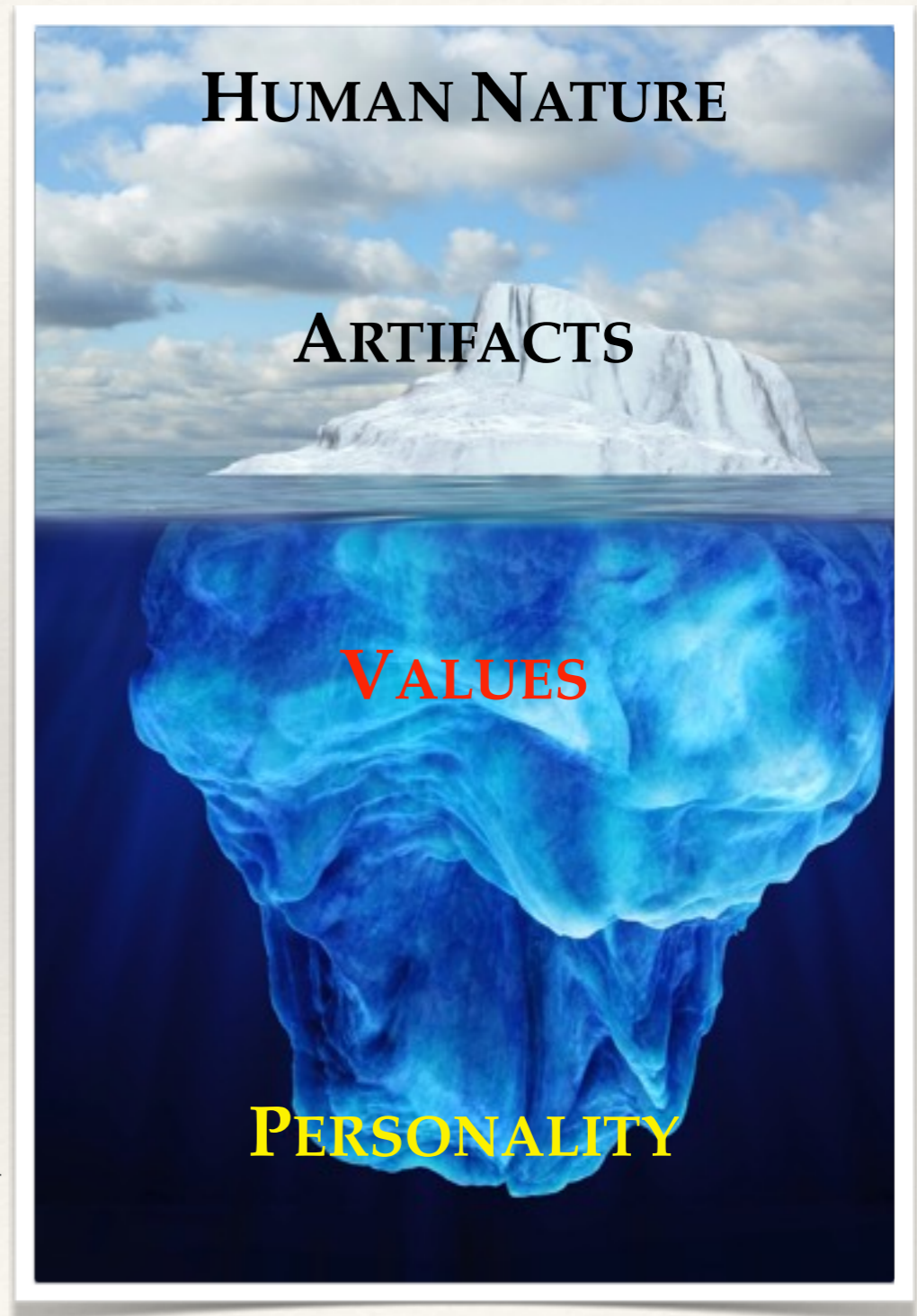


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# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: CHALLENGE

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- ❖ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be



# THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION: CHALLENGE

- ❖ We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.” For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:1–7 ESV)



And above all these put on



which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

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