

# OUR HUMANNESS: ONTOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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When you think about it, it is surprising that we humans are constantly 'present with ourselves' (Taylor, 1989), even talk to ourselves, and yet seldom think about how we are constructed. Thankfully, some people have asked the crucial questions and there remain three dominant notions of what it means to be human. I shall call these, the *primal view*, the *positivist reductive (scientism) view* and the *Judeo-Christian view*. There are other ideas but they are mostly pure fantasy.

## THE PRIMAL VIEW OF HUMANITY

The Hellenes thought seriously about most things and it is not surprising that they developed an ontological theory for humanity. They prescribed that a human had a body (*soma*), a soul (*psyche*) and a spirit (*pneuma*). Not a great deal is recorded as to how they came to this view but a similar view is found amongst modern primal groups<sup>1</sup>, so we can turn to them for understanding how the common sense primal view may have developed.

The BaPedi, a branch of the Sotho people in Southern Africa, are a group holding to a primal view of humanity and Mönnig, a German missionary who lived amongst them for many years, has described how they derived it (Mönnig, 1988). The BaPedi started with the obvious: a human has a body (*soma* Greek.; *mmele* (BaPedi)). But a human body can be *alive or dead* so there must be another component. The Greeks saw this as a rational (thinking) component and called it the *psyche* but the BaPedi and other Bantu speaking African people call it the *moyo* or *moya*, i.e. 'the life'. But there is a further dimension, a human may be alive but still not feel empowered to get things done. The BaPedi put it this way: 'Sometimes I wake up and feel I cannot get out of bed – I say my *seriti* (spirit) has left me, it is traveling. Another day I wake up full of vigour – I say 'my *seriti* has returned'<sup>2</sup>. The Greeks spoke of the spirit as *pneuma* i.e. the wind. And this is close to a Christian view, for Jesus referred to this idea when He spoke to Nicodemus: 'The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound of it but cannot tell from where it is coming or where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit' (John 3:8). We will talk more about this later.

In Greek literature, the notion of *psyche* and *pneuma* are interchangeable, and it is the same with the BaPedi *moya* and *seriti*. Both are thought to be

immaterial, as opposed to the body which is purely corporeal. The *moyo* is characterized by the BaPedi as follows: 'When a sick person stops breathing they are no longer alive – the *moya* is no longer present. When a voice is heard at night the *moya* of a dead person is said to have spoken' (Mönnig, op cit). In life, the *moya* is believed to be distributed throughout the body but to be strongest in the lungs, from which the breath originates, and the blood, without which the person dies. The *seriti* is characterized differently. Unlike the *moya* which (during life) is irremovable from the body, the *seriti* may leave the body any time it chooses<sup>3</sup>. Some people, particularly diviners, are believed to have great control over their *seriti*, sending it to make investigations of persons and places (*astral traveling?*). Witches, practitioners of the most advanced and malevolent form of African witchcraft, are notorious in this regard. They are believed to be able to change themselves into hyenas and other animals and to have sexual relations with men while they sleep. It is a fairly common experience for an African man to awaken naked and exhausted, far from home. Such happenings are assumed to be caused by witches.

The *seriti* is also connected with the idea of *shadow*. The BaPedi do not allow people who might harm them walk on their shadow and it is considered bad manners to allow your shadow to fall on another's shadow. Similarly, diviners do not practice their art at mid-day for at this time there are hardly any shadows - the spirits of the dead are sleeping!

The attachment of the *seriti* to the body is assumed to be weaker when a person is sick or under the influence of alcohol or wild hemp (*Cannabis indica*). Tribal dignitaries are seen to have strong *seriti*, especially the Chief and the medicine man, whereas a person born into an insignificant family is said to have little or a weak *seriti*. However, there is the contradiction that when a person is installed as a Chief, their *seriti* is said to increase, and a poor person may increase their *seriti* by accumulating wealth. Because of such notions, the BaPedi are careful to keep their *seriti* protected from hostile external influences for it is upon this principle that the BaPedi notion of cause and effect rests. Love potions, amulets and *muti* sacks worn around the neck, and wrist and stomach bands are viewed as crucial to maintaining *seriti* and thereby avoiding the malevolent influences of others, particularly the dead and those practicing the malevolent arts.

An important notion for the BaPedi is that the *moya* and *seriti* survive after death as a single entity. Some Ethiopian traditions assume that the after-life is located in the ground (e.g. the Zulus) but most

say that it dwells in a shadow world located in the sky, specifically where the sun sets in the west. From this springs the whole tradition of the ancestors and the involvement of spirits in the affairs of the living.

### **THE POSITIVIST (REDUCTIVE) ACCOUNT OF HUMANNESS**

It is in the nature of things that humans are obliged to examine the world around them, but to look is not necessarily to see. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC some Hellenes began to approach the matter of perception in a disciplined manner, taking the position that the *cosmos* may only be understood by *examination*. Philosophical ideas about the *cosmos* were dismissed along with the myths and legends that claimed the minds of the people of that time<sup>4</sup>. At a much later time their approach has been labeled positivism or positivist scientism by Auguste Comte (1798-1857). It is a tradition that has profoundly influenced Western thinking to the present time.

With regard to human ontology, positivism argues that, if we wish to know *what* humans are, what we need to do is examine human bodies, doing away with theories like ‘mind’ and ‘spirit’, as these are fantasies that cannot be sensed or explained by corporeal processes. For the positivist, there is no life apart from chemical processes and nerve impulses, hence the term ‘reductive’ being applied to this view.

#### ***The Ionian ‘Dawn’***

The 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC was a notable period. On the political front, the Egyptians regained control of Egypt, Cyrus the Mede (538 BC) permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-2), the Athenians (510 BC) established a notable form of democratic government called the *ecclesia* and six months later (509 BC) the Romans established a similar form of government they called the *Senatus Populus Que Romanus* (SPQR), the Senate and People of Rome. Busy and notable times in which one could be excused for not noticing that on the Aegean fringe of the Anatolian mainland three notable ‘scientists’ (*scientio*, Gk. = to know) had emerged. Together with a fourth person from Ephesus, these men birthed a science of natural philosophy aimed at providing a *purely naturalistic interpretation* of the universe. In its beginnings it had strong ties with the common sense view but over time it developed principles that led it to hypothesize a very uncommon view of the world around us.

Thales is regarded as the founder of the positivist school. To him is attributed the proposition of the

First Principle that *everything is derived from water*. The earth he saw to be a flat disk floating on water, with water above (where else could the rain come from) and water vapour all around. The sun, moon and stars he hypothesised to be vapour in a state of incandescence.

A second figure of importance was Anaximander. He worked from the proposition that natural things consisted of four elements *deriving from a common indeterminate primordial substance*. These elements he saw to be stratified: *water* (the sea) floated on *earth*, *mist* (air) sat on water and *fire* (the active element) was all encompassing. As pressure built up in the primordial substance, the ‘skin’ broke to form wheels of fire enclosed in tubes of mist that encircle the earth. Holes in the mist allow us to see the fire inside as heavenly bodies. An eclipse is simply the partial or complete closing of one of these holes. Anaximander argued that fish were the first animals - that, as parts of the earth dried, fish adapted to produce land animals and eventually humans. In his proposal of a common indeterminate substance and his evolutionary view of the development of life, Anaximander was innovative in the extreme. His hypothesis of a primordial substance anticipated the Big Bang Theory of modern physics and his evolutionary hypothesis looked forward to Darwin.

The third and last great Miletian natural scientist was Anaximenes. He plumped for *mist* as the First Principle. He saw mist getting harder as more of it was packed into a confined space, producing first water and then earth. That is, he hypothesised *rarefaction* and *condensation* as the crucial processes in the transformation of matter and noted the involvement of fire in these processes – heat accompanies rarefaction and cold accompanies condensation.

The fourth Ionian of note was Heraclitis of Ephesus. He proposed fire as the First Principle but his main contribution was to provide an explanation of ‘why things stay where they are’ via an hypothesis of *tension*. Taking his cue from the strings of a bow or lyre, he argued that there is a force in matter that moves elements on an *upward path to fire* and an opposite force that *moves them down to earth*. Existence is dictated by a balance of these forces – everything flows!

#### ***Hippocratic Medicine and the Full Emergence of Positivist Science***

The foundational work of the Ionian natural scientists led other workers to develop a positivist approach to healing. The move is attributed to Hippocratis but there were several positivist schools of healing in Greece in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC,

all of them in conflict with the other main healing practices of the times, viz: prayer to the gods, gymnasia, and philosophical counseling.

With regard to prayer, many Greeks in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC believed that healing was available via the god Aesculapius (the god of life and death = the Hindu Shiva) whose sign is the serpent (after Moses in the Wilderness, Numbers 21:9). The priests of Aesculapius survived by persuading humans that diseases and misfortune were the direct result of divine judgment and that cures could only be gained by placating the gods. While some Ionians chose to have nothing to do with myths and magic (Thales et al, above) countless others followed the Aesculapian tradition, especially when they became ill! And we note that attributing sickness to God's judgment is evident in our own time, even amongst sophisticated Westerners!

Greek gymnasia attendants had an extraordinary knowledge of human anatomy. They provided massage, direct interventions in the case of dislocations and sound advice on diet and systems of exercise. The Hippocratic tradition was helped in that gymnasia attendants were often extremely rough with patients, probably because the general populace regarded them as menials!

The *a priori* notions of philosophers also played a part in healing. The Pythagorean School thought the number 4 was crucial. Building on their mathematical reflections, they identified *four powers* in humans: the power to reproduce, the power to grow, the power to sense and the power to reason. These were seen from nature to be a hierarchy in that plants had the first two, animals the first three and humans all four. This hierarchy they saw further confirmed by their *position* in the human body. The sexual organs were regarded as the lowest power (and 'dirty' by their association with excretion), the power to grow was in the navel, emotions and feelings were in the heart and reason in the brain (the highest power). This thinking led to the notion that a human is not one entity but a composite being evidencing several parts and powers of a distinctive kind. These ideas are still very much with us, e.g. we still speak of 'higher education' and in some quarters sexual activity is still regarded as unmentionable.

The Hippocratic schools discarded all the above on the ground that they were inadequate for dispensing healing and tended to treat patients as objects rather than persons; the Hippocratic Oath required physicians to be *caring*. They had several objections to philosophical physiology. Firstly they argued that philosophical ideas are *unnecessary* seeing healers have all the means at hand to

discover principles and methods and to determine which of them are useful for relieving sickness and pain. Secondly, they found philosophical views *too narrow in diagnosis*. In fact, Hippocratic technicians were appalled at the sheer ignorance of philosophers, who seemed not to know that:

'...it makes a difference to a man's body whether the bread be of bolted or unbolted flour, whether it be winnowed or un-winnowed wheat, whether it be kneaded with much water or little, whether it be thoroughly baked or under baked. Each of these differences produces in a human an effect and a change of one sort or another, and upon these differences is based all dieting of humans, whether the patient be in health, convalescent or ill' (Farrington, 1949).

Thirdly, for the Hippocratic technician, *a technique must give a result* if it is to be taken seriously. If something worked it was proof that the technician understood nature. It was one thing for the philosopher to build a cosmology out of the observation that water could become ice under certain conditions - a doctor's ideas were constantly *under test in real life situations*. For the Hippocratic Schools the *first duty* was to *heal the sick*, not to study disease.

Hippocratic medicine reinforced the positivist scientific method by its practice of addressing sensation first and intellect second but it did allow that through experience one may devise a theory and subsequently a law. In medical science terms this may be stated as follows: (1) observation and experimentation are the way to discover the truth about human nature, not *a priori* propositions; (2) the criticism that internal complaints cannot be observed is met by arguing that what escapes the eyesight may be mastered by the 'eye of the mind'; the attendant can diagnose dysfunctions by reasoning based on symptoms such as roughness or clearness of voice, rapidity of respiration, and the character of discharges - smell, colour, etc.; and (3) the healing arts are aided by compulsions that constrain the body to give up its secrets, e.g. getting the patient to run up a hill. In the early 21st Century, Hippocratic medical practitioners hold fast to the above principles and by so doing maintain for themselves an honoured place in human society, not only because there is an on-going need for health intervention but because they have persuaded us that the way to health is established through the scientific method. This has led to the view that a high degree of intellect and much study is required for diagnostic reasoning and medicos still build their reputation on the need for caring. Strangely, the profession has taken as its logo the sign of Aesculapius. Seemingly nothing has been left to chance!

The persistence of positivist thought in modern societies creates the ground for funding on-going medical research, for by this view it is by research only that the nature of our bodies (which to the positivist is equivalent to 'our selves') will be better understood. Of course, in making these comments we are speaking of the Western world, not the primal world where commonsense notions that disease is predicated on spiritual malevolence dominate. The two views of our nature survive side by side. Both have this distinction – they are hierarchical views that cannot be understood by the rank and file; years of study must be undertaken if a person wishes to practice as a *sangoma* or become a Western medical doctor.

### ***The Problem for Observational Science***

In their rejection of any form of magical intervention the Ionians looked forward to the Abbe Simon, Francis Bacon, Auguste Comte and the reductive sensationalism of Bentham, Darwin and Ernst Mach in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD. But were they justified in so quickly rejecting theorising? The Ionian position is weakened by its need to *invent abstract terms* to explain phenomena. Water and earth become *liquid* and *solid* and words like *rarefaction* and *tension* are definitely not concrete terms. Heraclitus recognised that 'the eyes and ears are a bad witness if the mind cannot interpret what they say' and, as Farrington (op cit) notes: '...once the distinction becomes clear, there is bound to be controversy as to which of the two, sense or reason, is the true method of approach to the understanding of nature'. The battle continues to the present time.

The body/mind problem is a case in point. Positivists are united in the belief that the human is solely a corporeal being but when it comes to the mind they have prescribed four contradictory positions: (1) the Radical Materialist View states that mental events are illusionary and body-mind problem not a problem at all; (2) the Pan-Psychist View argues that all matter exists with a mental or proto-psychical state, and therefore, being integral with matter, mental activity can have neither any independent existence from matter nor exert any influence upon it, e.g. you cannot cure a cold by positive thinking; (3) the Epiphenomenalist View sees mental states existing in relation to material happenings but saying nothing about causes, e.g. the football that I have may have been used by a super star but because I own it does not make me an expert footballer; and (4) the Identity, Central State or Psycho-Neural Identity View sees mental states existing as an inner aspect of material structures such as the brain nerve cells and neural actions and providing a sufficient explanation of brain-mind responses. All of these views are

materialistic in that each of them safeguards the closed-ness of the material world; any suggestion of an immaterial self (soul or spirit) is categorically denied. At most, it is allowed that the conscious self, if such a thing exists, must be located in the neural tissue. None of them appeals as having real authority to explain a human's day to day experience but, if one chooses to take a positivist reductive view, one must hold to one view or another.

Many positivists take the view that the mind is solely associated with the brain. If this is so, it should be possible to discover which part of the brain is the most likely part for the mind to be located. Sir John Eccles, an Australian neurosurgeon, neurologist and Nobel Prize winner, spent a lifetime examining and operating on the brain. His conclusion was that, while it was clear that the human mind had no access to the corporeal world but *through* the brain,

“The happenings in the neural machinery of the brain do not provide a necessary or sufficient explanation of the totality of the performance and the conscious experience of the human” (Eccles, 1981).

By the use of radio tracer techniques, Eccles showed that the brain mantle, the *neo-cortex*, is composed of about ten thousand million neural cells oriented in modular columns running vertically in a 3mm thick layer. The immense potential of these two to three million modules may be grasped by comparing them with the potential of the eighty-six keys of a piano. But like the piano, independent modular events must be coordinated and it is significant that nowhere in the brain is there any mechanism for integrating the energy contained in the modules to coherent information. Each brain event is disparate, causing Eccles to argue that the mind must be immaterial and materialist views of the human essentially denied. But it remains difficult to convince the positivists!

### **THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN VIEW**

In contrast to the primal and positivist views, the Christian view of humanness provides an easily understood and profoundly practical explanation that relates well with common experience. It is like Newton's Laws of Motion – once you see it, you find it difficult to understand why you did not see it before! Charles Taylor, a leading philosopher in our time, has traced the history of Western man's efforts to understand his nature in a monograph entitled 'Sources of the Self' (Taylor, 1989). His ultimate conclusion was that there is a 'large element of hope implicit in Judaeo-Christian thought with its central promise of a divine

affirmation of the human, more total than humans can ever attain unaided'. In other words, we need God's help if we want to know what we are!

The Biblical understanding of humanness is that we are constructed to be the temple/dwelling place of God (I Cor.6:13-20)<sup>5</sup>. Paul tells us that this was always God's plan but only revealed after Christ had completed the work of redemption (Col.1:27). What does it mean to be a temple? To understand this we need to look no further than the Tabernacle in the Wilderness (Ex.25-40), for this provides a comprehensive explanation of how God intended that we should relate to Him. There are many points of interest in the Tabernacle but the essential elements are shown in Fig.1. There is an outer court with a gate, a bronze sacrificial altar, a bronze laver for washing and a container of oil for anointing those called to serve in the Holy Place. Inside the Tabernacle proper are found: (1) a Holy Place with furniture made of gold - a Table for Shewbread, a seven candle Minorah (Lampstand) and an Altar for burning incense; and (2) a Most Holy Place containing the Ark of the Covenant overshadowed by two golden seraphim and containing the Tablets of the Law, Aaron's staff and a pot of manna.

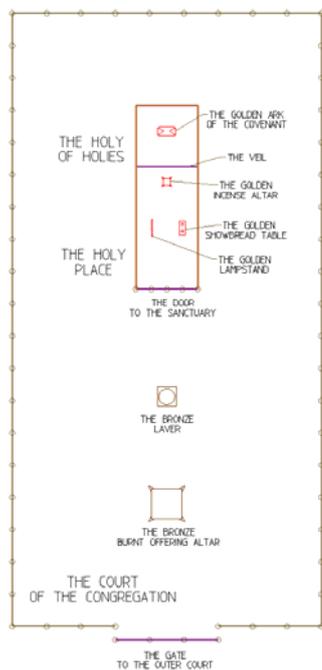


Fig.1: The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

It is clear that the Tabernacle in the Wilderness could not have been built to be a meeting place for the Church in the Wilderness, for the nation of Israel at the time numbered three million people. Rather, the Tabernacle was constructed as a place for God to dwell amongst His people, and this is confirmed by the fact that as soon as the Tabernacle was completed it was filled with the

*Shekinah* Glory (Ex.40:33-35). Solomon's Temple, constructed to the same pattern, was also filled with the presence of God at its initiation service (I Kings 8:10-11). And at Pentecost, AD 29, the disciples of Jesus were similarly filled with the Holy Spirit as evidenced by them speaking in unknown tongues. From this evidence we conclude that a human has an outer court (body), a 'holy place' (soul, a rational being) and a 'most holy place' (spirit, a place reserved for the presence of God) - a conclusion that has strong links with the Primal view described above.

We are all aware that a human has a body and we can thank the positivist medical scientists for an expanding view of its astounding complexity and perfection (see Brand, 1980). We also find humans thinking and reasoning, with the firm conviction that by this means they can control and even change the circumstances of their lives - eliminating hostilities and enhancing the good. Over time, philosophers, psychologists and educationalists have recognized that there are different levels of thinking. The first level, sensory perception is automatic; St Augustine (1961) called it the *anima*, i.e. the vital principle - if we are not dead we are sensing. The second level is thinking about what we sense (the *animus* - the thinking principle). The task for the educationalist is to motivate individuals to exercise this faculty, for we do not think about everything we sense, rather we are selective. For instance, when driving a car, we see many things but only take note of certain things; it may be a street we need to find or an irresponsible driver whom we wish to avoid for fear of a collision. This leads us to a third level of thought, the *ratio*, that which distinguishes and interprets what we are sensing and a fourth attribute, the *mens*, the spring of action. The Judeo-Christian position is that thinking occurs in the soul, an immaterial rational being in which the *animus*, *ratio* and *mens* are located. But Augustine prescribes a fourth immaterial faculty - the *intellectus*, the faculty which may be enlightened by God. This is explicit in his description of his own ontological/epistemological journey:

"..By degrees I passed from corporeal bodies to the soul, which through the bodily senses perceives. Then to the inner faculty that receives representations from the bodily senses... and then to the reasoning faculty by which what is received from the sense of the body is referred to be judged. Here I found a problem in that judgment was a thing most variable. Within myself I cried out that the unchangeable was preferable to the changeable... and thus, with the flash of one trembling glance I arrived at That Which Is... there at last catching sight of your

invisible nature as it is known throughout all creation” (Versveld 1990, p.11).

This last step for Augustine was what Christians call the re-birth, the discovery of the *Logos* within. Nothing is the same after that experience. Now we know that we are not alone. The Creator Himself has whispered: ‘I am here’! Regrettably, not everyone enjoys that blissful state. Some people are ‘alive’ but do not have the in-dwelling Spirit<sup>5</sup>. Their human spirit is empty and inoperative. We say that such a person is living *in sin*<sup>6</sup>. Being cut off from God they have no way of knowing that God exists, let alone experience His fellowship. That this state is possible is confirmed by Jesus who said that ‘You must be born again’ (John 3:3). Paul said it this way, ‘If a man does not have the Spirit of Christ then he does not belong to Him’ (Rom.8:9). Such people remain a ‘natural man’, the only information they have comes from the external via the senses.

Some people are *born again* but not *Spirit filled*, i.e. they have the Holy Spirit within (in their spirit) but are not aware of it. This is explicit in John 3:3: a person may *see* the reality of the Kingdom of God (John 3:3) but not ‘know’ God first hand. If we are to ‘know’ God the veil between the spirit and soul must be rent. The veil was incorporated by God to prevent any spirit other than the Spirit of God entering the human spirit. Even we ourselves cannot penetrate this region of our person (I Cor.2:11). Think about it, what can you tell me about your spirit?

Some people have *entered* into the *experience* of the Kingdom by the tearing of the veil (John 3:5). When Jesus died the veil of the Jerusalem Temple was rent from top to bottom (Matt.27:51-54); God did it. In the same way, the Holy Spirit can be guaranteed to break through the veil of every individual that seeks Him, *in His timing*. This happening sets up possibilities for regular communication between God and the *psyche* of the person concerned. Such a person is *born of water and the Spirit*; they experience a ‘regenerative washing’ and a flow of ‘anointing’ which results in an inner cleansing and the renewing of the mind (John 3:5, Titus 3:5). Out of their belly (Gk. *koilia*) flows a river of living water (John 7:37-39)!

The renewed human continues to relate to the *cosmos* via the senses but judges all things via eternal standards found within. Descartes argued that the senses deceive us but Augustine saw nothing of the kind. He saw the body created ‘very good’ and the senses reporting faithfully within their capability. His picture of the good life is as follows:

“God dwells in His unchanging unity. His perfection radiates in an ever increasing multiplicity, shot through by forms of beauty, goodness and truth. Number and harmony inhabit and form the reality of the world of bodies. Man is a kind of high priest of nature whose soul is knit to a body to watch over the creature. The senses of his body having contact with the external world but within himself he hears the concord of their numbers with truth and is enabled, because absolute truth sets the measure within, to verify the unchanging in the passing sounds within and without” (D’Arcy, 1957).

Within the human soul, there is a ubiquitous searching for understanding and enjoyment. But, if the soul is isolated from God the search is fruitless. For, left to itself, the soul is unable to comprehend either itself or the world around it. It is doomed to wander the earth seeking answers via the senses, giving the body mastery. And the body, having no life in itself, becomes undisciplined, its desires rampant, the organs of procreation become organs of shame (Gen.3:7).

The redeemed soul experiences the same pressures and temptations as the natural man but, in addition, finds within a struggle in the will – to obey the carnal or the spiritual. This has the potential to tear the soul in two, so the rational strategy is to take the way of escape – to reject the carnal and live out the interior life!

Augustine saw the inner experience of the love of God transforming the desires. He saw the reborn human continuing to experience fear, desire, pain and gladness but finding no condemnation in these things. He rejected the Epicurian delight in pleasure at all costs, and the Stoic pursuit of mental accomplishment for its own sake. He saw human welfare best served by bringing both body and soul into harmony with God’s purposes. Such submission, in his view, did not deny human agency, rather it provided possibilities otherwise denied (Augustine, 1961).

This is what John the Apostle was talking about when he said that to ‘as many as received Him to them gave He authority to become the sons of God’ (John 1:12). Jesus is our example: ‘The Son does nothing of Himself, whatever He sees the Father doing, this also does the Son in the same manner’ (John 5:19). ‘Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God’ (I John 3:1). Some translations say ‘children of God’, but why argue about it? Whether sons or children, the important thing is that we find ourselves in God’s family, drawing on an intimate relationship set up within us

by the *Logos* Himself, finding the authority/power we need to live constructively and compassionately in a dysfunctional world.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

There are some distinct similarities between the primal and the Judaeo-Christian ontological models. Both have a prescription for 'soul' and 'spirit' entities other than the physical body. The difference is that the primal model draws knowledge from tradition while the Judaeo-Christian model prescribed that a person may be known by God and draw on the intelligence of a Logos. The reductive model allows that a human is their own power, with no hope of knowing anything outside of what their senses tell them. Further, that an individual's ability is profoundly limited by their inherited genes, with profound negative implications for education. But that is another story.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>By primal I do not mean primitive. Rather, I refer to people who hold to traditional belief systems that harken back to the beginning of time.

<sup>2</sup>Not all African groups hold to the spirit (*seriti*) notion. The Nguni people in Southern Africa hold to a simplified body/life (*mmele/moya*) prescription.

<sup>3</sup>This is an important difference from the Judeo-Christian view. The BaPedi do not say how the *seriti* may be a human attribute yet still operate independently.

<sup>4</sup>I am indebted to Prof. Michael Stanton, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, for much of the material in this section.

<sup>5</sup>Scripture references in this article are taken from Scholefield 1967.

<sup>6</sup>It is my belief that God is not exclusive but would have everyone know Him, or rather, as Paul puts it, that He knows them (Gal.4:9).

<sup>7</sup>Sin is not 'acts' but a 'state', a state of separation – there is much confusion about this in the minds of Christians and non-Christians alike.

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