

# FACT OR FICTION?

BY: BRAD CULLEN – JANUARY 21, 2003

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Over the years I have written a great deal about the fact that so called experts in any field have almost as many differing opinions as there are experts. This has given rise in myself to an intellectual openness to any number of thought processes in such varying fields as medicine, law, religion and others.

Not too long ago I lived and worked in a country where there are two rather vocal contingents of two religions... Islam and Christianity.

I was awakened every morning at 5:00 a.m. by the sound of somebody praying to Allah over a microphone somewhere close by. Often I was unable to sleep at night because a Christian church somewhere close by is noisily singing and the leader is shouting into a microphone.

Why do these people think that God (by whatever other name) is so limited that they cannot be heard by God without the aid of sound systems?

Members of both groups in this city (Kampala, Uganda) make their arguments in print and vocally that their particular group has the truth to the exclusion of the other... which tends to prove to me, at least, that since they cannot both be 100% right... at least one, or perhaps both are missing something.

Which group has the facts straight? Which group is bound by pure fiction? Are they both a curious mixture of the truth and the not so true?

Is it possible that we are merely dealing with perspective? Why do both seem to feel the need to prove their respective points of view as being exclusively true?

What if there is another possibility? What if both are right! How can that be? Stay with me and I will give you a bit of pure Cullen theology. Before I give you Cullen theology let's wander through a somewhat mainstream thought process...

If Jesus said -and I happen to believe he did (and my belief doesn't make it true) that it is a bit dangerous to judge... the consequences of which causes the person judging to be himself judged. Such judging - I am assuming - (which doesn't make my thesis correct) would include thinking that another entire group of people are wrong in their beliefs simply because their beliefs do not coincide with mine.

Another tidbit, helping to form my somewhat chaotic thinking here, can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures... "God said, let US make mankind in OUR image..." [EMPHASIS MINE ] ... then, if the "mankind" here refers to human beings, both of these particular contingents, Christianity and Islam have the creative ability to make their own religious practices in their own image to suit their own tastes. At least that is one conclusion that could be drawn. Hold on now, the immediate foregoing is NOT the Cullen-ism I promised... I'll get to that in a moment.

Who is this God (English translation of the Hebrew word Elohiym used in this particular passage) who refers to Him/Her/Them (self) in the plural ("Us" and "Our") and what are the implications?

If we can begin to avoid making judgments about people who think differently than we do... and if we can consider that these two particular groups (Islam and Christianity) are part of this same "mankind" -- perhaps we can draw a couple of conclusions that are not ends in themselves. Still not the promised Cullen-ism, BUT if we are created by the Creator in the Creator's image. We are creators! Is this so far-fetched?

If we can grasp this idea and yet not lose perspective by rushing to judgment... perhaps we can see a potential in ourselves that we've overlooked. We have created (are creating) our own experiences. Need this be so frightening? If God/Allah is all-knowing and unlimited as both groups seem to indicate is the basis of their separate beliefs – why is it so hard to believe that we who are created in the image of God are created with myriad capacities to understand and perceive myriad possibilities.

If this is true, then I can rest in the position that I had better stop griping about losing a little sleep as these two creative (and noisy) forces go about enjoying their own creation and worshipping the One who created them.

Maybe I should just stop judging anything including my gentle hint at impatience with both of these groups for causing me to lose sleep... and take another look at the aforementioned passage from a different (entirely different) perspective.

Here comes Cullen's ism – well almost. First, let's look at Genesis 1:26 “God said let Us make man in Our image...” [again, the emphasis is mine ].

In the entire first chapter of Genesis, each time we see the word “God” it is translated from the Hebrew word Elohiym (more or less)... and more or less pronounced, (the first two letters rhymes with say or lay) a-lo-heem. This particular Hebrew word literally means the plurality (more than one) of God. Some Christian theologians use the term “Godhead.” Some theologians believe that the traditional doctrine of the “trinity” (Father, Son and Holy Spirit...i.e., God in three persons) is supported by this Hebrew term Elohiym. There are many Christian groups who adamantly refute the Trinitarian position. I'm not about to get in the middle of those two positions... which abound with spurious arguments on both sides.

Frankly, and I am letting some Cullen-ism out of the bag here... the concept of the “trinity,” in my view, is a doctrine designed by men attempting to explain the inexplicable and the concept is far too limiting anyway. Using the Hebrew word to support the concept is a bit ridiculous (and trust me here) --no non-Christian Hebrew would ever think that the name Elohiym would ever refer to Jesus. Notwithstanding that there are some “Jews for Jesus” who are strictly Trinitarian. So what?

Cullen-ism sez... Elohiym is certainly broad enough to include the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So any accusation that I am anti-trinity is preposterous. BUT THE TRINITY AS A DOCTRINE IS TOO LIMITING! (For me at least). There are certainly scriptures that tend to support the doctrine... there are certainly scriptures that tend to prove that it ain't necessarily so. Okay... as I said earlier, I do not want to get into the argument. I'm trying to get anyone who may still be with me to see something entirely different here.

Again, Elohiym, is the Hebrew word for “God” – the only word translated in English as “God” in the entire first chapter of Genesis. The plural word Elohiym means more than one – or probably several parts of one God. Yahweh is first introduced as the “Lord God” in the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis. In the seventh verse we read... “and the Lord God (Yahweh) formed man from the dust of the earth. This man, was formed... not created... and clearly, according to the Hebrew, a totally different being than created “mankind” in Genesis chapter one.

Is the foregoing important? In my view, for anyone that wants to walk in God's presence and power – doing the things Jesus said that anyone that believed in him will do... understanding the essence of the foregoing is vital!

Why? I should put it this way... having an understanding of the foregoing regarding who and what is the “mankind” created in the image of God (Elohiym) – distinct from the man that Yahweh formed from the dust of the ground -- opened my (spiritual) understanding of volumes of Scriptures that had not made sense before. It opens the door to what and who Jesus really is and to what our destiny truly is if we believe.

From whom are we descended? Adam (formed man)? Or are we descended from created “man?” It is easily proven that the two beings are distinct. Created “man” is not a physical (human) being. Adam is of the earth... his name means, man formed from red earth. This can be easily proven if you want to believe what is clearly revealed in the original language.

The possibilities of who we are... bodily descended from Adam or something entirely different... are nothing short of astounding.

This is enough for now. I have decided to make this an introduction... perhaps to a short book.

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