

In the Image of God

By Bev Currie

*“....all my love is towards
individuals...But principally
I hate and detest that animal
called man.”*

Jonathan Swift

God looked down on earth and was very pleased. Everything was working out just as He had planned. The earth rotated on its axis at an exact speed and precise angle to the sun and its orbit around the sun was such that the winters would not be too long or the summers too short. The moon pulled on the oceans causing the cleansing tides and the warm winds swept the moisture from the seas to the thirsty plants and animals on land.

There seemed to be a place for everything; from the polar bear in the north to the penguin in the south and for millions of His creatures in between. Each took only what was needed and gave back in equal measure. And all God's creatures were blessed with a special gift. It was the gift of adaptation. If they did not adapt, they did not survive. It was God's way.

It was hard to imagine a more perfect system; everything beating to the rhythm of Mother Earth. Surely this could go on forever.

God was so pleased that He decided to make one final gift to His wondrous planet. He decided to create an animal that could change the environment for the benefit of all creatures. This last creature would be made in the image of God.

So the Beaver was created in the image of God and introduced to the forest. Immediately the Beaver set about cutting down trees to dam the little streams that seemed to be in such a hurry to get to the sea. The pond that resulted was not only a safe and hospitable home for the Beaver himself, but was a home for countless millions of his fellow creatures as well.

Now at last, in times of drought the deer had a place to drink and the trout could survive beneath the thick winter ice. There was a home for the cattail and the water lily, the dragonfly and the water beetle, the snail and the tadpole. The list went on and on. Because of the good work of the Beaver (who was created in the image of God) all creatures thrived and multiplied. At last God felt his work was done and now He could relax for a few moments.

The Devil had watched what had happened and was very unhappy. He had tried his best from time to time to disrupt Gods plans but nothing had worked for very long. God had prevailed. The Devil was very depressed. He was almost to the point of jumping into his own fire never to be heard from again.

Perhaps he would never have thought of it if God had not created the Beaver. A creature that could change God's environment was just what the Devil was searching for. Immediately he set his mind to devise such an animal. His creature would eat anything, live anywhere and reproduce all year around. Its acquisitiveness would know no bounds and its appetite for the resources of God's earth would be insatiable. The Devil's creature would be different in other respects. This animal would have a brain to reason with and a conscience with which to feel remorse. A conscience, after all, would be a form of self-punishment that only a Devil could devise.

So the Devil created man and put him on earth between two mighty rivers in a place called Mesopotamia.

God, of course, was watching with interest what the Devil was doing. At first the Devil's creature seemed harmless enough. Indeed he seemed to be doing very much as God's creatures; taking only what was needed and adapting to survive in a changing environment.

God closed His eyes for a few more moments rest.

When He opened His eyes again He could not believe what had happened. The Devil's creature had multiplied and covered every corner of His earth. There was no ocean too wide for him to pollute, no forest too vast to denude, no sky too high to contaminate, no nest too fair to foul.

The Beaver prayed to God, his creator, for countless forest friends that would never again be seen. He prayed for the great auk and the passenger pigeon, for the dodo and the moa, for the giant aye aye, the night parrot and the bandicoot. He prayed for hundreds of animals; all gone at the hands of the devil man. As God watched with sadness and dismay at what was happening to His beautiful planet a glimmer of hope crossed His mind. Perhaps the Devil would be the architect of his own undoing. After all, the Devil had given man a brain to reason with and a conscience with which to feel remorse. Surely man will see the error of his ways and turn his energy to making the world a better place, just as the Beaver had done. It was a faint hope, but it was all He had left.

Then God saw a big hole in the ozone layer and He knew the Devil was still winning and He was very sad.