



# ONE HUMAN FAMILY

THE BIBLE, SCIENCE, RACE & CULTURE

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## INTRODUCTION: Humanity's big picture

In past ages, explorers were hailed as heroes after they returned to their European homeland with tales of strange and different people and their practices. These tales were the source of boundless fascination and awe. In this globalized, networked age, by contrast, we are exposed to people from other ethnicities, cultures and regions of the planet as never before. So much so that one can, unlike those in past eras, easily lose any sense of fascination or wonder at the rich variety of people. Their images flash with regularity across the various gadget screens of our lives. We think nothing of bumping into these various people at the supermarket, either, albeit minus some of the more exotic regalia that Discovery Channel might feature.

Familiar or not, though, human beings in their full array of diversity—you and me and those in all corners of the globe—present an amazing picture when we sit back and contemplate it.

Think only of the diminutive Khoisan<sup>1</sup> ('bushmen') of southern Africa's Kalahari Desert, made famous by the movie *The Gods Must be Crazy*. Then put next to them a couple of tall, blonde,

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1. This term actually collectively refers to two groups of people, the pastoral Khoi (or Khoikhoi) and the hunter-gatherer San, who are the ones generally referred to with the term 'bushmen'.



Canada  
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lanky Swedes from Stockholm. Contemplate not just the physical differences, but the huge gulf between their cultures. The bushmen are nomadic hunter-gatherers, a far cry from Sweden's advanced industrial economy. In the same vein, consider the Masai<sup>2</sup>—lean,

tall tribesmen existing on mostly milk and blood<sup>3</sup> from their herds on the steamy African savannah. Then next to them, place in your mind's eye the short, stocky Inuit (formerly called Eskimos) subsisting for centuries in an icy wasteland, nourished by the blubber and flesh of the marine creatures they hunt.

Amidst all this immense, almost overwhelming, diversity, we will find a common thread, and an underlying unity at all levels—genetic, cultural, linguistic,



Namibia  
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2. Alternative spelling, 'Maasai'.
3. Pun earlier in the sentence intentional (well, after I noticed it, anyway). ☺

intellectual and spiritual.

This book will demonstrate that there are no ‘races’ in the sense that Darwin, for example, thought of them, and as large numbers of people still do. There is in a very real sense only one ‘race’ of human beings. This is despite the many subgroups, tribes and factions within the human family. At the same time, genes still matter in explaining group differences, and this book does not espouse some ‘politically correct’ approach, or total avoidance of a term like ‘race’, which still conveys meaningful information.

It will also show that there are ideas on race and racism still commonly held today that simply don’t fit the facts. This is not just from a biological and biblical standpoint, but also a practical sociological one.

No portion of the ideological spectrum is immune from such misconceptions, and what follows in these pages will likely not fit easily into the liberal/conservative categories into which many like to shoehorn things.

This is not ‘just another creationist book’. Nor is it some over-idealistic let’s-all-get-together-and-sing-Kumbaya<sup>4</sup> approach to the very real and deep problems and issues that tear people and communities apart. It dares to grapple with issues of race and culture that are largely taboo subjects today, including the starkly differing outcomes in different groups, and the effects



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4. An African-American spiritual song from the 1930s, popular in the '60s with peace movements etc., that has associations with human unity and spirituality. It is sometimes used, like here, to gently satirize excessively naïve views of how to solve the world's problems.



Vietnam  
iStockPhoto

of different religions on those outcomes. From the reactions of early reviewers, these excursions will likely be the most fascinating—and at the same time the most controversial—aspects of the book.

### **Cards on the table**

The reader may not yet share my belief that what purports to be the true history of humankind—Genesis, as revealed by the Creator of the universe—fits the facts of the real world. Despite claims to the contrary, this is a view shared by substantial numbers of educated and

scientifically qualified people. Some things presented in this book will likely be new and surprising to you. It might start you thinking afresh about other things you may have thought were settled.

Regardless, I like to think that few will not find it fascinating—satisfying for some, perhaps challenging for others. Maybe even life-changing, as we take that history of humanity seriously, plug in the facts of the real world, and see what emerges.

Over the years, I have spoken on this subject to many thousands of people in various parts of the world. Experiencing the reactions of many of them tells me that the proposition in these pages will, for more than a few, provide a whole new way of looking

at the world—in particular, its people. The message of this book is basically simple. It could almost be summarized in the main title’s three words. History suggests that ideas with the potential to profoundly, even radically, impact thought and behavior are rarely complex at their core. When laid out and followed through in all its fascinating outworkings and implications, I believe that this concept of *one human family* is much more than some motherhood mantra. I am convinced that boldly grasping hold of it offers a real way forward in all aspects of this often emotion-charged issue—race and racism.

### Caveats

This book is meant to be simple, in the sense of making sometimes technical concepts straightforward and, where possible, easy to understand. That occasionally means having to make incursions into that borderland close to the line where the simple becomes simplistic. Things can also appear overly simplified some time after publication when, as often happens, ongoing research deepens and complicates a phenomenon.

Such additional knowledge can also overturn a ‘known fact’ completely. I recall a medical lecturer in my undergraduate years telling me in casual conversation, “You know, 50% of the cardiac physiology I was taught only ten years ago has now been shown



Kenya

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to be wrong.” I probably thought, naïvely, how fortunate I was to be living at that time in history, when we finally had the truth about the subject. But a decade or two after that incident, maybe 50% of what *he* had taught *me* about cardiac physiology was already having to be overhauled in the light of more information. That’s simply the way that human knowledge progresses, even in relatively uncontroversial areas of observational science, i.e. the study of how things work in the present world. Imagine how much more things could (and do) miss the mark in historical (or forensic) science, i.e. trying to establish what happened in the past. The conclusions in such fields—paleontology (study of fossils), archaeology, trying to reconstruct alleged evolutionary genealogies, historical geology, and more—are crucially dependent on interpretations. So they are inevitably skewed by the worldviews and prejudices of the investigators—as well as by the preconceptions inherited from an earlier layer of education.<sup>5</sup>

Subjectivity of interpretation is even more of an issue, of course, in the book’s forays into cultural and historical/sociological issues. I found these at once important, exciting, and risky to tackle. In the absence of divine inspiration, there can be no perfect or unbiased description of such a hugely complex thing as human affairs. Facts are facts, and absolute truth exists; I don’t hold to some postmodern view of ‘differing truths’. But in either framing thoughts (or perceiving them) on things such as culture—and the way that history is viewed, even for those who lived through it—everyone is a product of a unique set of inputs.

It was remarkable, for example, what differing reactions I had



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5. See [creation.com/its-not-science](http://creation.com/its-not-science).

to the several drafts of the apartheid chapter from various South African reviewers. The distinctions were not just between ‘black and white’, but also between those Europeans of an Afrikaner/Boer heritage and those of English extraction. Yet all had lived through exactly the same era of history.

So then, rather than try to live up to some idealized notion of perfect objectivity, I have not hesitated from making this an intensely personal account at many points, with all the risks—and benefits, from several reviewers’ accounts—that entails. I dare to suggest, too, that even those tempted to too-hastily assign the author to one or other of the many ‘boxes’ we mentally construct in this ‘race debate’ may be in for some surprises. And payoffs, also, if wise enough not to allow themselves to be derailed before the unfolding journey has revealed the strength of the overall case. By that I mean the ‘big picture’ of humanity—the *one human family* that emerges in these pages as we contemplate the most fascinating subject of all—ourselves.

