



THE  
IMAGE

A New Cantata by Stephen Main

Piedmont Community Church  
June 4, 2023

# THE IMAGE

Words and Music by Stephen Main

Original concept by Joseph Scherer

Stephen Main, music director

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Chester Pidduck, tenor – *The Voice of History*

Christa Pfeiffer, soprano – *The Imago Dei*

Martin Bell, baritone – *The Voice of Fear*

Tina Harrington, alto – *The Voice of the Oppressed*

Piedmont Church Chancel Choir – *The Voice of Humanity*

### 1. OVERTURE (Instrumental only)

### 2. THE VOICE OF HISTORY

#### [Tenor solo]

In ancient times, the Lord of Life  
Did cleave the darkness, creating light;  
And moved upon the wild and waste  
Making order manifest.

#### [Chorus]

From out of chaos life was drawn,  
Along with light and order born;  
Life's thirst for freedom brought upon  
By God's own gift at history's dawn.

And thus was Time itself begun –  
A sacred tale of grace undone  
By human folly, fear and strife,  
Which darkened freedom, light and life.

#### [Tenor solo]

For I am the Voice of history,  
Bearing witness to what might have been  
And instead what is, a mystery  
Of freedom lost, of slavery and sin.

#### [Chorus]

For we have long preferred the dark,  
And fear has twisted history's arc  
From freedom to grief, grace to shame,  
Subjugation in God's holy Name.

### 3. THE VOICE OF THE *IMAGO DEI*

#### [Tenor solo]

As darkness spread, vain leaders came  
To power, and a frightened world oppressed;  
As kings and priests they dared to claim  
They ruled and destroyed at God's behest.

They dared speak for God, that in their thrall  
All might bow both head and knee;  
They bent, and crushed the human soul  
And bound what had been created free.

#### [Soprano solo]

But yet, despite Time's sad refrain,  
God's gift of light from life did not part;  
Greater than kings or priests remained  
An unknown gift, hidden in each heart.

I am the Voice of the *Imago Dei*,  
Brighter than creation's first light,  
I lead each soul on the pathless way  
From others' darkness to sacred sight.

#### [Chorus]

God's last creation was no creature at all;  
It is an ideal that guides.  
A voice within that all recall,  
And though others fail, abides.

For in this Image each soul was made,  
God's likeness forged in holy fire,  
In which we know in all was laid  
The ideal that guides, that heals, inspires.

### 4. THE VOICE OF FEAR

#### [Baritone solo]

But men do not need that which heals or inspires;  
Nor can Wisdom bely what trembling flesh orders.  
Life has no use for ideals! A frightened world requires  
Order at any price, full bellies, secure borders.

For I am the voice of FEAR; I rule over more than you  
know!

I speak from the depths of your sleepless nights:  
In your broken dreams I whisper and show  
You a divided world, one that delights

In your powerlessness, and would have you trade  
Your truths for the safety of the people's lies.  
I will compel you to bow to authority made  
And enforced by those you know you despise.

#### [Chorus]

The masses will learn how to think, and whom to hate;  
For from this all tribes and castes do spring.  
With rulers to worship, to supplicate  
(making God himself but another angry king).

#### [Baritone solo]

I am the voice of the mob, from which springs  
An oppressed civilization and its discontents;  
I am the iron fist behind the "divine right of kings" –  
I am the beating heart of violence.

#### [Chorus]

We have always craved authority:  
As a bulwark against the unknown;  
Rulers have built temples, even deities  
When staking their claim to the throne.

#### [Baritone solo]

I am YOU; is there any price you would not pay  
Though your conscience be enslaved?  
Are not safety and consensus the order of the day?  
And the final destination merely the grave?

### 6. FINAL CHORUS

#### [Tenor solo]

But what does it mean to be made in the likeness  
Of One whose image cannot be seen?  
God creates, God chooses, God loves:  
Human nature includes all three.

### 5. THE VOICE OF THE OPPRESSED

#### [Solo women's trio]

The price is paid in anguish, of souls  
Discarded, mute and powerless.  
For the people's fear is projected onto those  
Whose silence reveals the world's true cowardice.

#### [Alto solo]

Hear me! I am the Voice of all the Oppressed;  
Who by birth or belief live on the shadows' edge,  
I am the one on whom God's favor can never rest,  
The outcast not admitted in God's image.

#### [Tenor solo]

In centuries past, through conscience, creed, or caste,  
A cursed exile you were called,  
The people's fears upon you did rest,  
The embodiment of humanity's fall.

#### [Alto solo]

But also oppressed are those whose thought  
Outside lifeless orthodoxy roams;  
I am the soul made fearful of itself, that is taught  
Only those truths which the collective owns.

#### [Soprano solo]

And yet though an exile you may be,  
In the same Image were you also made;  
Your conscience makes its own authority.  
God takes the cause of the betrayed.

With inalienable rights are you endowed  
By the Creator, rights which cannot be abridged.  
To live fully is to live with head unbowed,  
To think and breathe in God's Image.

#### [Solo women's trio]

To cherish God's Image in others' lives  
Is to honor our own sovereignty.  
For then we see with God's eyes  
And forge our own destiny.

#### [Chorus]

Created not just as creatures,  
But as creators ourselves we are called;  
Our life's creations and labors  
Are the fruit borne of likeness to God.

Endowed with choice, not victims of chance,  
We are born to choose our own paths;  
Yet when in darkest circumstance  
We know the soul stands sovereign at the last.

The final attribute of the living God  
Is love: where essence and gift unite;  
For we are not merely objects of love  
But, like God, lovers in our own right.

**[Soloists and Chorus]**

In this high trinity: creation, choice  
And love – is the mind of God beheld.  
In them the Image finds its voice –  
Ancient fears know wisdom's joys,

The Circle widens to include all souls,  
And Love redeems what time destroys;  
The dignity of the soul is upheld.

**[Tenor solo]**

Since ancient times, the Lord of Life  
Still speaks within all, as inner light,  
And still bestows upon the soul  
The greatest, yet most fragile, gift of all.

**[Chorus]**

And so creation's work is not complete;  
For history pleads that we do our part  
And guard against any earthly authority  
That seeks to bind the human heart.

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## The Orchestra

**Horns:** Alicia Telford, Alex Armstead

**Timpani, Percussion:** Norman Peck, Don Baker

**Piano:** Kymry Esainko

**Violins** Philip Santos, *concertmaster*, Marcella Schantz, Emanuela Nikiforova, Hande Erdem,  
Josie Fath, Christine Meals, Krisha Montmorency, Eddie Fong

**Violas:** Katy Juneau, Ivo Bokulić, Stephen Moore

**Violoncellos:** Matthew Linaman, Poppea Dorsam, Dorothy Nemeth

**Contrabasses:** Michel Taddei, Pat Klobas