

I am Niall, one of the ministers in the Parramatta City Uniting Church cluster. In this season of creation, I was wondering what I could share about humanity, people, you and me, our family, our friends, everyone, what does the story in the bible say to us. I was looking at my bookshelf to see if there was anything on there that could help me. There are lots of books – but “no” the books were not going to help me.

There was a happy looking friar, I was given 41 years ago when I left my job as a lawyer to become a minister, and yes God wants human beings to be happy but no the friar did not have what I was looking for. There is a very special, I think it is called a coolamon, given to me by Auntie Pearl Wymera on my induction as Moderator and it has sand from the lands of Aboriginal communities throughout NSW – the sand can't be separated and yes God wants us to be as one, I think this may have something to say about the Aboriginal way that might help save the planet... Then there are photos of my granny and grandad, my wife's and my mum and dad, my wife my sons and me, and yes God wants us to know and see ourselves as God's one big family, all special, all loved... maybe something in this but the photos were not what I was looking for. Then there was something that I don't remember being there – A Babushka doll - I don't even know where I got it from. I thought you are on my bookshelf because you have got a story to tell.

I got the doll down and I thought you have got something to say about being human that might help us

when in the book of Genesis it says, humans are made in God's image.

Babushka means grandmother or old woman

I discovered that in Russia they are commonly called Matryoshka dolls – a mother carrying a child within her – the dolls one inside another are like a child, a mother, a grandmother, a great-grandmother and back to the beginning.

But another way Russian people talk about the dolls is that they are body, soul, mind, heart, and spirit. (*Take apart*)



**Body** – that is this part of us that everyone can see  
– you can touch and feel

All the other parts that make us human you can't see or touch or feel

**Soul** – this is who you are – happy, mischievous, thoughtful, adventurous, dreamy

**Mind** – all the things we think about in here, good things, naughty things, funny things, sometimes things we don't tell anyone else, but also it is where we work things out, we work out how to solve problems, to build things, to invent things

**Heart** – a big heart is one that has a lot of love, a little heart is not so loving

**Spirit** – God is sometimes called Spirit or Holy Spirit. In the book of Genesis, it says humans are made in the image of God. What does that mean? It means we are somehow like God. We have a spirit, something like God is within everyone – sometimes hidden way inside, but the most important part of who we are. This spirit, being like God, is not meant to be hidden inside but there to help us:

- have big hearts full of love for others and all creation – because God loved everyone and all that he created, animals and birds and trees and fish, mountains and rivers, clouds and rain,
- to use our minds to think that this creation is good but also to work out how to take care of the earth, the plants and the animals, to solve the problems created when humans have not loved the earth as God does,

- to have souls whether they are happy, mischievous, thoughtful, adventurous or dreamy that help to grow a good, caring whole community benefiting from all our personalities,
- show to the world the God that is within through the lives we share and the things we do

I wonder what being like God means for the way we treat other people, especially those who are different to us, and the way we care for the earth? What do you think?