

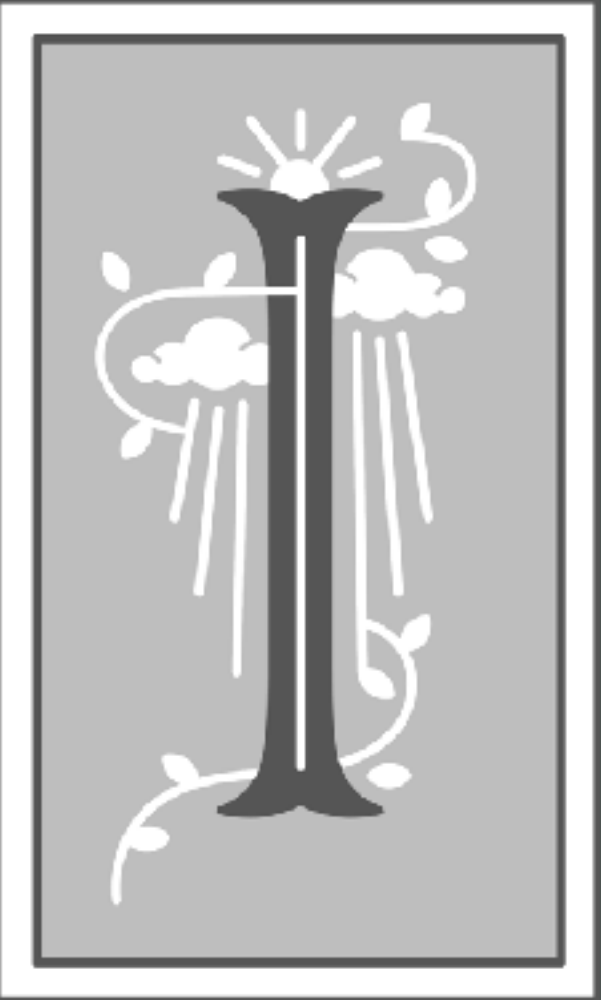
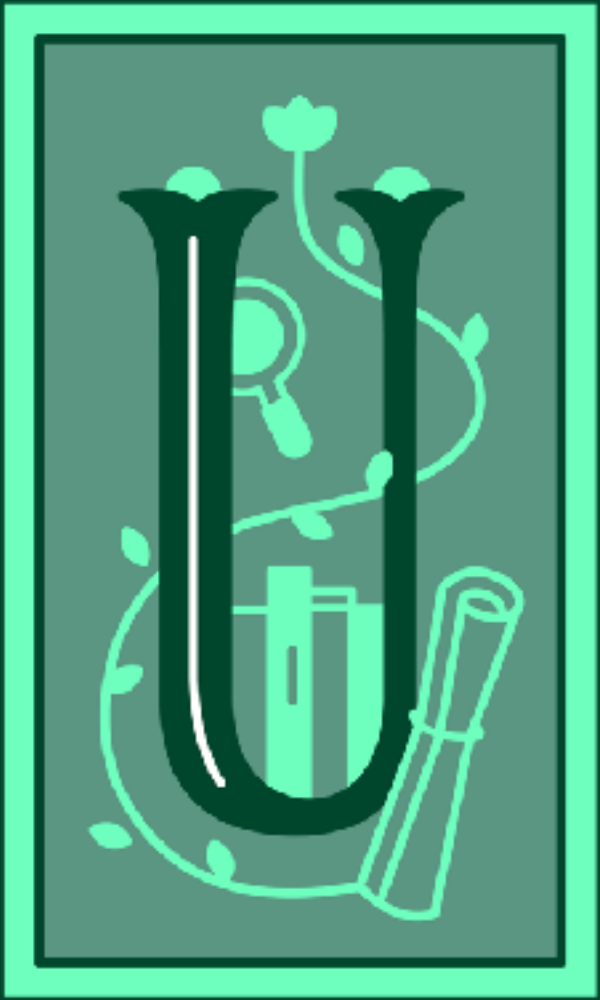
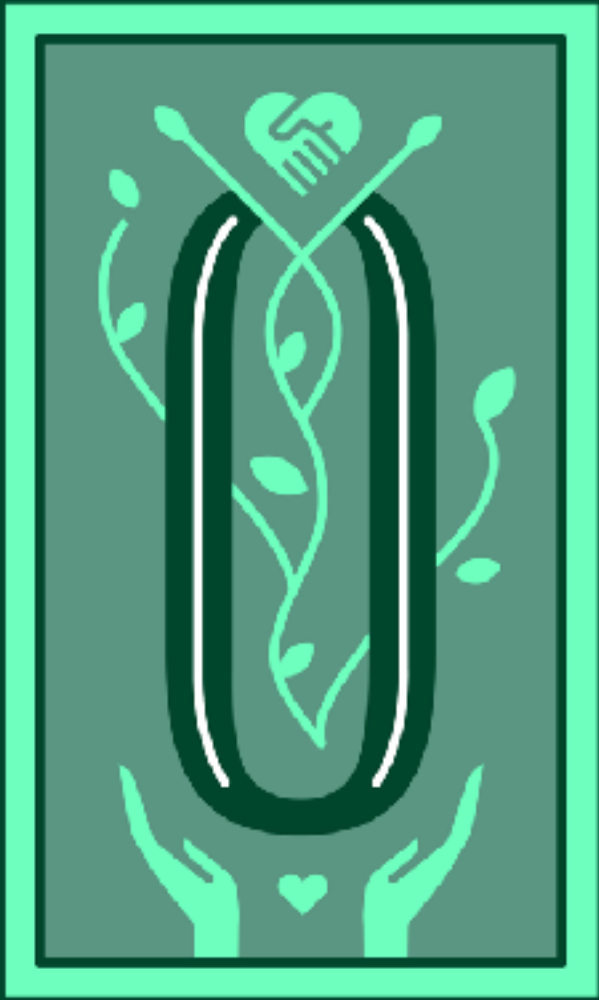
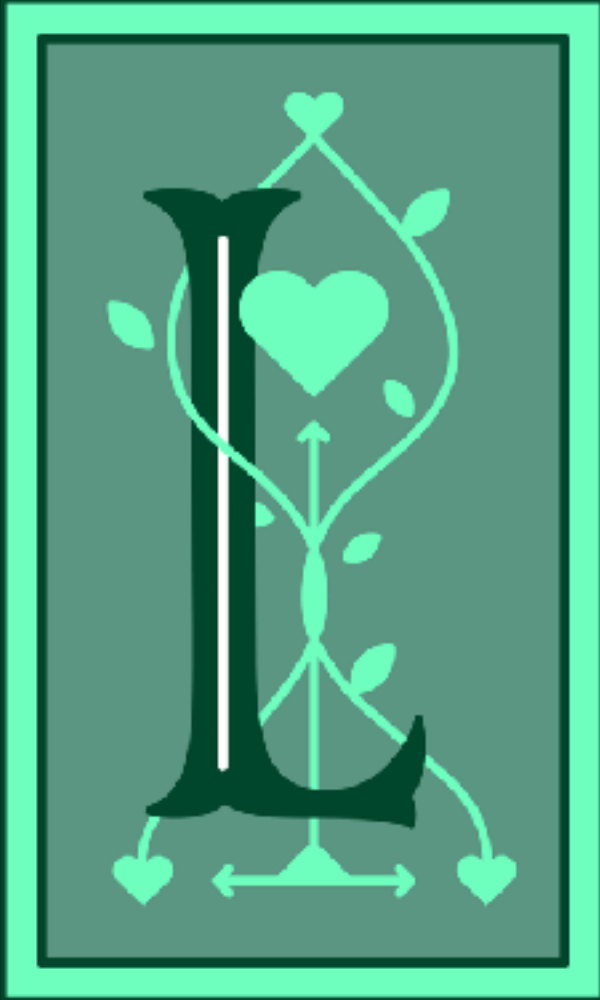
Image of God

*Faith & Flourishing in Politics:
Christian Education Hour*

Rev. Jonathan M. Romig - Fall 2021

Our Garden Hedge:

1. **Listen Well** - We don't have all the answers so let's ask what others think, really try to hear each other out, and let others finish their thoughts.
2. **Speak with Brevity & Focus** - Let's leave space for others to participate and stay on track ("Keep to our hedge").
3. **Practice Gentle Courage** - Let's be bold and share our thoughts and ideas, point to what we believe the Scripture and wisdom says, and yet do so with a gentle and humble spirit.
4. **Keep Praying** - Let's pray in preparation and silently while we discuss. Fruit is only possible through the Holy Spirit.

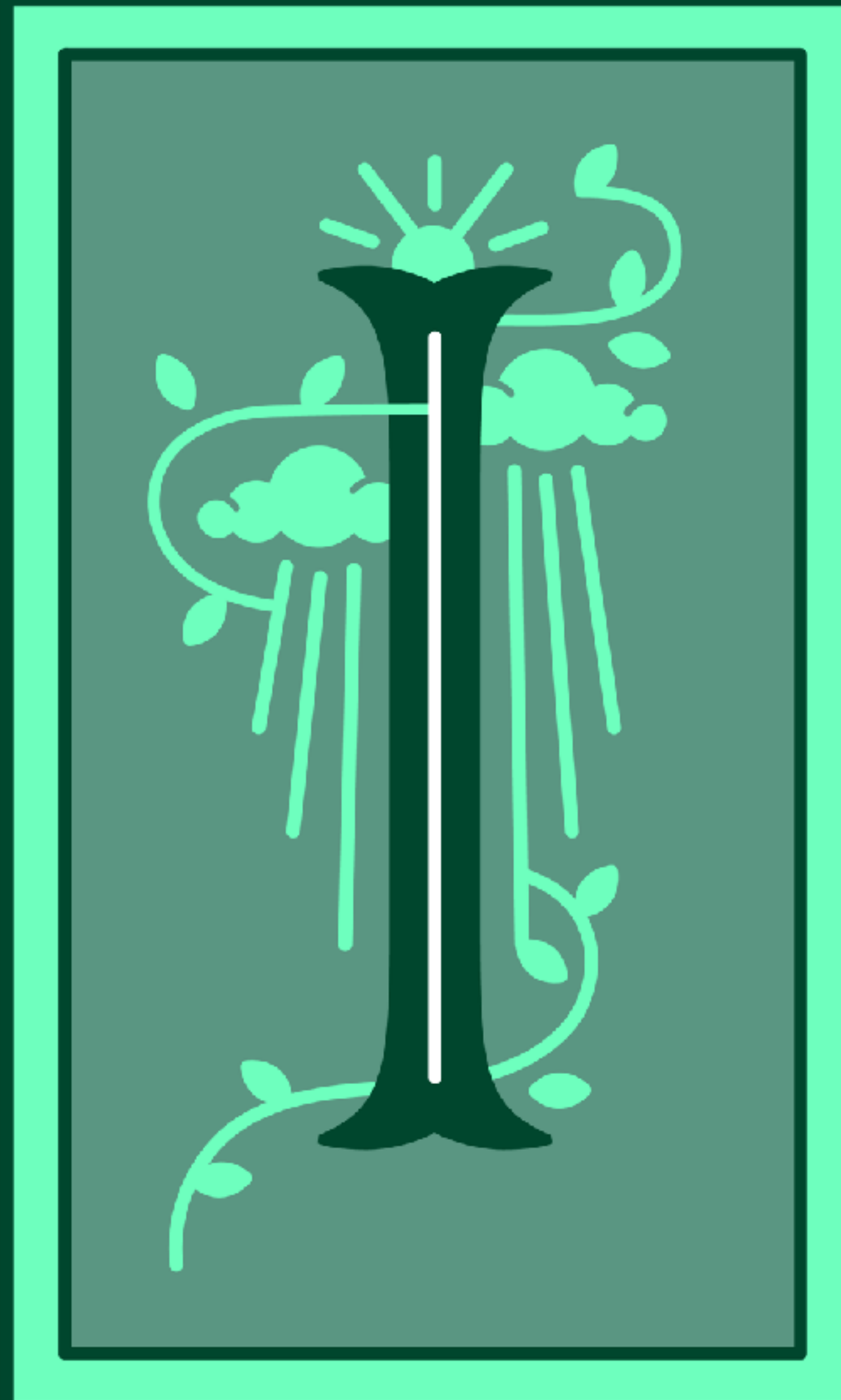


Genesis 1:26-28

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (ESV)



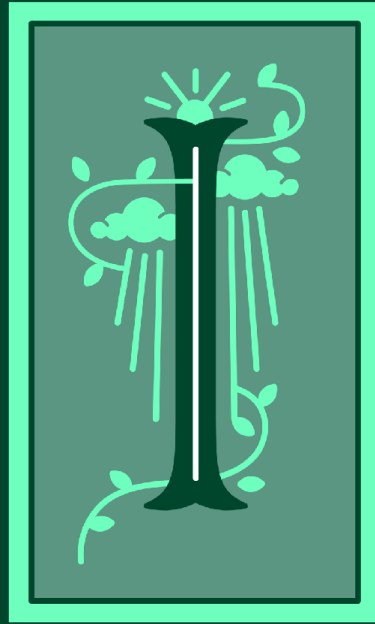
What does it mean to be made in the image of God (*Imago Dei*)?

The Bible, however, distinguishes human creatures from animals, birds, and fish. Humans have been created to walk and talk and work with God as high officials in God's creation-kingdom. We bear the kind of responsibility that belongs to no other creature. We have been created to love, serve, and reveal God through our friendships, marriages, families, development of the earth, education of young people, and, yes, governing of creation.

James W. Skillen, *The Good of Politics: A Biblical, Historical, And Contemporary Introduction* (Engaging Culture, Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2014) 21, Kindle.

God gave humans the dignified status of being created in his image. But this status comes with responsibility. According to Genesis 1:28, quoted above, God told humans to fill the earth and to subdue and rule it. This verse uses royal language in order to communicate the fact that humans are God's royal representatives in the rest of creation. As benevolent agents of God's royal rule, humans have the responsibility to take care of creation.

Tremper Longman, *The Bible and the Ballot: Using Scripture in Political Decisions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020) 55, Kindle.



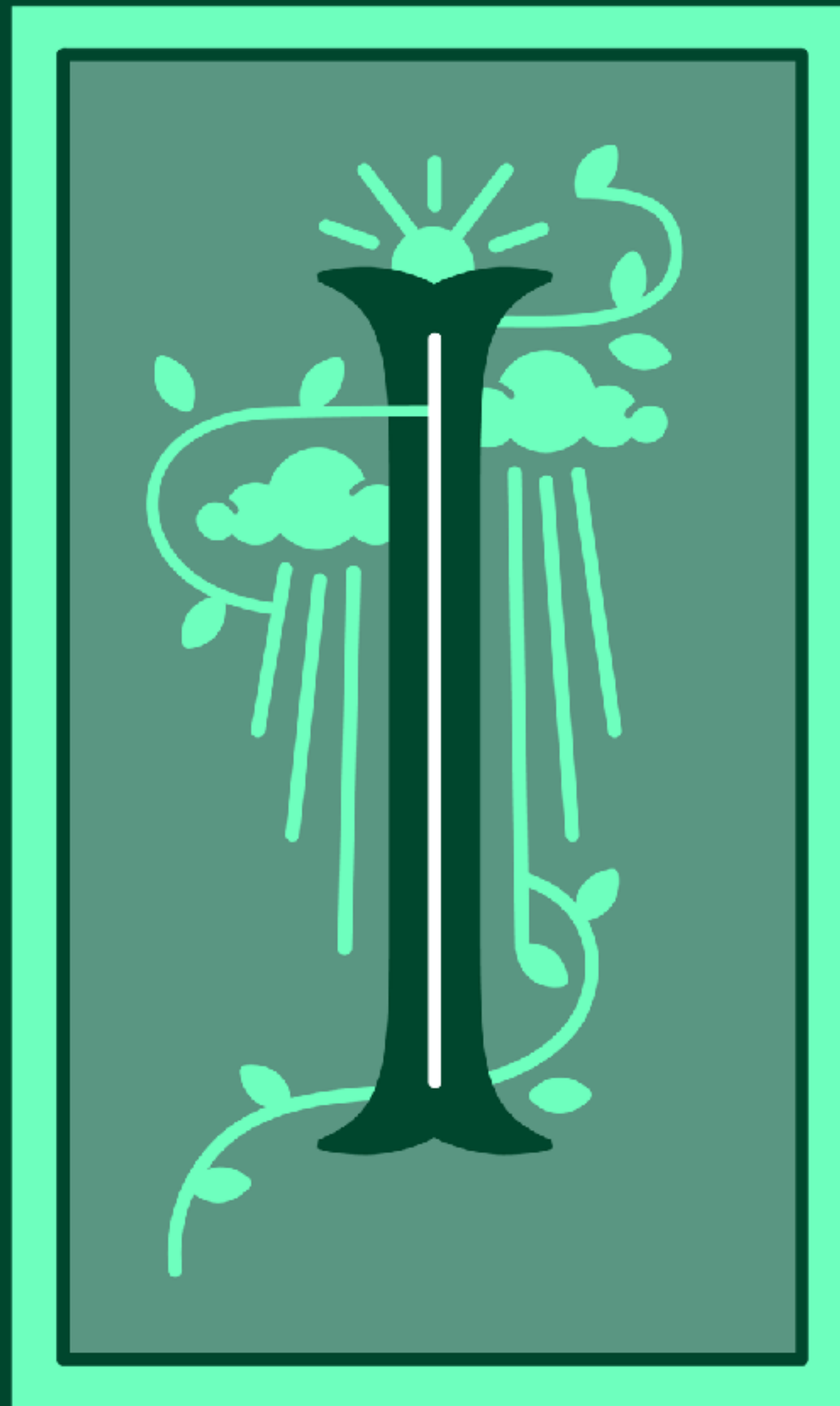
Co-reign with Christ

God created humanity to rule with him, which his people will do for all eternity.

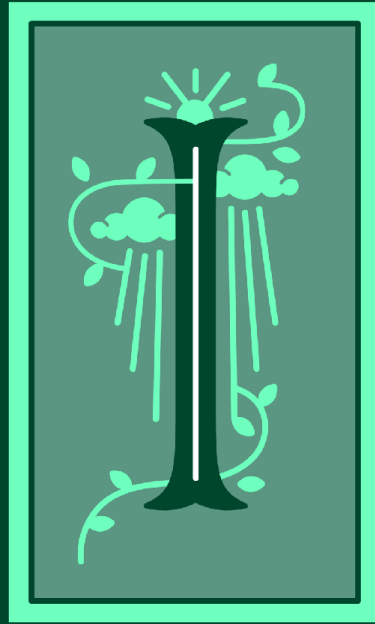
2 Timothy 2:11-12 (ESV)

The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;
if we endure, we will also reign with him;
if we deny him, he also will deny us;
if we are faithless, he remains faithful—



How can the doctrine of the image of God influence our political engagement?



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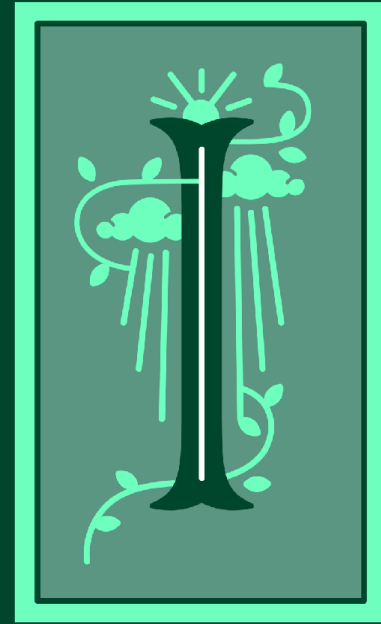
Politics and policy matter because people matter.

“But for Christians, politics is not important because we ascribe great value to political ideas, but because we ascribe great value to the human person.”

Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of our Neighbor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020) 2, Kindle.

And doing justice is likewise the means to an end—shalom, that rich Hebrew word for peace, describing the conditions where every creature can be fully, truly, gloriously itself, most of all where God's own image bearers bear that image in all its fullness, variety and capacity. The work of justice is to restore the conditions that make image bearing possible.

Andy Crouch, Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press) 80, Kindle.



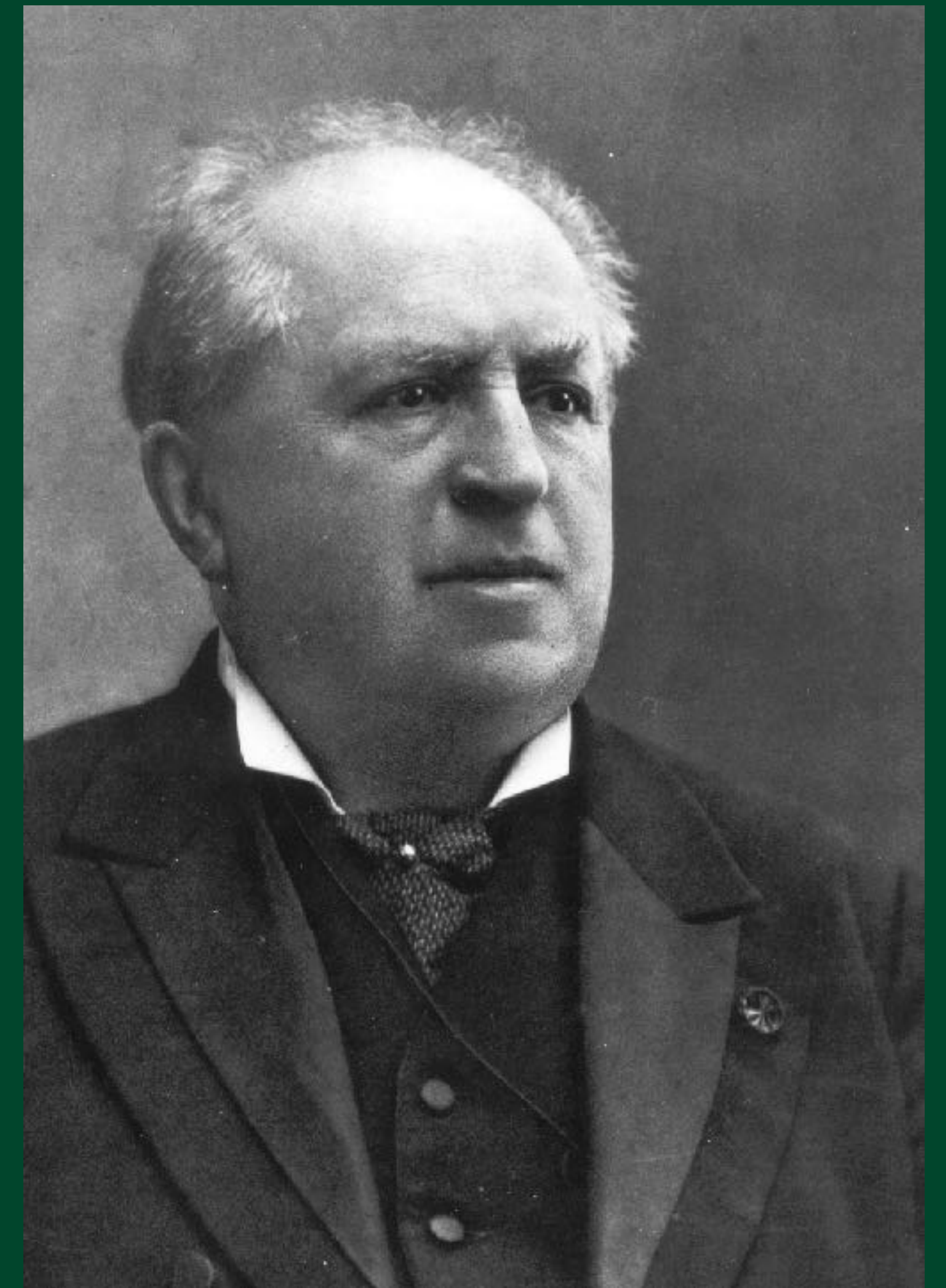
Abraham Kuypers

Reformed theologian, pastor & Dutch politician (1837-1920)

Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901-1905)

Known for concept of *sphere sovereignty*.

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”



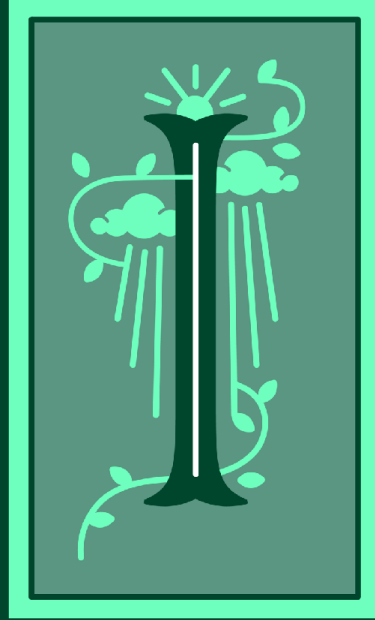
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“Kuyper’s confessional Christian worldview means every human being is made in the image of God and, therefore, everyone deserves equal dignity, care, and compassion.”

“The proper functioning of the social and economic spheres must be marked by justice and faithfulness: each person, created in the image and likeness of God, has a right to their fair share of the economic resources of God’s creation within human society.”

“Because Christ is Lord, no person (Christian or non-Christian) should be treated by the government or the legislative process or economic policy or employer as less than an image-bearer of God.”

Michael R. Wagenman, *Engaging the World with Abraham Kuyper* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019) chap. 3, Kindle.

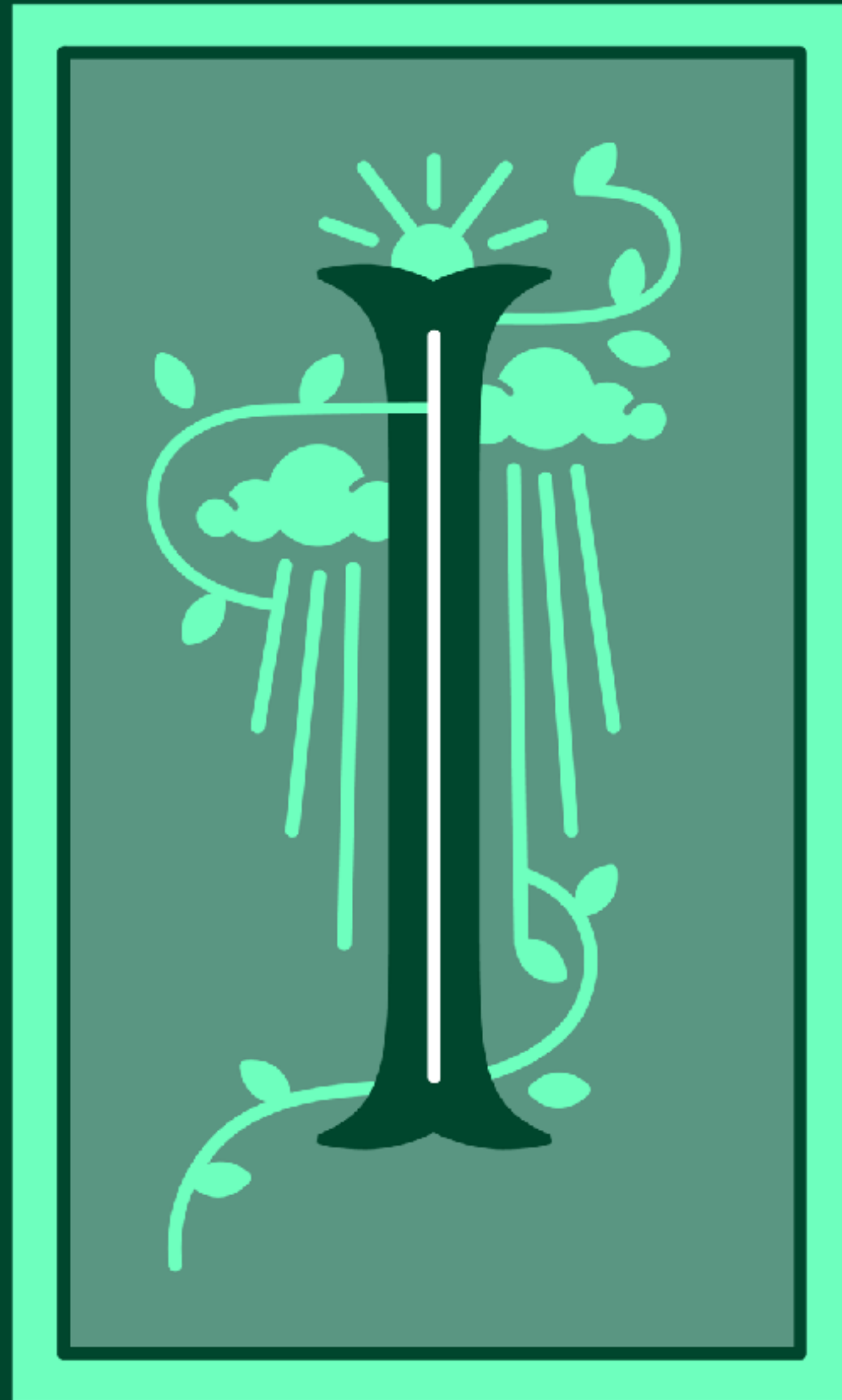


Idolatry in Scripture

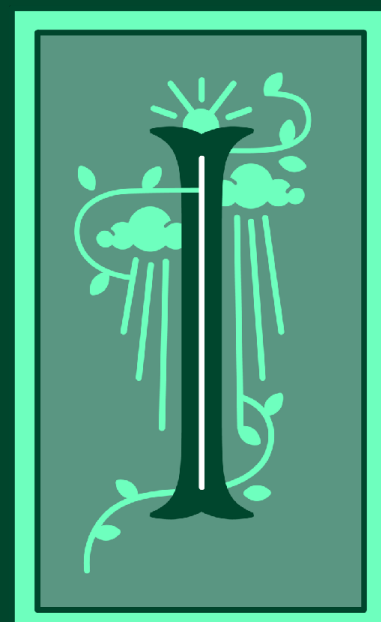
Exodus 20:2-3 (ESV)

2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

3 “You shall have no other gods before me.



What is idolatry
and what is its
impact on the
image of God?



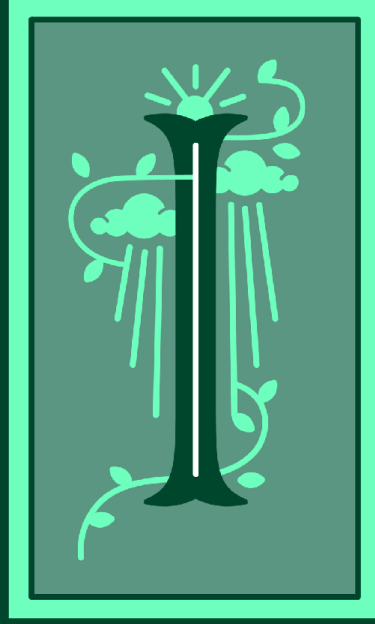
Idolatry in Scripture

Isaiah 44:6, 9 (ESV)

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel
and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:

“I am the first and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.

[...] All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they
delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor
know, that they may be put to shame.



Idolatry in Scripture

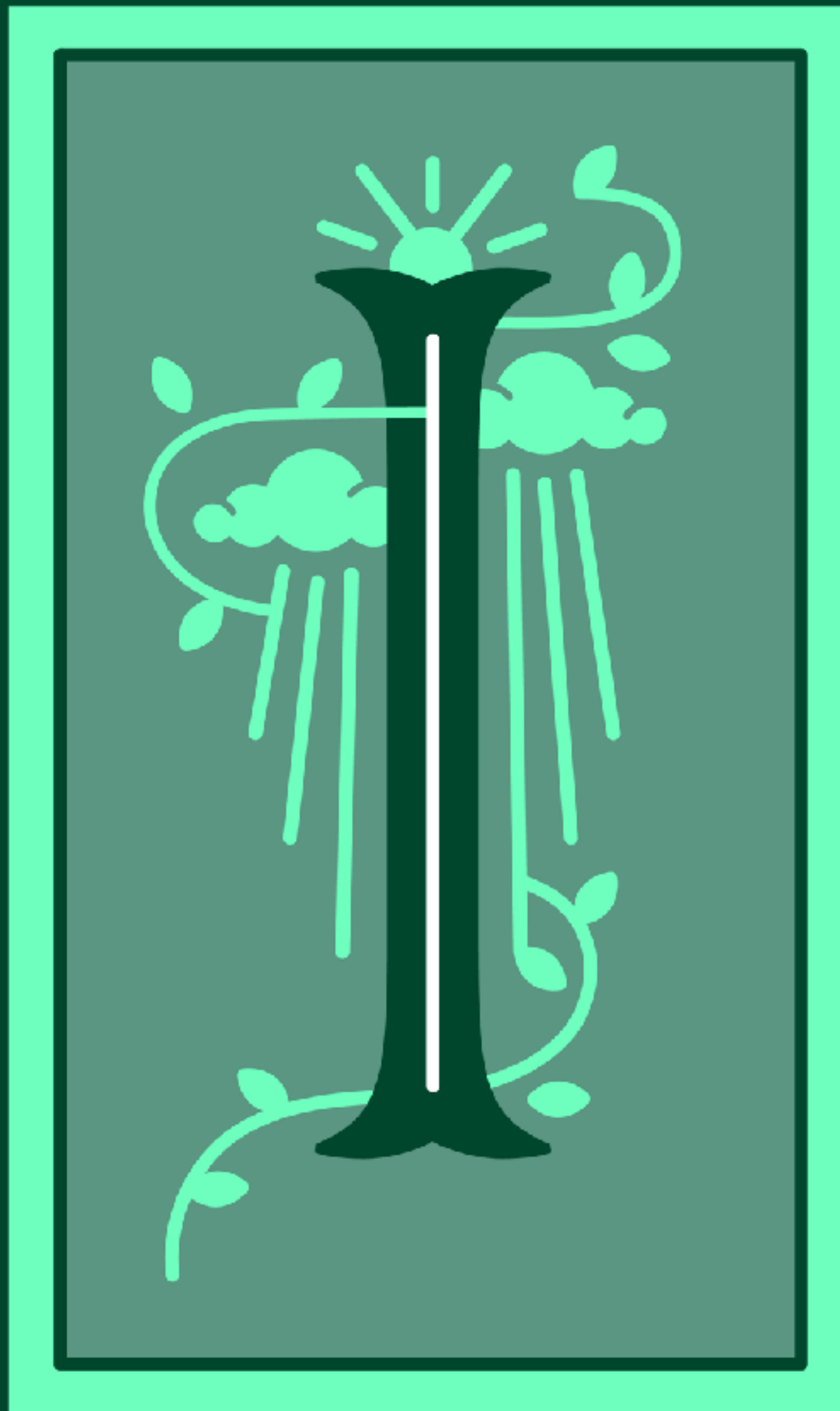
Romans 1:21-25 (ESV)

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

You do not have to believe in the Creator God to want to alleviate suffering. But justice is about much more than relieving suffering—it is about a vision of human flourishing. And the audacious biblical claim is that even good things that seem to contribute to flourishing become idols when they become our ultimate ends. Even the laudable goals of economic development, political freedom and human rights are only ultimately good when they are put in the context of something more ultimate than themselves.

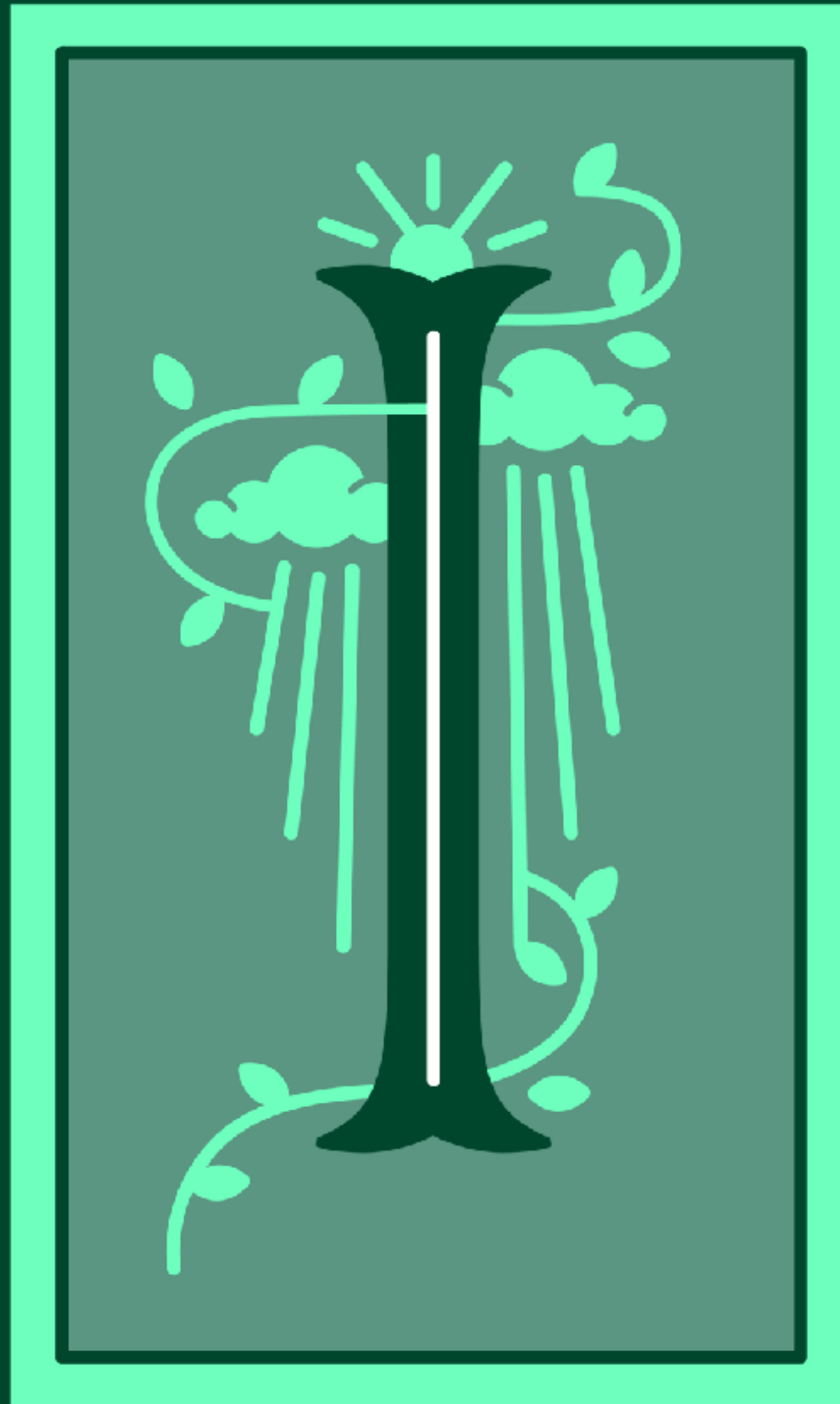
Andy Crouch, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press) 83, Kindle.



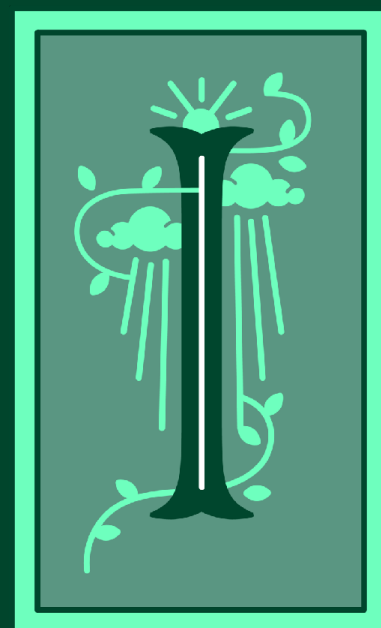
1) Where do you perceive idolatry in politics? 2) Where do you see the image of God honored?

In the positive sense, humans exercise constructive responsibility under God in ruling other creatures. In the negative sense, enemies of God challenge divine authority and wrongly lord it over other humans. The latter is the enemy whom Christ defeats. The enemy includes the acts of those who try to seize an authority God has not given them. In acting as if they were God, they put other human creatures under their feet.

James W. Skillen, *The Good of Politics: A Biblical, Historical, And Contemporary Introduction* (Engaging Culture, Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2014) 25, Kindle.



How does Jesus
restore the image
of God?



Jesus is the perfect image

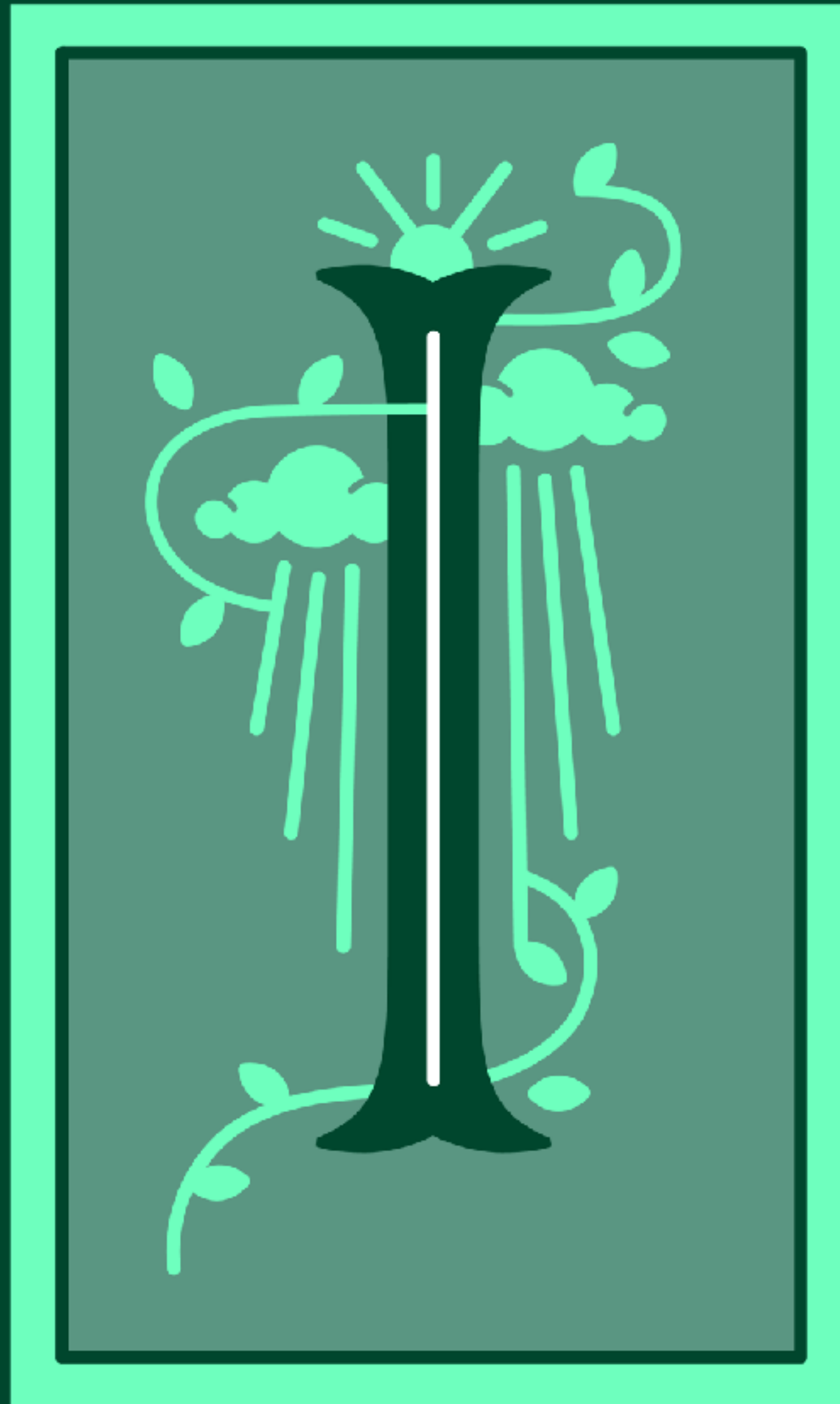
Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Jesus is the perfect image of God.

The image of God—the revealing image, male and female—discloses something true about God and God’s relation to us in everything we do, including our responsibility to exercise just public governance on earth. In Jesus Christ, the revelatory image of God has come into full relief. In becoming fully one with us, Jesus not only reveals what it means to live as self-giving servants of God in this age but also reveals, by way of his death, resurrection, and ascension, what God has planned for the faithful in God’s sabbath glory. Earthly governance is part of what humans have been created to do, and in Christ Jesus we see how that responsibility should be exercised in anticipation of the final revelation of the new Jerusalem.

James W. Skillen, *The Good of Politics: A Biblical, Historical, And Contemporary Introduction* (Engaging Culture, Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2014) 32, Kindle.



Let's pray to honor
the image of God
in all people and
in our political
engagement.

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