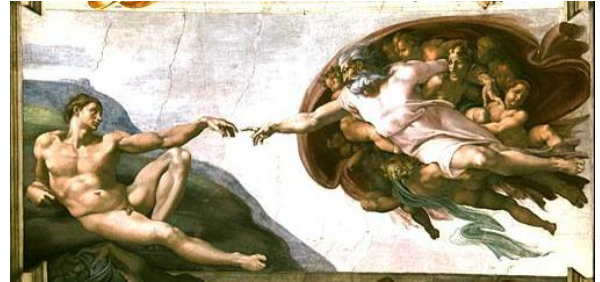


SONrise July - August 2004
EMMAUS
NEWSLETTER
... **Strengthening the Local Church**

Michelangelo-Part 2

Last summer when Carolyn and I knew we would be touring the Sistine Chapel during our vacation in Italy, Jim Downs told me to be especially observant of Adam's posture in the "Creation of Man" section of the ceiling, painted by the now-familiar-to-you Michelangelo. During our day-long Vatican City tour, we were only given about 15 minutes to view the Chapel's walls and ceiling, so I spent the entire time studying the center panel, as Jim had suggested (my neck was sore the rest of the day). Notice in the first image, that God is leaning out about as far as He can into space to reach Adam. It almost appears that the angels are holding God from falling out of Heaven!



Now look at Adam's posture. Sort of lazily reclining with an arm resting on his knee and half-heartedly laying out there. Now look at the zoomed view of the "contact point". Notice that if Adam will just raise his finger, that's all he has to do, just raise that one finger, and CONTACT will be made! Can you imagine what electrical feeling Adam would know if he would just make a little effort to be "in touch" with God? Can you imagine what he's missing out on just because he isn't willing to reach out, to strain, to go to some trouble, to just hold up one of his fingers?? He's waiting for God to do all the work...



Isn't this how God's Grace works? He has made all the plans in advance for us. He has gone to all the trouble for us. He reaches out for us. He "woos" us. He listens intently for us to call on Him. And we have to do soooo little to reach Him! Just think of Him. Talk to Him. Respond to Him. Look for Him. Listen to Him. Trust Him. And WOW,

if we do these things, "contact" is made and suddenly we have the enthusiasm to *Work for Him!*

But what do we often do? We, like Adam in the painting, don't think we need to make any effort at all. It's almost like we think we can do it alone, can make it by ourselves, don't really need any help. In fact, we sometimes can get the notion that we can go over God's head (or around His desire) to get what we want. In a Rome subway, we saw the last image in an advertisement, obviously a take-off on the Sistine Chapel. There we (Adam) are, thinking we can make a hook shot over God to score all by ourselves... And what happens? God says "not in My house" and swats our best shot away to teach us sometimes that He is God! And He will have His way with us... So, wouldn't it be a lot simpler to just play on God's team???? Then we might truly see a "sky hook" or a slam dunk over Satan's head!



De Colores, Steve Rochelle, Community Lay Director 2004.

"For you are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" Ephes 2:10.