

Seeing god in Culture

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By John Vansloten

[PSALM 19] One of the things always loved about that ancient Hebrew poem... how it talks about a God reveals himself in two ways... via two books!... one is **Book of Creation**... other **BIBLE** (law/written word)

God speaks through **this** (GESTURE)...all that is!... and through **this**... this holy book... the scriptures!

God is at work in both!... the **World** and the **Word**... **He's showing his face in both places!** **[PAINTING]**

At NHC we take this reality (two books) seriously!! in fact we're building our church upon it!... **PAUSE**... Where else can I say such **unrelated words/phrases** Metallica, Van Gogh, Mendehlsohn, Minority Report, U2, Green Eggs and Ham, Green Day, Lance Armstrong, and The Simpsons and then ask, "**What do they have in common?**" ...and then get the answer... **[WAIT for A]**

"All sermon topics at NHC!"... **LONG PAUSE**... over years many people expressed concern over **new kinds of messages!**... some have thought "**trying to be novel... get attn... keep it 'spiritually lite'**" my response "No, that's not it at all!"... We're not addressing these topics just to grab attention... way more than that we think, "**God is speaking in these places!**"... **revealing himself... his truth!**

Seriously... in Metallica?... Simpsons?... **[CBC Radio]**

Could it be true God would speak through Simpsons? Use it **prophetically point out our sometimes foolish Xn stereotypes to wake us up?**...

PAUSE... hearing that interview again catch role reversal? Jeff Collins "Ya, but" position... I'm advocate for the 'pop cultural' story?... **[LEGIT??]** Doing the right thing as a church?... leaning to far? **PAUSE**... Then I consider all research/ theological discussion past months all affirming this direction... all these theological concepts and thoughts, all saying, "Keep Going!"... **PAUSE** Ideas like this

"**Our world belongs to God...**" as psalmist wrote "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it..."... as Kuyper wrote "**There is not a square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry, 'This is mine! This belongs to me!'**"

What are implications of this idea? What does it mean to understand every part of creation belongs to him? ... **FIRST [YOU BELONG]**... **ALSO** Flames belong to him? [Editorial - MACLEAN's STORY] It means a) better be careful not to condemn too quickly... b) if it belongs to God God may just use it for his purposes... **maybe even speak through it!**

"**We are created in the Image of God**"... "**In his image he made them!**"...**[EXPLAIN]** recall Marcia as image bearing co-creator **PAUSE** does this *mean what she makes* has divine truth/ beauty/ revelation? I'd say it does! **PAUSE**... implications? for the **Songs... scientific theories... dances... essays... games... business plans** we created do they too have divine fingerprints on them? (whether a Xn or not!?)

“The Holy Spirit of God blows where it wills among peoples and nations, and often the Spirit blows outside the congregations of the faithful.”

Plantinga in Engaging God's World, p114

In this church believe in **Providence... Sovereignty Common Grace** (O works outside and inside the faith)

“The Holy Spirit authors all truth” John Calvin

“All truth is God’s truth” Philosopher Arthur Holmes based on Augustine’s teachings...

[EXPLAIN – real truth] Can the same be said for justice, peace, love, beauty???... All **beauty** is God’s beauty?... **great art** God’s great art?... **awesome drumming** God’s awesome drumming? **PAUSE...**

If God’s truth all over the place ... **should that not inspire us to search it out in this world?** Our ‘**ever ubiquitous**’ pop culture a bit more?

[Harink Article] "Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of all truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonour the Spirit of God. For by holding the gifts of the Spirit in slight esteem, we contemn and reproach the Spirit himself." (Inst II.ii.15)

“We human beings want God even when we think that what we really want is a green valley, or a good time from our past, or a loved one.” Plantinga, Engaging God's World

(sensus divinitatus – Calvin) the ‘**seed of religion**’ and ‘sense of divinity [sensus divinitatus]’ engraven indelibly on our very way of human being, ‘**men cannot open their eyes with being compelled to see him.**’ Institutes, 1,5,1 (assume includes XX as well!)
Huge idea probably spend 5 years preaching this

[HOMING DEVICE in you... “hole”... yearning...]

Talked about it once on CJAY... re: Evanescence... **[explain Chesterton (brothel door)]...** our culture is filled with cries for God... resulting from a God implanted thing (S. Div.)... **LONG PAUSE...**

OK... stop with the ideas can you see why we’re doing what we doing?... **Spirit of Jesus Christ at work all over this creation** **LONG PAUSE...**
I believe... with all my heart... as we show that back to this world catch their attention!... **Can you imagine the power of showing someone where God is already at work in their life?** **[Epiphany!]** **PAUSE...**

Then as you connect God’s truth in **Creation** to God’s truth in **Bible**... even more amazing thing occurs **synergy of illumination!** [Green Eggs] [Lance Suffering]... illumine each other!

NB [BIBLE BOOKEND idea... lens – world – word]

[Revelation to Revelation] God’s Spirit in the *world* connected to God’s Spirit in the *word*!... seems to be God’s MO!... Creation first then words/bible!!

[SIN CAVEAT... reading of both books impacted]
God helps here too!... via Christ... ultimate expression of Creation/Word come together!... **flesh and blood embodiment of God’s words!** **PAUSE...**

The greatest Word!... one who’s suffering led to **revelation** for billions!... In dying “**he left us his eyes**” inheritance HS!!... **PAUSE...** Jesus is the one God sent b/c “he so **loved the world**”... “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,[\[a\]](#) that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

[Heart in behind all this]... this is the calling of the church... to **discerningly** do whatever it takes... lay

down our very lives for our friends... sacrifice what we've always been comfortable with... for what is best!

PAUSE... I think I'm called to give the rest of my life to this idea... **NHC** place where it will continue to play out... (SLOWLY) **Your hearts and lives** are the places where this continues to play out!

So that the world might know... know the love of God... Grace... have eternal life!

Psalm 19

- 1 The heavens tell of the glory of God.
The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship.
- 2 Day after day they continue to speak;
night after night they make him known.
- 3 They speak without a sound or a word;
their voice is silent in the skies;^[a]
- 4 yet their message has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to all the world. The sun lives in the heavens
where God placed it.
- 5 It bursts forth like a radiant bridegroom
after his wedding. It rejoices like a great athlete
eager to run the race.
- 6 The sun rises at one end of the heavens
and follows its course to the other end.
Nothing can hide from its heat.
- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
- 8 The commandments of the LORD are right,
bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are
clear,
giving insight to life.
- 9 Reverence for the LORD is pure,
lasting forever. The laws of the LORD are true;
each one is fair.

10 They are more desirable than gold,
even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey,
even honey dripping from the comb.

11 They are a warning to those who hear them;
there is great reward for those who obey them.

12 How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart?
Cleanse me from these hidden faults.

13 Keep me from deliberate sins!

Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt
and innocent of great sin.

14 May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart
be pleasing to you,

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

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