

The House of God The Culture of the Son

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If the culture of the orphan is characterized by the imperatives of provision and protection, then what characterizes the culture of the son? When Adam was separated from his Father, when Adam saw himself as flesh - not as spirit clothed in flesh but as flesh - he was immediately struck with the vulnerability of his position in creation and moved immediately to address his need as he perceived it. So there was a mindset change. When we speak of the mindset change, we understood and we spoke about how this gave rise to a different culture, the original earth culture, the culture that sprung from the earth, from Adam, it did not originate in heaven, it did not come from God. How then is that culture different from the culture of the son? And since human culture today, represents the full maturing of that which occurred then, how do we make our way back home to the culture of a son? Well first we must understand the culture of the son and then we must understand the methodology by which that culture becomes ours again. Well what is the culture of the son? To ask the question differently: what is the purpose for which God created us and put us into the earth? We know what we were supposed to do but perhaps the gap yet is the question of why, why were we to do that. We know what we were supposed to do, we were put here to rule. God said, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, over all the earth and everything in it," and we understand that that dominion, when taken from the context, when you view this dominion from the context of a son, that dominion is totally different in its application - its intention and its application - from the culture of an orphan.

From the culture of an orphan, to "have dominion" means to "bend everything to the hierarchy of needs", to the need for provision and protection. So whenever the orphan has authority, whenever the orphan has power, whenever the orphan has opportunity, it is predicable what the orphan will do with it; he or she will shape it in support of the need for provision and protection. So if you give the orphan dominion over the earth, what is the outcome, how does the orphan administrate that authority that he has when he has dominion over the earth? Well the answer is: What he's been doing, he has been using the earth without regard for anything but his own need of provision and protection. With those needs dominant in his view, if he still says, "God gave man dominion," he's only telling half of the story, or less than half as it turns out. And this is one of the things that

the world has faulted evangelicals for an about, and evangelicals do not know how to answer this question. It seems that when evangelicals have influence upon political power, they insist upon sovereignty over the planet without any sort of responsibility and even the world says, "You cannot permit the rapacious activity of dominion without restraint." But the world doesn't understand that we lost the culture of rule based in sonship, so it imposes the rules of survival which are the rules of an orphan who is afraid that unrestrained greed on the part of one set of orphans will result in an inequity governing another set of orphans.

So the ecological movement, being by definition a perception of the survival of the planet and therefore individual human survival is as much the culture of an orphan as rapacious practices aided and abetted by a theology that says, "God put us here to rule," but that rule is taken out of the context of being sons and put into the hands of those whose philosophy, whose culture, is to survive. Then it becomes a tension between those who see that survival by utilizing as fully and as completely and without restraint, the resources of the planet. And that's one definition of survival, versus those others who see that if that is allowed to go unchecked then the ultimate survival of all of humanity is in jeopardy because such a use results in such consumption of the environment as to leave nothing for future generations. So they're both orphans in their thinking and they're both governed by the imperatives of survival, one just has a longer view of survival than the other; one has an immediate view of survival, the other has a longer term view. And so the relative sacredness of the culture of an orphan ends up being what the debate is about. And absent from the debate because I don't think we understand it, absent from the debate is the alternative that puts everything in perspective and actually brings forth a discussion of the quality that would be worth having, rather than one set of orphans arguing about their right to fully exploit the planet for their immediate survival and another set of orphans arguing about the need to restrain those orphans otherwise there'd be nothing left of the planet and for the future. There it's just a question of whose priority is to prevail; the ones who are arguing for immediate consumption have no long term view of the picture - but orphans are one generational thinkers anyway - and those who have a longer term view, they're thinking that it's necessary to preserve the environment for their own lifetimes let alone the future. The future is important but it is that they see the depletion of things leading to catastrophes in their own lifetime.

So it's a question of who has political power and therefore whose view of survival prevails at the time. Neither one has a grasp of the context in which God originally gave man dominion. So it is likely that evangelicals argue that God did give man dominion and therefore he is free to use the resources of the planet in whatever fashion dominion dictates. So consuming the resources urgently is that particular profile. When you overlay that with the ethic of Calvin, that hard work is the proof that you are elect, you are the elect of God, then the promotion of industry goals tends to be the default setting of evangelicals who are orphans.

On the other hand, when the environmental movement opposes that rapacious consumption in favor of renewable resources, it also does not have a view that man has sovereignty so it begins to consider a different philosophy and that is that man should exist in harmony with the planet, equating the survival of the planet with the survival of human beings and by that considering that human beings, as living beings, are on equal par with both other species and the planet itself. So it's conceivable that they'll talk... I mean the whole field of environmental crimes and animal rights, all of these are a view that has arisen as an alternative to sovereignty, that God has given man sovereignty. Because as the argument goes, if the only paradigms are sovereignty and therefore rapacious use of resources as one view, and the countervailing view is survival but you must then deny sovereignty, then you have to promote survival in terms of the ethics of equality between, on the one hand human beings, and on the other hand animals and plant life and the ecology and they must be promoted to having the same standing as human beings in creation. So an "animism" replaces the Christian faith because what is viewed as the Christian faith is this untenable understanding of sovereignty being an unrestricted right to devour the planet.

As I was saying, there is an alternative that has been veiled to both sides. Needless to say, whenever an argument is taking place, if the respective sides of this argument are presented from too limited a context, it is inevitable that the outcome will leave the issues completely unresolved and the results will be polarization. I'd like to propose a different view in which we might consider how this argument should be made or what is the appropriate perspective and that is to lift the discussion from it's cultural context of orphans preoccupied with survival, to sons being given the right to rule. Well first we must return to the culture of humans as spirits, not primarily as flesh; that we are clothed in flesh but the flesh is our clothing, it's not who we are. Then that asks the question: what is the purpose for the existence of these spirit beings? Well clearly, there's a need for certain accommodations to the flesh but it is not the reason for being.

So it shifts, the core emphasis regarding being shifts from survival to something else. What is the something else? If human beings are not flesh, that's simply where they live, these bodies of ours are not who we are, they're simply where we are, then if that shift in emphasis results in a shift from survival measured in terms of provision and protection, what does it shift to? And the first part of the answer is it shifts to the fact that we are spirit and then spirit has a different purpose; the purpose of a spirit in creation is fundamentally different from the purpose of human flesh in creation. What then is the purpose of a spirit being? The answer to this is supplied to us from the book of Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3 which says, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. And after He had provided purification from sin, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are My Son;', today I have

become your Father' or again, 'I will be His Father and He will be My Son'? And again, when God brings His Firstborn into the world, He says, 'Let all God angels worship Him.'”

Powerful. Because it describes again the original culture. God is a Spirit, when God made man as a son of God, and Adam was the son of God according to Luke 3, God was putting His son into the earth. But as a son, Adam did not resemble God in Adam's fleshly appearance for God is a Spirit and a spirit has no fleshly appearance. So Adam was a son of God in spirit and that spirit was housed in flesh, the flesh being the clothing he wore. But before his deception in which he saw both who he was and therefore what he was to do as colored by the fall, as governed in his perspective by his separation from his Father, before that occurred how did Adam live in creation? Well Adam ruled in creation and his rule was with the same character as God. One of the first things that Adam did was he named the animals and more than naming them, he brought a kingdom order to them. The way that Adam arranged the understanding of the world is still how we talk about the world today; we still talk about the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom because the one who brought this order was the king and God had instructed Adam to quote “tend to the garden”. In other words he was not just to go about considering what he would consume, he was to go about and establish order over that much of creation that had come up by then. In other words, until he would have his own children and human society would become civilized, meaning that the civil order of heaven would govern the behavior of human tribes, human families in the earth eventually evolving into nations, that was the role of a ruler king who was a son of God put into the earth.

Now Adam communed with God on a regular basis. God came morning by morning, everyday God came into the garden and God himself instructed Adam in the matter of Adam's rule. So all of the characteristics of God began to be imparted to Adam and Adam had the same view of creation as the Creator himself. The One who made the universe and who made the earth on which Adam was placed to rule, was the One instructing Adam about the propriety of rule therefore it is fair to say that Adam was given the understanding of the world from the viewpoint of the One who made the world. And we know something about the nature of God, the seven spirits of God referred to in both Isaiah and the Revelation speak of a God of lordship, so Adam was a ruler, God is a Ruler. And ruling is a necessary function, if rights are to be protected and preserved, ruling is necessary. The notion that no one is ruling is absurd because it makes way for chaos and a form of rule that is more endemic to the condition of an orphan than it is to the display of the nature of God and that is the survival of the fittest.

If orphans rule, you have the lord of the flies. If orphans rule, then they will rule with a stunning brutality because of their focus upon simply surviving, personal survival. No, God did not create and then abandon the world to the unpracticed skills of an orphan ruler; God met with him as His son and talked to him about rule because one of the

seven spirits of God, the first to be cataloged in the reference in Isaiah is the spirit of lordship, the spirit of rule. Lordship followed by wisdom, counsel, knowledge, understanding, power and the fear of the Lord. It begins with rule and it ends with the fear of the Lord, the seven spirits of God. The fear of the Lord is the accountability to God, it's not being afraid of God, it is having the restraint that comes with both love and respect of the highest order.

The thing that is most enduring about the way humans behave is whatever they do natively. In other words, you could force someone, over time, to adapt to a foreign perspective but you must put in place an order that keeps reminding them of that which is foreign to their nature. If someone is going to be required to behave with a certain consistency, in a fashion that is different from how they naturally are, you are going to have to have some reinforcement of that perspective on a regular basis. On the other hand, if a person responds out of how they are natively, the way they actually are, there's no need for reinforcement and this being such a natural response to them will be far more authentic, substantial and longer lasting. It is simple: if you're driven by the need for provision and protection, you're going to do that fairly consistently, but if you're ruling out of goodness, if you're ruling out of mercy, if you're ruling out of the ultimate of respect for God because it is your nature, then that culture will produce on the earth a more equitable and just society because it emanates from being, it is not out of political expediency.

So when God put man in the earth to rule, God gave him the culture of a son and man saw that his purpose for being in the earth was to be the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his Father's being. In other words, being here, humans as the sons of God in creation understanding that they are here as the sons of God, would honor God as their first and foremost priority for being here. And the way one would honor God would be to rule as a viceroy, rule as a vice king, rule as a substitute king for the King himself. So your culture would be the same as the King's culture and this earth, the farthest reaches of the kingdom of heaven is into the earth - the earth as an outpost of the kingdom of heaven - would have as it's native culture the exact same culture of heaven and so the earth will be a reflection of heaven. The culture of heaven would be the fashion of human behavior and civility, the civil order of the earth would be an exact reflection of the civil order of heaven. That means human civilization, making civil human society, the standard of our civility, to put it differently, the standard of our civilization, that being the abstract noun, the standard of civilization would reflect the mandates of heaven. That would be sovereignty, the purpose of which would be to put on display the good nature of God.

Within that context and evaluating the example we brought up earlier on as the conflict between two orphans over the question of survival as it relates to the physical world, how would this actually fit and what is the difference between the culture of a son who represents his Father in the earth versus the culture of orphans both of whom believe that

survival is the imperative but one of whom believes in sovereignty as the basis of fulfilling the demands of survival through rapacious and greedy practices and another who believes that since that is the presentation of man's purpose from the point of view of God, then you must reject God and have an animistic culture which is survival but survival in a less consumptive way. Well the culture of the son would change all of that and the culture of the son would be to bring order, and order would not be to destroy the planet but order would also speak of a God whose generosity and kindness would change the environment to make it all the more compatible with human need. No matter how the population increases there would be equitability and justice from a divine perspective, not from the perspective of the force of law. Now this is not a full discussion of this point, merely to bring into the mix this alternative perspective.

We'll continue our discussion of the culture of the son whose purpose is to represent the Father. I'm Sam Soleyn and I'll talk to you then, bye bye.