

Creator of Heaven and Earth

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[0 : 00] So after an introduction like that, you must be disappointed, especially with the lack of illustrative material. My normal presentations at the institution on Point Grey illustrated with colour slides and PowerPoint presentations.

But today I thought maybe I should just give a personal presentation reflecting on three topics within the general theme of God, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

First of all, to talk about worshipping the Creator. And secondly, as the personal, specifically personal material to myself, studying the landscape.

And thirdly, the theme, the biblical theme of the Sabbath as a connecting theme between the worshipping of the Creator and the studying of the landscape.

And I'll try to unwrap that as we go. Before I do so, let us pray again.

[1 : 21] O God, our Creator and Redeemer, we give you thanks for the magnificence of your creation and for the way in which you have made yourself known, not only through your word, but also through your creation.

We ask for your help and guidance as we contemplate the magnificence and the generosity of God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Amen. So in August, I was asked by Aaron Roberts to give a Sunday evening talk about something that was important to me and which our Sunday evening congregation might be interested to learn about me.

Well, it's not clear that they actually were interested in it. Some spoke positively about it, but I have had no follow-up literature, emails.

So I'm hoping that perhaps this might generate some emails from this group. So I chose to speak about the Heaven and Earth created by God and more specifically about the land that He has created.

[2 : 56] We all profess our belief in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. We say these words, Eucharist by Eucharist. The scene is set, ideally, and this doesn't necessarily correspond to our service, but it ideally is set with the saying of the Lord's Prayer by the priest, followed by the congregation's Collect for Purity, a reminder of the two great commandments, a prayer for mercy, and the proclamation contained in the Collect for the Day, the Epistle, the Psalm, and the Gospel.

Do we really take these words, I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things, visible and invisible, seriously?

To what extent has it become a rote? To what extent are we digging into the reality of this wonderful statement?

Our creed says nothing about what we must believe about how God created, nor on which day He created. There's absolutely nothing said about secondary causes.

We believe in one God who made, and continues to make, everything. In the book of Job, you will recall, God says to the totally defeated Job, where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

[4 : 42] Or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Who, who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain?

And this is one of the things that I study in a funny sort of way. who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt to bring rain, to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass?

These statements and so many others that we find throughout the scripture declare that God is the first cause, and all second causes are derivative from Him.

There's a memorable quote from Jim Houston which goes as follows. Creation is the landscape of the Bible by which I take him to mean, and there's always a question when Jim makes a profound statement, that's precisely how it should be interpreted, but I take it to mean that everywhere you look in the Bible, the context is God's creation.

The Bible is concerned to focus on God as the primary cause. He created and He creates. His creation has both spiritual and ethical implications for our lives.

[6 : 18] And as we know, God also cares for His creation of which we are a part. In Isaiah 24, verses 4-5, the land mourns and withers.

The world languishes and withers. The highest people of the earth languish. The land lies defiled under its inhabitants, for they have broken the everlasting covenant.

The land is repeatedly referred to in the Old Testament, as you know. And this is just one example of the way in which God cares for His creation in the form of the land.

At this point, don't misunderstand me. Of course, the creation is far more than the land. I'm simply trying to make the connection here between my own research and interests, rather than trying to be comprehensive about the theology of God.

For those of you who are familiar with La Rocha, there is a group of actively searching, committed Christians trying to work out what are the implications of a serious understanding of God as our Creator and Redeemer.

[7 : 45] He both creates and redeems His creation. Many of you here are far more fluent than I in speaking about God.

But I want to just dwell on the second theme, the matter of landscape and God's creation. So I've spent my professional working life studying the landscape.

Landscape referring colloquially to the lie of the land is a word that is used in many contexts, including architecture, art, literature, and in Vancouver primarily, gardening. gardening. As my wife will confirm, I have not achieved much in the area of gardening. But in geographical context, the word landscape incorporates the visible features of an area of land, including landforms, ecosystems, and land use, the way in which people choose to use the land itself.

Ronald Blythe, a Church of England clergyman, has written a book called Divine Landscapes, which I believe Alexandra has approved, but no, she hasn't suggested it as one of the readings for our book club.

[9 : 16] He's written a book called Divine Landscapes. He starts from the premise that there is scarcely a field or a hill, let alone a village or town, which cannot be read in both spiritual and material terms.

We have seen in recent presentations that learners exchange from both Christine and Colleen how a serious engagement with God's creation can be spiritually enriching, theirs specifically, visually, and artistically, and I'd like to claim a similar range of insight into landscape.

So where does this all come from? In my case, of course, I have been analyzing my early years, and I understand that the movement backwards and forwards between Norway and Wales for the first 15 years of my life was extremely formative.

First of all, the movement within Norway during Nazi-occupied Norway was between the city and the countryside.

our family started in the city and was evacuated to the countryside as the pressures from the Gestapo became more intensive.

[10 : 58] This, by the way, you don't need to feel sorry for me, you should feel sorry for my late mother who felt the impact of this more severely. But the issue there was that we worked backwards and forwards between a humanly modified landscape of the city which was undergoing the regime of a Kvislin, who was a traitor, Norwegian traitor, and ultimately under the regime of Hitler.

And when we were evacuated to Telemark, the wild natural landscape of the mountains of central Norway, the images that came to me as a youngster were so dramatically changed.

Here was the contrast between a Nazi-dominated regime that was oppressive, which did actually filter through to a little boy, but then when we were in the wilds of Telemark, the freedom that existed there in wandering around the forest, fishing, skiing, on the skis of my uncle, and so on.

But the sense that there was a different reality. Here was a creation that seemed untouched. Of course it wasn't untouched, but relatively speaking, the contrast was very strong. then after the war, going back to Wales, I arrived in a city that had been bombed. So it was a lunar landscape to compare with the humanly overrun landscape of Christian sand and the pristine landscape of Telemark.

[12:57] So again, there was a comparison that was so obvious and so remarkable as to generate a strong interest in landscape. And I'm sure that that's one of the ways in which God influenced my early thinking and drove me to particular interest in the landscape.

Ultimately, I became intrigued by the question of landscape change over time. There are profound ethical implications for our societies and especially for Christians lack of stewardship of the landscape and its deleterious effect on the image of God in creation.

The landscape is being consumed and overburdened faster than it can be replenished. The blasphemy of speaking of a man-created landscape is entirely encouraged by our disrespect for God's creation.

How seriously has the image of God in his creation been compromised by the activities of humankind? Hosea chapter 4 verses 1 to 3 says, Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Vancouver.

For the Lord has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. there is no faithfulness, no love of God, and no knowledge of God in the land.

[14:33] Therefore, the land mourns, and all who live in it languish, together with the wild animals, the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.

did you read Daniel Pauley's account of the disappearing fish in the oceans last week? This was written many hundreds of years before Jesus was around.

But that could so much be a summary of many of our environmental concerns today. So, in 1968, with the sort of traumatic background that I have described, and replete with images of landscape, I was appointed in 1968 to the faculty at UVC to teach and research the phenomenon of landscape change over time.

It was not called global environmental change at the time, and I did not at that time have a clear sense of the potential importance of the topic. In fact, it was called physical geography, and it was very much a Cinderella science.

Throughout my career, I focused on landscape change and society's awareness of the seriousness of the issue, which has grown, as you well know, exponentially.

[16:10] Now, on the one hand, I became known as a geomorphologist. Those with Greek background will understand entirely what the study of the shape of the earth, why that name is given.

This is the word about the shape of the earth explored, but entirely in a materials and energy framework, providing more and more detailed understanding of the secondary causes that shape the earth's surface, land forms and ecosystems on the one hand, and on the other hand, I've come to introduce myself then as a landscape scientist, a term that gives me the freedom to talk about aesthetic, emotional, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of creation, and to introduce the primary cause, God himself, though not officially approved by the bureaucracy at my institution.

But I should note here that geomorphology, as one of the enlightenment sciences, is normally taught without reference to God, on the grounds that all secondary causes provide adequate explanation of the observed and measured phenomena.

But surely enchantment with landscape, artistic expression of landscape, intellectually respectable evidences for the creative work of God in the landscape, spiritual awareness in landscape and what constitutes a norm in humankind's relationship with landscape, are all topics that demand attention, and refuse to be answered by enlightenment science.

So there's a classic confrontation, which many of you will have noticed in my previous presentations, and will probably continue to notice, this confrontation between two modes of thought that are so different.

[18:20] The difference between materialist realism from the enlightenment and the thinking of the critical realists, a position recommended by people like Paul Kinghorn, Alistair McGrath, John Lennox, and many other Christian thinkers, which allows a freedom in the investigation of landscape as God's creation, and not just a bunch of secondary causes.

As I reflect on my career, I can see how this confrontation has become more and more pressing over time. So when you are writing at a rate of a number of papers and books in a short period of time, within this materialist framework, your perspective inevitably becomes somewhat biased. unless you can see the framework within a bigger framework, which is what we are talking about today. So a simple summary of the issue in my particular field of interest is this.

Can science without God make intelligent sense? Yes, it can. But only in the world of secondary causes. It can alert the world to technical and material problems, and provide technical and material solutions to those problems.

But materialist realism insists that only energy and matter are real, and allows no questions about primary causes. On the other hand, the freedom that people like McGrath and Polkinghorne and Lennox and others have provided is an understanding that reality is so much more than energy and matter.

[20 : 23] And this is really a critical point for our understanding of the difficulties that people express about the relationship between science and religion.

Because in effect, our science has become so powerful in dealing with secondary causes, the superficial commentator can imagine that it solves all our problems.

And we know that that is not the case. So the third point that I wanted to make was what is the biblical, how does the Bible come to grips with this confrontation?

salvation. And it's my suggestion that the Sabbath is the crucial connection between the worship of our Creator and the exploring of His creation.

I talked a bit about this some time ago, but as I imagine one or two of you may have forgotten what I said, I will repeat that.

[21 : 31] It was not until I read Jürgen Bultmann's God in Creation that I found what I thought was a rigorous discussion of the connection between God's creative activity and a full enjoyment of the biblical emphasis on the Sabbath and the study of the land or the landscape.

The way in which Bultmann tackles this is that he gives a number of commentaries on Genesis chapters 1 and 2, Genesis chapter 9, Leviticus chapter 25, and Luke chapter 4.

A whole range of areas of the Bible from which he likes to make the connection. So the first part, the completion, the blessing, and the hallowing of creation is as follows.

Genesis 1 and 2 give us information about the relation between creation and the Sabbath, the completion of the creation, the blessing of the creation, and the sanctification of creation, each three separate steps.

In chapter 1, verse 31, and chapter 2, verse 2, God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning the sixth day.

[23 : 13] And on the seventh day, God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So this is the first meditation that Bultmann provokes, which is, what on earth was the nature of the contemplation that God had on the seventh day, as he reflected on the beauty and marvelous complexity of his creation?

Secondly, in Genesis chapter 1, verse 22, 27 to 28, and chapter 2, verse 3a, it's getting a little nitty-gritty here, but God blessed all the creatures, verse 22 of chapter 1.

He blessed male and female, in chapter, in verse 27 to 28. And he blessed the seventh day, chapter 2, verse 3a.

Now you'll notice there are two different kinds of things here. There were creatures, and there were male and female, which were objects of his blessing, and then a time period was blessed, the seventh day.

And thirdly, in this little introductory reflection, in verse 3b of chapter 2, so God made the seventh day holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

[25 : 03] So there was the completion, and there was the blessing, and there was the hallowing of that creation. Now, there's a movement in the logic to look at the Noahic covenant, which includes all living things.

In chapter 9 of Genesis, we read that God said to Noah and to his sons with him, Behold, I establish my covenant with you, and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you.

This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you for all future generations. And I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the

covenant between me and the earth.

coincidentally, I hope this doesn't act as too much of a distraction, but recently we've been studying Jonah, and one is reminded of the way in which the confession of the Ninevites was not just confined to the people of Nineveh, but the animals, the livestock.

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God.

[26 : 49] When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. Now, all of you have received profound teaching on this topic, and I don't need to elaborate, but I do think the emphasis on the way in which the whole of God's creation is involved in the confession and in the redemption is significant.

environment. And of course, the fact that Jonah was displeased with God's activity may be reflected in the displeasure of some contemporary Christians who feel that stewardship of the environment is less important than I, for example, think it might be.

So going on from that example of the Neuhahic covenant and its implications, there's the question of the nature of the Sabbath of solemn rest for the land.

In other words, the linkage that I'm trying to make here between the creation and the land and the nature of the human response to that phenomenon, the Sabbath of solemn rest for the land in Leviticus 25, as you all know, represents the respect for the land because of its being God's creation and the necessity for stewardship of that land.

Anyone who's ever been to Arosia will be impressed by the way in which they take that issue seriously. In Leviticus 25, verses 1 to 7, we read, The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, Speak to the people of Israel.

[28 : 46] Say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. In the seventh year, there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord.

And the nature of that rest, of course, we know as the fallow land that allows the production of crops continuously over time, given the chance of a rest every seventh year.

And the next connection comes between Sabbath feasting and Jubilee, which is in the next part of chapter 25 of Leviticus. You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years.

Very good arithmetic. You shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. The fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee for you.

The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine, says the Lord. There are all sorts of interesting issues here.

[29 : 58] How does the rest convert itself into a feast? How does the spiritual significance of the Sabbath for people convert itself into the Sabbath rest for the land?

What's the connection? It seems to me very clear that there is a rather direct connection made in these verses. And then finally, to cap this, I believe, is looking at Jesus and the Sabbath.

Jesus came to Nazareth in Luke chapter four, where he had been brought up, and as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll. Just imagine the people watching. Unrolling the scroll would have been a rather more elaborate procedure than opening the Bible, as we have it today.

He opened the scroll and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

[31 : 19] Amen. And as another point within that, Jesus on the Sabbath, as I've been looking at Matthew rather frequently, recently, and some in the group here will know what I'm talking about, Jesus answered the disciples of John the Baptist, when John the Baptist was in jail and getting a little bit hungry and a little bit uncomfortable in a miserable jail.

Go tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the poor have good news preached to them.

The change from doing nothing on the Sabbath, which was my tradition, don't touch anything or do anything, to feasting and to the year of Jubilee, is rather exciting.

And I think it, in part, reflects this comprehensive view of the work of God in his creation. That is indeed a reason for turning a negative into a positive, and that however important it may be to focus on worship on a Sunday, of course.

I don't have any problem with that. Nevertheless, the whole question of enjoyment and feasting and recognizing what great goodness God has given to us in his creation.

[33 : 07] So the connections here may be a little oblique, but I'd like to suggest that they make a very strong connection for someone who has spent his life doing an awful lot of things that are in the Enlightenment framework.

A lot of the writing that is acceptable in the academic literature is not accepting the presence of God in creation.

And some would say there's a funny way to make your way in life as a Christian. I would suggest that there is a very great significance, not in what I've done, but in what it's possible for Christians to do in the context of reflecting on, meditating on, and thanking God, and in fact, having parties based on the way in which the Sabbath is a reflection of the magnificence of God's creation.

Much of our life, it's not only my experience, I suggest, much of our life is lived in two worlds, whether we are interested in landscapes, or dams, or psychological theories, or critical literature. Much of our life is lived in two worlds, worshipping the creator, and living as if he does not exist. These two worlds are different realities, the world of primary cause, and the world of secondary causes.

[35 : 04] The two match perfectly if they are taken together under the direction of the primary cause, and no problem, at least that I can see, exists in the conflict between these two realities when they are understood to be under God.

world. The Bible calls us foolish because of this dualism that we practice, and I suggest that its teaching about Sabbath is intended to remind us that our creator is also our redeemer, and that he expects nothing less than the whole of our lives in dependence on him.

So that's the main part of the talk, but I'd like to also add a few additional thoughts. But the main argument I hope you can catch, from the reality of our worship, to the nature of the involvements in our everyday activities, through to the liberating interpretation of the word Sabbath, that I got from Mr.

Bultman. As a further reflection, and we're coming to discussion very soon, but I just want to think about the relationship between creation history and salvation history.

I don't think I'm open to heresy on the first part, but I may be. But I may be open to heresy more likely on this part.

[36 : 59] Our understanding of salvation history as conservative Christians is profound. We spend a lot of time thanking God for the redemption in Christ.

And salvation history rescues us from the fate of the world. But in many ways it isolates us from the public square.

That is to say people are not asking those questions. We had a most depressing presentation at UBC recently from a person who is an atheist, actively so, but he wasn't able to answer any of the questions that he was given because he said those questions are not meaningful.

And he said I can live my life fully without ever addressing any of those questions. things. So, to that extent, I'm not suggesting that this is a good thing at all, but I'm suggesting that the reality is that the discussion of salvation history, whilst it's being conducted at very high level and with very great intensity, and we're all grateful for it, isolates us from the public square in the sense that nobody else is talking about it.

Now you might say, well, they should be. Yes, of course they should be. But they're not. So, what do we do about that? We say, well, you know, you should be thinking.

[38 : 33] Well, I'm not going to be interested in it. So, the point at issue here is that creation history, in its guise as global environmental change and landscape change, has actually become a central topic of public debate.

So that the possibilities of representing the faith in the public square become greater in the context of creation history than in salvation history.

I'm not in any way denigrating the importance of salvation history. Please don't think so. But that's where I could be called up before the Sanhedrin. Throughout history, we've tended to read the Bible as though human life was all that God was interested in.

Thank God he is interested in human life. But surely the true biblical vision is one of all creation flourishing with human beings as God's appointed stewards.

human beings as others. There is not only a salvation history, but also a history of creation. More importantly than that, the two do fit together.

[40 : 00] So I started my prayer at the beginning of this talk with a prayer to God, our creator and redeemer.

And indeed, salvation history fits under creation history. But it doesn't mean to say that one forgets about creation history.

And it doesn't mean to say that we become fanatics about evolution as being a terrible thing, or become deliberately obstructive when some ideas come from science that don't seem to fit.

The only thing that doesn't fit from science, in my view, is the absence of the primary cause. That, of course, is a very serious omission, but it's nothing beyond that, it seems to me, because beyond that, the secondary causes are all part of God's creation.

So my reflection here, and it's sort of related to the main direction of my argument, is that many of us contemporary Christians have lost interest in the land and the landscape, and I'm not just arguing for people doing what I'm doing, it's an argument for doing other things as well.

[41 : 27] They prefer to live exclusively within the framework of salvation history. Where would we be without God's plan of salvation? But in some respects, it is difficult and even impossible to relate God's plan of salvation to the main currents of contemporary thought.

Aha, you say, too bad for the contemporary thought worlds. They're all going in the wrong direction. creation and salvation in one single history.

And what the seriousness, another seriousness of this is that the secular world has seized on this lacuna, well, that's a word for a gap, secular world has seized on this gap in Western religious thought, and with the emergence of evolutionary theory, it has clung tenaciously to a model of random processes in evolution as so-called explanation of the miracle of creation.

The beauty and the richness of creation and the mystery of creation have therefore in many ways been co-opted by secularists, people who do this without mentioning the name of God.

I'm thinking particularly of commentators like David Suzuki. Some of you dare not turn that channel on, I suppose, or at least find it politically offensive.

[43 : 17] But if you try to look at the imagery that is presented by David Suzuki and see that it all falls apart in terms of just the absence of primary causes, nevertheless the beauty, the intricacy and the magnificence of God's creation is better displayed there than by almost any Christian author or television commentator.

which I am suggesting, and again here's the heretical part that we maybe have neglected, to look after our own creation story in a way that has therefore allowed the secular world to move in.

and the final thought that I have in this context is what I find to be sobering, I don't know whether this is even more heretical, but I was recently present at the convocation at Quest University in Squamish, and a Squamish chief got up and thanked the creator for the way in which the creator had made a place for Squamish and for the Quest University.

He wanted to say how grateful he was that the secular world was creating a university on their land which they were hereby declaring belonged to the creator.

Now I know there are lots of differences in what they may be saying, but where is the Christian in the context of the commencement at UBC?

[45 : 12] We've removed the ritual which it was of claiming to be a Christian university.

It never was, but there were rituals that were used at commencement which suggested that there was a connection with religion. So I thank God for that brave Squamish chief who stood up and was counted.

and I think we need to take that seriously, not to become members of the Squamish nation, which may be difficult anyway, but to think how that resonates with the graduating students of this century, how that is part of the public square which we need to inhabit.

and whether that's the right way to do it is a matter that we have to think about carefully, but absence from the public square is scarcely something to be recommended, I would suggest.

So there, this is not a diatribe, it's a sober appeal to take creation history seriously and to revel in God's beauty and generosity as both our creator and redeemer.

[46 : 45] And I say that also with particular thanks to Christine and Colleen, who reminded us of that in a very graphic way a few months back.

Thank you. Thank you. Do we allow questions?

Yes, of course. Does the speaker have to answer the questions? Yes. I'm sorry, this is not a question, but a comment.

I do very much agree with what you say about creation history and salvation history. And I would say that evangelicals in our preaching tradition, they go back to Luther, Calvin, if you're a brethren, they go back to much earlier.

It was a kind of brethren in the early 19th century. 19th century, yes, but we claim that it goes back to the first century. Yes, of course. In all of those contexts, God as a creator was something which could be taken for granted.

[47 : 58] So people could perhaps concentrate on the salvation history as the new thing that they were adding. In today's world, that's no longer the case. And if you remove God as creator, God as savior doesn't make much sense, actually.

So I think we need to look at our preaching and not preach sermons which would have been effective 200 years ago. Gosh, this is getting more heretical than my question.

I couldn't agree with you more. Yes, please. I just have a question. I have some difficulty to form out.

In the secular economic world, do they also recognize the two causes, such as the primary causes and the secondary causes?

And if so, what is their general point of view about what the primary causes is to them? The primary cause has become randomness. So that the statement is that we cannot know.

[49 : 12] for sure. And the nature, well, of course, specifically in the evolutionary controversy, we are supposedly the product of completely accidental and random interactions.

There's a marvelous section in John Lennox's book about book. It's a book that has God's undertaker, I guess it's called.

He says, there is a claim that if you put a few monkeys in front of a typewriter and ask them to type random letters on the typewriter, that one of works of Shakespeare will eventually emerge.

It was laughable if it were not taken seriously. So there have been a lot of experiments of people not necessarily using apes, but with people just randomly using computer random numbers.

and I think the furthest they've got is maybe the second verse of Psalm 23. But I mean that sort of gives you some sense of the kind of abandonment of primary cause that exists.

[50 : 48] Now that's true, there is search for the primary cause, but the majority of academics, I would say, today are unhappy about the idea of looking for truth, which is a complete abandonment of the original objective of higher education.

Sad thought at Harvard which has a motto, Veritas, which means truth, commentary has suggested that the word truthiness should be substituted for truth.

So that gives you some sense of the seriousness of that discussion. Yes, John? You know, when you're mentioning about native people, because I'm around a fair amount, when they talk about God, the creator, they mention spirit world, or when I was mentioning that as of the fresh year, Gabriel, I didn't do a lot of yard work on our land, I came back, and then this older native fellow saw it's medicine, he said that's medicine, and that's actually true to fresh air, it's medicine, so the natives will go to the pharmacist to the drug store, or the pharmacist to the drug store, it's the forest, they gather medicine there, so it's interesting, and they talk about stuff like that.

Sounds as if you should have been giving the talk. You actually have experience of landscaping proper. Sir? Thank you very much for your talk, Ed, from start to finish.

Very interesting. If you were given a couple minutes at the graduation ceremony at EBC, and some atheist said to you, okay, professor, here it is, give me a bit of discourse about first principles, which is intelligible.

[52 : 43] I don't want proof, but just make it a bit intelligible for me. Would you accept that as a good question, and if so, how would you answer it? Good, good. I'll have to work on it.

Well, surely the whole question of the intelligent design is important here. It seems to me that the mathematical principles on which creation is based are so coherent.

I still think the argument about the watchmaker holds true. If you find a watch lying on Putney Common, you would assume that there was a watchmaker somewhere.

In the same sense, we see what God has created, we'd expect there to be a creator. Now, the whole, the punch that Darwin introduced, which was serious, was that you simply had the survival of the fittest, occupying every single niche, successively and randomly. and then, of course, that's been elaborated into the neo-Darwinist faith of Dawkins and others. But these are all inadequate in terms of any primary cause.

[54 : 24] So it's a, it's a, anyway, I guess that I'm diverging from the question, what I should be saying at that congregation is that we have deliberately, or there has been a deliberate avoidance of the question of God.

And it's partly an ethical issue. If we talk about God, we are actually talking about some obligations. if we talk about randomness, we do not necessarily have any obligations, because randomness carries on without any, anybody being responsible for anything.

Of course, I'm, I'm fully aware that there are many agnostics and atheists who take a more responsible approach than that, but the logic of their position, I think, is illogical.

Would you stand up and cheer at that point? No, or say, I suspect that the abolition, I get this from Marilyn Robinson, the abolition of the language of transcendence from UBC graduation is very much connected with the abolition of the arts from the center of serious discussion in our culture, because the arts are about surprise and look and mechanism gets rid of surprise or tries to.

God is a surprise. I think God is a surprise. I think the world as a surprise, I don't know, our atheist friends don't know how to answer that.

[56 : 20] They say, yeah, it's just there. I call it a surprise. It came from somewhere. Everything you said, I agree with, but my parents told me not to point.

Bill. The British agnostic or atheist social thinker John Gray argues that progressive, liberal thought, and I'm sure progressive, liberal creation care thought, has that simply secularized religion in the Western context?

How much of contemporary creation, secular creation care actually has at its roots some kind of Christian viewpoint?

That's simply secularized. What's on that? I think it's a very powerful point. I think that even Wilson's conciliant ideas very much grounded in original Christian thought.

But, you know, it's interesting how much of the heritage that we have from the past is really now ignored because it happened before 1990.

[57 : 50] You know why 1990 was important. Everybody knows, 1990 is the most important year. All the literature that can be accessed on the computer has been successfully archived from 1990.

Before that, it's very hard to find anything. So, a lot of our heritage has disappeared as far as the undergraduate student is concerned. Because they don't want to go through that tedious process. Yeah? I was just going to make a comment for those interested. There is a video on the net, basically, you click on videos, God of Wonders, and only have you seen it. It's creation, you know, what we would call biblical creationists or triunists and there are people like us that have made your names and that have put this together.

It deals more with animal life than that, but it really shows that, you know, there's a creator and it's a really good thing for us to look at and also the share of others who don't believe in it. Maybe you could share that channel of this, yeah?

Yeah. Sheila, Sheila first. I have a much less academic question. Impossible.

[59 : 14] going back to what you said about celebrating God's creation and so on. We aren't doing that anymore. We're celebrating man's creation and putting a few pumpkins up by the pulpit on Thanksgiving is just the merest token of recognition of whose world it is.

And I was just sort of musing in my head as you spoke about the changes that have happened in my environment here since I moved to the coast, where we had market garden farms all the way from Marple to Berkeley between South Marine Drive and the Fraser River.

Richmond was still largely agricultural. Even when I lived there, there was a boy with a horse and a big rhubarb farm on my corner, you know, and Barnett Blueberry Farm actually was there.

these places are all now town houses. maybe more well, here's something. When I was in graduate school, there was somebody looking for a thesis topic related to farming in the Fraser Valley.

And it was suggested that she go back to a study that had been done 10 years before on the strawberry farmers in the Fraser Valley. the sample that was available to that researcher was 167 strawberry farms.

[60 : 42] So, all the strawberries. Ten years later, less than a third of those people were available for this person to approach about her further study.

And we go into the store complaining about the price of food and buying strawberries from Guatemala and Mexico. You know, what the heck are we doing? Well, we're not trying strawberries. Yeah. We're paving paradise and putting it apart. You know, really, we are. No, no, I mean, this is a... There does not seem to be any way of stopping it.

This is a prime example. Yeah. Exactly. We are talking here about a man-made landscape. Instead of looking... I'm not arguing for doing nothing, but I'm arguing that indeed, we've overdone it.

First, and then there's it. A couple of years ago, after, one of your talks, we got into a bit of an exchange in which you explained the underlyings of what you were saying as dualism, which I found very helpful.

[61 : 51] And I first want to thank you for the elaborations on that dualism that you have provided today. To jag off to the side for a moment, one of the things that I'm led to think about, and a reason I have tremendous respect for Nietzsche, is that he did not stop at the level of secondary causes, and his resolution was a strange notion called the eternal recurrence of the same.

That's just the side light. Again, instinctively, I find it very difficult to operate with dualism, and I have thought about it as much as you have, but instinctively, I am a monist, and I think the way that I vaguely make it work is also to be an apocalypticist, and to see almost all of this fixation on the realm of secondary causes as a delusion.

I very much value some aspects of medicine, computer technology. I can see progress in those areas, but I'm not sure that the trade-off in the spiritual realm, having chosen to take that direction, is a good one, and I see so much evil and judgment attending that direction, that I cannot help but think that humankind is headed for a huge and unacceptable slap in the face, much as the Israelites could not believe that Jerusalem was destroyed in 586.

Well, thank you for that thought. I'm very sorry that our organizer Alexander missed that point. But clearly there's a case here for further discussions on monism and apolocticism.

Two further presentations. Monism and apolocticism. But I agree and I want to thank you in public for having raised that point with me and some of these thoughts actually result from the comment you made.

[64 : 55] I also want to say thank you that someone actually did remember something that was said at a previous loans exchange. Well, on that happy note, I can't, I just, please join me in thanking Olaf for yet again another inspiring and inspiring meeting.

Thank you. Thank you.