

2010 MANIFESTO: WONDER, HEARTBREAK, AND HOPE

Gideon Strauss played a pivotal role editing Comment for ten years. In 2010 he sketched a beautiful vision Comment continues to build on today.

By Gideon Strauss

The love of God evokes—from our whole person and in unity with the whole people of God—a life of worship, a love of our neighbours, and a respectful caring and disclosure of all of creation. Lives ordered by the love of God are ordered well, and can be lived well.

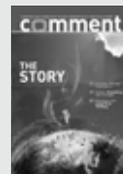
Comment explores the possibility of lives lived well. As we report on what people make of the world—in the spheres of art and the academy, business and technology, culture and politics, in our everyday enjoyment of delights and comforts—we seek to discover ways of human flourishing in lives lived with integrity and coherence. Flourishing is possible, we believe, when all of life is lived as worship and service of God: personally, publicly, professionally, permanently.

An understanding ordered by the love of God—Father, Son, and Spirit—allows for a particular point of view from which to understand the world: a point of view marked by wonder, heartbreak and hope.

WONDER

Comment takes delight in artworks crafted with skillful imagination, daring theories

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cogently argued, markets designed for trustworthy exchange, tools designed with affectionate elegance, communities deliberating toward regimes of mercy ... all of life created for the common good.

We do so because the Word and the Spirit of God open our eyes to the wonder of the world God made. For us creation is not just nature, but encompasses the God-ordained structure of all of human life and all the things in the world. Attending to the thousand things around us, reflecting on their ways of being, and having our attention and reflection focused by the revelation of divine creation and blessing, we find ourselves in awe of the Creator of all things, in awe of Jesus, the Christ, in whom all things have been given existence and coherence.

With eyes of wonder we can see the diversity and complexity of creation accurately and correctly, ascribing divine self-existence to no created thing, but denying created

goodness to no creature or creaturely way of being. We begin to discern the pattern of God's creation, and begin to learn the wisdom of caring for things as they are, neither neglecting nor exploiting their structured possibilities, but rather disclosing their meaning as creatures made and loved by God.

HEARTBREAK

Comment self-critically explores our own dulled tastes, our self-interested arguments, the entanglement of our identity with our consumption, our failures to cultivate expertise, our subtle slights of others and our seeking after status at the cost of justice... all of life fallen away from enjoyment of the good and obscuring the wonder evoked by a good creation.

With broken hearts we confess our own complicity in the vandalizing of God's good and peaceable order. We admit to our own idolatrous love of God's creatures and their diverse qualities: power and fame, sex and wealth, nature and community not least among these. We confess that we seek to shape things into forms foreign to their created purposes, and that we through lack of imagination and enterprise allow things to lie undiscovered and unenjoyed. We admit that we desire to do as we would, constrained by neither the love nor the law of God, and that we seek by our arts and crafts to bend the world to our own purposes rather than the purposes of God. We lament that these transgressions take on a life of their own, in systems and structures beyond our personal control. The wages of sin are indeed death.

As thoroughly as God's good design suffuses all that is not God, so thoroughly does human evil mar all things. All things wail and suffer because of the blight of evil, and yet the mystery of evil escapes human comprehension. Why it should be so, we do not know, except somehow in Adam's fall, and we in him: that it is so we cannot but know. The Word and the Spirit of God open our eyes to the heartbreak suffered by the world God made, and mindful of God's pain we find our own hearts broken.

HOPE

With all creation we at *Comment* yearn for the full recovery of the peace of God, desire the complete restoration of the reign of God, and await the fulfillment of the promises of God. We write of such signals and reasons for hope as we can discern. We seek out examples of *tikkun 'olam*, of repairing the world.

Our hearts burning with hope, we rejoice in the good news of the cross and resurrection of Christ and the promise of forgiveness and of the resurrection of our bodies and the reconciliation of all things with God. We celebrate the good things, great and small, that are foretastes of the coming kingdom.

As wide as the sorrows of humanity, as deep as the rifts between human and human, as high as the walls that prevent all God's creatures from fulfilling their intended purposes, so wide and deep and high reaches the redemptive work of God in Christ.

And so the great theme of *Comment* is hope. 