

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Consecrated in the Truth Seventh Week of Easter Wednesday, June 4, 2014 8:15 AM
Acts 20:28-38; **Jn 17:11b-19** (We are created in the image of God for God, therefore to know the truth, to love the good, and to appreciate beauty.)

“And I consecrate myself for them, so that they may be consecrated in truth.”

This concept of **truth** in the Fourth Gospel—it’s a very powerful concept. It’s **a way of looking at God and at reality**, and it has various aspects: for example, “Your word is truth”—this is Jesus speaking to his Father and, of course, Jesus is the Word of the Father speaks, so **Jesus is the truth**. Elsewhere he says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”; and elsewhere: **“The truth will set you free.”**

Now this is based on a way of thinking about human life as created for something, not simply human life that evolved by chance. And this is a great problem if people only think that way, that human life just evolved by chance and its purpose is to survive. If that’s all there is to it, no wonder people are so goofy. No, this is based on the idea that **human life is actually created for a purpose: to love the good, to know the truth, to appreciate the beautiful**, and seeing that ultimately these three must be one, that all truth and all beauty and all goodness **all comes forth from one source; and this is what we call “God.”**

And **we are created in the image of God for God, therefore to know the truth, to love the good, and to appreciate beauty**. Part of appreciating beauty is to make beauty, and to make the world beautiful, to take the beauty that we find in nature and to make it part of our own environment. And that includes beautiful buildings and beautiful statues and beautiful paintings and beautiful music and **everything we can make beautiful**. **All of this is part of appreciating the beauty of God himself**, which is why Christians believed that they had a job to do in developing a Christian culture that reflects in these various beautiful ways the

truth that they believe, the truth that comes from God, the truth that is the Word of God incarnate, enfleshed, in Jesus.

All this is connected. **It's all connected to a mission in the world**, a mission of sharing truth, expressing truth, expressing beauty, finding beauty, finding order, and in all things loving what is good, wanting what is good, desiring what is good. **The great source of all goodness is of course God**; so in a way when we want anything or desire anything, that is a kind of way of desiring God, who is the source of everything.

But, here's the problem: in our lives we can freely veer off the way from the path of wanting God, and **we can start to desire some good for ourselves that is not good for others**. Then we diverge from the path that God has placed there for everyone to embrace God and what is good for all, **all of us sharing together in the one reality of God and God's creation. And this is the framework for all moral thinking**. What is really good? Well, is it good for everybody? If it's just good for you, then it's not really good. If it's only good for right this minute but not for four days from now, then it's not really good. So it's a matter of **thinking about the whole**. It's a matter of vision and perspective.

This is what the **truth** is all about. This is why it **makes us free, because then we can be who we are created to be. We don't have to make up something**. In contrast, in the modern world, so many people are just inventing an idea of who they are: inventing goals, inventing desires, inventing purposes. They have nothing to do with anything except their own imagination. This is not the road to happiness. This is not freedom.

And so Jesus sends his own followers out to share this truth. And **he consecrates himself for our sake so that we can keep this truth and share this truth**.