

A little lower than God?

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Scripture doesn't just shape the life of the community of faith. It also has a powerful effect on the lives of those who maintain distance from traditional religion, even those who explicitly deny religious faith.

The Bible strongly marks our understanding of who we are as human beings; the words of the Hebrew scriptures, in particular, speak to us about our identity and our place in creation. Even supposedly secular perspectives reflect a view similar to that expressed by the psalmist who claims that God "made [human beings] a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor," giving them "dominion over the works of [God's] hands, putting "all things under their feet."

Whether it's an environmentalist who argues we are responsible for maintaining the gifts of natural resources or a laissez-faire capitalist who claims freedom to use nature for profit, most of our ideas around the relationship between humanity and creation seem to align with the biblical claim that we are in a special way set above the rest of creation.

We Reformed Christians are called to use our reason and our knowledge of the created order as a way to know God. Can we or other Christians see ourselves as faithful if our self-understanding continues to draw so much from the psalmist's idea--and so little from the increasingly rich portrait we have of a universe beyond us in scope and complexity?

Recently we have been confronted with [super-massive objects for which our physical laws cannot account](#). And it seems ever more inevitable that we will [encounter the kind of life that might knock us out of the center of our own cosmology](#). If we don't attempt to articulate what our faith has to say about these ideas and discoveries, then we abandon many people to their woefully outdated cosmology and senses of self--things easily jettisoned for purely "scientific" constructions.

I know that I, for one, could use a Reformed Christian framework for understanding a world in which human beings are an infinitesimally small part of creation, just one among a dazzlingly large and diverse array of creatures that all, in their own way, display the incomprehensible glory of God.