



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

I think I've figured it out: we're now, officially, bipolar. Without taking anything away from the people who suffer from the clinical condition, we've achieved the cultural version: *"having two completely different opinions, attitudes or natures..."* Proof?

Within the space of one week, Susan Boyle and Adam Lambert hit the headlines. Remember Boyle - the frumpy Scottish miner's daughter who stunned the world with her appearance on Britain's Got Talent, singing "I Dreamed a Dream." She didn't win... but she just released her first album and has topped a million sales at home and in America.

Lambert, the rocker from San Diego who was an American Idol competitor took his in-your-face attitude to the American Music Awards stage and mixed his music with an NC-17 performance that has confirmed conservative fears of what unleashed homosexuality would look like. The controversy has only broadened his exposure. *Bipolar?* When



Susan Boyle and Adam Lambert compete for attention, *what would you call it?*

Music exposes something in us that debates never touch. Listen to the perspective of the man who wrote the song that became the best-selling record of all time: *"My ambition is to reach the heart of the average American, not the highbrow nor the lowbrow but that vast intermediate crew which is the real soul of the country. The highbrow is likely to be superficial, overtrained, super-sensitive. The lowbrow is warped, sub-normal. My public is the real people..."*

The songwriter? Israel Baline (you know him as Irving Berlin). Born in Russia, his family immigrated to New York City when he was only five. Two years of schooling followed by a job selling newspapers on street

corners led to his chance to sing in saloons for tips. Song writing followed...

He gave us "God, Bless America," but the summit of his song contributions was, undoubtedly, "White Christmas." With just 54 words and a simple melody, it has become the iconic song for America's holiday season.

Here's my perspective: for the next 18 days, most people moving around you want to feel something different than the headlines. They're longing for the heart lines; the messages that will satisfy something deep within them. They are part of Berlin's "intermediate crew" who know that there's something out there. Do they need a "White Christmas," or a real one?

It took a modern-day Jew to put Normal Rockwell's American ethos into lyric and song. It took a 1st Century Jew to put God's ethos into flesh and blood. Christmas means lots of different things to different people, but the meaning of Christmas - from heaven's perspective - exists quite apart from the modern derivatives.

Hear it: Christmas, from John's perspective: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became*

flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1, 14)

People have birthdays; people celebrate birthdays. God - the Son of God, Jesus - had a birthday, of sorts, but it was *more* than that. His birthday was Incarnation: God became flesh, and lived among us. People need to know that... and we're the ones to tell them. It's part of the Story; they need to hear it all.

Adam Lambert needs to meet Jesus. Susan Boyle needs to meet Jesus. Irving Berlin has already met Jesus, but he met Him too late. *Who on your Christmas list needs to meet Him?*

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