



A new and urgent theology of creation

'In the beginning when God created' (Gn 1:1) and so let us begin right there at the moment of first time, when creation came into existence. A divine beginning, a creation that bears the semblance of God, touched with creativity and blessed with astounding beauty. If in our Christian understanding it is God that creates, then it follows, we who are God's creation must somehow be connected not only to God but to the creation from which we emerge – an interconnectedness, perhaps even a dependence. Perhaps even more so, the creation from which we were birthed is the only way back to our essence, our Creator, our God who 'created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb' (Pm 139:13). Diarmuid O'Murchu writes:

The wise and holy God was at work for billions of years before religious consciousness began to develop... and that same creative wisdom will continue to beget radically new possibilities, forever defying and challenging the outstanding theories and inventions of the human mind... we belong beautifully to the earth. It is the alive maternal organism that brought us into being, sustains us throughout life and receives us back into the fertile earth when our lives have run their course.

In this first chapter of Genesis, God creates and marvels at what becomes, the new emergings that in their natural beauty, even surprise God! As Mechtilde of Magdeburg puts it, 'The day of my awakening was the day I saw and knew I saw all things in God and God in all things.'

Over and over again it is repeated, 'God said, "Let there be..."' (Gen 1: 3, 6, 14). A call for life, for choice, for being. A divine call to become, to be given an identity, to live. That call to existence is not reserved for humans alone but a call to be, for all created forms, an acknowledgment of their essentiality in the whole of creation.

'Let there be' is a full thought. A call to diversity and plurality. A call to many and to variety. And it follows that there be, in the mode of harmony and unity, interconnectedness and co-dependence. All things are created successively and all things are to exist together.

And over and over again it is repeated, 'And God saw that it was good' (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). What is it that is good and pleasing and so necessary and essential? It is all, which includes light and darkness, land and water, plants and vegetation, sun and moon, fish and birds, animals both wild and domesticated.

The human judgment is reserved till the end of chapter one of Genesis. Our worth is evaluated according to the condition of the whole of God's creation. 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good' (Gen 1:31). Everything is right. Everything comes together as a whole. Everything is valued in God's eyes. We cannot be separated from that which we are a part of. And then God rested.

Having placed humans in charge of this divine plan, leaving us with a swarming, fertile world, what would God say today of an earth that suffocates? Indeed is it still 'very good'?

We are entering the Season of Spring if we haven't entered it already, considering this August was the warmest on record. Perhaps it is a case of climate change or perhaps it is our argument for 5 seasons in Australia unlike the European season. There is the new season of Springer, which falls between Spring and Summer. Whatever our theories and our experiences, we cannot deny that we are very dependent on the environment for our survival and economic stability. And it is this new awareness of the fragility of our earth that has led to a new understanding in theology, called Eco-Theology.

Over the centuries Christian theology was one of a Redemptive message. We were saved from 'mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.' Yet this is not a testing place and a passing world. This is life and reality, with its promises and failures. This is where we journey with Christ, in and with all of creation. There is a shift in theological understanding in regards to the earth. We are saved in, through and with creation. As Robert Fripp writes, 'Creation is an ongoing process, a continual becoming.' Together we work out our life as we become whole, for in Jesus 'all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together' (Col 1:16-17). It is an eco-theology that makes real the message of Jesus that, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near' (Mt 10:7).

As the world experiences suffocation, there is hope. There are constant signs of God's creative genius at work, unfolding, displaying, providing and renewing, in the movements of creation. Can we mere humans possibly silence the energy of God? Our coming into being, as conscious creation, was to come into a greater awareness of all life. So we end off here as we continue the journey with creation during this 'Springy' time!

My search is further. There's still to name and know
Beyond the flowers I gather, The one that does not wither –
The truth from which they grow – **Judith Wright**

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