



## Justice and Advocacy Week: Creation Care

### Reflection on Creation Care

Proverbs 8. 21-31 (selected verses)

Creation Care often sounds rather serious and guilt-inducing, and doesn't sit easily in the way most people view what church does. However all around us our society is deeply concerned about the environment and climate change, from school kids to voters. Fulfilling our earliest divine mandate to steward the world around us, connects us to our wider community and is vital to our witness to God's transforming love.

The passage from Proverbs below gives us a slightly different take on Creation and our response to it.

*Woman Wisdom calls out:*

*The LORD began the work of creation with me;  
the opening act of the primeval drama.  
In time before dreaming I was in on the action;  
right from the word 'go' as the earth began....*

*Throughout creation, I was there at the LORD's side,  
applying my skills like an expert in the trade.  
My joyous enthusiasm always made the LORD's day,  
for I filled our work with dance and play.  
The LORD's earth was my playground  
and the earth's children my greatest delight. (Laughing Bird translation ©Nathan Nettleton)*

Three (inevitably!) ideas come out of this.

### 1. Community

We read in Genesis "Let us make ... in our image". This is an unexpected allusion to the community within the Godhead which we call the Trinity. We 'understand' this mystery to reveal the relational foundation of all things from the very beginning. It is the flow of love between the persons of the Trinity that creates and sustains our world, and that relationship is the basis of everything. Here in Proverbs this communal dimension is reinforced by Woman Wisdom, or Sophia. She is similarly revealed as being present in the creation process, weaving her own patterns of wisdom into God's formation of the world. We and our environment were birthed in the joy that flows from loving relationship, and we are invited to live in those loving ways that enable us to join the ongoing dance of that divine community. We are not separate from Creation. There is a tendency to think about humanity *and* creation, but we are one and the same. We are the crowning glory of the creation, but still deeply enmeshed in the whole fabric of what has been made. We were made by relationship for relationship with everything that exists.

- *Spend a moment reflecting on what difference does it make for you to understand God's creation as the product of relationship?*
- *What implication does this communal dimension of creation have for you and for your church community?*



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### 2. Attentiveness

If wisdom is woven into creation how much more should we be paying attention to the natural world and its patterns? There is so much to be learned from the way the world has been made. We are still discovering new species and ecological connections and gaining new possibilities for human benefit. So many of our technological and pharmacological breakthroughs have been made through observing and mimicking the intricate construction of natural forms. It is crucial therefore to protect our environment and prevent the loss of irretrievable genetic material.

I also believe that attention to nature is vital for our own mental and spiritual well-being at an individual level. Most people say that they feel closer to God when they are immersed in nature – watching the waves in the ocean, absorbing the peace of the forest, or simply wondering at the intricacies of a leaf or flower. The fingerprints of the divine are throughout nature and wisdom is deep in every cell and mountain range. We know and respond to this truth – deep calls to deep within us, and yet we have done so little to preserve the created order from our destructive practices.

- *How can we encourage attentiveness to Creation as individuals and communities?*

### 3. Delight

The unique insights that Woman Wisdom brings to the Creation story are the elements of delight and playfulness that are embedded in what is made. There is a sense of the Trinity giggling joyfully as the animals poured forth and marvelling at the variety and curiosity of what they were making. This is more than the 'good' of Genesis, this is delight and wonder in the creation and most specifically in us as humans. We were the greatest delight of creation.

- *What does that make you feel?*

Church life can become very earnest and serious, but this passage encourages us to recapture a sense of fun in what we do

- *Have you lost some of the playfulness in your ministry – how might God be inviting you to welcome a little more joy and levity in your life?*

Some summary questions for reflection:

- *Does it change our approach to Creation Care if we come at it from a place of community, attentiveness, and delight?*
- *As you sit with this passage, what 3 things could you or your community do to join the dance of love that birthed our earth? (For some more ideas read....)*