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A THEOLOGY OF CREATION LIVED OUT IN CHRISTIAN HYMNODY

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A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Doctrinal Theology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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By  
Beth June Hoeltke  
May 2014

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Dedicated in loving memory of my parents William and June Hoeltke  
Life is Precious.  
Give it over to God, our Creator, and trust in Him alone.

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This dissertation is a result of much love and patience. It is a collaboration of all the people above and so many more. The work is far from perfect, but then perfection does not exist this side of the new creation. When Christ comes again, which I prayed earnestly for throughout this dissertation, all of us will finally see our Creator face-to-face. Until then we strive to love and care for those around us and humbly to serve each other as children that have been adopted by our heavenly Father.

After reading hundreds of hymns for this dissertation, the words of “When in Our Music God is Glorified,” best convey my thoughts as I praise God. May God’s grace transcend your life into a life of faith.

1 When in our music God is glorified  
And adoration leaves no room for pride,  
It is as if the whole creation cried:  
*Alleluia!*

4 And did not Jesus sing a psalm that night  
When utmost evil strove against the light?  
Then let us sing, for whom He won the fight:  
*Alleluia!*

## ABBREVIATIONS

AE	American Edition Luther's Works. American ed. 55 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–86.
CW	Christian Worship
DS	Divine Service
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
LBW	Lutheran Book of Worship
LC	Martin Luther's Large Catechism in the Book of Concord
LCMS	Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LSB	Lutheran Service Book
LW	Lutheran Worship
SC	Martin Luther's Small Catechism in the Book of Concord
WA	Luther, Martin. <i>Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. [Schriften.]</i> 65 vols. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993.
WELS	Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



## ABSTRACT

Hoeltke, Beth June “A Theology of Creation Lived Out in Christian Hymnody.” Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2014. 308 pp.

A seminal article written by Lynn White in the mid-1960’s indicted Christianity as a major cause affecting the ecological crisis of the day. White emphasized that the Christian tradition practiced domination rather than dominion and ownership rather than stewardship. Since White’s article Christian theologians have challenged his interpretation. One of the unexamined sources of the church’s teaching on creation is hymnody. This dissertation examines this source. Hymns play a vital role in the church’s teaching as they have the ability to form habits and equip their members to think through significant cultural issues of the day, such as ecology. Worship teaches the faith of the church and that teaching impacts the way the worshiper lives his life. As we worship, so we believe, so we live.

In order to examine how the hymns may or may not address issues relating to life in creation, six themes from the contemporary literature were identified; namely, “A Community of Creation Uniting in Praise,” “Human Creatureliness,” “The Spoken Word,” “Jesus As Creator Who Ushers in the New Creation,” “Creator Spirit,” and “The Sacraments of the First Creation into the New Creation.” This dissertation sought to determine how and to what extent these themes are present in Christian hymnody. The hymns analyzed for this dissertation provide a glimpse into what a theology of creation might look like. For the most part, the Church’s hymns capture the importance God places on his creation and creation’s praise of God. But they do not highlight the themes that teach the role of human creatureliness nor the vocation of dominion. Today a few contemporary hymn writers have begun to address these concerns.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A THEOLOGY OF CREATION

How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth (Ps. 104:24, 27–30).<sup>1</sup>

The psalm above and many texts throughout Scripture remind the Christian of God’s immense power and continued guardianship not only of human lives, but of the entire creation, as illustrated by these words: “When he opens his hand *we* are fed; when he hides his face and takes away his breath *all* die” (Ps. 104:28–29). As creatures, humans are utterly dependent upon God, but God has created the human creature “together with all creatures”<sup>2</sup> to be interdependent, to care for and nurture not only other human creatures but all inhabitants of this earth called home. Today, these biblical insights seem distant and are in need of rediscovery, especially for the Christian. Daily human creatures grapple with questions involving who they are, where they fit within this world, and how they are to relate to the rest of earth’s inhabitants. Human creatures struggle to understand how together with other humans they are to care for and protect the earth.

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<sup>1</sup> New International Version (NIV) for this translation only. Unless otherwise noted all biblical translations in this dissertation will use: Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* Revised Standard Version (New York: Oxford, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Deutscher Evengelischer Kirchenausschuss, ed., *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche: Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998), 510.

In 1962, Rachel Carson, a marine biologist, published *Silent Spring*.<sup>3</sup> Her book quickly hit the New York Times best-seller list. It stands out from other books of that time because it helped launch what is known today as the modern environmental movement. This movement reshaped the way people viewed themselves and the impact their actions had upon the earth. Carson's book calls into question the assumption that new technological developments are predominantly good. Because of her book, America would pass numerous environmental laws over the course of the next decade. Yet, Carson's data raises even more important questions about humanity's relationship to the environment. Namely, what causes Westerners to have such faith in technological progress and show such disregard for creation?

Five years after the publication of Carson's book, a medievalist from UCLA suggested an answer to the underlying reasons for society's ecological crisis. On December 26, 1966, Lynn Townsend White Jr. presented a lecture at the Washington meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) that was later published as "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis."<sup>4</sup> White develops a historical argument in which he traces the development of the world's ecological problems throughout history and ultimately lays the blame at the doorstep of Christianity. White opens his article by noting, "All forms of life modify their contexts"—including human beings. Although he does not take issue with the need for human beings to make use of their environment, he does note that as the human population has increased, a significant shift in the scope and scale of an environmental modification has taken

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<sup>3</sup> Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–7.

place in an “arranged marriage between science and technology, a union of theoretical and empirical approaches to our natural environment.”<sup>5</sup>

How did this union between science and technology come about, and what does it mean? White elaborates, “Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny—that is, by religion.” He argues that Westerners have lived for hundreds of years in a context shaped by Christian axioms. This prompts White to ask, “What did (and now does) Christianity teach people about their relationship with the environment?” After all, “our science and technology have grown out of Christian attitudes towards man’s relationship to nature.”<sup>6</sup>

White ultimately traces the West’s attitude toward nature to the church’s interpretation of Gen. 1:28, “And God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’” On the basis of this text, White believes that the church has fostered an attitude that all of creation is explicitly made for man’s benefit and for his rule and that creation’s sole purpose is to serve humankind. As a result, Christianity has emphasized that human beings stand at the center of creation and are the reason that creation exists. This leads White to declare, “Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen . . . . It insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.”<sup>7</sup> Christians have, at times, read Gen. 1:28 anthropocentrically<sup>8</sup> instead of theocentrically, as

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<sup>5</sup> Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–7. “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis (a lecture delivered at a meeting of the American Association of the Advancement of Science in Washington, D.C., 26 December 1966). The article was later reprinted in *Ecology and Religion in History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), chap. 1.

<sup>6</sup> White, “The Historical Roots,” 5.

<sup>7</sup> White, “The Historical Roots,” 5.

<sup>8</sup> Through hymn analysis this dissertation will either refute or confirm this assertion.

domination over dominion. When the text is read anthropocentrically, the result is an adversarial relationship between man and God's creation. He states, "Man and nature are two things, and man is master."<sup>9</sup> Given that fact White concludes, "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt," thereby suggesting Christianity has had a negative impact on the environment; he suggests that Christianity has either to "find a new religion, or rethink our old one."<sup>10</sup>

While White's article has been quoted, discussed, argued, and debated for the over the past fifty years, it is still relevant today. In fact, it would be hard today to find an article or book on the topic of the care of creation that did not cite White's seminal article. Since its publication scholars and theologians have explored and discussed Christianity's teachings on the human relationship to God and his creation. So now, the question at hand is, what if anything has been learned over the past fifty years? What has changed? Has the church in anyway addressed the environmental issues of today through its teachings? Has the church helped Christians better understand the role they have in caring God's creation?

Various church traditions<sup>11</sup> respond by publishing statements of faith about the care of creation, but this alone is not enough. In order to influence the wider Christian audience, the church needs to educate its people on a regular basis. That indoctrination takes place in Christian worship. Christian worship always reflects the beliefs and teachings of a church tradition. Throughout the church year, Christian worship tells and retells the Christian story. Most of the time the story is heard using past tense language and is solely focused on the salvation of man. It

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<sup>9</sup> White, "The Historical Roots," 3.

<sup>10</sup> White, "The Historical Roots," 4.

<sup>11</sup> In 1993, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America presented a social statement on "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice." In 1994, The Evangelical Environmental Network drafted a response called "On the Care of Creation: An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation." In 1999, a group of theologians drafted what today is known as the "Cornwell Declaration on Environmental Stewardship." In April 2010, The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod produced the document "Together With All Creatures: Caring for God's Living Earth."

goes something like this: God created the world, humankind sinned, Jesus came, Jesus redeemed the fallen creature, and Jesus will come again. But the Christian story is not a past tense event. It is a present tense event. God still creates, he still redeems not just mankind, but all creation, he still makes new, and he will come again to bring in his new creation. The story now encompasses the whole story it begins with the first creation, moves through the current creation, and culminates in the new creation. When worship condenses or even eliminates part of the Christian story, God's work in his world, it undermines the importance that a theology of creation plays in the Christian's life.

### **The Thesis**

This dissertation will show that the church's hymnody often speaks of God's continual care of his creation as well as creation's praise of God. But in general (with some notable exceptions) most Christian hymns do not address explicitly the important role the human creature plays in caring for God's creation or the significance of learning how to live as a creature dependent upon the community of creation. Although Christian hymns provide a solid *foundation* that begins to shape a Christian's understanding of his relationship to creation, they do not exhibit a *comprehensive* theology of creation.

### **The Current Status of the Question**

Today, when anyone turns on the television or opens the newspaper, he is bombarded with a new environmental problem. The news media are flooded with stories about environmental disasters, such as oil spills, arctic ice meltdown, growing holes in the ozone, global warming, the destruction of rain forests, contamination of America's food supply, genetically modified seed, topsoil erosion, water shortages, and so on.

In 1967, Lynn White Jr. published his seminal article, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” in *Science*. In it he explores the role of technological inventions during the Middle Ages. White argues that the combination of these technological advances and Western Christianity gave rise to the Industrial Revolution, which fundamentally altered the course of ecological history.

White’s article opened a floodgate of criticisms aimed at Christianity and its responsibility for the many ecological problems on earth today. In 1995, Steven Bouma-Prediger responded to these attacks by reincarnating his dissertation to produce the book *The Greening of Theology*. Bouma-Prediger depicts Christianity as an ecological asset rather than a liability. He refutes the arguments not only of White, but also of Arnold Toynbee<sup>12</sup> and Wendell Berry,<sup>13</sup> who claim that Christianity directly or indirectly “underwrote the rape of the earth.”<sup>14</sup>

Bouma-Prediger’s voice was only one of many. For years Christian theologians have responded to the charges raised by Lynn White (and other critics) by way of articles, papers, and books. A number of Christian church bodies have responded by adopting official statements regarding the Christian’s responsibility to care for creation. As a result, have the church’s worship materials, specifically church hymnody, followed suit? Is it possible that church

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<sup>12</sup> Arnold Toynbee wrote a brief article, “The Religious Background of the Present Environmental Crisis,” that was published in the *International Journal of Environmental Studies* in 1972. Its focus is twofold. The first is on the progress of technology in the Industrial Revolution and the damages that technology has had on the environment. The second is on monotheism’s faulty rendering of the Gen. 1:28 text.

<sup>13</sup> Wendell Berry for years has written about man’s responsibility in caring for God’s creation. One article stands out: “Christianity and the Survival of Creation.” It was published in his book *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002), 305–20. It was an essay written for a lecture at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In it he holds Christianity responsible for the destruction of the natural world. The indictment towards Christianity is in many respects valid because Christianity does not adequately understand the Bible and the cultural traditions that descend from the Bible.

<sup>14</sup> Steven Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology: The Ecological Models of Rosemary Radford Ruether, Joseph Sittler, and Jürgen Moltmann* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 2.

hymnody supports White's claim of anthropocentrism along with the other charges mentioned above, or do the church's hymns counter those claims by setting forth a theology that shapes Christian attitudes about creation and has an impact on the Christian life within creation? Before the examination of church hymnody it will be helpful to examine how Christian theologians over the course of the past fifty plus years have responded to the charges leveled against Christianity as well as to the questions put to society regarding the ecological issues of the day. A typology developed by H. Paul Santmire provides the structure for this dissertation's examination of current scholarship in this area. In his book *Nature Reborn*, Santmire identifies three schools of thought that begin to address the ecological needs of today. These three schools of thought are the *reconstructionists*, the *apologists*, and the *revisionists*.

### **Reconstructionists**

Of the three schools of thought, the reconstructionists are the most critical of Christian tradition and the most radical in their proposals. According to Santmire, the reconstructionists "generally believe that a new edifice of thought must be designed, from the ground up, with new foundations and new categories. These thinkers take it as a given that traditional Christian thought offers no—or few—viable theological resources to help people of faith respond to the ecological crisis and related cosmic anxieties of today."<sup>15</sup> To that end they generally "reject the classical kerygmatic and dogmatic traditions of Christianity as their primary matrix of theological knowing."<sup>16</sup> They replace or supplement classic Christian authorities with a number of different sources.

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<sup>15</sup> H. Paul Santmire, *Nature Reborn* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 7.



Some reconstructionists move toward New Age teachings<sup>17</sup> while others pull further away from Western traditions, gleaning insights instead from primal and Eastern religions. Other reconstructionists blend religious ideologies with mystical<sup>18</sup> insights and teachings borrowed from the Middle Ages. Still others offer theological positions that accommodate the findings of the natural sciences<sup>19</sup> as well as philosophical thoughts or ideas. These reconstructionists have become known as ecofeminists,<sup>20</sup> radical ecotheologians,<sup>21</sup> deep ecologists,<sup>22</sup> and process theologians.<sup>23</sup>

To illustrate better the reconstructionists' school of thought, this dissertation examines the work of Dr. Norman Habel.<sup>24</sup> Although Habel comes from the Lutheran tradition, his work on *The Earth Bible Project* suggests that he adopts a very strong reconstructionist approach. In this

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<sup>17</sup> For example: Ted Peters, *The Cosmic Self: A Penetrating Look at Today's New Age Movement* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Taoism from the East, Alchemy from the West and pre-Columbian Native American traditions.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Berry, C. P. (b. Nov. 9, 1914, d. June 1, 2009) was a Catholic priest of the Passionist order. He was a cultural historian and ecotheologian (although cosmologist—or “Earth scholar”—was his preferred descriptor). He was an advocate of deep ecology and “ecospirituality.”

<sup>20</sup> Ecofeminists such as Sallie McFague and her books *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), and *Super, Natural Christian: How We Should Love Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) and Rosemary Radford Ruether and her book *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993) characteristically radically reconstruct traditional Christian thought, they go so far as to deconstruct it by breaking away from it.

<sup>21</sup> The most well-known ecotheologian is Matthew Fox. Fox was formerly a dominion friar within the Roman Catholic Church and is now a member of the Episcopal Church. He promotes what he calls ‘creation-centered spirituality’ a form of medieval Christian mysticism. Fox’s central thought teaches a ‘nondualism’, ‘nonseparation’ experience between God and man, man and nature, nature and God. This is an affirmation of the world as a whole. Fox draws inspiration from the mystical philosophies of Hildegard of Bingen, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Francis of Assisi, Julian of Norwich, Dante Alighiere, Meister Eckhart, and Nicolas of Cusa.

<sup>22</sup> Arne Naess was a Norwegian philosopher who inspired the Deep Ecology movement. He asserts that the environmental groups of the time were only addressing “shallow” ecological issues that did not aim to change the causes of the problems, but only address the symptoms.

<sup>23</sup> Alfred North Whitehead and John Cobb belong in this category because they identify God with everything else that is in continual flux. Nothing stays the same. Therefore God changes along with the world and needs the world. All things are interconnected and are created as expressions to find harmony amongst all things.

<sup>24</sup> Dr. Norman Habel hails from Yulecart near Hamilton in Victoria, Australia. He was professor of Biblical Studies at Concordia Seminary from 1960–1973. Habel is currently Professorial Fellow at Flinders University.

project, Habel argues that the Bible is not as environmentally friendly as some would wish and suggests that Christians need to do some hard thinking about some “inconvenient” texts.<sup>25</sup> Habel develops a set of eco-justice principles, which he uses as guidelines for reading the biblical text and for posing questions on the text to promote justice and healing of the earth. *The Earth Bible Project* provides a forum within which the suppressed voice of earth may be heard and impulses for healing the earth may be generated. What the feminists have done to reinterpret the Bible, highlighting the neglected and oppressed role of women in order to create a hermeneutic based on equality, Habel seeks to do from the perspective of justice for the earth.

Habel creates a new hermeneutic for reading the Bible, what he calls a “fresh approach” to reading the texts in a critical fashion.

Rather than reflecting about the Earth as we analyze a text, we are seeking to reflect *with* [italics mine] the Earth and see things from the perspective of Earth. Liberationists stand with the oppressed poor as they read; feminists stand with oppressed women when they read; we stand with oppressed Earth in our dialogue with the text. We are concerned with ecojustice: justice for the Earth. Our approach can therefore be called an eco-justice hermeneutic.<sup>26</sup>

In order to develop an eco-justice lens for reading the Bible, *The Earth Bible Project* team engages a wide spectrum of thinkers including Christians and non-Christians, ecologists, and mystical thinkers. These eco-justice principles serve several different purposes. First, they establish the ecological orientation for *The Earth Bible Project* although the writers are free to debate the principles and offer their own interpretation of them. Second, they identify specific ecological values that are consistent with the basic orientation. Finally, they provide a point of departure for articulating key questions of the biblical text as it is read and interpreted.

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<sup>25</sup> Norman Habel, ed., *Reading from the Perspective of Earth* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 25–26.

<sup>26</sup> Habel, *Reading from the Perspective of Earth*, 26.

The principles of this team may at times appear startling, but their goal is to reach a larger audience beyond Christian theology:

One feature of these eco-justice principles—immediately obvious to those with a theological interest—is that the terms ‘God’ and ‘creation’ are not employed in the wording of the principles. This formulation has been chosen to facilitate dialogue with biologists, ecologists, other religious traditions like Buddhism, and scientists who may not function with God or God’s creation as an a priori assumption.<sup>27</sup>

The principles are as follows:

**The principle of intrinsic worth:** the universe, Earth and all its components have intrinsic worth/value.

**The principle of interconnectedness:** Earth is a community of interconnected living things that are mutually dependent on each other for life and survival.

**The principle of voice:** Earth is a subject capable of raising its voice in celebration and against injustice.

**The principle of purpose:** the universe, Earth and all its components are part of a dynamic cosmic design within which each piece has a place in the overall goal of that design.

**The principle of mutual custodianship:** Earth is a balanced and diverse domain where responsible custodians can function as partners with, rather than rulers over, Earth to sustain its balance and a diverse Earth community.

**The principle of resistance:** Earth and its components not only suffer from human injustices but actively resist them in the struggle for justice.<sup>28</sup>

Reconstructionists employ a hermeneutic of suspicion when reading the Scriptures; they assume that the Bible and Christian tradition are to blame for the earth’s current ecological problems because they provide warrant for human misuse of the earth.

## Apologists

The second school of thought is the apologists. The apologists “define their discussions of environmental issues regarding the themes of social justice. Wise management of the resources of the earth for the sake of the people of the earth, especially the poor—‘eco-justice’—has been

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<sup>27</sup> Habel, *Reading from the Perspective of Earth*, 38.

<sup>28</sup> Norman C. Habel, “The Earth Bible Project,” *SBL Forum*, n.p. [cited July 2004]. Online: <http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=291> (accessed May 25, 2012).

their primary concern.”<sup>29</sup> Santmire notes, “Some defenders of the classical Christian tradition have sought to underline what they consider to be its positive ecological implications, above all the tradition’s encouragement of ‘good stewardship’ of the earth.”<sup>30</sup>

Within this group Santmire includes a wide range of Christian theologians<sup>31</sup> and organizations including the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN).<sup>32</sup> Two major themes hold this group together: social justice and science. Santmire notes, “This kind of theological focus on science in general and scientific cosmology in particular has also been of concern to the international ecumenical community for some time.”<sup>33</sup> To offer an example of the concerns regarding social justice and the findings of science, an overview of the EEN will be provided. The EEN began its ministry in 1993 under the leadership of Ron Sider of the Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA) and Robert Seiple, former president of World Vision. The EEN was established to bring together individuals and organizations that are committed to biblically-based environmentalism. The Evangelical Environmental Network exists to

declare the Lordship of Christ over all creation. He is the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created. All things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:15b; 16a, c; 17).

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<sup>29</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> These theologians include apologists such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), Landon Brown Gilkey, *Nature, Reality, and the Sacred: The Nexus of Science and Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), and Philip Hefner, *The Human Factor: Evolution, Culture, and Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

<sup>32</sup> Inclusion of the EEN might seem surprising inasmuch as the WCC tends to be identified more with liberal ecumenical endeavors while the EEN tends to be identified more with conservative and Evangelical theologians—if not the more moderate side of Evangelicalism.

<sup>33</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 7. See 131n17 referencing Paul Albrecht, ed., *Faith and Science in an Unjust World: Report of the World Council of Churches’ Conference on Faith, Science, and the Future* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

Deepen our walk with the Lord and the life of their churches through joy-filled worship, Bible study on the topics of creation's care, and prayer that God's will "be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Show the compassion of Christ for people who suffer from creation's destruction (Proverbs 14:31).

Demolish strongholds of sin that tarnish the glory and integrity of God's good creation (2 Corinthians 10:4–5).

Build our Lord's kingdom by active service to restore and renew the works of his hands (Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 2:10).

Share the Gospel with those who do not know that Jesus Christ is the ultimate Hope for creation groaning under our sin and the only Hope for our own souls (Romans 8:19–21; Colossians 1:20, 27).<sup>34</sup>

“The Evangelical Environmental Network is a ministry dedicated to the care of God’s creation. EEN seeks to equip, inspire, disciple, and mobilize God’s people in their effort to care for God’s creation.”<sup>35</sup>

The EEN’s emphases on social justice and science lead to pro-life concerns for the unborn, which include not only the beginnings of life, but the whole life of the individual as illustrated by their slogan, “Creation Care: It’s a Matter of Life.”<sup>36</sup> Thus the work of EEN focuses on the unborn and the vulnerable both of whom are affected by human harm done to the environment. They also fully accept the scientific conclusions that climate change is occurring and humans are the cause, which is contrary to what many Evangelicals would claim. EEN’s goal is to protect those unable to protect themselves.<sup>37</sup> Like the reconstructionists, apologists take seriously

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<sup>34</sup> Evangelical Environmental Network, <http://creationcare.org/blank.php?id=36> (accessed October 15, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Evangelical Environmental Network, <http://creationcare.org/index.php> (accessed October 15, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Evangelical Environmental Network, <http://creationcare.org/index.php> (accessed October 15, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> EEN’s Executive Vice President for Policy, Climate Campaign, Rev Jim Ball, has recently published *Global Warming and the Risen Lord*. (New Freedom, PA: Evangelical Environmental Network, 2010). The topic of climate change will continue to grow in EEN’s ministry moving forward.

ecology and the damage humans have caused to the environment. However, unlike the reconstructionists, the apologists do not disregard the Christian tradition or Scripture. In fact, they draw heavily on the biblical tradition of love for neighbor.

### **Revisionists**

Santmire's third and final school of thought is the revisionists. This group (into which Santmire places himself) "modernizes"<sup>38</sup> Scripture and Christian tradition to make them relevant to the culture today. On the one hand, the revisionists work "mainly within the milieu of classical Christian thought, as defined by the ecumenical creeds and, often, by the confessional theology of the Reformation era and beyond."<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the revisionists call for a reforming of traditional Christian thought and see themselves more as a "latter-day, albeit lowercase group of reformers."<sup>40</sup>

Santmire identifies Joseph Sittler as the first revisionist. In 1961, Sittler addressed the World Council of Churches with a paper entitled "Called to Unity" to enlighten the Christian community about the deep relation between nature and grace.<sup>41</sup> In spite of the promising approach offered by Sittler, the revisionists began to disappear during the 1980s. Simultaneously, the environmental movement began to lose its grassroots support. Yet, neither the revisionists nor the environmental movement died off completely. In fact, both resurfaced, or as Santmire put it, "The tradition gave way to a rebirth of nature within classical Christian theology. Call it

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<sup>38</sup> I have chosen to place the word *modernize* in scare quotes because when the revisionists revise the biblical texts and Christian tradition, they attempt to accommodate the reader's worldview.

<sup>39</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Sittler is dealt with in greater detail in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

‘nature reborn.’<sup>42</sup>

Santmire claims that the revisionists finally came of age in 1992 with James Nash’s *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility*.<sup>43</sup> In his book, Nash argues that the ecological crisis is caused by people prioritizing their own needs and desires over those of the environment.

Shortly after Nash, other revisionists began to surface. John Polkinghorne’s<sup>44</sup> work tied together the fields of theology and science, while Terence Fretheim<sup>45</sup> affirmed creation by interpreting biblical history from a creation-redemptive perspective rather than a human-redemptive perspective. In 1995, drawing on and further developing Sittler’s themes, Denis Edwards,<sup>46</sup> an Australian Catholic theologian, emerged as a neo-Catholic revisionist focused on ecological theology. His work combined biblical exegesis with classical Christological and Trinitarian theology.

This recent emergence of theological reflection about the relationship between humankind and nature has produced an influx of revisionists who have been driven back to the main sources of theological tradition, “especially to the Scriptures and to certain premodern Christian thinkers, such as Irenaeus, Augustine, Luther and Calvin.”<sup>47</sup> In the process of rediscovering what these

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<sup>42</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 8.

<sup>43</sup> James A. Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991).

<sup>44</sup> John Polkinghorne, *The Faith of a Physicist: Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995). A paper presented at The Gifford Lectures for 1993–94, as a commentary on the Nicene Creed.

<sup>45</sup> Terence Fretheim, “The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus,” *Interpretation* 45 (1991): 354–65.

<sup>46</sup> Denis Edwards, *Jesus and the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 9.

theologians thought about creation, Santmire discovers “hidden ecological and cosmic riches”<sup>48</sup> that modern Christian theologians have either missed or neglected until the present. According to Santmire the revisionists choose not to defend or abandon theological tradition but instead to “reclaim it in order to *reenvision it* for the purpose of serving worship, teaching, and the public witness of the church”<sup>49</sup> in today’s world.

As mentioned earlier, Santmire includes his own work within this revisionist school of thought. In his book *Nature Reborn*, he states,

I would identify my own work in the theology of nature with that orthodox but innovative *revisionist* [italics original] tradition, which stands over against the sometimes heterodox, religious expressions of the *reconstructionist* [italics original] position, on the one hand, and the often thoughtful, but typically conventional traditionalism of modern ecumenical theology, on the other.<sup>50</sup>

Since Santmire considers himself a revisionist, it is only appropriate to provide his interpretation of the revisionist approach as an example. Santmire utilizes the work of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber<sup>51</sup> to create an additional category that helps him express a relationship between humans and nature.

Santmire claims that the fundamental issue of the ecological crisis is man’s lack of understanding of his relationship to nature using Buber’s philosophy of dialogue. Buber identifies two relationship categories that are described as the I-Thou and the I-It relationship. Typically, an I-Thou relationship exists between humans and other persons or living beings. By contrast, an I-It relationship exists between humans and inanimate objects. Santmire was

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<sup>48</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 9.

<sup>49</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Martin Buber (1878–1965), an Austrian born Jewish philosopher was best known for his philosophy of dialogue. A philosophy of dialogue was considered a form of existentialism, which focused on relationships specifically the *Ich-Du* or the I-Thou relationship and the *Ich-Es* or I-It relationship.



concerned about what kind of a relationship must then exist between humans and nature. Using general theological terms, this relationship has been strictly seen as an I-It relationship, “distant, manipulative and instrumental, if not exploitive.”<sup>52</sup> Buber argues that an I-Thou relationship could include certain relationships people have with the physical-vital world of nature. For example, an I-Thou relationship could exist between a person and a tree because there is a mutual, holistic existence between the two objects; therefore the relationship is real and perceivable. Karl Barth and other Christian theologians of the twentieth century counter, arguing that an I-Thou relationship with a tree could never exist in any sense. They state that any relationship between humans and nature must assume an I-It relationship for the sole reason that entities of nature are not persons or beings. Yet, Santmire agreed with Buber to some degree. He confirms that a relationship between humans and nature must exist. So Santmire offers a modification of Buber’s categories to include a third kind of relationship, one that would be truly ecological and cosmic, namely, an I-Ens relationship.

For Santmire, an I-Ens allows for a relationship to exist between humans and nature, one that is both cosmic and ecological. In this relationship, nature is neither a person nor a mere object. Instead, Santmire tries to grasp it as a kind of “presenting reality, not circumscribed by the detached inspection of the human eye. To employ Buber’s terminology, the Ens is primarily presence (*Gegenwart*), rather than object (*Gegenstand*).”<sup>53</sup> In this way, Santmire seeks to affirm nature’s intrinsic value. Thus when one thinks of relating to a tree, “the objectifying mode of human consciousness”<sup>54</sup> does not interfere or disturb the relationship as it would if it were an I-It

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<sup>52</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 66.

<sup>53</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 69.

<sup>54</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 69.

relationship. In an I-Ens relationship with a tree, the human is able to see the beauty the tree possesses. Subsequently, the person relates to a tree in such a way that the tree now evokes wonder for the human by his or her interaction with it. Centuries earlier, Martin Luther beautifully captured this same thought: “If you really examined a kernel of grain thoroughly, you would die of wonder.”<sup>55</sup> As Santmire explains it, in an I-Ens relationship, both the human and nature have a certain fluidity and an openness to one another. They are bound intimately together in community.<sup>56</sup> This I-Ens relationship can ultimately be extended to “fabricated nature,”<sup>57</sup> or chairs, buildings, and even whole cities. With this new philosophical description of relationships in place, Santmire is able “to revise the classical Christian story, in order to identify and celebrate its ecological and its cosmic promise.”<sup>58</sup>

The three schools of thought provide a helpful typology for organizing and understanding the various theological answers to modern ecological questions and criticisms of the Christian tradition raised by White and others. Each of these schools of thought has strengths and weaknesses. As a whole, they provide a way to identify some themes related to a theology of creation, but they are not exhaustive. Therefore this dissertation will introduce other theologians, most of whom have written since Santmire published *Nature Reborn*.

### **The Dissertation in the Context of Current Scholarship**

Christian worship lies at the heart of the Christian life. Church hymnody in worship expresses the church’s theology and thus provides a window into its theological priorities at any

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<sup>55</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 70.

<sup>56</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 69.

<sup>57</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 69.

<sup>58</sup> Santmire, *Nature Reborn*, 9.

given time in history. Hymns reflect what the church believes, teaches, and confesses. Because they are used on a weekly basis, they become a vital instrument by which the church helps people live a life that is faithful to those beliefs and teachings. Although much of what the church teaches and values does not drastically change throughout history, the church has found it necessary, from time to time, to lift up certain themes either to counter false teachings or to address vital questions of the day. By including hymns that identify these themes, the church equips its members to think and live in connection to significant cultural issues such as abortion, suicide, marriage, or environmental damage.

Thus, the task of this dissertation is to peer into the various church windows to see what the church teaches and professes about creation. Is a theology of creation evident in church hymns? Do the hymns equip the Christian to live out his daily life within creation? This dissertation analyzes the works of various theologians to identify the themes of a theology of creation. Once these themes have been identified, this dissertation examines church hymnals of the Lutheran and Anglican Church traditions published since 1960 in order to determine whether the hymns of the church, those of the past and more recent, demonstrate a care and concern for God's creation.

The reason for this approach lies in the recognition by the church that worship plays a vital role in forming Christian habits. Although it has not always been as common among Lutherans to speak about the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (what we believe shapes the way we worship and vice versa) as among Catholics, it has been an operating assumption for Lutherans. This more traditional phrase has been expanded to read *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*, namely, how we worship reflects what we believe, and what we believe shapes and determines

how we will live.<sup>59</sup> This phrase expresses the reciprocity that exists between Christian worship and the intentional shaping of the life of the Christian.

Many theologians have written on the theology of Christian worship<sup>60</sup> and just as many, if not more, have written on the important role that hymns<sup>61</sup> play in Christian worship. However, there have been relatively few, if any, who have mined the riches of Christian hymns and canticles in search of a theology of creation. Similarly, much has been written on the topic of the environment in light of Christian theology, yet relatively little has been written that brings together Christian worship and the Christian's responsibility of caring for God's creation. Several have begun that task. H. Paul Santmire, Norman Habel, Andrew Pearson, Benjamin Stewart, and Gordon Lathrop have all sought to cultivate the connection between Christian worship and the life of the Christian in creation. What follows is a brief overview of the work of these theologians.

## **H. Paul Santmire**

H. Paul Santmire began writing in the discipline of ecological theology and environmental ethics in 1970. In his latest book, *Ritualizing Nature: Renewing Christian Liturgy in a Time of Crisis*,<sup>62</sup> Santmire seeks to connect that theology to the church's worship life. He believes that

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<sup>59</sup> Deacon Keith Fournier, "Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi. As we Worship, So we Live," Catholic Online, <http://www.catholic.org/featured/headline.php?ID=2367> (accessed April 2012).

<sup>60</sup> Paul Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009); Edward Kilmartin, *Christian Liturgy* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988); Charles Davis, *Liturgy and Doctrine* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960); Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968); Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Book* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993); Jean-Jacques von Allmen, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (New York: Oxford, 1965).

<sup>61</sup> Tim Dowley, *Christian Music* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011); Teresa Berger, *Theology in Hymns?* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995); Eric Routly, *The Church and Music* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1950); John Vieker, "The Father's Faith, the Children's Song: Missouri Lutheranism Encounters American Evangelism in its Hymns 1889–1912" (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 2012).

<sup>62</sup> H. Paul Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature: Renewing Christian Liturgy in a Time of Crisis* (Minneapolis:

“the Christian faith has something of profound importance to say about nature and human life in nature.”<sup>63</sup> Yet, he believes there is a severe global crisis engulfing planet earth. Santmire responds using what he calls a confessional voice<sup>64</sup> to “examine the liturgy as a form of ritual”<sup>65</sup> and then contemplate nature in light of that ritual.

Santmire defines ritualizing nature as “standing within the cultural world of Christian worship and seeing what one can see as one contemplates the world of nature from that standpoint.”<sup>66</sup> To illustrate what he means, Santmire reflects on two of his most prominent childhood memories: the candlelight service of Christmas Eve and the Easter liturgy. In both cases, these services shaped—ritualized—the way Santmire now experiences the world of nature, even if subliminally. The Christmas Eve rituals (the movement from darkness to light while singing “Joy to the world, the Lord has come . . . And heaven and nature sing”) highlight for him the images of creation from the biblical texts. The Easter rituals (the lilies, the empty cross, and open tomb) also bring similar reminders to mind of the renewal of the whole earth and the wonders of God’s amazing creation. These childhood memories remind Santmire of creation throughout the church year.

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Fortress, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 7.

<sup>64</sup> By “confessional voice,” Santmire means that his book is considered confessional in two senses. In the first sense, he is writing a personal testimony. He begins asking the reader to join him on a walking journey along the Charles River, witnessing signs of eschatological peace made real as he participates in liturgies held in a small monastic chapel along the river. He also brings the reader into his worship experiences in South Africa, on a trip to Washington State, and within his own congregation in Roxbury, MA. He invites the reader to walk through the liturgy itself, baptism, the proclamation of the Gospel, table fellowship encountered in the Eucharist, and finally the sending forth to witness and serve. In the second sense he defines confessional theology as “an existential first-person address” but at the same time “an authoritative churchwide discourse.” This discourse celebrates and narrates “the mighty acts” of the “God of grace and God of glory” in creation, redemption, and the consummation of all things made known to us in God’s Word. Here Scripture is its own chief norm (*norma normans*), and the creedal tradition takes on a secondary norm (*norma normata*).

<sup>65</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 4.

In spite of these memories, Santmire contends that Christian ritual must be renewed in view of nature.<sup>67</sup> In other words, he wants the Christian to see that the gospel proclaims not just the forgiveness of sin for humans but also for the Alpha and Omega of the whole creation. Santmire draws heavily on biblical texts that emphasize all things in order to proclaim and embody a vision of *shalom* for the sake of the whole creation. From here, Santmire explores ways in which Christian liturgy ritualizes nature so that “anyone who, in faith, enters into the liturgy and whose mind is shaped by that practice, can have hope for the whole creation.”<sup>68</sup>

Perhaps the term “ritualizing nature” may be unfamiliar. Santmire simply desires to find a way for Christians, by way of renewing liturgy, to inculcate habits of faith, or in his words, “find ways of walking with nature.”<sup>69</sup> He highlights three ways in which liturgy can be used to instill these habits of faith in the Christian life:

First, as the believer praises the God of cosmic grace in the liturgy, he or she learns to *stand in awe of nature*, habitually. Second, as the believer is claimed by the love of Christ in the liturgy, he or she learns how to *serve nature*, habitually. Third, as the community shapes the believer-building hospitality of Christ liturgically, he or she learns how to *build community partnering with nature* habitually.<sup>70</sup>

When the church’s liturgy and the church’s Scriptures reinforce each other these three habits of

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<sup>67</sup> Santmire regards ritual and nature as two generic constructs through which all other constructs are understood. Ritual for Santmire in its simplest form means Christian liturgy, which has the effect of shaping one’s thoughts and actions.

By nature he means first something similar to “the natural world,” which includes the “fabricated nature,” as well as “wild nature” and “cultivated nature.” He goes on to state that even this definition produces ambiguities. So he finally defines nature as “the material-vital aspect of God’s creation,” what the Nicene Creed calls “all things visible.” Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 32–33.

The term liturgy he defines descriptively from three perspectives: “how it functions, what forms shape its functioning, and how the functions and forms are held together.” Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 34, suggests that the liturgy “functions to form a counterculture, by the agency of simple ritual forms, as that forming and those forms are united in an experience of communal ecstasy.”

<sup>68</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 6.

<sup>69</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 182.

<sup>70</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 182–83.

faith, or ways of walking with nature, are brought together. Each, Santmire believes, when properly done, begins to form habits of faith that transform individual believers into people that can then ritualize nature. Each of the habits of faith can be found within distinct segments of church liturgy.

The first habit of faith is that of standing in awe of nature when they sing the *Sanctus*,

Holy, Holy, holy  
Lord God of Sabaoth;  
heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed, blessed, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.<sup>71</sup>

The words of the *Sanctus* testify to what Santmire calls the “sacrality of nature.”<sup>72</sup> Santmire argues that the *Sanctus* presupposes that God communicates with his entire creation and desires all of his creatures—not just his human creatures—to flourish and be in relationship with him. Santmire maintains that nature has a place within the universal history of God and that a liturgically molded believer should be able to stand back and ponder the wonder of God’s gracious acts in a Trinitarian fashion as the acts of Creator, Savior, and Consummator.

In his second habit of faith, Santmire believes that Christians learn to serve and care for nature when they truly understand that they have been personally claimed by Christ’s love. In the liturgy, the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) helps shape this habit because Christians learn to confess their sin in response to the law of God and acknowledge that they are unworthy beggars. However, through liturgical proclamations, such as the *Agnus Dei*, they also learn to sing “Jesus,

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<sup>71</sup> The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 961.

<sup>72</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 185.

the Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.”<sup>73</sup> The liturgy thus pronounces restoration and divine healing, not just for sinful human beings, but the whole creation.

In Santmire’s final habit of faith, he describes the Lord’s Supper as “a celebration of the One who calls together a new human community in partnership with nature”<sup>74</sup> The Eucharist provides a time in the liturgy where humans come into direct contact with God’s gifts of creation: the bread and wine; the community unites as a body, the body of Christ, and receives the gifts of nature. Unfortunately, Santmire does not really develop this habit of faith any further.

Santmire’s book provides a helpful beginning for exploring ways in which the liturgy can form habits in the Christian’s life that can prompt a new relationship with nature. His three habits of faith or ways of walking with nature, as illustrated above, show how this can be accomplished in the church’s liturgical worship service. Santmire puts this into practice as he daily walks along the Charles River. On these walks he regularly stops to celebrate liturgy with the monks at a small chapel in the woods. In this small way, Santmire brings the two, liturgy and nature, together. Santmire admits throughout his book that bringing together liturgy and nature continues to be a work in progress. Nevertheless, Santmire has initiated an important discussion regarding the connection between the liturgy and the Christian’s life in nature.

### **Norman Habel**

Norman Habel along with David Rhoads and H. Paul Santmire edited *The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*.<sup>75</sup> Each author has over the years written extensively on the

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<sup>73</sup> Commission of Worship, *Lutheran Service Book*, 962–63.

<sup>74</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 244.

<sup>75</sup> Norman Habel, David Rhoads, and H. Paul Santmire, eds. *The Season of Creation: A Preaching*



topic of creation, but in this work they join together to integrate the topics of creation and Christian worship and begin to show how Christian worship plays a vital role in shaping the Christian's life. In other words, they recognize the importance of moving from *lex orandi, lex credendi* to *lex vivendi*. The book begins by acknowledging that biblical and systematic theology in the past focused primarily, if not exclusively, on man's relationship with God and man's relationship with other human beings. But the questions raised by the ecological crisis over the last fifty to sixty years has prompted the church and its theologians to consider a theology that pushes past these two relationships in order to embrace a third relationship, namely, the human creature's relationship with creation. So today, theology increasingly addresses not only man's relationship to creation alongside God's continual relationship to creation, but now includes the human creature's place in creation alongside God's other creatures. Throughout the book, Habel directs the reader towards two particular theological themes: first, the importance of recognizing the neglected relationship between humans and the rest of creation and second, the importance for humans to hear the moaning of creation and to understand that all creation is included in God's redemptive act.

Although theologians have begun to address God's continual activity in creation and man's relationship to that creation, the church's worship life has been slower to adopt these teachings. Habel in *The Season of Creation* argues that the relationship between humans and creation lies deep within the Christian tradition. He also believes the church offers "no opportunity to reflect in a concentrated way on the foundation of redemption and sanctification, namely, the very creation itself that is redeemed and sanctified."<sup>76</sup> In order to highlight this relationship within the

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*Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

<sup>76</sup> Norman Habel, David Rhoads, and H. Paul Santmire, eds., *The Season of Creation: A Preaching*

worship service, Habel presents the “Season of Creation” as an option for a typical Sunday service that can be used throughout the church year. Habel lays out seven reasons<sup>77</sup> why the church should adopt the “Season of Creation,” noting that Christian worship needs to embody its theology.

The authors of the book propose that the church set aside the month of September, four Sundays, (from Creation Day September 11 to St. Francis Day on October 4) as the “Season of Creation.” They justify this proposal, adjusting the church year, by noting that throughout history, the church has made adjustments to the church year adding specific days and observances and suggests it might be time once again for such an adjustment. The purpose of designating four Sundays as a “Season of Creation” is to provide a sustained opportunity for the church to focus its attention on God’s creation and the human’s relationship to that creation. Highlighting creation allows the church to acknowledge the importance of these relationships. However, because they recognize that ultimately the emphasis cannot stop with four Sundays, they proceed to show how the themes of creation and man’s relationship to creation can be integrated throughout the entire church year.

Habel makes it clear that they are not seeking to abolish the church year or even revise it; instead, they intend to work within it:

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*Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 3.

<sup>77</sup> Habel, *Season of Creation*, 5–6. The book offers seven reasons: First, because God is first and foremost the Creator of all of life, Second, because we were created with the rest of nature, Third, because God has given us a creation to celebrate with, Fourth, because through worship we have an opportunity to come to terms with the current ecological crisis in a spiritual way so as to empathize with the groaning creation, Fifth, because a fresh focus on the wonders and wounds of creation will help us in positive ways to love creation and so care for creation as our personal vocation and our congregational ministry, Sixth, because this season enables us to celebrate the many ways in which Christ is connected with creation, and Seventh, because this season enables us to deepen our understanding and experience the Holy Spirit in relationship with creation.

The Season of Creation is part of the heritage of mainstream Christian worship. There is no break from the gospel at the core of our faith. Christ is at the heart of our celebration. The incarnate Christ connects us with the Earth. The cosmic Christ is the new life at the core of creation. In the Season of Creation we celebrate Christ together with creation, we face the ecological crisis with Christ, and we serve Christ in the healing of creation.<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps the most jarring aspect of the “Season of Creation,” which startles most Christians, including this author, involves how they plan to implement the creational accent into the worship service during the “Season of Creation.” They intend to approach the Bible with specific concerns and within a specific perspective, allowing the stories and teachings of the Bible to be interpreted and made relevant. The goal is to engage all five senses within the worship service, by means of utilizing art and plants, and even bringing animals into the sanctuary. In this way, the worship service has its focus not only *on* creation but *with* creation. When Habel speaks of worshipping *with* creation he literally means that the church invites creation into the worship space. For example, while Australians may invite kangaroos and cockatoos, someone in Alaska might invite polar bears or seal pups to worship alongside the Christian. Habel asks the church to consider inviting the trees, the plants, grasses and birds to join humankind in praise of the Creator. Habel’s book, although questionable in its implementation, provides an example of integrating the topic of creation with Christian worship in order to show that worship plays a vital role in shaping the Christian’s life.

### **Andrew Pearson**

Another theologian who has begun to cultivate a connection between Christian worship and the life of the Christian in creation is Andrew Pearson, an Anglican Priest-in-Charge. In response

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<sup>78</sup> Habel, *Season of Creation*, 5.

to an article he wrote in 1994 called “God’s Earth in Christian Worship,”<sup>79</sup> Pearson wrote a book called *Making Creation Visible: God’s Earth in Christian Worship*<sup>80</sup> where he summarizes the responses he received to the original article. In his introduction he states the central concern of the book: “We missed the boat with women; are we going to miss it again with creation?”<sup>81</sup> Pearson points out that the Church of England was late in recognizing women<sup>82</sup> as half of the human race. So he asks, “Will they also be too late in recognizing that ‘neighbor’ also includes all of creation: the plants, animals, soil, and rocks?”<sup>83</sup>

Pearson argues that today’s ecological crisis should heighten the Christian’s awareness and give regard to some sort of relationship with creation, considering how creation can rightly fit into the worship service. He notes that the Christian community has forgotten that the tree, the birds, and the sky are all marvels of God’s creativity and that every intimate detail of creation is interdependent. Pearson’s goal is to cause the church to think positively about creation and to move forward its discussions about how the church’s liturgy might be shaped to recognize and celebrate God’s creation and man’s relationship to it.

As a priest, Pearson daily recites set liturgical forms<sup>84</sup> and admits that although rigid in shape there is room for spontaneity by way of Christian prayers and preaching. Yet he sadly notes that for the most part “there is hardly any mention of the (primary) revelation of God, as

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<sup>79</sup> Reverend Andrew Pearson, “God’s Earth in Christian Worship,” *Green Christians* 23 (1994): 22–23.

<sup>80</sup> Andrew Pearson, *Making Creation Visible: God’s Earth in Christian Worship* (Cambridge, UK: Grove Books, 1996).

<sup>81</sup> Pearson, *Making Creation Visible*, 5.

<sup>82</sup> This is a reference to the following publication: General Synod, “Making Women Visible: The Use of Inclusive Language with the Alternative Service Book” A Report by the Liturgical Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England (Norwich, UK: Church House, 1988).

<sup>83</sup> Pearson, *Making Creation Visible*, 5.

<sup>84</sup> This could vary from Matins and Morning Prayer to what Lutherans understand as Divine Service or Evening Prayer.

Creator.”<sup>85</sup> He acknowledges that some within the Anglican Church will argue that creation is mentioned at certain times throughout the year within key festivals. A few festivals he notes are found in the *Alternative Service Book (ASB)*, most notably, Ember Weeks (*ASB* 878–88), Rogation Days (*ASB* 884–89), and Harvest Thanksgiving (*ASB* 890–901).<sup>86</sup>

Pearson counters with the concern that nearly all of these festivals reflect a more rural lifestyle and are difficult to comprehend or even celebrate within today’s more urban lifestyle. In addition, he expresses that these additions are limited to only a few occasions of the church year and do not offer enough repetition to have a greater impact on the Christian’s life as do the weekly Sunday services and the daily services of morning prayer or evening prayer. Pearson voices a concern that the Christian liturgy as a whole tends to be anthropocentric, focused solely on the Christian and his redemption. As a result, he believes churches and people fail to understand that creation is also a part of God’s redemptive plan and that until Christ returns the Christian has the responsibility to make God’s creation visible in liturgy.

Overall, Pearson hopes that his book will initiate conversations not only within the Anglican Church but also within the Church catholic. More specifically, he hopes that the Church as a whole will rethink its liturgy and worship services in order to see where and how it might better incorporate a theology of creation into that worship. His recognition of previous celebrated creation festivals might help the church reconsider their return in order to highlight the theme of creation in its liturgical services.

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<sup>85</sup> Pearson, *Making Creation Visible*, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Pearson also mentions Plough Sunday, although I was not able to find evidence of this in *The Alternative Service Book of 1980*.

## **Benjamin M. Stewart**

Benjamin M. Stewart is a pastor and educator within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). In a recently published book, *The Watered Garden: Worship and Earth's Ecology*,<sup>87</sup> Stewart brings together Christian worship and the wounded earth so that together both might flourish. When Christian worship and ecology are intimately joined, they form a valuable partnership, which gives way to “seeing everything as part of the one great whole,”<sup>88</sup> and in turn begins the promise of healing God’s creation. Stewart looks for obvious ways in which Christian worship has “earthly rootedness.”<sup>89</sup>

Stewart begins by exploring Christian worship in three ways. First, he examines the crevices of the ecumenically-held patterns of worship in search of ecological wisdom. Second, he searches these worship patterns for their sacramental approach to creation. Finally, he looks for a renewed relationship with the earth, which is desperately in need of God’s healing.

Stewart locates the promise of Christian healing each year in the Ash Wednesday worship service. He writes that on Ash Wednesday, “we are newly reminded of our mortality, shown the ruins caused by our destructive sin, and told to remember, in words and with ashes, our often-forgotten basic identity as creatures made of dust, of the earth.”<sup>90</sup>

One of the most important aspects of the Ash Wednesday service is the time provided for quiet contemplation. Before, during, and after the service the Christian is provided time to focus and reflect on personal sin and on healing. Stewart suggests that in this service the church might also consider time for reflection and focus on human damage done to God’s creation. However,

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<sup>87</sup> Benjamin M. Stewart, *A Watered Garden* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).

<sup>88</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 11.

<sup>89</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 19.

<sup>90</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 6.

Ash Wednesday, is not the only time and place where the promise of healing and the promise of God coming to his human creature, takes place within Christian worship. So Stewart highlights the importance of water in baptism, Earth's relationship to the moon and sun throughout the days and seasons, identifies the fields and vineyards as the source of Holy Communion, and reminds the Christian of the very earthliness of his own human body.

Although the book contains fewer than a hundred pages, it is filled with unique ways for congregations to think about what worship might look like when the church connects itself to the ecological needs of today. For example, consider the sacraments. Stewart asks the church to rethink the place where baptisms happen. Does the place itself engage the people's senses? In other words, what do the vehicle and the location that hold that water look like? Does the water make a sound to engage one's hearing? Can one touch the water? Engaging one's senses makes a vital connection between worship and creation more real.

Similarly, when Stewart looks at the Lord's Supper he turns his thoughts to the fields and vineyards of God's creation, reminding the Christian, "Among the most profound mysteries we confess is that Christ comes to us in food, in the bread and wine"<sup>91</sup> of the Lord's Supper. Stewart reminds his readers that Christ's life, death, and resurrection changes everything, including how one lives one's life on Earth until Christ comes again. Christ's renewing promises of life are visible in worship through the waters of baptism and through the eating and drinking of the bread and wine in communion with one another. Stewart believes that these sacramental places of worship should begin to connect the Christian's thoughts back to the earth itself, and begin the process of connecting the Christian to care of God's creation.

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<sup>91</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 59.

Stewart offers two additional themes for consideration. First, he highlights the importance hymns and prayers play in worship, especially within the church's liturgical seasons and how they can provide new ways for the Christian to view earth's changing seasons. For example, the liturgical church season begins with the Christmas liturgy where both light and darkness are brought into the worship space and hymns are sung that call all creation to sing at Christ's birth. The Easter season begins with Ash Wednesday, as noted earlier, and culminates with the resurrection, reminding Christians that all things will be made new and consummated in the new creation. Through these observations, Stewart endeavors to show how all the liturgical seasons of the church have a direct connection with what he calls "a sacramental approach to earth's seasons, approaching the earth's great cycles as holy signs of God's saving action in history, drawing us into worship alongside the whole living earth."<sup>92</sup>

Stewart's second theme connects the Lord's Supper<sup>93</sup> to the physical act of eating. He notes that not only sacramental food but also daily food is given to creation by God's hand through his fields, vineyards, and laborers. These thoughts are summarized well when Stewart emphasizes the importance of prayer at every meal. Overall, Stewart's book provides helpful suggestions for pastors and congregations to consider in order to better unite worship with the Christian's life in creation. Stewart's book is intended, however, to be more suggestive than thorough in its examination of the actual theology of creation as embodied in the church's worship materials.

### **Gordon Lathrop**

Finally, for the purpose of identifying recent theologians that have sought to cultivate a

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<sup>92</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 52.

<sup>93</sup> The Lord's Supper is covered in a chapter Stewart appropriately calls, "Field and Vineyards in *A Watered Garden*" and is heavily dealt with in chapter 7 of this dissertation under the theme "The Sacraments of the First Creation into the New Creation."



connection between Christian worship and the life of the Christian in creation, this dissertation will consider a brief overview of the work of Gordon Lathrop, a well-known and influential liturgical theologian.

Lathrop has written a trilogy that is centered on church liturgy. His first book, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*,<sup>94</sup> focuses on understanding Alexander Schmemmann's concept of *ordo*, which provides an ecumenical approach to liturgical theology. This concept is threaded through all three of his books. In his second book, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology*,<sup>95</sup> he views the activities of worship as a means for discussing and defining the concept of church for today. In his third book, *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology*,<sup>96</sup> Lathrop examines how Christian worship helps the church care for God's creation and live in his world.<sup>97</sup> Lathrop makes it very clear upfront that neither this book nor the other two are about nature but instead about God as he is known in Christian worship. Yet, he hopes that through his books the Christian will be "led towards a renewed consideration of ecology, worldview, and 'sarcophilic' ethics."<sup>98</sup>

In Lathrop's final book he sets out to connect God's holiness with the holiness of his creation. He does not encourage the Christian to worship creation but rather to recognize the earth as God's creation and to care for and respect it as such. He asks the reader to consider God's unique holiness and ask questions such as what does God's holiness have to do with the earth? And does the church have a liturgical cosmology that is effective for living in the world today? Lathrop situates Christian liturgy especially Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the central

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<sup>94</sup> Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

<sup>95</sup> Gordon Lathrop, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999).

<sup>96</sup> Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

<sup>97</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Ground*, ix.

<sup>98</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Ground*, x.

message of each within a classical cosmology.<sup>99</sup> In the end Lathrop's goal is to ask the Christian to consider how liturgy might be used to shape a Christian's understanding of living in God's creation.

Lathrop develops the cosmological dimensions of liturgy using the "symbols" or the "patterns" of Christian liturgy. He borrows these concepts from the work of the Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann who argues, "The study of Christian worship should begin with an analysis of its patterns and structures—what he called its *ordo*."<sup>100</sup> Lathrop defines these symbols or patterns as things that are done in worship when God's people gather together around the Scriptures and Sacraments. These things define not only the church's identity but also its theology and worldview.

Throughout his book, Lathrop searches for the symbols found in Christian worship. The symbols of bread and wine, which are made holy by Christ, do not constitute a stand-alone meal. While most people focus solely on the elements, he suggests that the focus should really be on the entire liturgy of the meal. The symbols of bread and wine are joined with all the symbols of worship: Scriptural reading, preaching, prayer, and hymns as instruments by which God meets with His people.

Lathrop believes that when the symbols of Word and Sacrament are faithfully celebrated, they begin to cast a new light into the world through God's people simply by accomplishing the most basic task God intends for his Word and Sacraments: "to hold us before God and bring us

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<sup>99</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Ground*, 6–9. For Lathrop cosmology contains three senses: astrophysics, classical or metaphysical worldviews, and modern whole "world" cosmologies and all are pertinent to Christian liturgy.

<sup>100</sup> Byron D. Stuhlman, review of *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology*, by Gordon Lathrop. *Christian Century*, July 28–August 4 (1999): 750–51.

to faith in God.”<sup>101</sup>

### **Tying Them All Together**

Each of the theologians above presents a vital connection that exists between Christian worship and the life of the Christian in creation. These connections begin to highlight the various themes of a theology of creation that are found in Christian worship. Each theologian integrates liturgy and creation or, as others have put it, the ecology of the earth together with Christian worship. They consider different ways to use the liturgy better in order to create new relationships between the Christian’s life and God’s creation. Santmire suggests using the liturgy to find new ways to create habits of faith or ways to walk with nature. They stand in awe of nature, serve nature, and partner with nature. Habel, along with Rhoads and Santmire, suggests a more intimate engagement: literally worshipping *with* creation. Pearson proposes that the artificial environments surrounding the Christian life have blinded the Christian from seeing creation in Christian worship. While Stewart believes that worship should engage the human senses in order to recognize creation and its connections to worship. He suggests tasting, seeing, and hearing what God is doing in worship so that you might connect that back to God’s creation. Finally, Lathrop asks the Christian to consider the symbols of liturgy, such as the bread and wine, and use them to make vital visual connections to God’s creation.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the origins of the discussions by theologians who began to respond to the critics of Christianity and the relationship it has with God’s creation. In 1966, Lynn White raised the question, who is responsible for the environmental crisis of today? In his pivotal

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<sup>101</sup> Stuhlman, review of *Holy Ground*, 750.

article, he indicted the Christian church for its doctrine of creation, suggesting that the church teaches domination rather than dominion, control and power instead of care and nurture. Since the mid-1960s, the responses to his work have multiplied.

What followed was a systematic list of these various responses highlighting the themes that emerged throughout the years and that best represented what this dissertation has identified as the themes of a theology of creation. These themes then became the chapters of the dissertation. Once the themes were chosen, hymns reflecting each theme were selected from eleven hymnals and analyzed for theological depth and content.

The authors above have begun critical discussions for the church that connect Christian worship with the responsibility of caring for God's creation. They have begun to identify the role Christian worship plays in assisting Christians to think through critical ecological questions of the day. They have connected the sights and sounds of worship with the sights and sounds of creation. They have highlighted the use of symbols and/or rituals as a way to inculcate the worshipers to make decisions that will have an effect on God's world. On one hand, they have begun the task of unearthing the themes of a theology of creation. On the other hand, they have not considered the important role that church hymnody plays in effecting change in a Christian's life.

### **The Methodological Procedure to Be Employed**

Few theological works have explored the connection between Christian worship, the life of the Christian, and the responsibility the Christian has in caring for creation. Some have proposed suggestions for making better connections, but, for the most part, they have not engaged in an in-depth exploration of church hymnody in order to identify if a theology of creation exists, and if it

exists, how the hymns of the church can shape a Christian's life. This dissertation accomplishes that goal using a twofold method. First, it defines the themes of a theology of creation based on previous studies and second, it examines the hymnals of two church traditions: Anglican and Lutheran.

### **A Theology of Creation Rubric for Assessing the Church's Hymns**

The first task of this dissertation is to develop a theological rubric that assists in identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the themes of a theology of creation. The second task is to determine, by way of church hymnody, whether the themes of a theology of creation adequately address the ecological questions of the last half-century. In other words, this dissertation develops a series of questions based upon the theological insights of theologians who have articulated a theology of creation within the cultural context of the ecological questions of today. These questions are then asked of the church hymns in order to determine whether they address the creation themes and coincide with the work of theologians today.

If the church believes that worship plays a vital role in shaping the lives of its people, then what is included in worship, such as hymnody, is critical. Therefore, the rubric of this dissertation will focus on asking questions of the hymns that actually shape a person's view of creation. Do the lyrics of the hymn provide aid in viewing God's creation rightly? Do the lyrics direct or teach the Christian how to care for God's creation? This is not to suggest that hymns should be written for the sole purpose of addressing ecological issues, but it is to say that the editors who selected the hymns did so at a time when ecological issues were at the forefront of the culture in which the church lives. So, their selection could shape a certain outlook toward creation among church members and have an impact on the way in which they live. Even though

church hymnody does not address specific environmental questions, it may provide a good starting point for addressing them.

The rubric utilizes the contours of a theology of creation that have addressed the ecological issues of the culture in recent decades. As shown earlier, Santmire identifies three schools of thought that have attempted to formulate a response to the charges leveled by Lynn White in his seminal essay. The reconstructionists respond by pushing aside the creature while attempting to focus on the creation itself, using some might call a more biocentric approach. The apologists respond by highlighting the effect the environment has on human beings. In other words, humans cannot properly love neighbor without caring for the creation on which that neighbor's life depends. Conversely, harming creation hurts one's neighbor. Hence care for creation becomes a social-justice issue. The revisionists respond by focusing on the creature's relationship to creation in a way that does not treat creation as a person, object, or commodity, but instead as being able to engage in a meaningful relationship with creation. Although Santmire's schools of thought provide answers to White's work, they offer no criteria for developing the themes of a theology of creation.

Since Santmire introduced his three schools of thought, additional theologians and scholars have surfaced whose work introduces various themes that begin to highlight a theology of creation not previously covered in Santmire's analysis. These theologians' work would best fit within the revisionist category of Santmire's school of thought because their work is grounded in the creedal tradition of the Christian faith, but they have gone further than the revisionists who preceded them. These theologians include Anglican theologians Richard Bauckham, N. T. Wright, Colin E. Gunton, and Alister McGrath; Lutheran theologians, such as Oswald Bayer, Charles Arand, Robert Kolb, and Jeffrey Gibbs as well as those from other traditions, such as

Elizabeth Achtemeier of Union Seminary, Father Raniero Cantalamessa, and John Calvin. Others also need to be considered who although are not formally trained as theologians, they address ecological issues from an avowedly Christian perspective. Most important is the work of Wendell Berry and the theologians who have picked up and developed his themes exegetically or systematically, namely, Ellen Davis, Norman Wirzba, and Craig Bartholomew. Many unique themes that represent a theology of creation are highlighted by these scholars and theologians and are necessary for Christians who seek to live in and with creation. These scholars exhort the Christian to care for creation as God intended. The themes identified by this dissertation; namely, “A Community of Creation Uniting in Praise,” “Human Creatureliness,” “The Creative Word,” “Jesus as Creator Who Ushers in the New Creation,” Creator Spirit,” and “The Sacraments of the First Creation into the New Creation” will be used to formulate a rubric to analyze the hymns of the Anglican and Lutheran church traditions.

### **The Rubric**

The themes above provide the basis for developing the criteria used to determine if and how a theology of creation is being expressed in Christian worship through its hymns. As these themes of a theology of creation were being drawn together some common threads were exposed. First, all of the themes confirm the Christian narrative and the Christian faith. And second, they embody the language of the Nicene Creed and hold to a solid Trinitarian framework.

A theology of creation best finds its expression in the words of the Nicene Creed, beginning with the first article that names God the Father as “Creator of heaven and earth.”<sup>102</sup> As

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<sup>102</sup> Commission on Worship, *Divine Service: Setting One Lutheran Service Book*, 158–59.

Luther writes, “God has created me together with all that exists.”<sup>103</sup> All creation came into existence by means of the spoken Word. The Word declares, “I am a creature of God,” affirming with certainty that the human creature belongs to God as do all other creatures. That God is the sole provider and preserver of every created being declares him alone to be the Creator: “For here we see how the Father has given to us himself with all creation and has abundantly provided for us in this life, apart from the fact that he has also showered us with inexpressible eternal blessings through his Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>104</sup>

The second article of the Nicene Creed furthers one’s understanding of a theology of creation as Jesus is declared to be the Lord of all creation for “through him all things were made.”<sup>105</sup> When God created everything in heaven and on earth he declared all things good; but Satan deceived the man, causing sin and death to reign on earth. At that moment of deception and sin, the whole earth was cursed, separated from God, and placed under his wrath. Yet, Christ came, by his own free will, as a creature to creation to redeem his people and his creation. Through Christ’s death and resurrection, the restoration process began for the whole creation. Christ broke the bond of sin and death releasing his children in order that he might reclaim, restore, and keep them as his for eternity. He will come again and with him the New Creation.

A theology of creation finds fulfillment in article three of the Nicene Creed through the power of the Holy Spirit, “the Lord and giver of Life.”<sup>106</sup> It is through the Holy Spirit that the Christian believes Christ will come again, and because of that belief the Christian is called to live

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<sup>103</sup> Small Catechism, I.2 in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 354.

<sup>104</sup> Large Catechism II.24 in Kolb and Wengert, 433.

<sup>105</sup> Commission on Worship, *Divine Service: Setting One Lutheran Service Book*, 158–59.

<sup>106</sup> Commission on Worship, *Divine Service: Setting One Lutheran Service Book*, 158–59.



out a unique life on this earth within a community of believers to care for each other and for God's creation through faith. When the Nicene Creed supports and promotes a theology of creation, a solid Trinitarian, Scriptural picture comes to light. The Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—creates all, preserves all, and restores all creation as the One true God. When a Christian views a theology of creation within the context of the Christian narrative and the Christian faith, it opens up new avenues for expressing and teaching it within Christian worship. Once this critical theology has been incorporated into Christian worship, Christian habits begin to be formed that remind the Christian of their responsibility in caring for God's creation.

In each of the following chapters a different theme of a theology of creation is addressed. Hymns were chosen from both the Lutheran and Anglican tradition hymnals as best representing the theme and for the purpose of critiquing the theme. The hymns chosen for each theme will each be subjected to a rigorous analysis using the following questions:

### **Historical Context (Rubric Questions #1–2)**

1. Does the author's biography or interpretive community contribute to an understanding of the hymn today?
2. Does the immediate occasion for the reception of the hymn or the historical period in which it was written have any effect on its interpretation today?

### **Theological Content (Rubric Questions #3–5)**

3. In what way does the theme of a theology of creation in which the hymn has been placed get expressed in the hymn?
4. Does the hymn use poetic literature and/or metaphorical language to emphasize specific phrases?
5. Does the hymn provide a clear and distinctive Christian perspective?

### **Church Hymns**

Although a theology of creation has been addressed to some extent by nearly every

Christian tradition, it is not feasible to examine the entire spectrum of worship materials found within the Christian church. So, this dissertation will offer a sampling of worship materials by examining the hymnals of two church traditions: the Lutherans and the Anglicans, both of which have published new hymnals since 1960.

### **Understanding Hymns**

Hymns play a vital role in forming the Christian life in worship. To write a hymn requires a certain discipline. Hymns by nature need to be easily comprehended, which often means they are limited in expression of language and content. While hymns are not poetry, they do contain poetic elements. Similarly, hymns are not prayers, yet may include elements of prayer. John Richard Watson in *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study*<sup>107</sup> states, “Hymns are not Christian Dogmatics or Systematic Theology, but the expression of all the varieties of human religious experience, the dark places of the soul, the exaltation, the sense of penitence, and the sense of joy.”<sup>108</sup> Well-written hymns have the power to intertwine the popular culture with the religious and literary culture, and they have the power to transform an ordinary life into a more sacramental life because good hymns engage the human senses. When human senses are engaged, the hymn becomes a very powerful tool in the hand of the church.

What is the function of the hymn? The hymn provides “verse against prose, sound against silence, singing as opposed to reading, standing (in most churches) as opposed to sitting.”<sup>109</sup> In the church, hymns are generally interspersed throughout worship between prayers, lessons, and the sermon for active congregation involvement. Here the congregation stands, proclaims God’s

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<sup>107</sup> John Richard Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>108</sup> Watson, *English Hymn*, 5.

<sup>109</sup> Watson, *English Hymn*, 8.

word, and expresses emotion in thought and word through the singing of hymns. Well-chosen, well-placed hymns should strengthen the pastor's intended message while providing and supporting relevant Christian teachings and beliefs.

## Hymn Examination

This dissertation will examine the worship hymnals<sup>110</sup> of the three major Lutheran traditions in America, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and the Anglican Church body. In total it will examine eleven hymnals and provide an in-depth overview of each.

The LCMS has produced two worship hymnals since the year 1960: *Lutheran Worship*<sup>111</sup> and the *Lutheran Service Book*.<sup>112</sup> The ELCA published two worship hymnals: the *Lutheran Book of Worship*<sup>113</sup> and the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.<sup>114</sup> In addition they published a supplementary worship resource called *With One Voice*.<sup>115</sup> Since 1960, the WELS has published one worship hymnal, *Christian Worship*,<sup>116</sup> and one songbook, *Let All People Praise You*.<sup>117</sup> The

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<sup>110</sup> The hymnal for the Lutheran tradition is understood to include all parts of its worship service. This includes Propers, Divine Services, prayer, Service Orders to include Matins, Vespers and the like, the Litany, Psalms, Luther's Small Catechism and finally a vast array of hymns and spiritual songs.

<sup>111</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1982).

<sup>112</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006).

<sup>113</sup> The Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978).

<sup>114</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006).

<sup>115</sup> Division for Congregational Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *With One Voice: A Lutheran Resource for Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995).

<sup>116</sup> Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1993).

<sup>117</sup> Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Let All the People Praise You: A Songbook* (Milwaukee:

Anglican Church traditionally has not adopted an official hymnal for their church body. Instead they have published a variety of hymnals and have allowed their individual congregations to select hymnals that best fit their needs. The two hymnals chosen for this dissertation include the *New English Hymnal*<sup>118</sup> and the *Hymns Ancient & Modern New Standard*.<sup>119</sup> In addition, the following Anglican songbooks were chosen for investigation: *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise*<sup>120</sup> and the *New English Praise Book*.<sup>121</sup>

### **The Outcome(s) Anticipated**

This dissertation makes several contributions to the church. First, this dissertation identifies and defines the themes of a theology of creation that serve as resources for living in an age when ecological issues are at the forefront of our culture's social questions. Second, it draws attention to the important role hymns play in forming and shaping members of the church. Through repetition the hymn's text and melody become lodged in the memory and imagination of the Christian. As each season passes and hymns are repeated, the church experiences a renewed awareness of their role in God's creation. Finally, this dissertation connects the vital components of the themes to the hymns in order to shape the Christian's life, in other words, *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*.

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Northwestern, 1999).

<sup>118</sup> The English Hymnal Company, *The New English Hymnal* (Suffolk, UK: Canterbury, 2006).

<sup>119</sup> Hymns Ancient and Modern Limited, *Hymns Ancient & Modern New Standard* (Suffolk, UK: Canterbury, 1986).

<sup>120</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, *Hymns of Glory Songs of Prayers* (Suffolk, UK: Canterbury, 2008).

<sup>121</sup> Hymns Ancient and Modern Limited, *New English Praise* (Suffolk, UK: Canterbury, 2006).

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE COMMUNITY OF CREATION UNITING IN PRAISE

For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands (Isa. 55:12).

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command! Mountain and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Beast and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and maidens together, old men and children! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven (Ps. 148:7–13).

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and sing (Isa. 35:1–2a).

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall the trees of the wood sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth (Ps. 96:11–13).

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven crying, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God” (Rev. 19:1).

The Scriptural passages above show God’s many creatures gathered together as a single community united as one to sing God’s praise. When the bird chirps, when the wind blows, when lightning lights up the sky, creation is expressing its praise to God. The theme of a community of creation uniting in praise provides a foundation on which Christian theologians construct a theology of creation.

Two theologians in particular, Richard Bauckham and Elizabeth Achtemeier, draw special attention to the way in which the praise of God unites the entire creation into a community.

Richard Bauckham subtitles one of his books *Rediscovering the Community of Creation*<sup>1</sup> in order to remind the human creature that they too are fellow members of creation. “All God’s creatures are first and foremost creatures, ourselves included.”<sup>2</sup> Since all God’s creatures share in God’s creation, they are intimately bound together as a community, interdependent and interrelated to each other yet solely dependent upon a common Creator. Bauckham argues that the community is strongest when it is bound together praising. He sees this theme emerging most forcefully in the Bible when the entire creation praises God together.<sup>3</sup>

Psalm 104 provides an example of creation praising God for his “generous extravagance.”<sup>4</sup> God provides what every creature needs to live. These provisions include the breath of life, water, food, habitat, and seasons.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, the entire community of creation unites to praise its Creator. Walter Harrelson, an Old Testament scholar, agrees with Bauckham. Harrelson analyzes Psalm 104 as a hymn that praises God the Creator and Sustainer of all life.<sup>6</sup> He shows the importance of all God’s creatures having a designated place and purpose in life. For Harrelson, Psalm 104 shows God’s engagement with the “stuff of creation.”<sup>7</sup>

A second theologian, Elizabeth Achtemeier, highlights this theme of a community of creatures uniting in praise in a sermon she wrote called “God the Music Lover.”<sup>8</sup> The sermon, based on Psalm 148 and Col. 1:9–20, poses a question, namely “Why did God make the world?”

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 64.

<sup>3</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 64–71.

<sup>4</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 67.

<sup>5</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 68.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Harrelson, “On God’s Care for the Earth Psalm 104,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 2 (1975): 19–22.

<sup>7</sup> Harrelson, “On God’s Care,” 19.

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Nature, God & Pulpit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 40–49.

She begins with a quote from the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, “The miracle is not that there is a God. The miracle is that there is a world.”<sup>9</sup> She contends that God created the world for two reasons: first, because he is a lover and second, because he is a lover of music.<sup>10</sup> As Achtemeier contemplates the beauty of creation across every landscape, she begins to see the beauty in each intricate detail of creation from the simple housefly to the majestic waterfall. When all God’s creatures join together as a community singing his praise “all is as it should be, stamped with his love and overflowing with good, in perfect harmony.”<sup>11</sup> To live fully as a creature of God is to praise the Lord, the Creator of all.

She ponders a silence in creation’s praise today, suggesting that humanity has interrupted various parts of the God’s choir.<sup>12</sup> Many of God’s creatures have been driven to extinction. “Nothing is more contradictory than to juxtapose the words creation and extinction.”<sup>13</sup> Achtemeier refers to Jeremiah’s text about a time when there shall be no more singing; no voice will interrupt the deadly silence caused by man’s sin.<sup>14</sup> Jeremiah was told of the pending silence that might be, but God did not allow the silence to go on. Through Christ, the human creature restoration from sin, and God’s creation begins to heal. “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

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<sup>9</sup> Achtemeier, *Nature, God & Pulpit*, 40.

<sup>10</sup> Achtemeier, *Nature, God & Pulpit*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Achtemeier, *Nature, God & Pulpit*, 42.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Brown in his book *Our Father’s World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation* brings out this idea of the creation being a celestial orchestra. God is the celestial conductor, the instrument maker, the composer, and the audience. Each piece of the orchestra has its own score. He asks us to think about the humans being the string section of the orchestra. We play the melody, but there are also trumpets, flutes, and drums—rabbits, cardinals, lilies and redbud trees. There are no solo parts. One of humankind’s responsibilities is to make sure that the entire orchestra is healthy.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Arand, “Extinction within Creation,” The Together With All Creatures Blog, entry posted February 9, 2012, <http://togetherwithallcreatures.com/> (accessed May 11, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Achtemeier, *Nature, God & Pulpit*, 46.

Praise for the Creator is expressed in various ways. It looks different from one creature to the next. Praise can be the sound of a multitude of voices harmonizing in song or it can be the sound the stars make when swirling in orbit. Just because the human ear cannot hear all the sounds of creation does not mean creation is not praising the Creator. Louie Giglio,<sup>15</sup> a pastor, speaker, and founder of the Passion Movement is passionate about the glorification of God. In order to express that passion Giglio creates a “mashup” that joins the sound of stars, whales, and humans into what he calls a symphony of praise to help the human creature hear what only the Creator might hear.<sup>16</sup>

All creatures live as a community by the sheer fact that the Creator made them. The Latin root of the word community is *communitas*, which means living in the same place and sharing common characteristics. All creatures share the same air, light, and earth, and the same Creator. God fashions creation as a community to be interdependent, to care for, and nurture others in their community. Both Bauckham and Achtemeier argue that Americans, accustomed as they are to emphasizing independence and self-sufficiency, have often forgotten the importance the rest of creation plays in forming community. They have forgotten that the land produces the food they eat, that the trees and plants provide the oxygen they require to breathe, and that the sunlight provides the vitamins and energy their bodies require to live. When creation lives as a community, a common praise for the Creator begins to arise.

The primary role of both animate and inanimate creatures is to praise God. But does this find expression in church worship through its hymnody? Each week Christians join with other

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<sup>15</sup> After Louie Giglio completed his theological studies, he was determined to find new ways to engage the Christian church. He began a movement called The Passion Movement or Passion Conference. It is a Christian organization that holds spiritual awakening for young adults, specifically college students.

<sup>16</sup> Louie Giglio, “Mashup of Stars and Whales Singing God’s Praise,” YouTube video, 14:06, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zWKm-LZWm4&feature=youtu.be> (accessed May 13, 2012).



Christians around the world in the joyful songs of praise but the human creature is only one voice in the choir. Does the church recognize the larger choir of creation?

This chapter investigates how praise is expressed in Christian worship by analyzing the hymns of the church. Praise can be expressed as humble gratification for God’s creation, as awe over the beauty of creation, or as a sinner’s lament over sin that turns a heart to praise.

Table 1. Hymns of The Community of Creation Uniting in Praise

<b>Hymns of The Community of Creation Uniting in Praise</b>	
<b>Hymn Title</b>	<b>Hymnals that Include Hymn</b>
“Praise the Lord of Heaven”	<i>LBW 541</i>
“All Creatures of Our God and King”	<i>LW 436, LBW 527, New English 263, Hymns of Glory 147, Hymns Ancient and Modern 105, and New English Hymnal 263.</i>
“Think of the World Without Any Flowers”	<i>Hymns of Glory 155</i>
“Nourished by the Rainfall”	<i>Hymns of Glory 138</i>
“God of the Sparrow”	<i>Worship 740</i>

This chapter’s theme, “The Community of Creation Uniting in Praise,” is found in the largest number of hymns. The hymns provide a springboard for teaching worshippers to recognize the voice of the wider creation. “Singing about God’s creation is not a modern innovation, but a return to the historical roots of our faith.”<sup>17</sup> Many of the hymns identified use Psalm 148 as a backdrop for expressing a community of creation uniting in praise. Below are a few observations on Psalm 148.

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<sup>17</sup> Edward Brown, *Our Father’s World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 110.

Richard Bauckham declares that there is a catalogue of more than thirty creatures that comprise the cosmic choir of praise in Psalm 148.<sup>18</sup> He observes that verses 5–6 and 13–14 explain why all God’s creation should praise the Creator: nothing is as impressive as YHWH. He is the one who commands creation, and his creatures are merely created. Bauckham does not let Psalm 148 rest as a mere example of a “cosmic choir;” instead he calls creation a symphony or orchestra,<sup>19</sup> where all parts of the choir are different yet complementary. The flute and trombone are different instruments, and they create different sounds. When they are brought together they provide harmony for each other. Creation does the same.

An Old Testament scholar, Terence E. Fretheim, spends an entire chapter discussing nature’s praise of God.<sup>20</sup> Fretheim shows how Psalm 148 portrays “an amazing array of nonhuman creatures called upon to praise God (Ps. 148:3–10).”<sup>21</sup>

Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars!  
Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!  
Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for he commanded and they were created.  
He established them forever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.  
Praise the LORD for the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!  
Mountains and all hills,  
fruits trees and all cedars!  
Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!

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<sup>18</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 77.

<sup>19</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 78.

<sup>20</sup> Terence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 249–68.

<sup>21</sup> Fretheim, *God and World*, 249–50.

Fretheim stresses that the human creature needs to understand the importance God places on the nonhuman creation. Creation does not exist to enhance the human life but instead to praise the Creator. God establishes all his creatures and then gives each of them a place and purpose in his creation. Then he calls upon them to praise him.<sup>22</sup>

Derek Kinder confirms this idea when he calls Psalm 148 the “Choir of Creation.”<sup>23</sup> God calls all creation to join together in praise, thereby uniting the whole creation. Praise begins in the heavens and reverberates down to the earth, the seas, and all that is within them. Kinder believes the psalm shows God’s entire creation in a joyful preoccupation with God.<sup>24</sup>

Pope John Paul II in a public address spoke about the choir of creation praising God in Psalm 148. “Psalm 148, which we just prayed, is truly a ‘cantic of the creatures,’ a kind of Old Testament *Te Deum* and cosmic alleluia in which everything and everyone is praising God . . . . Let us also join in this universal chorus.”<sup>25</sup> In the psalm “we meet the singers from the universe of the stars in the heavens: the distant heavenly bodies, the choirs of angels, the sun and moon, the shining stars, the highest heavens.”<sup>26</sup> The procession continues with the beasts and sea monsters and culminates with at least twenty-two singers joined together in praise.<sup>27</sup> When joined together as a community of creatures, none more important than the other, each member sings its necessary part of God’s praise while recognizing the Creator for who he is.

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<sup>22</sup> For a more in-depth study into Psalm 148 see both Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament* and John Goldingay, *Psalms 90–150 Vol. III of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Derek Kinder, *Psalms 73–150: A Commentary on Books III–V of the Psalms* (London: InterVarsity, 1975), 487.

<sup>24</sup> Kinder, *Psalms 73–150*, 488.

<sup>25</sup> Excerpt from Pope John Paul II general audience address of July 17, 2002. [conservation.catholic.org/psalm%20148.htm](http://conservation.catholic.org/psalm%20148.htm) (accessed on April 13, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Excerpt from Pope John Paul II general audience address of July 17, 2002. [conservation.catholic.org/psalm%20148.htm](http://conservation.catholic.org/psalm%20148.htm) (accessed on April 13, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Excerpt from Pope John Paul II general audience address of July 17, 2002. [conservation.catholic.org/psalm%20148.htm](http://conservation.catholic.org/psalm%20148.htm) (accessed on April 13, 2013).

## Praise the Lord of Heaven

### Hymn Verses

1 Praise the Lord of Heaven! Praise him in the height;  
Praise him, all you angels; Praise him, stars and light!  
Praise him, clouds and waters which, above the skies,  
When his Word commanded, did establish arise!

2 Praise the Lord, you fountains of the deeps and seas,  
Rocks and hills and mountains, Cedars and all trees!  
Praise him clouds and vapors, Snow and hail and fire,  
Stormy wind, fulfilling only his desire!

3 Praise him, fowl and cattle, princes and all kings;  
Praise him, men and maidens, all created things;  
For the name of God is excellent alone  
Over earth His footstool, Over heav'n His throne!<sup>28</sup>

### Browne's Original Poem "Psalm CXLIII"

Praise the Lord of Heaven, praise Him in the height,  
Praise Him all ye angles, praise Him, stars and light:

Praise Him, skies, and waters, which above the skies,  
When His word commanded, stablish'd did arise:

Praise the Lord, ye fountains of the deeps and seas,  
Rocks and hills and mountains, cedars and all trees:

Praise Him, clouds and vapours, snow and hail and fire,  
Stormy wind fulfilling only His desire:

Praise Him, fowls and cattle, princes and all kings,  
Praise Him, men and maidens, all created things:

For the name of God is excellent alone,  
Over earth His footstool, over Heaven His throne.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, "Praise the Lord of Heaven," *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), 541.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Briarley Browne, *The National Bankruptcy And Other Poems* (London: W. Pickering, 1844), 129.

## The Hymn's Historical Context

**Composer's Biography:** Not much is known about Thomas Briarly Browne, the author of the poem "Psalm CXLVIII." What is known is that he was the son of Pryce Jones, was born on Christmas Day in 1805, and died in 1874. It is believed that he spent most of his life in Wellington serving as a school inspector. Little evidence was found to show that Browne was actively involved in the church. He was not trained in church music or theology nor did he have any aspirations to serve as a church cleric; his area of formal training is unknown. His known publications are *Thought of the Times* (1838), *The Oxford Divines Not Members of the Church of England* (1839), and *National Bankruptcy and Other Poems* (1844). Two hymns have been attributed to Browne: "Praise the Lord of Heaven" and "O Come to the Fountain and Drink."

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Browne wrote the poem "Psalm CXLVIII" around the year 1844, and it was published in *The National Bankruptcy and Other Poems*,<sup>30</sup> a collection of poems and translations, in that same year. "Psalm CXLVIII" is one of eighteen published and written by Browne in this book. The poems vary in subject matter from the nation's bankruptcy and the tough times that followed to poems that deal with the age of romance. Others carry religious overtones. Alongside "Psalm CXLVIII," three other poems in the book suggest that Browne had Christian roots. The first poem is called "The Heavenly Jerusalem." It speaks to the power of Jehovah, the one who reigns. In the final two lines of that poem Browne includes visual images of creation to make his point: "No sun shall be thy brightness, No moon on thee shall shine, Jehovah is thy glory, The Lord thy God is Thine."<sup>31</sup> The next poem might well capture the attention of Lutherans. It is called "On Seeing a Portrait of Luther." The poem speaks to the steadfastness and truth of Luther's words and the author's

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<sup>30</sup> Browne, *The National Bankruptcy*, 129.

<sup>31</sup> Browne, *The National Bankruptcy*, 85.

desire that Luther himself might be in England during the hardship of the nation's time. The final poem in Browne's book is called "Flow on Thou Shining River." This is a poem based on the text of Eccles. 1:7.

Browne may have written "Psalm CXLVIII" as a way to help the people of England praise God in spite of the hard economic times of his day. The poem's title makes one believe that Browne drew exclusively upon Psalm 148 to assist him. "Psalm CXLVIII" became the hymn "Praise the Lord of Heaven," which was published in about fifty hymnals, primarily in English-speaking countries. Today, "Praise the Lord of Heaven" can only be found in Lutheran Hymnals. Although this hymn is not frequently published today, it can still be found in *LBW* #541 under the section heading "Praise and Adoration."

### **The Hymn's Theological Content**

**Theme of Community of Creation Uniting in Praise:** Psalm 148 is considered a canticle. Canticles, which are set out in strophes or stanzas, retain the words of the Old Testament.<sup>32</sup> They are limitless alleluias<sup>33</sup> to God. Each stanza methodically constructs a step-by-step process of identifying the things God has created and summons them all to join in the praise.

Browne's hymn "Praise the Lord of Heaven" follows suit. The hymn brings out the fact that all God's creatures have the same purpose: to praise their common Creator. Browne expresses this fact at the end of each verse. Verse one concludes, "When his Word commanded, did establish arise!" Verse two concludes, "Fulfilling only his desire!" and verse three concludes,

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<sup>32</sup> Tim Dowley, *Christian Music: A Global History* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 30.

<sup>33</sup> Scott Hoezee, *Remember Creation: God's World of Wonder and Delight* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998), 51–52. "Psalm 148 is called an 'imperative hymn' by scholars. The first and the last words of the psalm are the Hebrew words *hallelu yah* . . . In English we typically translate it as a personal statement of praise, 'I am now thanking you, O God.' But in Hebrew it is neither a simple indicative statement nor an exclamatory outburst but an imperative statement that orders others to join in the chorus of cosmic praise to God . . . Now often translated 'Praise the Lord' . . . instead it is the psalmist's way of pointing his finger and shouting. 'Hey, you over there—join the chorus and praise God along with me right now!'"

“God is excellent alone over earth his footstool, Over heav’n his throne!” Praise of God unites creation into community with each creature offering its own unique voice of praise.

**Poetry and Imagery:** As noted earlier, Browne’s hymn “Praise the Lord of Heaven” reflects the structure and imagery of Psalm 148. Browne considers the cosmology of the Old Testament by dividing the world into the heavens above, the earth below, and all the creatures that dwell within those realms.

In terms of structure, the hymn contains language and images similar to Psalm 148. Yet Browne’s work is more poetic when he portrays the creatures. The hymn begins by considering the creatures that dwell in the heavens above: “Praise him, all you angels; Praise him, stars and light! Praise him, clouds and waters.” In verse two, Browne considers all the creaturely elements of the earth: “Praise the Lord, you fountains . . . rocks and hills and mountains, cedars and all trees! Praise him clouds and vapors, snow and hail and fire, stormy wind.” In verse three, Browne invites all living creatures of the earth, both human and nonhuman to join in: “Praise him, fowl and cattle, princes and all kings; praise him, men and maidens, all created things.” Taken together, these three verses provide an all-encompassing picture of creation. One can only imagine the thunderous praise rising up to God.

The balance of the hymn reflects on Psalm 148. In verse one, Browne ends with this declaration: “When his Word commanded, did establish arise.” This phrase plays off of verses five and six of Psalm 148,

Let them praise the name of the Lord!  
For He commanded and they were created.  
And he established them for ever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds which cannot be passed.

This draws attention to the power of God’s word. God commands praise, and creation’s response is to arise and praise. In verse two, Browne’s final line states, “Fulfilling only his desire,” which

uses Ps. 148:8, “Fulfilling his command.” Here Browne turns to God’s desire of receiving praise from his creatures. Finally in the middle of the verse three, Browne emphasizes the fact that “all created things” are called to praise their Creator, a fact not mentioned in Psalm 148. Browne’s poetic literature brings rhythm and proclamation to Psalm 148.

**Christian Confession:** Browne’s hymn reflects the language of Psalm 148. Unfortunately there is nothing substantial in the text that would identify the hymn as being distinctively Christian. Some might claim the words, “Praise the Lord” help but these words could be used to declare any god. Other than the fact that it is published in Christian hymnals there is nothing that identifies this hymn as being Christian.

### **All Creatures of Our God and King**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voice and with us sing:  
Alleluia, Alleluia!  
O burning sun with golden beam,  
And silver moon with softer gleam:

*Refrain*  
*Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him!*  
*Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

2 O rushing wind and breezes soft,  
O clouds that ride the winds aloft:  
Oh praise him! Alleluia!  
O rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
O lights of evening, find a voice,

3 O flowing waters, pure and clear,  
Make music for your Lord to hear,  
Oh praise him! Alleluia!  
O fire so masterful and bright,  
Providing us with warmth and light,

4 Dear mother earth, who day by day  
Unfolds rich blessings on our way,



Oh praise him! Alleluia!  
The fruits and flow'rs that verdant grow,  
Let them his praise abundant show.

5 O ev'ryone of tender heart,  
Forgiving others, take your part,  
Oh, praise him! Alleluia!  
All you who pain and sorrow bear,  
Praise God and lay on him your care.

6 And you, most kind and gentle death,  
Waiting to hush our final breath,  
Oh praise him! Alleluia!  
You lead to heaven the child of God,  
Where Christ our Lord the way has trod.

7 Let all things their Creator bless  
And worship God in humbleness.  
Oh praise him! Alleluia!  
Oh praise the Father, praise the Son,  
And praise the Spirit, Three in One.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** The author of the hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King" is St. Francis of Assisi. He was born in either 1181 or 1182 to Giovanni di Pierto di Barnardone and nicknamed Francesco ("the Frenchman") by his father. Francis was an Italian Catholic friar, preacher, and founder of the men's Franciscan Order, and the woman's Order of St. Clare.<sup>35</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Like the previous hymn, "Praise the Lord of Heaven," this hymn, "All Creatures of Our God and King," relies heavenly on Psalm 148. Unlike Browne's hymn, however, this hymn draws more indirectly upon the psalm inasmuch as it puts to verse Francis's well-known "Canticle of the Brother Sun," also known as *Laudes Creaturarum* (Praise of the Creatures). It is believed that "All Creatures of Our God and

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<sup>34</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "All Creatures of Our God and King," *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), 527.

<sup>35</sup> Paschal Robinson, "Saint Francis of Assisi," in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1913).

King” is a paraphrase of Francis’s “Canticle of the Brother Sun.” The paraphrase was not completed until around 1918.<sup>36</sup> William H. Draper paraphrased it for a children’s Pentecost festival. Draper, an ordained priest in the Church of England in 1880, translated over sixty Latin, Greek, and German hymns, many of which were published in *The Victoria Book of Hymns*<sup>37</sup> and *Hymns for Holy Week*.<sup>38</sup> Francis’s “Canticle of Brother Sun” reads as follows:

- 1 Most High, omnipotent, good Lord,
- 2 All praise, glory, honor, and blessing are yours.
- 3 To you alone, Most High, do thee belong,
- 4 And no man is worthy to pronounce your name.
  
- 5 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) all your creatures,
- 6 Especially (through) Sir Brother Sun,
- 7 Who brings the day, and you give light to us through him.
  
- 8 How handsome he is, how radiant, with great splendor!
- 9 Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.
  
- 10 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) Sister Moon and the Stars.
- 11 In heaven you have formed them, bright, precious, and beautiful.
  
- 12 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) Brother Wind,
- 13 And Air, for Cloud, and Clear, and all weather,
- 14 By which you give your creatures nourishment.
  
- 15 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) Sister Water,
- 16 She is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.
  
- 17 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) Brother Fire,
- 18 By whom you light up the night.
- 19 How handsome he is, how happy, how powerful and strong!
  
- 20 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) our Sister, Mother Earth.
- 21 Who nourishes and governs us,
- 22 And produces various fruits with many-colored flowers and herbs.

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<sup>36</sup> Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World’s Greatest Hymn Stories* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 10–11.

<sup>37</sup> John Varley Roberts, ed., *The Victoria Book of Hymns* (London: Weekes, 1897).

<sup>38</sup> This information was presented on the hymnary.org web page and no additional information to date has been found regarding its editor, compiler or publisher. [http://www.hymnary.org/text/all\\_creatures\\_of\\_our\\_god\\_and\\_king](http://www.hymnary.org/text/all_creatures_of_our_god_and_king) (accessed 2/12/13).

23 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) those who grant pardon for love of you  
24 And who endure infirmity and tribulation.

25 Blessed are those who endure them in peace,  
26 For by you, Most High, they will be crowned.

27 Be praised, my Lord, for (through) our Sister, Bodily Death,  
28 From whom no man living can escape.

29 Woe to those who die in mortal sin!  
30 Blessed are those whom she shall find in your most holy will,  
31 The second death shall do them no evil.

32 Praise and bless the Lord,  
33 And give thanks and serve him with great humility.<sup>39</sup>

Although Francis's canticle contains strong images of the Psalm 148 text, it also uses the language and images of the apocryphal reading of the "Song (or Canticum) of Three Children."<sup>40</sup> A text that is understood to be an addition to Daniel 3 and inserted between verses 3:23 and 3:24.

Sorrell believes that Francis's canticle metamorphoses Psalm 148 and the "Canticum" into something distinct.<sup>41</sup> Although there is unquestionable agreement among scholars that Francis depended on these two liturgical texts—all three texts follow a noticeable step-like progression, first addressing the Lord with thanksgiving and then turning to God's creation—both the Psalm and "Canticum" offer a more general address before proceeding to the more specific identification of the creatures.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi*, 101. Some of Sorrell's translation has been changed to reflect more correctly the Latin text and to emphasize Sorrell's in-depth analysis on the Latin conjunction *per*, which will be discussed later in this section.

<sup>40</sup> Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., "The Song of the Three Young Men," in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University, 1977), 209.

<sup>41</sup> Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature* (New York: Oxford University, 1988), 103.

<sup>42</sup> A side-by-side reproduction of Psalm 148, The Song of the Three Young Men, Francis's "Canticum of Brother Sun", the hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King," and Stephen Starke's "All You Works of God, Bless the Lord" can be found in appendix 1.

The “Canticle of Brother Sun” was written between the years 1224 and 1226. At one time there was much controversy among Italian authors over where Francis wrote his canticle. The controversy found some resolution in the *Legend of Perugia*, written between 1310 and 1312. The legend states that the main section was written at two different times and in two different places in Francis’s life. It suggests that the “nature-segments” (strophes 1–25) were written during the winter of 1224–1225 while he was in seclusion in a hut near San Damiano, Italy. Strophes 26–30 were written sometime later in order to stop a feud between the bishop and *podestà* at Assisi. The final strophes of the canticle, those that discuss “sister death,” were added only a few days before his death on October 3, 1226.<sup>43</sup>

The other account has to do with the day in the year 1224 that Francis’s companion and friend, Brother Leo, witnessed that Francis was afflicted with Christ’s stigmata. The story is told that around the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, while Francis was praying, the wounds of Christ’s crucifixion became visible on his body. Could these wounds have played a role in Francis’s writing of his Canticle?<sup>44</sup> Both accounts reflect a similar historical time period and provide similar evidence of Francis being away from his typical residence for a time of prayer and meditation. Whether he received the stigmata is a side note, but it might help explain the pain and nearness to death he experienced as his writing came to an end in 1226.

The hymn “All Creatures of Our God and King” was originally published with seven verses (as seen above), while most hymnals today include only five verses (usually removing verse four, and then either verse five or six). The repeated “alleluias” were not found in the original text but fit well with the tunes chosen today.

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<sup>43</sup> Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi*, 98.

<sup>44</sup> Charles G. Herbermann, ed., *Fathers—Gregory*, vol. 6 of *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1909), 226.

Today the hymn can be found in *LW* 436, *LBW* 527, *New English Hymnal* 263, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* 105, and *Hymns of Glory* 147. Although the hymn typically falls under the heading of “Praise and Adoration” or “Time and Seasons,” *Hymns of Glory* places it under the heading “God’s Activity in Creation.” *Hymns Ancient and Modern* places it under “Creator, Ruler, Father.” Both headings encourage the use of the hymn more frequently in that they are not placed under a specific seasonal section.<sup>45</sup> An additional translation of Francis’s canticle can be found under the title “All You Works of God, Bless the Lord,”<sup>46</sup> written by Stephen Starke in 1995 or under the heading *Benedicite*<sup>47</sup> as found in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Community of Creation Uniting in Praise:** Francis’s hymn represents this chapter’s theme as it reveals the creature’s purpose as one of praise. Francis implies that all creation is responsible for praising its Creator. Each verse of the hymn names a creature of God and bids it to praise the Creator. Francis gives vivid detail to each creature: the wind wild and strong and the water pure and clear.

When the hymn “All Creatures of Our God and King” is set alongside Francis’s “Canticle of Brother Sun,” there is one striking element missing. In the canticle, Francis addresses the various creatures within creation as “brothers and sisters.” The sun, wind, and fire are called brothers while the moon, stars, water, and even death are called sisters. Using these terms provides a more familial community of creation. This address is not picked up in the other

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<sup>45</sup> The Hymn Society of the United States and Canada, “A Comprehensive Index of Hymns and Hymnals,” <http://www.hymnary.org> (accessed on February 12, 2013).

<sup>46</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, “All You Works of God, Bless the Lord,” *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 930.

<sup>47</sup> Church of England, *The Alternative Service Book 1980* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1980), 90–92.

hymns. Instead, the elements of creation are addressed simply as a second person singular “thou.”

**Poetry and Imagery:** Each work has a unique rhythm and rhyme, and each adds to the list of creatures and their descriptors. Whereas Psalm 148 and “Canticum” just provide a list of the names of God’s creatures like the sun, Francis’s canticle provides more descriptive details: “Brother Sun, who brings the day, and you give light to us through him.” This can also be said of “All Creatures of Our God and King.” Observe the vivid details that are added about the creature sun: “O burning sun with golden beam.” The canticle and the hymn describe the sun’s purpose and worth in creation. In the final translation, “All You Works of God, Bless the Lord,” the language returns simply to listing the creatures in similar fashion to Psalm 148 with the exception of asking the sun to sing.

Both Psalm 148 and the “Canticum” resemble the creation account in Genesis as described by Dietrich Bonhoeffer when God spoke creation into place. Bonhoeffer suggests, God first creates the spaces of earth then fills them: the firmaments are created, and the waters and the land fill them. Finally he fills the waters and the land with his animate creatures, the birds, the fish, the beasts, and his human creature.<sup>48</sup> While both Psalm 148 and the “Canticum” follow pattern, Francis’s canticle does not.

Francis’s “Canticum of Brother Sun” adds not only the familial relation to the creature, but it describes the creature’s role and its purpose and provides an image of God’s creature. This implies that all creation has purpose aside from humankind, and that purpose is simply to praise God. When a tree buds each spring, it praises God. When a bird builds its nest to care for its young or when it fills the air with song, it is praising God. When the human creature cares for

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<sup>48</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1–3* (New York: Macmillan, 1959).

God's creation and their neighbor, they too are praising. Each unique creature of God praises him by being who God created it to be.

Sorrell studies Francis's use of the Latin conjunction *per* to determine whether the Francis's canticle was meant to invoke praise of God *for* creation or *through* creation. Sorrell believes his purpose was the latter. When seen this way, Francis gives thanks both to God and his creatures for ministering to our human needs. Thus, the message of the Canticle is both appreciative (to God) and ecological:

It [The Canticle] is appreciative in that people are instructed to value creation on at least three levels: the symbolic (the sun as signifying God), the aesthetic (Brother Fire as beautiful), and utilitarian (the sun gives light, the earth is feed the people). It is ecological in that it explicitly rejects a view of creation that would objectify it and take it for granted as being worthless and irrelevant unless it proves serviceable to humanity.<sup>49</sup>

For Sorrell, Francis's canticle expresses thanksgiving *through* (*per*) creation as God's agents of praise.

In the hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King" many of Francis's original descriptors are retained, but the hymn adds even more detail. Both Francis's canticle and the hymn devote more time to describing the creatures when compared to the lists that are found in the psalm and the "Canticum". For example, while the "Canticum" and psalm associate the earth with its fruit, Francis's canticle and the hymn connect the fruit of the earth to God's love and his immanence; it is God who feeds it, rules it, and allows for numerous flowers and herbs to flourish in it. The same can be said for the way Francis addresses the waters in strophes fifteen and sixteen. Although the hymn does not contain all the intricate details as Francis portrayed in his canticle, it does portray a deeper understanding of God's creation and links the creatures to their relationship with God and the rest of creation.

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<sup>49</sup> Sorrell, *Francis of Assisi*, 123. The parenthetical insertions are Sorrell's.

In a final translation, “All You Works of God, Bless the Lord,” written by Stephen Starke, all the vivid descriptors and details of the creature have been removed, and it begins to look more like Psalm 148 and “The Canticum of Three Children.”

In summary, Sorrel writes that while Psalm 148 and the “Canticum” join together humankind with creation in a common praise of God, Francis’s canticle links the “people to creation directly and emotionally—with love and joy.”<sup>50</sup> Francis wants his readers to understand that it is its own beauty that inspires all creation to praise their Creator.

**Christian Confession:** Both Francis’s “Canticle of Brother Sun” and its paraphrase, the hymn “All Creatures of our God and King,” provide a distinctive Christian perspective as they highlight and focus on the entire creation praising the Creator. The hymn “All Creatures of our God and King” brings to light that each creature has a place and purpose, and each creature express praise simply by being who God created it to be.

### **Think of the World Without Any Flowers**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Think of a world without any flowers,  
think of a wood without any trees,  
think of a sky without any sunshine,  
think of the air without any breeze.  
We thank you, Lord, for flowers and trees and sunshine,  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

2 Think of a world without any animals,  
think of a field without any herd,  
think of a stream without any fishes,  
think of a dawn without any bird.  
We thank you, Lord, for all your living creatures,  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

3 Think of a world without any people,  
think of a street with no one living there,

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<sup>50</sup> Sorrell, *Francis of Assisi*, 108.



think of a town without any houses,  
no-one to love and nobody to care.  
We thank you, Lord, for families and friendships,  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.<sup>51</sup>

Verse two above was missing on the website where a version of Newport's original hymn was found. It also contained the two additional verses below, but its authorship remained the same.<sup>52</sup>

4 Think of a world without any worship,  
think of a God without his only Son,  
think of a cross without a resurrection  
only a grave and not a victory won:  
we thank you, Lord, for showing us our Savior;  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

5 Thanks to our Lord for being here among us,  
thanks be to him for sharing all we do,  
thanks for our church and all the love we find here,  
thanks for this place and all its promise true:  
we thank you, Lord, for life in all its richness;  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Doreen E. Newport was born in 1927 and died in 2004. Although not much is known about her personal life, she was known as "Bunty" to her friends. She was the music teacher at Emmanuel United Reformed Church. She was a skilled pianist and a trained soprano.<sup>53</sup> Newport with the assistance of the children from Emmanuel Junior Church wrote the hymn in Cambridge in 1966.

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<sup>51</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* (Suffolk, Great Britain: Canterbury, 2008), 155.

<sup>52</sup> The website contains either the original poem or a rendition of the hymn, "Think of a World Without Any Flowers." The website only states the authors name Bunty Newport and the children from Emmanuel Junior Church, Cambridge, 1966. <http://www.rwlswann.org.uk/archive/songs/hymns/t/thinkofaworld.htm> (accessed March 10, 2013).

<sup>53</sup> J. R. Watson and Emma Hornby eds., *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, <http://www.hymnody.co.uk/d/doreen-newport> (accessed February 2, 2014).

Those that knew and worked with Newport claim she had a deep concern for the damage caused to earth by humankind. A blogger known only as Tony the prof mused about the application of Newport's hymn when compared to the earth's present condition and amplified it the following way, "The words of the hymn provide a prophetic warning about what climate change and man's greedy exploitation of natural resources may bring about."<sup>54</sup> He continues,

Trees are being destroyed . . . at a frightening rate. Think of a world without any trees. The use of chemical pesticides may well be depleting the bee population . . . without bees flower and fruit pollination would not take place. Think of a world without any flowers.

The oceans are overfished or polluted. Think a stream without any fishes . . . ecosystems are so tightly knit that a fall in fish . . . could lead to a critical fall in numbers of sea birds that depend up them. Think of a dawn without any bird.

Milk cows are being treated like battery animals, feeding, milking . . . not allowed to graze . . . Think of a world without any herd. Animals are being hunted to extinction across the world, their habitats are being destroyed. Think of a world without any animals.

We live in a fragmented society . . . people are being treated like cogs in a bureaucratic machine. The old are left on their own . . . no one to love and nobody to care.<sup>55</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** "Think of a World Without Any Flowers" was written as a way to express praise for the Creator by lamenting God's damaged creation. In order to inspire a love of creation in the young people of the church, Newport commissioned the youth of Emmanuel Junior Church to write a hymn about pollution. The results of this assignment varied from adequate to embarrassing; therefore she attempted an alternative approach. Instead of asking the youth to work individually, she gathered them

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<sup>54</sup> Tony the Prof, "Think of a World Without Any Flowers," Tony's Musings Blog, entry posted Sunday, 30 September 2012. <http://tonymusings.blogspot.com/2012/09/think-of-world-without-any-flowers.html> (accessed March 10, 2013).

<sup>55</sup> Tony the Prof, "Think of a World Without Any Flowers," Tony's Musings Blog, entry posted Sunday, 30 September 2012. <http://tonymusings.blogspot.com/2012/09/think-of-world-without-any-flowers.html> (accessed March 10, 2013).

together as a group. As she had already sketched out the first line of the hymn, the rest was not difficult to write collaboratively. The result is the hymn as we see it today.<sup>56</sup> The hymn received its copyright in 1969 and was published in 2005.

Since this hymn was written in 1966, one might infer that Newport read and reflected on Rachael Carson's book *Silent Spring*, which was published in 1962. Carson's book had a huge impact on American thinking. It assisted in launching what today is known as the environmental movement. Carson argues that the extensive use of pesticides throughout the country was not only harming but killing the animals and birds as well as the human population.<sup>57</sup> Newport's hymn provides a vision of what the earth might look like if it had not been damaged by human neglect.

Today Newport's hymn can be found in *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* #155 under the heading "The Activity of God—God in Creation." Unfortunately, this hymnal only contains the first three verses.

### **The Hymn's Theological Content**

**Theme of Community of Creation Uniting in Praise:** This hymn represents the creature's praise for God from a completely different angle than we saw in the previous hymn or the hymns that will follow. In this hymn, we experience the author's lament over what the world might look like if the human creature continues to damage God's creation. Newport's hymn asks the reader to imagine a "world without:" without trees, without sunshine, without birds and fish. It is not easy to picture the "world without," for example, the dawn of the first spring day without chirping birds.

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<sup>56</sup> Newport, "Think of a World Without Any Flowers," <http://www.rwlswann.org.uk/archive/songs/hymns/t/thinkofaworld.htm> (accessed March 10, 2013).

<sup>57</sup> Rachael Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

**Poetry and Imagery:** The type of praise identified in this hymn can be found in an often-unfamiliar psalm, Psalm 77. This type of psalm is a lament. The psalmist cries aloud to God so that he might be heard. In his day of trouble, he seeks the Lord; at night his hand is stretched out, and his soul refuses to be comforted. He thinks of God and moans. The psalmist asks, “Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion” (Ps. 77:9)? As the psalmist meditates on this, he is reminded of the works of God and the wonders of old. He recalls that God is still the God of great wonders; he is the God that redeems and saves his people. He is the God that controls his creation from his first word that brought light to creation to a clap of thunder. Halfway through the psalm in verse 11, there is a change in the plea. Now the psalmist’s lament turns to praise. He moves from sorrow and frustration to a heart filled with gratitude for what God has done. Derek Kinder sees Psalm 77 as a musing in two moods: the moods of darkness and despair and the joy of light and faith. He sees the psalmist turn self-centered despair to God-centered faith and joy.<sup>58</sup>

The basic elements of a lament as found in the psalm find expression in Newport’s hymn. Although Newport’s hymn and Psalm 77 are not directly connected, like Psalm 77, Newport’s hymn also moves from despair to joy. Her hymn makes humanity aware of the transience of the created things of earth. Just as the psalmist cries to the Lord in fear of what is happening around him and turns toward God to remember his promises and mighty deeds, Newport turns her thoughts away from what might not remain in the world toward what God has made and his promise of providence in the world.

**Christian Confession:** Theologically, Newport raises some important questions. For example, is it possible for humans to destroy God’s creation? And would God allow this to

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<sup>58</sup> Kinder, *Psalms 73–150*, 277.

happen? Up until the nineteenth century, Christians would have denied that they were capable of pushing entire species to the brink of extinction, yet today it is a very visible fact.

Although Newport's hymn is not widely known or used in most church hymnals, it does provide a unique way for the Christians to think about praise following sorrow. As Achtemeier stated earlier, humankind can either continue to silence God's choir through extinction of his creatures or they can assist in bringing songs of praise back to his creation.

### **Nourished by the Rainfall**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Nourished by the rainfall, the earth can come alive;  
woodlands swell with splendour, the moors and meadows thrive.  
Flowers of every colour now raise their heads in pride,  
praising God their maker throughout the countryside.  
Each flower has its purpose, and every petal its place,  
each celebrates glory, each speaks of God's good grace.

*Refrain: All, all creation delights to worship the Lord.  
Let those in God's image respond in deed and word.*

2 Birds that wake the morning and fill the evening sky,  
sing not to please us humans, but to praise God on high.  
Nightingale and curlew, the robin, rook, and wren,  
first rehearse their anthem, then sing it through again.  
Each bird has its purpose, and every song its place,  
each celebrates glory, each speaks of God's good grace.

3 Every land and nation, each woman, child, and man,  
find their root and reason before the world began;  
all by God were destined to hear the Savior's call,  
and choose to give him nothing, or gladly give him all.  
Each soul has its purpose, and every child has its place,  
each celebrates glory, each speaks of God's good grace.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, "Nourished By the Rainfall," *Hymns of Glory Hymns of Praise* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2008), 138.

## The Hymn's Historical Context

**Composer's Biography:** Pablo Fernandez Badillo composed the hymn "Nourished by the Rainfall." Later the hymn was either translated or rewritten into English by John Lamberton Bell. Very little information is available about Badillo other than his birth in 1919 and authorship of this hymn. Thus this dissertation will examine Bell as the author of the English version of this hymn. Bell was born in 1949 in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. He is a hymn writer, minister in the Church of Scotland, and a member of the Iona Community. The Iona Community was founded in 1938, and today is a monastic setting where Christians work and live together in order to work for peace and social justice, rebuilding community, and the renewal of worship, with a strong commitment to the integrity of creation.<sup>60</sup> The Iona Community publishes most of Bell's songs and hymns. In 1994, by way of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Bell convened the Church of Scotland's Panel on Worship to revise the *Church of Scotland's Church Hymnary* (CH4), which was published in 2005.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** As was mentioned earlier, the original context and date of translation of the hymn "Nourished by the Rainfall" is unknown. This makes it difficult to determine precisely when the hymn was written. It was more than likely influenced by the environmental movement of the twentieth century as it speaks to human responsibility for creation. Today the hymn can be found in *Hymns of Glory Hymns of Praise* #138 under the heading "The Activity of God—God in Creation."

## The Hymn's Theological Content

**Theme of Community of Creation Uniting in Praise:** This hymn accentuates the purpose and place of all God's creatures within the wider creation. Although previous hymns highlighted

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<sup>60</sup> For more information about the Iona Community visit the website at: <http://iona.org.uk/>.

how the entire creation praises God, “Nourished by the Rainfall” makes the point that each of these creatures has its own niche within God’s creation. The hymn summons the human creature to recognize its specific purpose and place within creation. The hymn emphasizes God’s good grace by envisioning the creature in its given role. The flower opens its face in color, the bird chirps its song, and the human nurtures and cares for creation.

**Poetry and Imagery:** The author leads the reader through the elements of inanimate and animate creation using vivid language. The hymn picks up on a particular countryside as the author speaks of wetlands, moors, meadows, curlews, and rooks. Each of them is specific to a certain landscape located outside the United States, in this case, probably Scotland. The verses of the hymn each use formulaic metaphoric language. Each verse contains approximately four lines that introduce a creature of God’s creation: the flower in verse one, the bird in verse two, and human creatures in verse three. It then places the name of that creature in the following line, “each \_\_\_\_\_ has its purpose, and every \_\_\_\_\_ its place, each celebrates glory, each speaks of God’s good grace.” Each verse then concludes with the following refrain: “All, all of creation delights to worship the Lord. Let those in God’s image respond in deed and word.” Each verse of the hymn states that each creature celebrates God’s glory by fulfilling the purpose that God intended.

The hymn’s title and first line of verse one, “Nourished By the Rainfall,” imply a necessary substance required for life, health, and growth, but when that is combined with the rest of the first line, “the earth can come alive,” a powerful image of the Creator’s hand reaching into his creation is evoked. When rain falls from the skies, “the meadows swell with splendour, the moors and meadows thrive. Flowers of every colour now raise their heads in pride.” One can almost imagine the meadows grinning as they soak in the fresh water the flowers shaking

themselves to wipe the rain from their petals in order to open their faces to shine and glorify God, their maker, as if to say, “Thank you, Lord.”

In verse two, the author introduces God’s creature, the bird. The bird’s song “wakes the morning and fills the evening sky.” This verse shifts from a picture of the creatures on the ground to sounds of creation in the skies. Every morning one can hear the birds as they bring in the morning light through song. As the sun sets by God’s command, the skies are lit in dramatic color, and the birds become a black silhouette as they escort out the day’s end with another song. The next line in verse two is probably the most important in the verse because it tells the reason for their singing: “they sing not to please humans, but to praise God on high.”

Verse three turns its attention to human creatures. It begins by stating that they all “find their root and reason before the world began,” implying that a Creator is in control. In this verse, the imagery and/or metaphors have gone away, and we are left with cold hard facts. The human was “destined to hear the Savior’s call,” each and every human creature is given the same purpose: to be in an intimate relationship with the Creator. Lutheran theology would say that this relationship is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit in baptism. This hymn, on the other hand, gives evidence of decision theology in that once the call has been given, the creature “chooses to give him nothing, or gladly give him all.”

Within these verses, each created being celebrates God’s glory by fulfilling God’s purpose. Richard Bauckham asserts that while Christians encounter the theme of creation praising its Creator as seen in Psalm 148, they are apt not to take the text seriously. For Bauckham, texts such as Psalm 148 are not just metaphors but metaphors that point to a reality. “All creatures bring glory to God simply by being themselves and fulfilling their God-given roles in God’s creation. A tree does not need to do anything specific in order to praise God; still less need it be



conscious of anything. Simply by being and growing it praises God.”<sup>61</sup> While this idea of each creature having a purpose and a place has been highlighted in other hymns, this hymn does it uniquely by calling each creature by its distinct name. Each is a unique creation of God. Each has its own place and purpose inaugurated when the world was created and each worships and celebrates the Lord, the maker of all. This provides Christians with an ecological vision of interconnectedness. Everything that God created works together in community aiming for the same goal: to give glory to God.

As verse three implies, the human creature has a unique role and responsibility. The hymn identifies these three main points. First, it declares that humans share in the purpose of all creation: to worship the Lord. Second, it leads the reader, “those in God’s image” (drawing upon Gen. 1:26), to consider their own purpose and place in God’s creation. And third, it raises the importance of God’s continued goodness. Those created in God’s image are fed by the same hand that feeds all other creatures of the earth. Yet, the human has the responsibility to pray and care for God’s creation. The hymn asks those created in God’s image to respond in word and deed. So, what might this response look like? Humankind’s response could look different from one person to another. One might choose to clean up local rivers of its pollution. Others might create more green space for plants and animals instead of parking lots or shopping malls. A church might include daily prayers that focus on praising God for the gifts of creation or confessing the damage it has inflicted upon his creation. Finally, the hymn highlights how each creature in its own way “celebrates glory and speaks of God’s good grace.” God’s grace is his favor for creation. Each creature glorifies God by being who God created it to be thereby showing forth the glory of the Creator. For example, the branch of a tree provides shelter from

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<sup>61</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 79.

the sun's rays, or it can house the nest of a bird. The ocean influences climate and weather patterns. In this hymn, the author makes it clear that each creature celebrates glory and speaks of God's good grace by simply being who God created it to be; this includes the human creature.

**Christian Concern:** None of the hymns analyzed as of yet reflect on the creature's purpose or place within creation. This hymn does that well from a Christian perspective. It also picks up on the human's purpose and place, which God provided before the world began. Here the refrain and verse three are tied together, speaking directly to the human creature. The expressed reference to the "Savior's call" makes it clear that this hymn is addressing Christians. It further suggests that Christians, above all, should best recognize and embrace creation as God's good work and thus embrace their own role within creation. When the human creature manages God's creation properly, then he too is praising God as he was created to do.

### **God of the Sparrow**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 God of the sparrow God of the whale  
God of the swirling stars  
How does the creature say Awe  
How does the creature say Praise.

2 God of the earthquake God of the storm  
God of the trumpet blast  
How does the creature cry Woe  
How does the creature cry Save.

3 God of the rainbow God of the cross  
God of the empty grave  
How does the creature say Grace  
How does the creature say Thanks.

4 God of the hungry God of the sick  
God of the prodigal (wayward child)  
How does the creature say Care  
How does the creature say Life.

5 God of the neighbor God of the foe  
God of the pruning hook  
How does the creature say Love  
How does the creature say Peace.

6 God of the ages God near at hand  
God of the loving heart  
How do your children say Joy  
How do your children say Home.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Jaroslav J. Vajda, a well-known author in Lutheran circles, wrote the hymn "God of the Sparrow" in 1983. Vajda was born in 1919 and died in 2008 at the age of eighty-nine. He is of Slovak descent, born to a Lutheran pastor who served many years in East Chicago, Indiana. Vajda himself became a Lutheran pastor in 1944, receiving his Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Vajda received musical training early in life, playing the violin by age twelve and later became interested in translating Slovak poetry and short stories into English.<sup>63</sup>

Although Vajda wrote over 200 original hymns, he did not write his first hymn until age forty-nine. During his life he served on two Lutheran hymnal commissions, the *Hymnal Supplement* (1969) and the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). After serving as pastor for many years, he was called to serve as editor of "This Day" magazine and later served as an editor and developer at Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>64</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Concordia Lutheran Church in Kirkwood, Missouri, gave Vajda good reason to create a hymn. In 1983, the church

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<sup>62</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "God of the Sparrow," *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2006), 740.

<sup>63</sup> Carl Schalk, "Commentary for Vajda Hymn Sing," presented at WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts in Kenosha, WI, July 2002.

<sup>64</sup> Schalk, "Commentary for Vajda Hymn Sing."

commissioned him to join them in celebrating its one-hundred-and-tenth anniversary. After forty years of ministry, Vajda was still fascinated by what motivated proper and effective Christian service in the church. So for the occasion Vajda wanted “to compose a hymn text that would provide answers from the users of the hymn as to why and how God’s creatures (and children) are to serve him. The Law of God demands perfect love from every creature; the love of God and the Gospels coax a willing response to live as an expression of gratitude.”<sup>65</sup>

The text was first arranged with a tune composed by David Christian for Concordia Lutheran Church. Later, the text was joined with a tune written by Carl Schalk. Schalk’s tune and Vajda’s text were first sung together in 1987 at the convention of the Hymn Society of Canada and the United States in Ft. Worth, Texas.<sup>66</sup> Today, the Vajda/Schalk collaboration is one of the most widely used in hymnals.

Carl Schalk writes, “Vajda’s texts are a sign to God’s people, a sign of hopefulness, expectation, and promise . . . a sign that the Holy Spirit has not forsaken his church.”<sup>67</sup> He contends that Vajda’s writing contains three unique features. The first is his ability to strike a new image and/or reshape old ones in his texts. Second is his fondness for using fewer textual meters and forms, which provokes interest for his listeners, and third is Vajda’s unique ability to impose strong theological thrust into his text.

Peter Bower, a Presbyterian pastor is convinced that Vajda’s hymn gives voice to basic convictions of the Christian faith by referencing Scriptural texts that begin with Genesis and run through Revelation.<sup>68</sup> His article will be used as a guide for analyzing Vajda’s hymn.

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<sup>65</sup> Jaroslav J. Vajda, *Sing Peace, Sing Gift of Peace* (St. Louis: Concordia, 203), 104–5.

<sup>66</sup> Vajda, *Sing Peace*, 104–5.

<sup>67</sup> Schalk, “Commentary for Vajda Hymn Sing,” 1.

<sup>68</sup> Peter C. Bower, “An Artistic Creation Which ‘Directs Attention to What God Has Done *and* to the Claim that God Makes Upon Human Life’: Jaroslav Vajda’s God of the Sparrow,” *Reformed Liturgy and Music* (Summer

Vajda wrote “God of the Sparrow” in 1983. This was a time when Americans had become more environmentally conscious because of the founding of the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. It was also a period of time in which the church had become increasingly urbanized and thus more distanced from the wider creation. As noted, Vajda wanted to provoke the users of the hymn to consider why and how they as God’s creatures could best serve him. He answers the question, how does the Christian, God’s creature, express with actions something significant to God and the world in response for the love he has shown?

In 1997 Robin Knowles Wallace, assistant Professor of Worship and Music at Methodist Theological School in Delaware, Ohio, wrote that the hymn was once considered one of the most popular hymns in congregations over the past several years since it appealed to people of every age.<sup>69</sup> Today the hymn can be found in only one hymnal, *Worship* #740 under the heading “Creation.”

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Community of Creation Uniting in Praise:** This hymn has a creedal structure, moving from creation to redemption and sanctification on a biblical journey from Genesis to Revelation. Verse one highlights creation. Verse two shows God’s judgment and man’s broken relationship with creation. While verse three speaks of human redemption. The hymn also highlights the importance of relationships. Christ is sent to heal those broken relationships, first with God (*coram Deo*) and then with creation (*coram mundo*). Once the creature’s relationship with God is healed, the focus turns to reconciliation with neighbor as seen in verses four and five.

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1994): 147–50.

<sup>69</sup> Robin Knowles Wallace, “God of the Sparrow God of the Whale,” *The Hymn* 48 (1997): 60.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Vajda was a trained musician and early in life showed interest in literature especially in poetry. In this hymn, “God of the Sparrow,” Vajda uses allusion and parallelism to provide a deeper meaning in the text. As the author portrays images of God’s creatures he does two things: first he provides an allusion to a biblical text and then he creates parallelism between the creatures presented. Each verse of the hymn is broken into two parts: the first portion focuses on the specific creature, such as, the sparrow, the rainbow, the storm, and the hungry, while the second part asks poignant rhetorical questions. Peter Bower compresses Vajda’s hymn into six words: creation, judgment, redemption, outreach, reconciliation, and steadfast love.

Vajda’s hymn contains a few features that the reader notices early. The hymn lacks punctuation and rhyme, creating an openness in the hymn while maintaining its structure through parallelism. Each of the six verses is perfectly balanced. In the first two lines of each verse, Vajda names the creatures of God and then visually depicts the relationship between them. The last two lines of each verse pose rhetorical questions that begin with “How does the creature . . . ?” The lack of punctuation suggests that the author is not so much expecting an answer but is instead making a statement that asks one to ponder the relationship between the Creator and the creature. This is a unique element of this hymn and the chapter’s theme.

Each verse creates an artificial movement between two rhetorical questions. For example, verse one begins with “How does the creature say Awe, How does the creature say Praise.” The two words *awe* and *praise* connect directly to the creatures that were listed in the first two lines. Vajda begins with the smaller creature and builds in size towards the vastness of the universe, moving the reader to stand in awe, which ignites a response of praise for the Creator.

As Bower suggests, verse one reflects creation. It begins with a progression from the sparrow, to the whale, and finally to the swirling stars showing God's range of creatures from small to large and his hand in creation still today. The sparrow evokes texts such as Ps. 84:3, "Even the sparrow find a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young," and Ps. 104:25–26, "Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan which thou didst form to sport in it." The swirling stars evoke Job 38:6b–7, "Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together." God is at creation's center, and he demands all creation to recognize him as the Creator. The verse ends by asking, "What is the creature's response?"

Verse two uses a similar device. The list of creatures—earthquake, storm, and trumpet—trigger images of danger while the rhetorical questions convey a typical reaction to those dangers: woe, which causes the creature to plead for the Creator to save. In highlighting earthquakes, storms, and the trumpet blast, the verse evokes texts such as Isaiah 29:6, "And in an instant, suddenly, you will be visited by the Lord of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise," or Job 9:6, "Who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble." The word Bower uses for this verse is *judgment*.

Paul Schilling, in his article "God and Nature," suggests that verse two voices "the doubts and perplexities aroused by the violence of nature, yet expresses truth that divine purpose will ultimately triumph, and that in the meantime God will give us strength to endure."<sup>70</sup> The vision of God's creatures, the birds and whales and swirling stars, are quickly shattered in verse two. Thus the creature comes face-to-face with the reality that God's judgment and his power reign in creation.

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<sup>70</sup> Paul Schilling, "God and Nature," *The Hymn* 42 (1991): 24–28.

Vajda continues this reflection with each verse, asking the reader to focus on the connection posed by the rhetorical questions. In verse three, Vajda makes a list of God's promises, the rainbow and the cross, and ends with the empty grave, posing the question, "How does the creature say grace?" This leaves the creature with an impossible question and the ability to say only "Thanks." Verse three turns the reader's attention to God's redemptive power. The verse begins with the rainbow, a sign of the covenant made between God and the earth. Seven times between Gen. 9:9 and Gen. 9:17, God tells Noah that he has made a covenant with the earth and every living creature never again to destroy the earth. Ultimately, God's promise is fulfilled when Jesus freely goes to the cross on Calvary and gives his life as a ransom for man's sin. Jesus' resurrection breaks creation's bond with Satan, sin, and death. Vajda wonders at the end of verse three how the creature is ever to respond to the overwhelming love God shows his people throughout the many generations.

The parallelism in verse four turns the reader to the human creature. It evokes images of the parable of the lost son in Luke 15:11–32. The text describes one who has it all but becomes hungry and returns to his home in humble repentance. This poses the rhetorical questions, "How do we care?" and, "How do we give thanks to the maker of all?" Bauckham suggests that maybe the human is placed after the rest of creation in the creation account and at the end of Psalm 104 because he is the most reluctant of God's creatures to praise his Creator.<sup>71</sup> Bower calls this the verse of outreach. It highlights God's immanence with creation and vocalizes God's pathos.

In verse five, Vajda recalls the images of Isaiah 2, a time when nations shall gather, all conflicts shall cease, and the people "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isa. 2:4). The text moves from conflict to peace. Pruning hooks and

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<sup>71</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 78.



plowshares now replace the tools of war. The verse recounts the community of all creation, both neighbor and foe, showing concern for each member of the community.

Bower refers to verse five as the verse of reconciled relationships. Here the biblical stories that may have influenced Vajda are “The Good Samaritan” and “The Sermon on the Mount” in which Christ teaches people to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute them (Matt. 5:44). The text highlights Isa. 2:4 and Mic. 4:3 when a spear for battle turns into a pruning hook for plowing. A weapon of violence and war becomes an agricultural tool used to produce peace by providing care for one’s neighbor. How is the creature able to show love or peace to foe or neighbor? It starts by first laying down the sword and helping one’s neighbor.

In the final verse, Vajda provides an image of God’s continual love from ages long ago to times that are near at hand and to the intimate relationship God has with each of his children. That personal relationship causes Vajda to make a simple yet delicate shift in his language from “creature” to “children.” Once back in relationship with their Maker, God’s children now respond in joy. With verse six, the hymn has come full circle. The relationships *coram mundo* and *coram Deo* have been repaired as depicted in verses one through five. Bower considers verse six the verse of steadfast love. The final question of verse six asks, “How do your children say Joy, how do your children say Home?” Joy is found in healed relationships. In Christian baptism, the human creature is killed and made alive in Christ. Home for a child of God is “the end of the baptismal journey.”<sup>72</sup> Bower directs the reader to Psalm 90:1, “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place.” Here God himself becomes the creature’s dwelling place, refuge, shelter, and final home. “Home is not spatial (place) but relational (person).”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Bower, “An Artistic Creation,” 150.

<sup>73</sup> Bower, “An Artistic Creation,” 150.

**Christian Confession:** Vajda is a Christian Lutheran pastor and his hymn proclaims that all creatures belong to God. Everything created whether animate or inanimate belongs to the Creator of all. Bower's overall hymn analysis presents the entire Christian narrative in six words: creation, judgment, redemption, outreach, reconciliation, and steadfast love.

## **Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter's theme, "The Community of Creation Uniting in Praise," highlights the interdependence of all life. The chapter began by introducing the language of Psalm 148 as a template for contemplating why creation praises God. It highlighted several characteristics, two in particular, which show what a community of creation looks like. And finally, by way of Christian hymnody, it shows how that the creatures of God express their praise.

There is a community of creation that exists. Since all God's creatures share in his creation, which makes them dependent upon a common Creator, they are by definition a community. As a community they are interdependent. This community not only includes birds, flowers, and humans but the entire creation, including things not often considered, such as, rushing wind, sun, moon, and stars. All of them together comprise this vast community of creation that unites to praise its Creator.

Creation exists to sing forth its praise and to give glory to God. Psalm 148 provides a template for many of the hymns in this chapter. Its words exemplify praise while at the same time give glory to God,

Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!  
Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps  
Kings of the earth and all peoples  
Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted . . . . (Ps. 148:1, 7,  
11, and 13)

Praise finds expression in the first hymn “Praise the Lord of Heaven” by way of the creatures receiving a call to sing the Creator’s praise. The hymn text commands all God’s creatures to raise their voice in praise. In the second hymn, “All Creatures of Our God and King,” the human creature makes a plea to the rest of creation. Praise finds expression when the author asks the readers to understand that is the beauty of God’s creation that inspires creation to praise its Creator. The hymn also brings to light the fact that praise finds expression when all God’s creatures simply do what God created them to do.

Both hymns rely heavily on Psalm 148. The second hymn also relies on the Apocryphal text of “The Song of Three Children.” In the third hymn, “Think of a World Without Any Flowers,” which makes use of Psalm 77, the author uses a lament to express how praise might come about. Midway through Psalm 77 there is a shift in the language from despair to comfort in trusting God. The hymn does this in a similar fashion by considering a “world without.” Quickly the text changes its focus, allowing the reader to focus on the things that are present and, in return, to praise God for them. The hymn “Nourished by the Rainfall” focuses on the human creature, who is created in God’s image. It shows that each creature has a place and purpose within creation. Each creature uniquely celebrates God glory and speaks of God’s good grace. In the final hymn, “God of the Sparrow,” the author asks the reader to focus on the connection between paired words by posing rhetorical questions that begin with “how does the creature say . . . ?” Just as the author made connections with his words, praise in this hymn finds expression when relationships are nurtured with all God’s creatures.

As noted in chapter 1, hymns play a vital role in shaping a Christian’s life. This chapter’s theme carried the largest number of hymns available for this dissertation to consider. Confirming that the church to date has done a good job in choosing hymns that reflect the importance God

places on his creation and his creatures joining together as a community to praise him, but additional work still needs to be done to make this point stronger. Hymns need to be more forthright in language in order to cultivate a more drastic change. This could include choosing hymns that highlight the damage caused to creation at the hand of the human creature. Edith Sinclair Downing's hymn, "Great God, Your Vast Creation,"<sup>74</sup> provides an example of what this looks like. This hymn was written in 2000:

1 Great God, your vast creation breaks forth in joyous praise.  
The creatures with elation their eager voices raise.  
We hear the vibrant chorus of frogs announcing spring.  
The songbirds rise before us and soar on silent wing.  
We hear the gentle lapping as ripples meet the shore,  
and sounds of waves' loud crashing: the mighty oceans' roar.

2 Yet, God, there is pollution of waters which were pure.  
Our wills resist solutions; move us to find a cure.  
We grieve the growing absence of creatures once held dear.  
More mating calls are silenced—those sounds we thrilled to hear.  
Teach us to humbly reverence all life beneath the sun.  
Awake in us awareness our destinies are one.

3 You make us in your image; you give us endless worth.  
Help us as we envisage the sacredness of earth.  
We would reclaim the treasure of rainbows in clear skies,  
and seek to save this pleasure for children's wondering eyes.  
As we face each tomorrow, we pray for strength to dare  
to live as if each sparrow depends upon our care.<sup>75</sup>

Downing pronounces in verse one that the whole creation cries out in praise. By verse two she reveals the damage caused to creation at the hand of the human creature. She highlights the fact that "our wills resist solutions" and prays to "move us to find a cure." She recalls, as did

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<sup>74</sup> Earth Ministry, Creation-Honoring Hymns. <http://earthministry.org/resources/worship-aids/hymns/creation-honoring-hymns> (accessed May 24, 2013).

<sup>75</sup> Earth Ministry, Creation-Honoring Hymns. <http://earthministry.org/resources/worship-aids/hymns/creation-honoring-hymns> (accessed May 24, 2013).

Newport and Achtemeier, the silence of creation and reminds the human of the role they have in caring for God's creation and uniting as a community to praise the Creator.

Seeing creation as a community that together unites in praise cultivates a new way of thinking for the Christian. First, this theme highlights the importance God places on the human not seeing himself as separated from or standing apart from creation but instead as a vital member of creation. Second, this theme shows the creature a new way to appreciate creation. In "Think of A World Without Any Flowers," Newport teaches an appreciation of creation by imagining a world deprived of its beauty. Francis in "All Creatures of our God and King" and Bell in "Nourished by the Rainfall," take praise one-step further. Each suggests that humankind should not appreciate creation because of what it does for them but because of what God has created it to do. When this takes place a stronger community bond is formed. When creation does what it has been created to do it shows forth God's praise. "Creation's praise is not an extra, an addition to what it is, but the shining of its being, the overflowing significance it has in pointing to its Creator simply by being itself."<sup>76</sup>

Finally, the theme of praise helps the Christian to think more theocentrically rather than anthropocentrically. In other words, the hymns guide the reader to think of God and his creation (theocentric) rather than himself (anthropocentric). Humans are important members of God's community, and every creature has the responsibility to offer praise and thanksgiving to God.

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<sup>76</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 79.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HUMAN CREATURELINESS

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Have you commanded the morning since your day began, and caused the dawn to know its place? Have you entered in the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep (Job 38:4–7, 12, and 16)?

This scriptural text epitomizes the vital distinction between the Creator and the creature.

The Creator is in a category by himself. This distinction provides the framework for a Christian worldview. Since Adam and Eve’s original sin—with their desire to be like God—entered the world the human creature has continually desired to be more than God created him to be. To be a creature of God means being dependent upon God, the Creator. Christians confess on a regular basis not only their dependency upon the Creator but also their creatureliness.

“I believe in God, the Father almighty, CREATOR of heaven and earth.”<sup>1</sup> What does this mean? It means, “I am a God’s creature,”<sup>2</sup> by nature dependent upon God and everything else in God’s creation. This is foundational to human identity. The creeds of the church provide theological insight into these facts.

Two theologians who have devoted a fair amount of attention to the theme of creatureliness are Norman Wirzba and Charles Arand. Both of these men draw many of their insights from the writings of Wendell Berry. Norman Wirzba contends that creatureliness goes to the heart of

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<sup>1</sup> The Three Ecumenical Creeds I.1 in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert eds., *Nicene Creed, The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 22–23.

<sup>2</sup> Large Catechism II.13 in Kolb and Wengert, 432.

vocation and human identity. It illuminates who the creature is, where the creature lives, and what the creature is to do.<sup>3</sup> A creature's vocation is best described as the time between creation and resurrection, between life and death; it is the creature's life on earth.<sup>4</sup> Calling upon a Creator signifies dependence upon something or someone other than one's self. Confessing a Creator signifies being created; if one is created, then he is dependent upon another. Charles Arand develops the theme of creatureliness,<sup>5</sup> working from Martin Luther's German text, "I believe that God made me together with all creatures and all that exists."<sup>6</sup> Luther's confession draws attention to the fact that human creatures have "both common creatureliness *with* other creatures as well as distinct creatureliness *apart* from other creatures."<sup>7</sup> The human, as God's creature, is to hold both relationships together and consider each in light of the other. One cannot separate the fact that "God has created him" apart from "together with all that exists."<sup>8</sup> In its most basic form, "creatureliness is inescapably marked by need and by dependence on fellow creatures and a Creator."<sup>9</sup>

Human creatureliness can be divided into two main categories. The first contains characteristics that are shared with all other creatures. All creatures are created, all creatures suffer together and share a common future, and all creatures are dependent upon a common

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<sup>3</sup> Norman Wirzba, "The Art of Creaturely Life: A Question of Human Propriety," *Pro Ecclesia* 22 (2013): 7–28.

<sup>4</sup> Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1957), 166.

<sup>5</sup> "Together with All Creatures," A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (St Louis, April 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Kolb, LC, *BOC*, 432. I am God's creature, that is, that he has given me and constantly sustains my body, soul, and life, my members great and small, all my senses, my reason and understanding, and the like: my food and drink, clothing, nourishment, spouse and children, servants, house and farm, etc. Besides, he makes all creation help provide the benefits and necessities of life—sun, moon, and stars in the heavens; day and night, air, fire, water, the earth and all that it yields and brings forth; birds, fish, animals, grain, and all sorts of produce.

<sup>7</sup> Arand, "Together with All Creatures," 30.

<sup>8</sup> Johannes Schwanke, "Luther on Creation," in *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and The Church*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 78–98.

<sup>9</sup> Wirzba, "The Art of Creaturely Life," 9.

Creator. The second category includes those characteristics that are distinct from other creatures. Human creatures maintain a relationship with God both horizontally and vertically, they are created the image of God, and they have dominion over God's creation.

### **Common Creatureliness**

God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind." And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature (Gen. 1: 1,11, 21, 24 and 2:7).

The most basic common characteristic that all creatures share is the fact that they are created. God first created the heavens and the earth then filled the vast spaces, the sea, land, and sky with all his creatures. His final creation was his human creature. Everything that exists in the heavens and on the earth was spoken into being by the breath of God.

The human creature was formed from the same ground and of the same earth alongside all the other creatures. "And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up the tree" (Gen. 2:9). "Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens" (Gen. 2:19). All God's creatures came from the earth; they all breathe the same air and are all fed from the same ground. Wendell Berry observes, "The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life."<sup>10</sup>

All creatures come from the same earth and are given life by the same God. "Then the Lord formed the man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the

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<sup>10</sup> Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 86.



man became a living creature”(Gen. 2:7).<sup>11</sup> God made us *napsôt*. The Hebrew word *nepes̄* is typically translated as “soul” but today more accurately it is being translated as “living creature”—that is, a creature of God.<sup>12</sup> *Nepes̄* connotes living alongside many of God’s other creatures, namely, those possessing the breath of life—God’s animated creatures. And with his creatures God establishes a covenant, “with you [Noah] and your descendants after you, and with every *living creature* that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out to the ark” (Gen. 9:9b–10).

A second characteristic that all God’s creatures of the earth share is that they all suffer under the same curse even though they share a common future as a result of Christ. Arand writes that together God’s creatures “experience the undoing of creation,”<sup>13</sup> but they also share in the restoration of all creation. God cursed the ground (Gen. 3:17b), and now man must sweat to bring forth the fruits of creation from the ground: “in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you” (Gen. 3:18). Creatures and creation will struggle against each other. The harmony that once existed is broken between God and man and man and creation. And together all God’s creatures will experience death (Ps. 104:29b).

A third characteristic that the human creature shares with God’s other creatures is that all are dependent upon the one true Creator and his creation for sustaining and preserving life. “Everything that has the breath of life, I have given green plant for food” (Gen. 1:30b). Creation is not independent of the Creator who once long ago created and is now done. In fact, just the opposite is true: “creation is the continuous, constant participation of all creatures in the being of

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<sup>11</sup> Arand, “Together with All Creatures,” 33.

<sup>12</sup> Arand, “Together with All Creatures,” 33.

<sup>13</sup> Arand, “Together with All Creatures,” 35.

God.”<sup>14</sup> When a child is born, when a sparrow is fed, when a wildfire creates new life, the Creator’s ongoing creative activity is made manifest.

Wendell Berry stated, “Creation is God’s presence in creatures.”<sup>15</sup> Everything that God creates, everything formed by his hand, emulates God’s presence by the sheer fact it belongs to him. Philip Sherrard, a Greek Orthodox theologian writes, “Creation is nothing less than the manifestation of God’s hidden being.”<sup>16</sup> God’s creatures dwell together and are nourished by the the same earth. God provides for the crane, the shark, as well as the human creature. All are provided with food, shelter, and love.

But God’s providence does not stop there. Luther’s explanation of the second article of the creed explains it this way: “He became a human creature, conceived and born without sin, of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, so that he might become Lord over sin.”<sup>17</sup> Christ as creature now depends upon the same creation he created. He breathes the earth’s air. He eats and drinks the gifts of his earth. Jesus is a human creature. Yet he is the only creature that can bring restoration to his creation. Jesus first restores his people then his creation. John writes, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away . . . and he who sat upon the thorn said, ‘Behold I make all things new’” (Rev. 21:1,5).

### **Distinct Creatureliness**

Although the human creature shares much in common with all other creatures, he is given unique and distinct characteristics apart from God’s other creatures. Human creatures are created to be relational beings (*in relatione*). They live in God’s presence (*coram Deo*) while

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<sup>14</sup> Wendell Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation,” in *The Art of the Commonplace* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002), 308.

<sup>15</sup> Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation,” 308.

<sup>16</sup> Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation,” 308.

<sup>17</sup> Large Catechism II.31, in Kolb and Wengert, 434.

maintaining a relationship in community (*coram mundo*). When a *coram Deo* relationship is right, the creature is able to focus on his relationship *coram mundo*. Within a *coram mundo* relationship the human creature becomes the hands or gloves of God in caring for and nurturing his creation. When the creature feeds the bird or cares for his neighbor, the relationship *coram mundo* is appropriately at work. Yet, God's creatures are not dependent upon the human, but on the Creator alone alongside whom the human only works, as his agent to care for and serve creation.

In his unique standing, the human has three distinct features not shared with other creatures. First, he is created to be a relational being (*in relatione*). They live in God's presence (*coram Deo*) while maintaining relations in creation (*coram mundo*). A *coram Deo* relationship works vertically. It is man's relationship with God. It is a unique relationship that every human being has been called to. The relationship flows freely from God, to the human, not vice versa. The second relationship is the *coram mundo*. This is not independent of the *coram Deo* relationship. Instead it works in tandem with it. It is in this relationship that the human creature becomes God's hands in caring not only for other humans, but for all of God creation, animate and inanimate. A *coram Deo* relationship must exist if the human creature has any chance of maintaining a relationship *coram mundo*.

Second, human creatures are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26a). Luther called this "an outstanding difference . . . a special plan and providence of God."<sup>18</sup> *Imago Dei* ("the image of God") relates to the function and form, not the substance. God's human creature is not set apart from creation because he is more unique than other creatures. Instead he has been given a

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis 1–5* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 56.

special responsibility *within* creation.<sup>19</sup> Norman Wirzba constructs an ideal conception of the image of God as being a possession, a calling or a task.<sup>20</sup> The human creature in action becomes a reflection of the Creator to his creation. In this way the human creature manifests God's almighty hand. For a Christian, this has abundant implications for tending to God's creation.

The third distinct characteristic is the significance of the responsibility of dominion. "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26b). Dominion has both theological and ecological implications. When carried out properly, the human creature understands the limits placed upon him and that he is accountable to the Creator for his actions. Today dominion is too often understood as domination. Domination is the attitude that everything in creation has but one purpose: to serve man. An example of domination is an entire forest being stripped bare for the sole purpose of profit. Proper dominion refers to caring for and protecting God's creatures and his creation in order that all might flourish under the creature's hand. Wirzba expresses proper dominion this way: "To degrade the bodies of the earth—its forests, streams, soils, oceans, prairies and mountains—is to degrade the human bodies that depend on them for food, fiber, energy, pleasure and inspiration."<sup>21</sup>

Dominion comes from the Latin word *dominus*, meaning "lord or master." Christ as Lord provides the perfect example of what dominion over the rest of creation looks like. Here one might also appropriate the language of stewardship. A steward is one who administers, supervises, or controls the household affairs—one that has the knowledge, power, and insight to properly care for that which he has been given. Wirzba states that "a steward is not the outright

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<sup>19</sup> Norman Wirzba, *The Paradise of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 127.

<sup>20</sup> Wirzba, *Paradise of God*, 128.

<sup>21</sup> Norman Wirzba, "Reconciliation With the Land," in *Making Peace With the Land* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 32.

owner of the house . . . he is the one who acknowledges God as the owner and master of creation, yet recognizes himself or herself as entrusted with creation's management . . . rather than its exploitation."<sup>22</sup> One who understands dominion properly recognizes the proper distinction between God as Creator and man as creature.

In a recent article Wendell Berry responds to the question, "Do you really believe life is a miracle?" reflecting on his 2000 book called, *Life is a Miracle*. Berry states, "Life is more credible to me as a miracle than it is an accident or as somebody's property."<sup>23</sup> He continues, "The practical point is that if I believe life is a miracle, I will grant it a respect and a deference that I would not grant it otherwise. If I believe it is a miracle, then I cannot believe that I am superior to it, or that I understand it, or that I own it."<sup>24</sup> When the human creature makes room for all God's creatures and all created things, then all creation flourishes.

Although few hymns develop explicitly the theme of creatureliness, a number do highlight God's providence and the human creature's role of dominion. Yet, many of the hymns that express God's provision are limited in scope by highlighting God providing only daily food. A few hymns were found that highlight God's provision to include air to breathe, oil to warm homes and fuel cars, and precious minerals to adorn or replenish one's body.<sup>25</sup> The hymns that

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<sup>22</sup> Wirzba, *Paradise of God*, 129.

<sup>23</sup> Wendell Berry, "Is Life a Miracle?" in *Citizenship Papers* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2003), 183.

<sup>24</sup> Berry, "Is Life a Miracle?" 183.

<sup>25</sup> Here is a list of other hymns that bring out in various ways the theme of a theology of creation of Human Creatureliness: "Come, Rejoice Before Your Maker," "All Things Bright and Beautiful," "Change My Heart of God," "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come," "Consider How the Birds Above," "Creating God, Your Fingers Trace," "Entrust Your Days and Burdens," "For the Fruits of His Creation," "God of Concrete," "God of Great and God of Small," "God the Sculptor of the Mountains," "God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens," "How Great Thou Art," "I Love the Sun," "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise," "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me," "Many and Great, O God," "My Soul, Now Praise Your Maker," "O God, Your Hand the Heavens Made," "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," "The Lord My Pasture Shall Prepare," "The Morning and the Evening Sing Your Praise," "This Day God Gives Me," "We All Believe in One True God," "We Sing the Almighty Power of God," "When All the World to Life is Waking," "Who Put the Colours in the Rainbow?" "For the Beauty of the Earth," "Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth," and "O Lord of Heaven and Earth and Sea."

did touch on the role of dominion did not contain strong enough language to shape a Christian’s attitude. Most hymns lacked the language of a human’s relational role within creation, especially *coram Deo* and *coram mundo*. Although many hymns carried the thought that God was the ultimate provider much work in this area still needs to be done.

Table 2: Hymns of Human Creatureliness

<b>Hymns of Human Creatureliness</b>	
<b>Hymn Title</b>	<b>Hymnals that Include Hymn</b>
We Plough the Fields and Scatter	<i>LBW</i> 362, <i>Worship</i> 680–81, <i>Hymns of Glory</i> 229, and <i>The New English</i> 262.
This is My Father’s House	<i>LBW</i> 554, <i>Worship</i> 824, and <i>Let All the People</i> 302
Great is Thy Faithfulness	<i>LSB</i> 809, <i>Worship</i> 773, <i>Hymns of Glory</i> 153, <i>With One Voice</i> 771, and <i>New English Praise</i> 636
O Lord of Every Shining Constellation	<i>Hymns Ancient and Modern</i> 411, and <i>Hymns of Glory</i> 246 (under similar title)

### **We Plough the Fields and Scatter (*Wir Pflügen und Wir Streuen*)**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 We plough the fields, and scatter  
the good seed on the land,  
but it is fed and watered  
by God’s almighty hand;  
he sends the snow in winter,  
the warmth to swell the grain,  
the breezes and the sunshine  
and soft refreshing rain.

*All good gifts around us  
are sent from heaven above;  
then thank the Lord, O, thank the Lord,  
for all his love.*

2 He only is the Maker  
of all things near and far;

He paints the wayside flower,  
He lights the evening star;  
The winds and waves obey him,  
by Him the birds are fed;  
much more to us, his children,  
he gives our daily bread.

3 We thank you then, O Father (Our Creator),  
for all things bright and good,  
the seed-time and the harvest,  
our life, our health, our food.  
Accept the gifts we (No gifts we have to) offer  
for all your love imparts,  
with what we know you love for (but what you most would treasure):  
our humble, thankful hearts.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Matthias Claudius (1740–1821) wrote this hymn under the pseudonym Asmus.<sup>27</sup> He grew up the son of a pastor and briefly studied for the ministry at the University of Jena but never completed the program, instead studying law and language. During his late twenties and early thirties, many claimed that Claudius had been deeply influenced by the philosophy of his day, rationalism, which caused him to abandon his faith temporarily. In 1777, he became seriously ill, and those that knew him were convinced that this illness was instrumental in retuning him to his childhood faith. Although he held various jobs throughout his life he spent most of his time as the literary editor of “Der Wansbecker Bote” (“The Wandsbeck Messenger”).<sup>28</sup> In 1776, he was appointed the Commissioners of Agriculture and Manufacturers of Hesse-Darmstadt. Claudius considered himself first and foremost to be a poet. Because his poetry was filled with such beautiful religious overtones, three of Claudius's poems were put to

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<sup>26</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, “We Plough the Fields and Scatter,” *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise*, 229.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Westermeyer, *Hymnal Companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2010), 535.

<sup>28</sup> A hymnal resource website, [http://www.hymnary.org/text/we\\_plow\\_the\\_fields\\_and\\_scatter](http://www.hymnary.org/text/we_plow_the_fields_and_scatter) (accessed March 3, 2013).

music in Germany; but only this one “We Plough the Fields and Scatter” found its way into American hymnals. Claudius never intended his poetry to be sung as hymns, nor did he write hymns for church use. He was one of very few non-clerics whose poetry was later considered for use as hymnody.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** The original writing of the hymn “We Plough the Fields and Scatter” took place around the year 1782 as a peasant’s idyllic portrayal of pious simplicity. It tells the story of how neighbors traveled to a local German farmhouse to gather and share together the gifts of God’s abundant harvest. It was first published as a seventeen stanza descriptive peasant’s song, which began “*Im Anfang war’s auf Erden,*” (“In the beginning upon the earth, there was”). It first appeared as part of the author’s sketch called “Paul Eardman’s Festival” and was published in “*Der Wandsbecker Bote,*” a newspaper Claudius edited in Wandsbeck, Germany, in 1782.<sup>29</sup> During the nineteenth century the sketch morphed into the hymn we know today. It was popularized in German hymnals but consisted of only a few verses, which often began with Claudius’s third stanza “*Wir pflugen und wir streuen*” (“We plough and we scatter”).<sup>30</sup>

Nearly, a century after the hymn was written, Jane M. Campbell in 1861 translated Claudius’s hymn into English. It was a free translation of stanzas three, five, seven, nine, ten, and twelve of Claudius’s original piece. This translation was first published in Charles Sanford Bere’s *A Garland of Songs; or, an English Liedkranz*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Westermeyer, *Hymnal Companion to ELW*, 525.

<sup>30</sup> Albert Edward Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns: Backgrounds and Interpretations* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1950), 339.

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.hymnary.org/text/we\\_plow\\_the\\_fields\\_and\\_scatter](http://www.hymnary.org/text/we_plow_the_fields_and_scatter).



Today, “We Plough the Fields and Scatter,” can be found in five of the hymnals being examined in this dissertation; *LBW* #362, *Worship* #680–81, *Hymns of Glory* #229, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* #290, and *The New English* #262.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Creatureliness:** Although the poet’s intent was only to show a childish appreciation for the goodness of God and not to write about agriculture from an ecclesiastical viewpoint, his hymn affirms God’s care of creation. Albert Bayly suggested that Claudius might have smiled to himself thinking that God too was a Commissioner of Agriculture, but on a much grander scale.<sup>32</sup> For the land to be fruitful, God provides all the essentials: the ground, the rain, and sunshine. The human plows the land and sows the seed, but God alone provides the harvest.

By emphasizing God’s provision the hymn expresses the creature’s dependence upon God. The language of the hymn highlights this in several ways. It distinguishes the creature’s work from the Creator’s. It defines God’s continued provision for his creation. This is expressed in the first verse using the phrases, “He sends the rain,” “He warms the seed,” and “He provides the breeze, the sunshine and the rain.” In verse two, Claudius describes how God paints the flowers and lights the skies of day and night. Nature obeys God’s command, and he provides their needs. The hymn highlights God’s work is in the small details of life, which are often missed and usually taken for granted; yet each one is initiated and completed by God. He is in control. This hymn best exhibits God’s attention to detail and exemplifies *creatio continua* (“ongoing creation”).

**Poetry and Imagery:** Structurally, Claudius’s hymn contains movement. It moves from the work of the creature to the hand of the Creator back to the creature, who responds in

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<sup>32</sup> Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns*, 339.

thanksgiving. The hymn opens by introducing the labor of man as he plows and plants the land. It then shifts its emphasis to God who gives life and brings forth the labors of the earth. Finally, it highlights the creature's response of thanksgiving. In doing so, the author guides the reader to shift from self-gratification of his own work and instead turning to the providence of God.

Claudius' poetic imagery draws upon the language of scripture, which conveys certain biblical truths. The imagery helps to separate the work of the Creator from the work of the creature. It helps the reader consider the smallness of the creature and the grandeur of their Creator. Hymnary.org suggests Ps. 145:16 and Ezek. 34: 26–27 as scriptural references for verse one:

Thou openest thy hand, thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing” (Ps. 145:16).

And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; and they shall be showers of blessings. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in the land; and they shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezek. 34: 26–27).

Both these Scriptural verses affirm the reality that creation lives, breathes, and depends deeply upon God, its Creator, for existence. But when God withdraws his hand or breath, all creation fails to exist.

The hymn's refrain declares this truth: “All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love.” Everything creation receives is a gift at the hand of the Creator. Its repetitive nature continually reminds the hearer that he alone is the Creator and Giver of life. It also declares that God requires humble gratitude and praise. It is part of what it means to be a creature.

Beginning with the farmer in verse one, Claudius describes how the seeds are sown upon the ground, then immediately moves to the declaration that it is God who sends the water “He sends the snow in winter.” Claudius takes it one step further by showing that it is God who

provides the warmth of the sun to awaken the seed, and “soft refreshing rain.” The focus of verse one centers on God who provides for all human needs of food and drink. The hymn picks up Claudius’s agricultural background as he describes how the grain “swells” beneath the earth as it is warmed by the summer sun.

Verse two expands beyond the human realm to consider God’s work in the wider, perhaps even wilder, creation. Claudius presents a picture of the Creator intimately focusing on every detail of creation, painting the flowers, lighting the stars, feeding the birds, and speaking to creation while it obeys him. God did not merely create then step away; instead he continually creates and is intimately involved in every detail of creation, including giving all creatures their daily bread. Luther in his *Large Catechism* expands the concept of daily bread to include “not just the oven or flour bin, but also the broad fields and the whole land that produce and provide our bread. . . . To put it briefly, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in this world.”<sup>33</sup> Acts 14:17b also affirms this provision and care; “For He did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

Verse three focuses on the creature’s appropriate response of praise and thankfulness for all things God has done and what he continues to do for his creatures. The phrase “while the earth remains” brings to mind Gen. 8:22, in which God promises, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” God will provide everything his creatures require to live. As long as the earth remains, God’s care will not be absent; hence every creature owes him thanks and praise.

**Christian Confession:** Claudius’s hymn provides the promise of care for the earth coming directly from God’s almighty hand. Theologically, the hymn clearly distinguishes the Creator

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<sup>33</sup> *Large Catechism* III.72 in Kolb-Wengert, 449–50.

from the creature. Only in the first two lines of verse one does it mention the work of the creature: “We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land.” The next critical word in the verse is a transitional “but,” which changes from the creature’s tasks to that of the Creator. The balance of the hymn describes the work of the Creator in active verbs: *feeds, waters, paints, lights, sends, and provides*. This hymn assists humankind in identifying itself with the rest of creation as a creature, not as something set apart and different from creation. Each creature is given a stark reminder that all creation depends on God and that even today God is involved in the intimate details of his creation.

### **This Is My Father’s World**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 This is my Father’s world, and to my listening ears  
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.  
This is my Father’s world; I rest me in the thought  
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;  
his hand the wonders wrought.

2 This is my Father’s world; the birds their carols raise,  
the morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker’s praise.  
This is my Father’s world; He shines in all that’s fair;  
in the rustling grass I hear Him pass,  
He speaks to me everywhere.

3 This is my Father’s world; oh, let me ne’er forget  
that, though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.  
This is my Father’s world; why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is King; let the heavens ring.  
God reigns; let the earth be glad!<sup>34</sup>

(optional final two lines:  
This is my Father’s world; the battle is not done;  
Jesus, who died shall be satisfied,  
and earth and heav’n be one.)

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<sup>34</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “This is My Father’s World,” *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 824.

Three additional verses that were found on-line, but not in any of the hymnals.

This is my Father's world, dreaming, I see His face.  
I ope my eyes, and in glad surprise cry, "The Lord is in this place."  
This is my Father's world, from the shining courts above,  
The Beloved One, His Only Son,  
Came—a pledge of deathless love.

This is my Father's world, should my heart be ever sad?  
The lord is King—let the heavens ring. God reigns—let the earth be glad.  
This is my Father's world. Now closer to Heaven bound,  
For dear to God is the earth Christ trod.  
No place but is holy ground.

This is my Father's world. I walk in desert lone.  
In a bush ablaze to my wondering gaze God makes His glory known.  
This is my Father's world, a wonderer I may roam  
Whate'er my lot, it matters not,  
My heart is still at home.<sup>35</sup>

### **Babcock's Poem: My Father's World**

This is my Father's world.  
On the day of its wondrous birth  
The stars of light in phalanx bright  
Sang out in Heavenly mirth.

This is my Father's world.  
E'en yet to my listening ears  
All nature sings, and around me rings  
The music of the spheres.

This is my Father's world.  
I rest me in the thought  
Of rocks and things, of skies and seas,  
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world.  
The birds that their carols raise,  
The morning light, the lily white,  
Declare the Maker's praise.

This is my Father's world.  
He shines in all that's fair.

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<sup>35</sup> Three additional verses were found on-line at <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/t/i/tismyfw.htm>, but unfortunately none of them were included in any of the hymnals that were being investigated.

In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,  
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world.  
From His eternal throne,  
His watch doth keep when I'm asleep,  
And I am not alone.

This is my Father's world.  
Dreaming, I see His face.  
I open my eyes, and in glad surprise  
Cry, "Thee Lord is in this place."

This is my Father's world.  
I walk a desert lone.  
In a bush ablaze to my wondering gaze  
God makes His glory known.

This is my Father's world.  
Among the mountains drear,  
'Mid rendering rocks and earthquake shocks,  
The still, small voice I hear.

This is my Father's world.  
From the shining courts above,  
The Beloved One, His only Son,  
Came—a pledge of deathless love.

This is my Father's world.  
Now closer to Heaven bound,  
For dear to God is the earth Christ trod,  
No place but is holy ground.

This is my Father's world.  
His love has filled my breast,  
I am reconciled, I am His child,  
My soul has found His rest.

This is my Father's world.  
A wanderer I may roam,  
Whate'er my lot, it matters not,  
My heart is still at home.

This is my Father's world.  
O let me ne'er forget.  
That tho' the wrong seems oft so strong,

God is the ruler yet.

This is my Father's world.  
The battle is not done.  
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,  
And earth and Heaven be one.

This is my Father's world.  
Should my heart be ever sad?  
The Lord is King—let the Heavens ring  
God reigns—let the earth be glad.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** The hymn “This Is My Father's World” was written Maltbie Davenport Babcock, a Presbyterian pastor trained at Auburn Theological Seminary in 1882. He was born in 1858 in Syracuse, New York and died in Naples, Italy in 1901. His first American ancestor, a native of England, was James Babcock, who emigrated in 1642. Babcock's great-grandfather was Henry Davis, second president of Hamilton College, and his grandfather was Rev. Ebenezer Davenport Maltbie, a Presbyterian minister.

Babcock was educated in the Syracuse's public schools. He attended Syracuse University and Auburn Theological Seminary, graduating in 1879 and 1882. He not only excelled in general studies and sports but also in playing the organ, piano, and violin. As a pastor, his first call was to Lockport, New York, (1882–85) strategically located midway between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario and in close proximity to Niagara Falls, which was perfect for someone who loved the outdoors. From 1885 until 1899 he served as the senior minister of Brown Memorial Presbyterian church located in Baltimore, Maryland. It was here that he was acclaimed for his oratory and use of colorful metaphors in his sermons.

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<sup>36</sup> Maltbie Davenport Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living: From the Spoken and Written Words of Maltbie Davenport Babcock* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 180–83.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Babcock was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed running, hiking, and fishing. Often, before heading outdoors, he would tell his secretary, “I’m going out to see my Father’s world.”<sup>37</sup> Babcock would run or hike for miles, losing himself in God’s creation.

Babcock’s poem, which is the basis for the hymn, was originally written as a sixteen-stanza, four-line poem during Babcock’s pastorate while in Lockport. Unfortunately today most hymnals only contain two or three verses of the original. Babcock’s poem includes a rich appreciation of the details of creation and a nearness to God amidst the beauty of creation. It highlights the work of Christ, his time on earth, his death on the cross, and his defeat of Satan and sin. It declares Christ to be the one who reigns today.

Since Babcock died at the age of forty-three and was assigned to his first congregation in 1882 there is only a small window in which to determine the actual date of writing his poem. Most resources have determined that it was written while he served in Lockport, New York between the years 1882-1887. After his death, the words “Riverdale, N. Y., November 7, 1899. Committed myself again with Christian brothers to unreserved docility and devotion before my Master” were found on the fly-leaf of his pocket bible.<sup>38</sup> This affirms Babcock’s devotion to ministry and his humbleness before God, his Maker. Following Babcock’s death in 1901, the original poem was published in its entirety in a book entitled *Thoughts for Everyday Living*, which included Babcock’s prayers, letters, poems, and prose comments compiled by his wife. Today this hymn can be found in *LBW* #554, *Worship* #824, and *Let All the People* #302.

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<sup>37</sup> Robert J. Morgan. *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World’s Greatest Hymn Stories* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 254–55.

<sup>38</sup> Maltbie Davenport Babcock, D. D., *Thoughts for Every-Day Living* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), vii.



## The Hymn's Theological Content

**Theme of Creatureliness:** The sounds of creation, a delight in the created order, and God's immanence are the focal points of this hymn. The hymn communicates the chapter's theme, "Human Creatureliness," by highlighting the difference between the creature's role in creation and God's role as Creator, and it clearly communicates to whom this world belongs.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Babcock's poem was translated into the hymn. He uses poetic imagery to stress the visions and sounds of God's command over creation. His poem uses a broad spectrum of creation including the sun, moon, stars, planets, and the entire galaxy to express this command. The title of the hymn and the words that are repeated in every verse "This Is My Father's World," recalls the words of Psalm 24, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein; for he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers."<sup>39</sup>

Babcock's poem begins, "On the day of its wondrous birth the stars of light in phalanx bright sang out in Heavenly mirth." This refers to Job 38:7, which reads, "When the morning stars sang together" and helps to explain the "all nature sings and round me rings, the music of the spheres." In the second verse Babcock's poem, now the hymn's first verse, he directs the reader's attention to "the music of the spheres." In ancient times, it was believed that as the planets revolved around the universe they made their own music.<sup>40</sup> Today, science has indeed

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<sup>39</sup> Other hymns that use Psalm 24 include "The Earth is Yours, O God," hymn 227 in *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise*, "God of Concrete, God of Steel," hymn 366 in *Hymns Ancient and Modern New Standard*, and "Your Majesty above the Heavens is Praised," hymn 668 in *New English Praise*.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum: The Church and Music* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 116–17. Boethius, a writer and philosopher (480–545) wrote a book titled *De Musica*. In it, he identifies three kind of music: *musica mundana*, the music of the spheres; *musica humana*, the music of the human body and soul; and *musica instrumentalis*, the actual musical sounds we hear. The central focus for Boethius was *musica mundane*. John Milton's poetry also uses this type of language, "Ring out, ye crystal spheres." Both reflect on the point that the music the human ear hears is but a dim reflection of the music made in God's creation. This idea of the song of the stars and planets was introduced in the previous chapter by Louie Giglio and can be heard on YouTube at the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zWkm-LZWm4&feature=youtu.be>.

confirmed this fact. Louie Giglio, an evangelical pastor, discovered that indeed the stars and planets make noise as they travel through the galaxy. Giglio has made a “mashup” that takes the recordings of these sounds and combines them with the songs of whales to provide a small sample of what a symphony of creation might sound like to God.<sup>41</sup> In Babcock’s poem we also hear the music of creation. He hears the sounds emitted from rocks, trees, skies and the seas, which all points him back to the Creator.

In verse two Babcock points specifically to the beauty of creation and the song it sings as a way to prove a Creator. He highlights the singing bird, the morning light, and the white of the lily as ways in which God’s creatures declare praise for the Creator by doing what God created them to do. Babcock refers to the rustling sound that occurs when the wind moves through tall grasses. Could Babcock be asking the reader to reflect back to the Garden of Eden? In Genesis 3:8, Adam and Eve “Heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” Babcock asks the reader to contemplate questions such as, when it rains, why is it so difficult for the human creature to believe that the parched earth rejoices in relief? Or when the sun warms a flower after a cold night’s dew, does not that flower blossom in joy for its Creator?

Babcock’s final line of verse two states, “God speaks to me everywhere.” One might suspect hints of pantheism in such language, but Babcock is not alone in speaking this way. Oswald Bayer, in *Martin Luther’s Theology*, quotes Luther: “The creation is ‘our bible in the fullest sense,’ this our house, home, field, garden and all things, where God does not only preach by using his wonderful works, but also taps on our eyes, stirs our senses, and enlightens our heart at the same time.”<sup>42</sup> He follows this with a clear reminder that only eyes of faith can recognize

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<sup>41</sup> Louie Giglio, “A Symphony of All Creation,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXXK8W00GFOM>.

<sup>42</sup> Bayer, *Luther’s Theology*, 111.

this “Bible in the fullest sense”<sup>43</sup> because this Bible is established on the basis of Scripture. With eyes of faith a Christian can talk with the trees or anything that grows on earth, and they will answer back.<sup>44</sup>

Verse three recognizes that all is not right with the world. Babcock states, “This is my Father’s world: the battle is not done.” When the creature sets his mind squarely on Christ, he soon recognizes that the battle that creation wages with sin and death is not done. But the battle has been won. Christ reigns now and forever more. Christ’s victory over the battle is addressed more in Babcock’s poem than in the hymn, especially in lines ten through fifteen. Line fifteen states, “This is my Father’s world. The battle is not done. Jesus who died shall be satisfied, and earth and heaven be one.” This confirms that although creation is fallen and broken, God, who sent his Son to walk with all in creation, still holds his creation together. God’s word of promise, the restorative promise of the new creation, provides the Christian the strength to respond daily to the battles of creation.

It is unfortunate that more of Babcock’s poem was not included in the hymn’s final version. His poem contains many scriptural texts that are neglected in the hymn. Lines six and seven of the poem show the Father sitting on his throne yet being watchful of his creatures as they rest. Lines eight and nine reflect on both Moses’ and Elijah’s encounter with God in the burning bush and in the cave. In lines ten, eleven, and twelve, Babcock’s poem directs the reader’s attention to Jesus, God’s only Son. He tells of God’s love for earth because it was the place Christ trod.

**Christian Confession:** Theologically, Babcock’s hymn provides a picture of God’s world and his continual care of it but with a strong emphasis on God’s immanence in the world today.

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<sup>43</sup> Bayer, *Luther’s Theology*, 111

<sup>44</sup> Bayer, *Luther’s Theology*, 112.

Oswald Bayer directs the creature's thoughts to what this means today as the creature cares for creation and how God's immanence needs to be applied more theologically. The hymn provides a vision of all God's creatures emitting the sounds of praise and together recognizing God as Creator. It emphasizes the distinction between the creature and the Creator. Babcock situates the reader in the center of the text to reflect on human sin while reminding him of God's promise for all creation. He does this by highlighting Christ's victory over the battle, which wages war against creation daily. Although the battle over sin is not done, sin has been conquered in Christ's death and resurrection. All creation belongs to him alone!

### **Great is Thy Faithfulness**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.  
Thou changest not: Thy compassions, they fail not;  
As Thou has been, Thou forever wilt be.

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided;  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Great is Thy Faithfulness," *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 809.

## The Hymn's Historical Context

**Composer's Biography:** Thomas Obadiah Chisholm was born in a log cabin in Kentucky in 1866. Despite the paucity of his education, at age sixteen he became the local area's schoolteacher. Under the ministry of evangelist Henry Clay Morrison, founder of Asbury College and Theological Seminary, Chisholm experienced a Christian conversion at age twenty-seven.<sup>46</sup> He entered the ministry when he was thirty-six but was only able to serve one year due to poor health. Although he lived until 1960, his health was often unstable. He alternated between gainful employment and bouts of illness throughout his life, holding jobs that ranged from insurance sales and journalism, to the work of an evangelist. During his life he wrote over two-hundred devotional poems, which were occasionally published by many through Christian periodicals. "Great is Thy Faithfulness" was one of those poems and was written in 1923. In addition to "Great is Thy Faithfulness," he penned other well-known hymns such as "O To Be Like Thee" and "Living for Jesus."<sup>47</sup>

During Chisholm's discontinuous employment, the text of Lamentations 3:23–24 became a personal text of comfort to him: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness." This Lamentations text will serve as part of this hymn's commentary analysis.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** The phrase "Great is Thy Faithfulness" became a testament to God's faithfulness through the ordinary trials of Chisholm's life. He acknowledged no particular story that precipitated its writing. Throughout his life he sent poems to his friend William M. Runyan, who at the time served as a Methodist pastor in Kansas. It was

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<sup>46</sup> Paul Westermeyer, *Hymnal Companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2010), 593.

<sup>47</sup> Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 284–85.

said that Runyan was so moved by the words of the poem “Great is Thy Faithfulness” that he vowed to pray earnestly for guidance in composing the perfect music to accompany the words.<sup>48</sup> In 1923, Runyan set the poem to music and published it that same year. Runyan, who both studied and taught music, served as a church organist at the young age of twelve. From 1925 until he retired Runyan worked with Hope Publishing Company and the Moody Bible Institute.<sup>49</sup>

Although the hymn is well known around the world today, it did not receive its full acclaim until George Beverly Shea sang it for the Billy Graham evangelical crusades in 1954. Later the Moody Bible Institute asked that it be made its unofficial theme song for the college.

Toward the end of Chisholm’s life he explains,

My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in earlier years, which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness.<sup>50</sup>

This quote helps situate the struggles of Chisholm’s physical condition during his life while it provides a declaration to those that read his poem/hymn today. No matter the circumstances of life, or the disappointments of life, God is always faithful. Today this hymn can be found in *LSB* #809, *Worship* #773, *Hymns of Glory* #153, *With One Voice* #771, and *New English Praise* #636.

## The Hymn’s Theological Content

**Theme of Creatureliness:** “Great is Thy Faithfulness” is the message of God’s faithfulness to his creatures and is what differentiates it from others hymns. Verse after verse the reader is redirected from self-centered thoughts to thoughts that focus on God, who is always

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<sup>48</sup> Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul*, 285.

<sup>49</sup> Westermeyer, *Hymnal Companion*, 593.

<sup>50</sup> Bill and Gloria Gaither, *The Gaither Homecoming Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), an excerpt called, “Great is Thy Faithfulness”— The Story Behind the Hymn,” <http://gaither.com/news/%E2%80%9Cgreat-thy-faithfulness%E2%80%9D-story-behind-hymn> (Accessed November 9, 2013).

faithful, always present, and never changing. Human faithfulness is marred with sin, self-righteousness, and greed, but God's faithfulness endures day after day, promise after promise. Creation can God to these promises. Scripture affirms this fact. God declared a covenant between himself and creation, and God's sign of this covenant is the bow in the clouds.

**Poetry and Imagery:** The hymn, originally written as a poem, uses poetic literature to express itself. It also depends heavily on Lam. 3:22–23. The hymn's structure is centered on God's faithfulness. In verse one each line builds on the first line "Great is Thy Faithfulness" adding facts about God's faithfulness. In verse two the author uses the change of the seasons, year after year, to confirm the fact that God continues to be faithful. Verse three shifts slightly by reflecting on the creature's weaknesses and then returns to God's great faithfulness for strength, which never ends. The hymn's refrain highlights the fact that "God's mercies are new every morning." No matter the struggles of yesterday or the blessings of today, God alone is faithful. He provides what every creature requires until heaven and earth pass away.

Chisholm's hymn opens with the words of Lam. 3:23b, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Yet, Lamentations 3 is about affliction, despair, and God's wrath. It is a time in which the author claims God has driven him into darkness. For twenty-one lines there is bitterness and wailing in pain. The author's distress builds with each verse, but in line twenty-one he states "but this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope." It is at this point in the text that the author sends forth the proclamation of God's continued faithfulness. One can only surmise that Chisholm struggled with similar pain and frustration, but in the end, turned it over to God and thanked him for his faithfulness.

The second line of verse one picks up the text of James 1:17: "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no

variation or shadow due to change.” Here the “Father of lights,” refers to the Creator of the heavenly bodies: “To Him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever” (Ps. 136:7). The next few lines focus all attention on God, the One who never changes, whose compassion never fails, and the One who will always remain even in the midst of death.

Verse two calls on each of the seasons of summer, winter, springtime, and harvest to be a witness to God’s faithfulness by doing what they do best, being seasons: “One cannot coerce the summer into coming, one must wait for it. The fields and the orchards are there the whole year long, but if its time does not come, nothing will come of it; it must have its time.”<sup>51</sup> Time, a gift God provides through his creation, comes only from the Lord. He faithfully provides the seasons, the day, and the night. “God has set a precise, free moment for everything that must happen.”<sup>52</sup>

Verse three turns its attention to the human creature, to the one who needs forgiveness for his sin of *unfaithfulness*. The unfaithful heart of humanity turns to self-dependence rather than on God. Yet, it is God who turns to his creature and offers forgiveness and the strength to walk through the day ahead. Christ’s last words and the last words in Matt. 28:20b say, “I am with you always, to the close of the age.” Each day the human creature is given the opportunity to experience God’s grace, his mercy, his forgiveness, and his love. Chisholm recognizes God’s provision by proclaiming God gives “ten thousand” blessings and more every day.

The hymn’s refrain focuses on the fact that each morning God’s mercy endures: “Morning by morning new mercies I see.” This again highlights Lam. 3: 22b–23a, “His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.” This begs the question, what is mercy? Mercy is understood as compassion or forgiveness shown towards someone whom it is within one’s power

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<sup>51</sup> Gustaf Wingren, “The Doctrine of Creation: Not an Appendix but the First Article,” *Word and World* 4 (Fall 1984): 363.

<sup>52</sup> Wingren, “The Doctrine of Creation,” 363.



to punish or harm.<sup>53</sup> God provides mercy every day to his human creature. The refrain continues, “All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.” Chisholm confirms that it is God’s providence alone that sustains creation.

God’s providence, the common characteristic humans share with other creatures, comes through as the strong theological implication in this hymn. God’s providence and his faithfulness reverberate throughout the hymn.<sup>54</sup> Lutherans see God continuing to be active in his creation. He did not create once and walk away. God uses his human creatures to assist him in this care. God does not demand action from his creatures, but he does demand faith.<sup>55</sup> That faith is found in the creature’s participation in caring for God’s creation. “The Creator appears disguised, hidden behind masks . . . a fruit tree or rain is a disguise for God.”<sup>56</sup> In I Kings 17:4 God tells Elijah, “I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” In this text God uses his creature, the raven, to feed and care for his human creature Elijah. “God’s promised world continues to exist because of his faithfulness.”<sup>57</sup>

Martin Luther emphasizes that creation is not a past one-time event. Instead it is a continually present event. “God remains with his creation, is effective in it, continually allows new animals and human beings to be born, and continually grants new beginnings and in this way preserves creation. God’s sustaining of creation is, to be sure, a sign of his abiding goodness as the Creator.”<sup>58</sup> For Luther, creating and preserving are one in the same. One does not work

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<sup>53</sup> Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> (accessed June 15, 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Other hymns that reflect God’s providence include; “For the Fruits of all Creation,” hymn #231 in *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise*, “Pears and Apples, Wheat and Grapes,” hymn #232 also in *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise*.

<sup>55</sup> Wingren, *Doctrine of Creation*, 363.

<sup>56</sup> Wingren, *Doctrine of Creation*, 363.

<sup>57</sup> Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 117.

<sup>58</sup> Johannes Schwanke, “Luther on Creation,” in *Harvesting Martin Luther’s Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 82–83.

without the other being present, and both are indivisibly bound together.<sup>59</sup> God's providence, his preservation of his creation, can be summed up simply by that fact that he alone gives breath to each moment of life. "If he should take back his spirit to himself, and gather to himself his breath, all flesh would perish together" (Job 34:14–15). All life exists by the sheer fact that God allows it to exist.

**Christian Confession:** This hymn's theological mainstay is God's faithfulness. No matter the struggles and disappointments of this life, God is always faithful. As Lamentations 3 teaches, although affliction and darkness consume us, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His compassion does not fail. That fact is visible every morning as God's shows forth his mercy. God continues to create and preserve his creation.

### **O Lord of Every Shining Constellation**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 O Lord of every shining constellation  
that wheels in splendor through the midnight sky,  
grant us your Spirit's true illumination  
to read the secrets of your work on high.

2 You, Lord, have made the atom's hidden forces,  
your laws its mighty energies fulfill;  
teach us, to whom you give such rich resources,  
in all we use, to serve your holy will.

3 O Life, awakening in cell and tissue,  
from flower to bird, from beast to brain of man;  
help us to trace, from birth to final issue,  
the sure unfolding of your age-long plan.

4 You, Lord, have stamped your image on your creatures,  
and, though they mar that image, love them still;  
lift up our eyes to Christ, that in his features  
we may discern the beauty of your will.

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<sup>59</sup> Schwanke, "Luther on Creation," 83.

5 Great Lord of nature (creation), shaping and renewing,  
you made us more than nature's sons to be;  
you help us tread, with grace our souls enduing,  
the road to life and immortality.<sup>60</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Albert Frederick Bayly was born and died in Sussex, 1901–1984. He was educated at Mansfield College in Oxford and London University where he received his Bachelor of Arts. Bayly was trained as a shipwright, but soon working on warships became contrary to his strong pacifist views. He later offered his services in ministry. Bayly was ordained as a congregational minister in 1929, serving for nearly forty years before retiring in 1968.

In 1984, Bayly attended the annual Hymn Society conference held in Great Britain, but it would be his last year to attend. Before he reached home that year, he died of a heart attack. Fred Pratt Green, a personal friend and hymnist himself, wrote a short obituary honoring Bayly and his life as a hymnist. Pratt stated that Bayly began writing poetry and hymns, at a time when there was little to encourage a writer. Tensions had risen across Europe, and Great Britain was no different. Bayly's recognition as a hymnist grew slowly, but by the time the economic difficulties of Europe began to dissipate, Bayly's work began to be recognized. He started out publishing privately until Anglicans editors began to take notice. A few years later American editors began to follow suit.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** The hymn "O Lord of Every Shining Constellation" originally entitled "God's Age-long Plan" was said to be "one attempt to write a hymn which would express a Christian response to life in the twentieth century world, which

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<sup>60</sup> Hymns Ancient and Modern Limited, "O Lord of Every Constellation," *Hymns Ancient & Modern New Standard* (Suffolk, UK: Chaucer, 1986), 906–7.

science and technology have influenced so greatly.”<sup>61</sup> This quote comes from Bayly himself. Although the Industrial Revolution started in the nineteenth century, major technological advancements and inventions that American’s depend on today surfaced in the twentieth century. In particular, it was in the twentieth century when science discovered that the Andromeda galaxy was not a star cluster within the Milky Way, but instead a galaxy outside of earth’s galaxy. With this discovery, man’s perception of the galaxy expanded exponentially (verse 1). It was also in the twentieth century that human beings discovered that they had the ability to split the atom (verse 2) and that DNA was the information communication system of life. The author’s awareness of all these things causes the author to make a plea to humankind that this knowledge be used wisely and in accordance with God’s will.

The author himself sets the parameter for interpreting his hymn “O Lord of Every Shining Constellation.” Bayly felt the world was being bombarded with scientific knowledge and contemporary problems that required answers. So Bayly, through his hymnody, offered solid Christian responses to assist the Christian in thinking through pertinent issues of his day.

Today Bayly’s hymn can only be found in *Hymns Ancient and Modern New Standard* #411. This dissertation also discovered other hymns, written by Bayly, that contain similar language to the hymn analyzed here. The only major difference is in the hymn’s title. They include, “Great God of Every Shining Constellation,” published in *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* #246 and “Lord of the Boundless Curves of Space,” published in *Hymns Ancient and Modern New Standard* #493 and *The New English Hymnal* #405.

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<sup>61</sup> Fred Pratt Green, “Albert F. Bayly, 1901–1984,” *The Hymn* 35 (1984): 246–47.

## **The Hymn's Theological Content**

**Theme of Creatureliness:** In Bayly's hymn "O Lord of Every Shining Constellation" one quickly detects the characteristic of dependence upon God by recognizing that everything, from the vast constellation to smallest atom, belongs to God. One thing that sets this hymn apart from others is the way in which Bayly underlines the distinct characteristic the human creature has been given: the role of dominion. He not only alludes to the human's role of dominion and its use in God's creation, but speaks to its limits and the human potential for misusing it. It emerges in the first three verses that begin to sound as if the author is invoking a prayer for guidance. For example in verse one, Bayly offers a prayer for the Spirit's illumination so that the creature might understand God's creation. In verse two, after reflecting on the immensity of the atom, Bayly prays, "teach us . . . to serve your holy will." And in verse three, Bayly contemplates the inner workings of tissue and cell and prays for discernment regarding God's long-range plans.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Bayly sets his hymn to a poetic rhythm. In other words, the lines of the verse contain a reoccurrence of sound at equal intervals. In this hymn, the last word of the verse one rhymes with the last word of verse three and the last line of verse two rhymes with that last word of verse four.

Each verse of Bayly's hymn follows a similar structural pattern. The first line of each verse begins with an awareness that God is Lord as Creator. This is followed by a verb of ownership confirming it is the Lord's. For example, in verse two, he writes, "You, Lord, have made," and in verse four, "You, Lord, have stamped." In doing this, Bayly makes it clear to the reader that all life begins and continues to live through God's almighty power. Lines three and four of each verse use verbs of action to command the Lord to teach, to grant, to help, and to humble his human creature.

“O Lord of Every Shining Constellation” begins verse one by acknowledging that every shining star in the heavens above belongs to God. Bayly’s reference to constellations confirms his desire for God’s guidance as he ponders the wonders of the skies. Bayly looks to the clusters of stars, which are in fact galaxies containing billions of stars and demand’s God’s guidance. The author asks God that He might grant by the power of the Spirit true illumination to understand better God’s amazing power and glory through everything the creature sees around him in the skies at night.

Verse two acknowledges that God is the force and energy behind every atom that exists. Bayly acknowledges God’s amazing complexities of creation by considering the atom. Everything God creates on earth, every speck of dust, every bird of the air, every creature of the sea, is composed of trillions upon trillions of atoms. Bayly asks the Lord to teach his creatures to use this resource wisely. He implies that man is not to use them to harm neighbor or land but instead to use them to serve God and his creation.

In verse three, Bayly invites the reader to contemplate the creation of all God’s creatures. He considers the scientific study of cells and tissue, that of the flower and the bird, to the beast and human brain. A cell is a living organism in its the most basic functional, structural, and biological unit. It is the smallest unit of life that can replicate independently and is often called a “building block of life.” Each cell contains a protoplasm enclosed within a membrane. The membrane contains many biomolecules such as protein and nucleic acids. Bacteria are considered a single cell organism, while plants, animals, and humans are multicellular. The human being contains about 100 trillion ( $10^{14}$ ) cells. The human tissue is just a miraculous. It is an ensemble of similar cells from the same origin, which carry out a specific function. Organs

form by the functional grouping together of multiple tissues. Bayly asks that God endow each learner's knowledge with understanding of life's processes from life to death.

In verse four, Bayly turns to God's human creature. "You, Lord, have stamped your image on your creatures." This phrase, along with the role of dominion granted to humankind, marks the distinctive characteristics of God's human creature.<sup>62</sup> What does it mean that man and woman were created in the image of God? Martin Luther considers it as an imparted dignity placed upon man by God. It is received from outside oneself "without any merits or worthiness in me."<sup>63</sup> Luther emphasizes the fact that is has been distributed to the human being in order that the creature "re-pond."<sup>64</sup> Reflecting on Luther, Oswald Bayer suggests,

The image of God for the human being consists in the fact that the individual is the representative (*vicarius*) of God and is the one responsible for carrying out His mandates on earth. Whoever is not satisfied with being an instrument of God and with being one who carries out His mandates destroys and misdirects the proper way to act in the image of God by glorifying himself instead, wrongly applying what was promised to him.<sup>65</sup>

Luther properly defines dominion as turning one's focus away from self and instead towards the needs of all other creatures. Verse four ends with a request for discernment and guidance to help the creature properly care for God's creation.

The hymn closes with verse five where Bayly turns the focus back to the Lord, the Creator, but this time provides the additional concept of *creatio continua*, as the Lord shapes and renews his creation. "Great Lord of nature, shaping and renewing." Christ as Creator will continue to

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<sup>62</sup> The following hymns also highlights the distinct creatureliness of the image of God stamped on his human creature: "Nourished by the Rainfall, the Earth Can Come Alive," found in *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* #138, which was analyzed in chapter 2. Hymn #500 in *Hymns Ancient and Modern New Standard* titled, "Now Join We, to Praise the Creator," asks the creature who has been given much to be wise and thankful in his care for all he has dominion over.

<sup>63</sup> Bayer, *Luther's Theology*, 157.

<sup>64</sup> Bayer, *Luther's Theology*, 157.

<sup>65</sup> Bayer, *Luther's Theology*, 159.

restore and renew this creation, but there will come a time when Christ will re-create his creation in his ultimate fulfillment, through the new heaven and new earth.

**Christian Confession:** Although this hymn does not make reference to any scriptural texts or tell the Christian story in any one explicit way, it does carry the Christian message that all creation from the smallest atom to the vastness of the universe belongs to the Lord and He alone has control over it: “He makes the atom’s force, he awakens life in cell and tissue, and he shapes and renews creation.” Bayly’s hymn shows that in order to understand God’s creation wisely and to use the knowledge gained through science properly, Christians need to pursue all things in science and technology in light of God’s Word.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

Two main categories were highlighted in this chapter. They were common creatureliness and distinct creatureliness. Under these two categories characteristics of each were presented. Common creatureliness included the following characteristics: all creatures are created, all creatures suffer together while sharing a common future, and all creatures are dependent upon a common Creator whose creation is vital for life. The characteristic developed throughout the hymns focuses on all creatures’ dependency upon a common Creator. This is understood as God’s providence.

Under the category of distinct creatureliness the following characteristics were highlighted: human creatures are relational beings, they are created in the image of God, and the human creature has been given dominion over God’s creation. In this category, the hymns best represented the characteristic of the human creature’s proper understanding of dominion.

Creatureliness goes to the heart of human identity. It defines who the creature is, what role he plays, and to whom he is accountable for fulfilling that role. What links human creatures



together with all other creatures is their common dependence upon God's provision. This dependence implies something outside oneself; it implies a Creator.

It is worth noting that several of the hymns chosen for this chapter could have easily been used to also represent the previous chapter's theme, "The Community of Creation Uniting in Praise." Most hymns analyzed for this chapter continue the idea of praising God because of his care and his provision to all creatures. As a whole, few hymns were found that placed a strong emphasis on the theme of human creatureliness. Only three hymns identified God's providence and his care that is shared amongst all of his creatures, and only one highlighted the characteristic of the human's role of proper dominion as a distinct human characteristic.

The first three hymns, "We Plough the Fields and Scatter," "This is My Father's House," and "Great is Thy Faithfulness," provide an example of common creatureliness. They emphasize, in a variety of ways, what God's providence for his creation looks like. First, in "We Plough the Fields and Scatter," great attention was given to God's delight in the details of his creation. Here God painted the flowers and lit the skies. In "This is My Father's House," emphasis was placed on God's immanence and his presence in creation. In "Great is Thy Faithfulness," the analysis focused on God's continued faithfulness and his care in creation, now and throughout time. All of these hymns highlight in different ways how God's creatures are guarded by the providence of God. Creation belongs to God; it is his. He alone provides for the needs of every creature.

In the hymn, "O Lord of Every Shining Constellation," attention was given to the importance of a distinct characteristic of human creatureliness, namely, the human vocation of dominion. In Genesis 1:26, God makes the human creature in his image, after his likeness, and gives him dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, over the cattle of the earth, and the creeping things that creep upon the earth. It is a unique role given to the human by God

himself, as a reflection of his care in creation. This was the only hymn chosen that reflects this distinct characteristic of human creatureliness. “O Lord of Every Shining Constellation” reminds the human creature that he alone was created in the image of God. Therefore, he has the unique responsibility of dominion. But the creature cannot forget that with this role comes great responsibility.

Of all human creatures, the Christian has the best insight into how the role of dominion should be reflected in creation. God provides a perfect example of humbleness, servanthood, and unconditional love: his Son Jesus. He was sent to live amongst his creation as a human creature. During Christ’s time on earth, the human creature experienced healing, restoration, a peace with creation, and a heart that found beauty in everything that was created. When the Christian is able to consider the image of God not as a crown or an honor but as the responsibility of *reflecting* God’s care to the rest of creation, the role of dominion becomes second nature. This may be simply reflected when humans treat other creatures humanely instead of as a commodity. It might be seen in allowing land time to rest before the next aggressive harvest. To be created in the image of God and to be given dominion over creation is best practiced when the human creature thinks first of God and second of neighbor leaving thoughts of self behind. The human creature then truly becomes the hands, channels, and means through which God’s blessings are bestowed on his good earth.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE SPOKEN WORD

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Si'ron like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness, the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forests bare; and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever (Ps. 29:3–10).

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their hosts by the breath of his mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth (Ps. 33:6–9).

And God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light. And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." . . . and it was so. And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so (Gen. 1–3, 6, 7b, 9).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him and without him was not made anything that was made (John 1:1–4).

"The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God will stand forever" (Isa. 40:8 and 1 Pet. 1:24b–25a).

The Word of God is fundamental to Lutheran theology. The *Word* can refer to the written word, the spoken word, or even to Christ in the flesh, the *logos*. The spoken word can be further broken down to include both the word preached by pastors (in other words, the Gospel message) and the actual spoken word of God as found in the Scriptures.

A scriptural theology of creation misses the mark if it does not explore the connection between God's spoken word and the creation of the world for the God of the scriptures is a God of conversation. He speaks all creation into existence. Thus God says, "Let there be Light" (Gen. 1:3), and there is light. God says, "Let the earth bring forth" (Gen. 1:11), and vegetation of every kind sprouts from the ground. The same word remains effective to this day as it calls forth the sun to rise or commands the flower to bloom each spring. And it is this same spoken, effective word the entire world will hear together when Jesus calls forth his new creation. God's Word, the spoken word, is a creative word; it is effective. It does what it says.

The spoken word as a theme of a theology of creation has not been widely discussed within larger theological circles. In this regard, it might be considered somewhat of a distinctively Lutheran contribution to the larger church. For Martin Luther, the doctrine of creation is centered in God's word and his own study of Scripture. Luther, an Old Testament scholar, had a particular liking for Genesis. His lectures on Genesis do not deal with the doctrine of creation in a theoretical or abstract way; instead Luther describes creation in a narrative way, as though it were taking place in present time.<sup>1</sup> Creation is not something of the past but something of the present. In other words, through his word, God spans together the world from the beginning to the end. "God's living creative Word is 'without end.'"<sup>2</sup> It is not dead, and it remains effective even to this day.

God's effective Word, the word that calls all creatures into being, "says what it creates and creates what it says."<sup>3</sup> As a result of the Creator possessing such powerful speech, Luther would

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<sup>1</sup> Johannes Schwanke, "Luther of Creation," in *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 78–98.

<sup>2</sup> Schwanke, "Luther of Creation," 82.

<sup>3</sup> Schwanke, "Luther of Creation," 85.

say that God has his own language, his own divine grammar.<sup>4</sup> He is the author of the world.

Luther explains it like this:

“Let there be light” are words of God, not of Moses; this means that they are realities. For God calls into existence the things which do not exist (Rom. 4:17). He does not speak grammatical words; He speaks true and existent realities. Accordingly, that which among us has the sound of a word is a reality with God. Thus the sun, moon, earth, Peter, Paul, I, you, etc.—we are all are words of God, in fact only one single syllable or letter by comparison with the entire creation. We, too, speak, but only according to the rules of language; that is, we assign names to objects which have already been created. But the divine rule of language is different, namely: when He says: “Sun, shine,” the sun is there at once and shines. Thus the words of God are realities, not bare words . . . . For what else is the entire creation than the Word of God uttered by God, or extended to the outside.<sup>5</sup>

God’s word is a living, creative, working being; it is a word of present tense and of promise. It is not a fleeting breath; it is an effective breath—it creates. As such, “God’s work is God’s speech.”<sup>6</sup>

Luther’s theology of the word finds some of its fullest development in the work of Robert Kolb and Oswald Bayer. Both Kolb and Bayer are well-known theologians today that dedicate their time and expertise to the work and writings of Martin Luther. Luther’s theology of the word, in this case the spoken word, is grounded in Luther’s understanding of the doctrine of creation. Each of these scholars brings unique insight to understanding God’s word in light of Luther’s teaching. Kolb focuses more centrally on the spoken word being a performative speech act, whereas Bayer’s focus is on the word being God’s promise and address. Neither Kolb nor Bayer would deny the importance and centrality that Luther places on the word of God. Luther also focuses on the embodied Word, Christ. In fact, Luther does not speak of creation or the

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<sup>4</sup> Schwanke, “Luther of Creation,” 85.

<sup>5</sup> Schwanke, “Luther of Creation,” 85.

<sup>6</sup> Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 43.

word apart from Christ, but this is a theme that deserves full attention and will be handled in chapter 5.

### **Robert Kolb**

Robert Kolb is considered a leading expert in the life and theology of Martin Luther and in the Lutheran Reformation. He writes extensively in both areas. Today he serves as an emeritus professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri and as a visiting professor and guest lecturer throughout the United States and at numerous international school locations.

Robert Kolb contends that Luther's theology is ultimately a "Theology of God's Word"<sup>7</sup> and that Luther treasured the way in which God revealed himself in "the Word made Flesh."<sup>8</sup> Kolb argues that Luther understood that God's words brought reality into being. So, when Kolb talks about God's word, he speaks of it as being a performative word. Take, for example, "Let there be light." Upon God's speaking, light instantaneously appears out of nothing. God's word becomes a visual reality. God "actually accomplishes his will through his speaking."<sup>9</sup> God's speaking results in a new reality. But it is not a word that has only a momentary effect. Its power endures. The world still exists. The sun still rises. The ground still yields its fruit in due season, and the stars still come out in the dark of the night. These are present-day realities, and they are preserved and maintained by God's creative word. "For Luther, God is always acting, and his action is speaking."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Kolb, "Reality Rests on the Word of the Lord: Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Word," *Reformation and Revival* 9 (Fall 2000): 47–63.

<sup>8</sup> Kolb, "Reality Rests," 47.

<sup>9</sup> Kolb, "Reality Rests," 52.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Arand and Robert Kolb, *The Genius of Luther's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 136.

Robert Kolb provides insight to the power of the word when he reflects on Luther's 1532 lecture on Psalm 2.<sup>11</sup> In it, Luther told his students that God's Word was "related to a real thing or action [*verbum reale*], not just a sound, as our words are."<sup>12</sup> God's language, his grammar, is not language the human can totally comprehend. God's speaking creates and acts. Here the spoken word is seen as performative. God speaks every moment of every day. He calls forth the sun to rise and it rises. In the evening, God dismisses the sun when the course of the day has ended and commissions the moon to take over its light-given role. Luther surmised that God "does not speak grammatical words; he speaks true and existent realities."<sup>13</sup>

Kolb continues to show the power of God's word when he considers God's original creation and how it serves as a paradigm for Luther's understanding of God's re-creating activity.<sup>14</sup> Sin introduced chaos and disorder into creation in the form of death. Prior to sin, humankind's greatest strength lay in the "faith in the word."<sup>15</sup> Yet, that faith was destroyed when Adam and Eve were lured, not so much by the beauty of fruit, but by Satan's attack on God's word. Sin lies in the doubt and the abandonment of God's word. Once faith in the word was destroyed, the creature's relationship and communication with God was destroyed. This destruction, of relationship and communication, caused the human creature to die spiritually, yet physically they were alive. As Kolb states, "Human creatures were corpses in their relationship with God."<sup>16</sup> Renewal of that relationship and communication with God comes only from God. These dead corpses needed to be re-created; they required new life in order to live. And so God

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<sup>11</sup> Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 136.

<sup>12</sup> "Lecture on Psalm 2, 1532," *AE* 12:32-33; *WA* 40.2:230.20-231.28

<sup>13</sup> Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, 136.

<sup>14</sup> Kolb, "Reality Rests," 52.

<sup>15</sup> Kolb, "Reality Rests," 53.

<sup>16</sup> Kolb, "Reality Rests," 54.

initiated a new act of creation in order to rescue corrupted humanity. Here Kolb connects the reality of the word brought forth in the original creation as being synonymous with the word that now justifies sinners and re-creates them into new creations.

### **Oswald Bayer**

Oswald Bayer is a German Lutheran theologian who has focused much of his career studying the concept of *promissio* (promise) in the theology of Martin Luther. Bayer's theology focuses on Luther's theology of the word and promise. Bayer believes that Luther understood the act of creation fundamentally as an act of speech. Bayer directs attention to Luther's translation of Psalm 33:4, which Luther calls a creation psalm: "For the Word of the Lord is true; and what he promises, he certainly holds to it." Luther testifies "God's work of creation is certainly a work, but it is concurrently a speaking work. God's work speaks on its own behalf, it is *sui ipsius interpres*: it makes itself understood."<sup>17</sup> Therefore God's spoken words are effective words.<sup>18</sup>

Creation, for Bayer, must be understood in the context of communication. The word is a speech act, a dialogue between the one who speaks (God) and the one who hears and willingly responds (the creature). As noted earlier in Kolb's work, the creature's sin ruptured God's communication with his creatures when they chose to ignore God's spoken word. When God's word is ignored the creature begins to turn inward toward itself. This turning in on oneself turns the creature further away from God, his word, and his creation. Luther calls this idol worship,<sup>19</sup> or being consumed by self. When idol worship of self occurs, the human creature misconstrues and dislodges his creaturely nature and his role within God's creation. The creature no longer

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<sup>17</sup> Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 102.

<sup>18</sup> Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 110.



serves God or hears his word, but cares for and serves only self. When this occurs God's voice in his creation can no longer be heard.

Although God continues to speak, the creature cannot hear. "We do not hear, even if the entire world and [all] creatures call out, and [through this medium] God [himself] makes promises [to us]." <sup>20</sup> God still speaks. For Bayer this becomes Luther's central point to understanding creation:

The heavens are telling the glory of God: and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.  
Day to day pours forth speech, and night-to-night declares knowledge.  
There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;  
yet their voice goes out throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world (Ps. 19:1–4).

In this psalm God speaks through the handiwork of his creation. Although the creature is dead in sin and deaf to his word, it does not negate the truth that God continues to speak through his creation.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer alludes to the fact that "only in the Word of creation do we know the Creator."<sup>21</sup> The Creator cannot be recognized *from* his works, as though the substance, nature, or essence of his work somehow becomes identical with his nature. Instead, the creature is only able to recognize the Creator because God's word acknowledges these works.<sup>22</sup> This example provides two very different ways to *see* a tree in creation. The first, and the incorrect way, would be to view a tree and *in* the tree see God. This is a panentheistic interpretation where creation and God become mutually dependent. But to view a tree and in faith know that God spoke the tree into being and that he continues speaking, growing, changing, and producing more trees has a dramatic impact on the power of God's spoken word.

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<sup>20</sup> Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 111.

<sup>21</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 20.

Based on the works of Kolb and Bayer two characteristics emerge that will be used to analyze the hymns for this chapter. The first highlights that God spoken word is effective. It continually does what is says and says what it does. The second recognizes that God’s powerful word is an act of communication, a speech act. Whether God’s creatures hear God’s word or not through denial or ignorance, God continues to speak, and he uses his creation as proof of that speech.

The hymns available for this chapter were few. Most of them deal with the topic of the word focused on either Christ as the Word or the preaching the Gospel. But, the goal of this chapter is to highlight God’s spoken word and its performative effect in creation. This is visible in the first creation, it is visible as his word creates today, and it will become visible when he calls forth his new creation.

The spoken word, as a theme of a theology of creation has not begun to be tapped to its full potential. Only ten hymns in total were identified as expressing in some way the theme, yet this theme is vital for rounding out a full theology of creation. The hymns chosen for this chapter all highlight the spoken word in a unique way.

Table 3: Hymns of The Spoken Word

<b>Hymns of The Spoken Word</b>	
<b>Hymn Title</b>	<b>Hymnals that Include Hymn</b>
Thy Strong Word	<i>LSB 578, LW 328, Christian Worship 280, and Worship 511</i>
God Who Spoke in the Beginning	<i>Hymns Ancient and Modern 468</i>
The Word of God is Source and Seed	<i>With One Voice 658</i>

## Thy Strong Word

### Hymn Verses

1 Thy strong word did cleave the darkness;  
At Thy speaking it was done.  
For created light we thank Thee,  
While Thine ordered seasons run.

*Refrain: Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise Thee who light dost send!  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Alleluias without end!*

2 Lo, on men who dwelt in darkness,  
Dark as night and deep as death,  
Broke the light of Thy salvation,  
Breathed Thine own life-breathing breath.

3 Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous;  
Bright with Thine own holiness,  
Glorious now, we press toward glory,  
And our lives our hopes confess.

4 From the cross Thy wisdom shining  
Breaketh forth in conquering might;  
From the cross forever beameth  
All Thy bright redeeming light.

\*Note: the refrain on the next two verses is different.

5 Give us lips to sing Thy glory,  
Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim,  
Throats that shout the hope that fill us,  
Mouths to speak Thy holy name.  
Alleluia! God of Glory,  
May the light which thou dost send,  
Fill our songs with Alleluias,  
Alleluias without end!

6 God the Father, light-creator,  
To Thee laud and honor be.  
To Thee, Light of Light begotten,  
Praise be sung eternally.  
Holy Spirit, light-revealer,  
Glory, glory be to Thee.  
Men and angels, now and ever

Praise the Holy Trinity!<sup>23</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Martin Hans Franzmann, the author of this hymn, was born in 1907 in Minnesota. He is the son of William and Else Franzmann. William was a local Lutheran pastor, and young Franzmann was raised in the sturdy German Lutheran tradition, which included understanding that English was the “*Teufelsprach*,” or the devil’s language!<sup>24</sup>

Franzmann did his undergraduate work at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, and studied theology at the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary in Thiensville, Wisconsin. While at seminary he also studied the classics at the University of Chicago where he found a love for poetry. For the next twenty years, Franzmann spent hours studying the classics. He taught Greek, English, and Latin courses in literature at Northwestern College and St. Peter’s Lutheran School in Shaker Heights, Ohio (1933–1935). It was at St. Peter’s where Franzmann became acquainted with Pastor Arthur Katt, a man who would later influence his hymnody writing. Franzmann’s work in the classics also prepared him for his future exegetical work as a New Testament scholar. In 1946 he was called to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri as a professor of New Testament studies.

In 1968, Franzmann took a sabbatical in which he traveled for six months throughout Austria and England. It was in England where he became reacquainted with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England and with its seminary Westfield House in Cambridge. In 1969, he moved to England to serve as a tutor at Westfield House. In 1972 and his son John took over his duties. In 1975, he returned to Concordia Seminary in order to assist in healing the division that

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<sup>23</sup> The Commission of Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, “Thy Strong Word,” *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 578.

<sup>24</sup> Robin A. Leaver, *Come to the Feast* (St. Louis: MorningStar Music, 1994), 15.

had taken place within the Missouri Synod. This took a toll on Franzmann's health, and in 1976 at his apartment back in Cambridge he died.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** While Franzmann was employed at Concordia Seminary he met and befriended Walter Buszin, the professor of liturgies on the same campus. In 1954, Buszin asked Franzmann to compose lyrics that could be sung to the tune EBENEZER and used for that year's processional commencement hymn. Franzmann agreed and wrote four verses based on the seminary's motto, "*Anothen to Phos*" ("Light from Above"). On the morning of October 7, 1954 in chapel, Concordia Seminary's student body sang the hymn "Thy Strong Word" for the first time. Soon it was included in the *Seminary Service Book* (1954) and contained five verses. A sixth verse, a doxology, was added as it appears in *Worship Supplement* 747 and is considered by some<sup>25</sup> to be the finest doxology ever written in the Western Church.<sup>26</sup>

Franzmann's recognition as a hymn writer took many years to establish. His first hymn was not published until 1941. It was included in new *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Finally in 1969, with the publication of *The Worship Supplement*,<sup>27</sup> Franzmann's work as an author was finally recognized. This work contained six of his original hymns and one of his translations. Herman Stuempfle, a hymnist himself, commented that Franzmann's work was known for its poetic beauty, careful crafting, and most importantly its theological depth.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> A quote by Bruce Baker a professor at Luther College, New Elm, Minnesota writes, "Most liturgical expression is at the same time doxological, since it is the Christian's chief duty in addressing God to thank and praise him especially for the great gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Martin Franzmann penned perhaps the greatest doxology in the entire corpus of western hymnody."

<sup>26</sup> Richard N. Brinkley, *Thy Strong Word: Enduring the Legacy of Martin Franzmann* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993) 82.

<sup>27</sup> Commission on Worship The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Synod of Evangelical Churches, *Worship Supplement* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1969).

<sup>28</sup> Herman G. Stuempfle, "Hymn Interpretation," *The Hymn* 52 (2001): 46–47.

“Thy Strong Word” is perhaps one of the hardest and at the same time easiest hymns to analyze. The hymn was written at Concordia Seminary for Concordia Seminary. The year was 1954. The hymn was to reflect the seminary’s motto, “*Anothen to Phos*” (“Light from Above”).

Today Franzmann’s hymn, “Thy Strong Word,” can be found in almost every major Lutheran hymnal, *LSB* 578, *LW* 328, *Christian Worship* 280, *LBW* 233, and *Worship* 511, and it is usually found under the category of “The Word of God.” However, this hymn is distinctly absent from the Anglican hymnals.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of The Spoken Word:** The main focus of Franzmann’s hymn is not exclusively on creation, which this dissertation considers a strength rather than a deficiency. In it Franzmann deals with how God’s word brings about all the works of God spanning from creation to eschatology. In doing so, he shows not only that God is a God of conversation but also that speaking is God’s *modus operandi* for interacting with his creation. The strength of this hymn lies in the fact that the word does what it says. Franzmann’s hymn proclaims that God’s word “cleaves the darkness” making way for light to fill his creation. He uses the phrase “at Thy speaking it was done.” This emphasizes the fact that not only creation occurs with the spoken word but forgiveness and healing occur with that same spoken word. What took place at creation occurs in redemption. Here God “bespeaks” the sinner righteous. His word now creates a new reality in the life of the sinner.

Stuempfle suggests that when the church sings “Thy Strong Word,” they must think about the message of each word. Stuempfle states that Franzmann’s hymn “weaves poetry and theology into a sturdy yet beautiful fabric.”<sup>29</sup> A theology of creation that carries the theme of the

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<sup>29</sup> Stuempfle, “Hymn Interpretation,” 46.

spoken word only strengthens its theological focus. God's word is prominently centered in Franzmann's hymn. The word creates, forgives, and justifies; God's word also reconciles the creature's broken relationship with its Creator.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Long before Franzmann wrote hymns he studied the classics and found a deep love for poetry. The hymn "Thy Strong Word" is structured using parallelism. Throughout the hymn there is an exchange in action taking place between the odd and even verses. The odd verses present God speaking and the even verses respond to God's speaking with an action. Take for example verses one and three. In verse one the hymn states, "Thy strong word did cleave the darkness; at thy speaking it was done." In verse three, "Thy strong word bespeaks us righteous." In both cases, God speaks and an action follows as can be seen in verses two and four. In verse two light appears and in verse four, righteousness. In verse five, Franzmann turns the tables and asks God to give his human creatures the things they need: lips, tongues, throats and mouths to proclaim, to sing, and to shout his holy name.

Although verses two and four provide a response to God's speaking they differ slightly. In verse two, Franzmann provides an image of man's situation prior to God's speaking. Here men are dwelling in darkness, but God's powerful word, his "own life-breathing breath," breaks the darkness open by "the light of thy salvation" in life-giving breath. In verse four, the vision of the God's spoken word is set forth by way of forgiveness of sin and is provided by God's action from the cross of Jesus. Jesus becomes a metaphor for word and light. Now the action of word and light spoken in the beginning changes the world forever. God's spoken word conquers both the darkness and death of humankind. God's spoken word always produces an action his words are his work.

Verse one opens with the Genesis 1 text, “And God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). But, it is perhaps a *double entendre* in that it also is an allusion to conversion. Bruce Baker, a professor of Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota provides a brief analysis of the hymn suggesting that verse one is a big metaphor for the miracle of conversion.<sup>30</sup> Yet, the text of the hymn actually proclaims the power of the word. The word actually does what it says. It speaks, and darkness is turned into light. It proclaims the seasons, and the seasons run their course. Franzmann’s choice of the word “cleave” deepens this thought. To cleave something means to sever, forcefully split something open. The word severs; the hymn splits open the darkness and provides light to the world. It severs the sinner’s heart and opens the way for healing and forgiveness. Franzmann recognized God’s word, as is evidenced in the hymn. Luther also recognizes the power of God’s spoken word: “That God, by speaking, created all things and worked through the Word, and that all his works are some words of God, created by the uncreated Word.”<sup>31</sup>

Verse two recounts how, after the fall of humankind, creation finds itself once again plunged into darkness: “Dark as night and deep as death.” A new chaos has invaded God’s creation, one that caused man to deny God as Creator and Lord. Satan’s attack on humankind is evident; he attacks what Luther calls the human creature’s greatest strength, faith in God’s Word. When faith is destroyed, the creature stops hearing God’s word as promise. His words dwindle to become no different than the noise of human words. Yet, in line three of verse two, God’s word sends light to break that darkness: “Broke the light of thy salvation.” Here the hymn portrays the powerful words of the Holy Spirit, spoken in the Gospel, which create new life in the creature.

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<sup>30</sup> Brinkley, *Thy Strong Word*, 82.

<sup>31</sup> “Genesis Lectures, 1535,” *WA* 42:35, 38–40, *AE* 1:47.



Verse three ties verse two and four together by recounting Christ's reconciling work in his death as verse two painted a picture of man standing in darkness, lost and unable to find the light. Verse four depicts a picture of Christ's death, but this darkness is broken wide open in "redeeming light." Between these two pictures, light breaks forth by the power of God's spoken words. His words speak "righteousness," the proclamation of innocence. The light of Christ breaks the darkness of sin. It re-creates a new relationship with all creation. This redeeming light returns those living in darkness as the word of forgiveness is heard. Satan's bond is released, and God's creatures once again trust God's Word. Faith is restored. Franzmann shifts from the spoken word of creation to the spoken Word of forgiveness now found in Christ. God's word does what it says. God speaks, creation appears, God forgives, and the creature is forgiven.

Verse four, is the hymn's Christological center. Franzmann shows light being produced from a very strange place: the cross. He uses phrases such as "wisdom shining" and "redeeming light forever beaming" from a cross of death. Now Franzmann turns all his focus on the cross where God's strong Word is "enfleshed in weakness and vulnerability was silenced."<sup>32</sup> But, the cross does not represent defeat of God's word; instead it proclaims and shouts Christ's glory and his victory over death, sin, and the devil as Christ now spoke, "It is finished." The enfleshed word speaks just three words, and these words change everything. Christ's death breaks all barriers, and his resurrection bursts forth a new beginning in which God once again communes with his children.

In verse five the author flips the hymn's focus over. Instead of the power and performative action of God's word, the creature uses his weak and non-performative words to make a plea to God. He asks for lips to sing, tongues to proclaim, throats to shout, and mouths to speak his holy

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<sup>32</sup> Stuempfle, *Hymn Interpretation*, 46.

name. In response to the creature's plea, God gives his creatures, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the things he needs to proclaim his glory. Now the creature is able to speak God's words in trust and faith. God's work is accomplished. Proclamation of the Gospel is spoken throughout the world.

In the final verse Franzmann pulls the whole hymn together into a Trinitarian doxology. He accomplishes this by identifying each person of the Trinity through its connection to light. For example, Franzmann identifies the Father's role as the creator of light through the spoken word. Franzmann identifies the Son as the light, "Light of Light begotten," but he also identifies him as the Word. And finally Franzmann identifies the Holy Spirit's role as the revealer of light, "Holy Spirit, Light-Revealer." Here the Holy Spirit works through the creature to speak his word of truth and promise to the world.

**Christian Confession:** As can be seen in the analysis above, Franzmann's hymn offers a clear Christian confession with its emphasis on Christ, but he does so by exploring the vital and dynamic theology of the word. Franzmann's understanding of the word is summarized in an article he wrote in 1951, "As God is, so is his Word to us: quick and powerful." "The Word has power, it works and creates what it says."<sup>33</sup> "The Word is quick; we must let it live. The Word is powerful; we must let it work."<sup>34</sup>

### **God Who Spoke in the Beginning**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 God who spoke in the beginning,  
forming rock and shaping spar,  
set all life and growth in motion,  
earthly world and distant star;  
he who calls the earth to order

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<sup>33</sup> Martin Franzmann, "Quick and Powerful," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 22 (1951): 161–69.

<sup>34</sup> Brinkley, *Thy Strong Word*, 83.

is the ground of what we are.

2 God who spoke through men and nations,  
through events long past and gone,  
showing still today His purpose,  
speaks supremely through His Son;  
he who calls the earth to order  
gives his word and it is done.

3 God whose speech becomes incarnate—  
Christ is servant, Christ is Lord—  
calls us to a life of service,  
heart and will to action stirred;  
he who uses man's obedience  
has the first and final word.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** In 1968, Fredrick Herman Kaan wrote the hymn, "God Who Spoke in the Beginning," which seems to have been known at one time as "The First and Final Word." Kaan was born in Haarlem, Netherlands, in 1929. His theological education began at the University of Utrecht but was completed at Bristol University after his move to England in 1952. Kaan was ordained in 1955 by the United Reformed Church. Between the years of 1968 and 1978, he served as the minister-secretary for the International Congregational Council and as the executive secretary for the World Alliance of the Reformed Church. Prior to and after this time, he served in various congregations as pastor. Alzheimer's disease and cancer overshadowed Kaan's final years until his death in 2010. During his lifetime he proved to be a prolific hymn writer. He wrote and translated over two-hundred hymns and was considered one of the important contributors to English hymn writing today.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Kaan was considered an ecumenist and had strong associations with social-action groups and Christian communities throughout the

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<sup>35</sup> Hymns Ancient and Modern Limited, "God Who Spoke in the Beginning," *Hymns Ancient and Modern New*

world. He began writing hymns because he felt there were gaps left in traditional hymnody. He was especially attentive to the areas of social responsibility and issues regarding peace and justice. He believed that the gospel demanded that these be given proper attention by Christians. So Kaan with this purpose in mind set out to write hymns to correct these deficiencies. He, like many others in the reformed tradition, wrote hymns that summarize the sermons he preached. There is no evidence to show that Kaan followed that tradition to write this hymn.

Following World War II there was an explosion in hymn writing. These hymns could be loosely categorized into two groups. The first included writers who were interested in the traditional style of hymns. The authors sought to add their twentieth-century contributions to this corpus of hymns handed down year after year to all church traditions. The second group focused on introducing a new style of “worship song” one that would appeal to today’s congregations.

Kaan became impatient with the second group, often referring to their songs as “the nursery rhymes of the church.” He believed his work in hymns fell firmly in the first category. His work meant to address the modern challenges of faith and still have the ability to reach a wide spectrum of Christian churches.<sup>36</sup> Today Kaan’s hymn, “God Who Spoke in the Beginning,” is only found in one hymnal, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* #468.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of The Spoken Word:** Kaan’s hymn situates its focus on God’s word by using the language of the three articles of the Creed. This is a bit surprising, as most reformed churches do not use the creed as an affirmation of the faith in the way the Lutheran Churches do. The first line of each verse opens with God speaking. Verses one and two begin with “God who spoke,”

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*Standard* (Suffolk, UK: Chaucer, 1986), 1016–17.

<sup>36</sup> Keith Forecast, “Fred Kaan: Minister and Celebrated Hymn Writer,” *The Independent*, July 8, 2013.

and in verse three “God whose speech.” Each verse emphasizes the focus of the hymn: the power of God’s spoken word.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Kaan’s hymn is structured within two major Scriptural texts: Genesis 1–2 and Heb. 1:1–2. The hymn portrays God’s word being a word of action. Verse one recalls the beginnings of the world. God spoke, and the rocks and trees came into being. With a word God set the seasons, planets, and stars into motion. In the final line of verse one, Kaan reminds the creature of his humble beginnings, the ground from which he was formed at the hand of the Creator. God through his spoken word creates everything that exists and everything that exists is dependent upon him for its life. God’s works are his words created by the uncreated word. As Kaan stated it, “He set all life and growth in motion . . . He calls the earth to order, is the ground of what we are.”

In verse two, Kaan picks up how God continually speaks throughout history. He begins with the prophets of the Old Testament: “Through events long past and gone, showing still today his purpose, speaks supremely through his Son.” Luther in his Genesis lectures states, “God’s word is the only trustworthy source of God’s revelation of himself”<sup>37</sup> to his creation. That revelation is Christ himself in human form. Kaan keeps the focus on the Creator: “He who calls the earth to order gives his word and it is done.”

In verse three Kaan describes how a Christian becomes a servant of God in the world using Christ as an example. He uses the final lines of verse to introduce the impact of the word of God upon his church and throughout the world. He uses the words to call the Christian to action, “calls us to a life of service, heart and will to action stirred.” Here God’s words, as tools of the Holy Spirit, are seen in the deeds and actions of the Christian’s life. The Christian has been

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<sup>37</sup> Kolb, “Reality Rests,” 50–51.

called into service. Now God's words through the Christian are to accomplish his will and actualize his presence in his creation.<sup>38</sup>

**Christian Confession:** "God Who Spoke in the Beginning," offers a clear Christian confession by way of its overarching Trinitarian narrative. God the Father spoke the world into being reminding the reader of the first creation recounted in Gen. 1:3—"And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light," Then it shifts to God the Son, the incarnate word best highlighted in John 1:1 "In the beginning was the word . . . He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." The hymn concludes with the work of the final person of the Trinity. Kaan highlights the working of the Holy Spirit through the Christian to speak the words of God to his creation. Through the Holy Spirit, the effective work and word of God will continue until Jesus comes to usher in the new creation.

### **The Word of God is Source and Seed**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 The Word of God is source and seed;  
it comes to die and sprout and grow.  
So make your dark earth welcome warm;  
root deep the grain God bent to sow.

*Gaudeamus Domino, gaudeamus Dominio, gaudeamus Domino! In the Lord let us rejoice, in the Lord let us rejoice, in the Lord let us rejoice!*

2 The Word of God is breath and life;  
it comes to heal and wake and save.  
So let the Spirit touch and mend  
and rouse your dry bones from their grave.

3 The Word of God is flesh and grace  
who comes to sing, to laugh and cry.  
So dare to be as Jesus was,

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<sup>38</sup> Kolb, "Reality Rests," 48.

who came to live and love and die.<sup>39</sup>

## Hymn Notes

**Composer's Biography:** Delores Dufner, a Benedictine Sister, wrote this hymn in the early 1980s. Born in 1939, today she is a member of the St. Benedict Monastery located in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Dufner holds a Master's degree in Liturgical Music and Studies. For over twenty years she has served as church musician and teacher of music. In addition she serves as the Liturgy Director of her Monastery for the past six years.<sup>40</sup> Today she is best known for her hymn "Sing a New Church."

Dufner writes liturgical hymns that are scripturally based but designed for a more broad ecumenical appeal. She has received close to fifty commissions to write hymns for special occasions. To date she has written more than one-hundred fifty-five hymns. Dufner is also the author of two collections of hymns: *Sing a New Church*<sup>41</sup> and *The Glimmer of Glory in Song*.<sup>42</sup> She is currently working on her third collection.

In 1996, Dufner and four other hymn writers were awarded in an international English-language hymn competition in which over nine-hundred contestants competed. The contestants were asked to produce hymns that revealed an updated image of the Virgin Mary. Dufner's hymn "Mary First Among Believers" was later commissioned for the National Catholic Youth Choir. In 2000, she was named one of three outstanding Roman Catholic hymn text writers since

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<sup>39</sup> "The Word of God is Source and Seed," *With One Voice: A Lutheran Resource for Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 658.

<sup>40</sup> World Library Publications: The Music and Liturgy Division of J. S. Paluch Company, Inc., *Artists and Authors: Sr. Delores Dufner*, OSB, <http://www.wlp.jspaluch.com/390.htm> (accessed July 17, 2013).

<sup>41</sup> Delores Dufner, *Sing A New Church* (Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 1994).

<sup>42</sup> Delores Dufner, *The Glimmer of Glory in Song* (Chicago: GIA, 2004).

Vatican II.<sup>43</sup> In 2002, she received the Spirit and Truth Award presented by the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** In regards to the hymn “The Word of God is Source and Seed,” no backstory could be found. With Dufner’s diverse background in music she could have written this hymn for many reasons. What has been uncovered is the fact that the hymn’s writing took place around the early 1980s and the hymn was copyrighted in 1983. Within the Catholic Church only one significant event was found between the years of 1980 and 1983. This was called the 1983 Code of Canon Law. This new code of canon law replaced the first, which was written in 1917. In simple language, it is the codification of the laws and regulations made or adopted by ecclesiastical church authority. It is very unlikely that Dufner’s writing of the hymn had anything to do with this historical event. Today the hymn “The Word of God is Source and Seed” was found in *With One Voice*, #658.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of The Spoken Word:** As with the last two hymns, this hymn focuses on the power of the spoken word of God. Unlike the previous two hymns, Dufner does not focus on God’s word creating and sustaining the world, such as God’s providence. Instead, Dufner uses the imagery of creation such as seed, earth, grain, and life as metaphors to describe the impact the Word God has on one’s relationship with God. In other words, she uses tangible elements of creation as metaphors for talking about the word of God and how that word takes root within the human creature to grow and conform the Christian to Christ. In this hymn, Dufner highlights God’s word as being the source of life and healing, both physically and spiritually, as it applies to one’s spiritual life and relationship with God.

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<sup>43</sup> [http://www.hymnary.org/text/the\\_word\\_of\\_god\\_is\\_source\\_and\\_seed](http://www.hymnary.org/text/the_word_of_god_is_source_and_seed).



**Poetry and Imagery:** In the first verse of Dufner’s hymn, she appears to draw upon the imagery of the parable of the sower recounted in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 14. In the parable of the sower, Jesus uses the image of seed to portray the word of God, “The sower sows the word” (Mark 4:14). The parable states that *all* hear the word, but few accept and bear fruit from it. It identifies that there are those that hear the word, but Satan comes immediately and snatches it away. Others, seed sown on rocky ground, immediately receive the word but have no root to stay grounded in it and quickly fall away. Seed planted among the thorns, hear the word but are distracted by the cares and riches of this world and the word is choked away. But when the word is planted on good soil it takes root, it is nourished, and bears fruit. In the parable these are ones who believe the word and become followers of Jesus. Dufner’s hymn follows a similar structure.

Verse one is unique. One cannot be sure whether Dufner is drawing on the parable of the sower or if she is speaking of Jesus as the Word. Dufner states the seed “comes to die and sprout and grow.” This imagery could either portray the seed as the word, which is scattered throughout the world or she could be providing imagery of Jesus’ mission. Both scenarios could work. Jesus was sent to earth to die. Once Jesus is raised from the dead, believers sprout up all over, they grew in faith and in numbers. This would tie in well also to the next phrase, “make your dark earth welcome . . . root deep the grain God bent to sow,” as it provides an image of Christ’s burial in the earth. It is difficult to know for sure what the author intended to portray, but both options provide opportunity for further discussion.

In verse two, Dufner explains the word as “life and breath.” The word is living and active. The text in verse two clarifies that the work, which takes place in the hearer, is the work of the Holy Spirit. He mends and rouses dry bones. Dufner appears to be drawing upon the imagery of

the dry bones recounted in Ezekiel. Ezekiel being led by the Spirit is taken to a valley full of dry dead bones. He is told to prophesy, to speak the word of God, to the dry bones. Upon hearing this word, breath returns to the bones, and the bones live. “Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live” (Ezek. 37:5). Ezekiel’s vision comes to pass each time a sinner hears the word of God. The sinner becomes the picture of the dry bones. As the dead are led to the Spirit he plants the seed, He breathes his breath, and “new” life is given.

Verse three introduces the word as flesh and grace. This verse shifts in meaning from verse two, but ties in better with the second option as identified in verse one. When one hears the word described as flesh and grace, John 1:14 comes to mind, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.” Immediately following this identification of the word, Dufner states that “this word” came, “to sing, to laugh, and cry.” Although Christ’s purpose was to save, heal, and restore, these expressions to sing, laugh, and cry describe the incarnate life of Christ as he embedded himself in the life of his human creatures. The final line of verse three calls those who have heard the word and in which the word has now taken root to “dare to be as Jesus was,” and in doing so, evokes his life and death too which all Christians are called.

**Christian Confession:** Dufner began the hymn by simply stating, “The Word of God is Source and Seed.” Although it may seem simple in language, this statement is surrounded with theological implications. The spoken word is the source of all life. It existed before all time and brought all things into being. The word is powerful, creative, and effective. It is a seed that is sown, which in turn sprouts and grows. By the power of the Holy Spirit, that word receives its breath and comes to life to bear fruit. It is a word of flesh and grace. Dufner’s hymn proclaims

the power of God's spoken word. She highlights through imagery and proclaims Jesus as the spoken word who come in flesh to bring God's grace.

## **Chapter Conclusion**

God's word is as powerful and effective today as it was when the world began. The hymns in this chapter, "Thy Strong Word," "God Who Spoke in the Beginning," and "The Word of God is Source and Seed," along with the work of Oswald Bayer and Robert Kolb presents the Word of God in various ways. All proclaim the word as active and effective today in accomplishing its purpose.

"Thy Strong Word" expounded the word of God in connection with Concordia Seminary's motto, "*Anothen to Phos*"—"Light from Above." Franzmann centered the word both as the performative and embodied word in God's speaking. For Franzmann, the strong word—the light of the Gospel—does not exist without the word of God. The hymn proclaims that when God spoke, things happened. He speaks; creation appears. He forgives; the child is forgiven. Franzmann brings to light the promise of faith. In the end, Franzmann tightly weaves together a Trinitarian, doxological picture of the word of God.

"God Who Spoke in the Beginning" portrays God's word in action. The hymn's structure was set between two strong biblical texts, Genesis 1–2 and Heb. 1:1–2. In this hymn, the word became the only and original reality helping the reader understand that reality exists in God's word alone. Kann's hymn follows the narrative structure of the Creed. First, Kaan presents the word of God as speaking the creation into being. He continues by showing Jesus, as the incarnate Word, who speaks creation into being today as he calls the sun to rise and the birds to sing his glory, in other words *creatio continua*. Kaan introduces the work of the Holy Spirit as the one

who speaks through God's children to accomplish his will. All these verses show God's words as still being active.

The final hymn, "The Word of God is Source and Seed," uses metaphoric language to show that the word of God is a seed and that God himself places that seed in the soil, a metaphor for the human creature to sprout and grow. She highlights the word becoming breath and life when touched by the Holy Spirit. The hymn recalls Scriptural images from the parable of the sower and Ezekiel where dry bones are restored to life. God's children, dead in sin, when fed by the word of God go from death to life both physically and spiritually.

The word of God, "The Spoken Word," is fundamental to a theology of creation. The *Word* can refer to the written word, the spoken word, or to Christ himself in the flesh, the *logos*. Considered a bit more distinctively Lutheran in nature, a scriptural theology of creation misses the mark if the word goes missing. God's word is effective. It does what it says and says what it does, while at the same time it is a living, creative, working being. It is a word of present tense and of promise. More work will need to be considered under this theme in order to strengthen the overarching discussions of a theology of creation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### JESUS AS CREATOR WHO USHERS IN THE NEW CREATION

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1–3).

When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast.” So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine (John 2:3–9a).

And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on a cushion; and they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm . . . And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him” (Mark 4:37–41)?

As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, saying to him, “Go wash in the pool of Silo’am (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing (John 9:6–7).

Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, “Our friend Laz’arus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep.” The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, “Laz’arus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” . . . Now when Jesus came, he found that Laz’arus had already been in the tomb four days . . . Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” . . . So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank thee that thou has heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me.” When he said this, he cried in a loud voice, “Laz’arus, come out.” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped in cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go” (John 11:11–15, 17, 33–35, 39a, 41–44).

Who is this Jesus, and what is his relationship to creation? When most Christians consider Jesus, they think of Jesus born in a manger, or they consider the man who lived a perfect life, condemned to death on a cross and rose for the salvation of all mankind. But in some ways, this provides too narrow a vision of Jesus of Nazareth. The above-mentioned Scriptural passages present Jesus as Creator in three ways. He is the agent of creation, he has command over and a relationship with creation, and he restores creation by bringing in the new creation. As the agent of creation he creates in and through his creation. He turns water into wine. As the one who commands creation, he calms the storm. Jesus heals the blind. He raises Lazarus from the dead. As the restorer of creation he ushers in the new creation.

Recognizing Jesus' role as Creator is not a new way of thinking. New Testament texts proclaim it while Old Testament texts provide images of this fact. Yet, very few theologians portray Jesus as Creator even though this role has been taught throughout the Christian tradition.

In the twentieth century, Joseph Sittler highlighted the role of Christ as Creator in part to address the ecological questions facing western society. Years before the publication of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, or White's seminal article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," Sittler argued that environmental degradation "was a profoundly spiritual matter."<sup>1</sup> Already in 1954, Sittler spoke on "the urgency of the task of alerting all to 'care for the earth.'"<sup>2</sup> Much of Sittler's writing centered on what he labeled "a phenomenology of grace." Sittler, influenced by the theological masters of grace-talkers such as Saint Paul, Martin Luther,

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph A. Sittler, *Evocation of Grace: The Writings of Joseph Sittler on Ecology, Theology, and Ethics*, ed. Steven Bouma-Prediger and Peter Bakken (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Sittler, *Evocation of Grace*, xi.

Augustine, and Irenaeus, recognized that the relationship between nature and grace was being neglected.<sup>3</sup> Long before it ever became common, Sittler propounded a “cosmic Christology.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1961, Sittler delivered a paper entitled “Called to Unity” to the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches. In order to make an appeal to “the Cosmic Christ,” he opens with the text of Col. 1:15–20<sup>5</sup> and argues “that the sphere of grace and redemption can be no smaller than the sphere of creation itself.”<sup>6</sup> Sittler does not mean that theology needs to shift from a “‘redemption-centered’ theology to ‘creation-centered’ theology. Instead, he argues for an expansion of the *circumference* of redemption to embrace the whole of creation.”<sup>7</sup> His main argument was not to reveal Christ as Creator, as this seems to have been assumed by his audience or not a point of contention at this time, but instead to focus on the redemption of “all things.” God in Christ will redeem all things. In fact, Sittler argues, “A doctrine of redemption is meaningful only when it swings within the larger orbit of a doctrine of creation.”<sup>8</sup>

Like Sittler, other theologians have picked up and developed similar themes dealing with Christ’s role as Creator. They have begun to make the vital connection between creation and redemption, with redemption being understood in terms of the entire creation made complete at

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<sup>3</sup> Sittler, *Evocation of Grace*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cosmic Christology, an idea imparted by St. Paul’s writing especially in Col. 1:15–20, focuses on how Jesus as the Son of God changed forever the nature of the world as the text confesses the exalted Jesus role in both creation and redemption.

<sup>5</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross (Col. 1:15–20).

<sup>6</sup> Sittler, *Evocation of Grace*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Sittler, *Evocation of Grace*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph A. Sittler, “Called to Unity,” *The Ecumenical Review* 14 (1962): 177–87.

Christ's return. These theologians include: Colin E. Gunton,<sup>9</sup> Loren Wilkinson,<sup>10</sup> Steven Bouma-Prediger,<sup>11</sup> Richard Bauckham,<sup>12</sup> N.T. Wright,<sup>13</sup> Jeffrey Gibbs,<sup>14</sup> Sean M. McDonough,<sup>15</sup> Paul Deterding,<sup>16</sup> and Oswald Bayer.<sup>17</sup>

Three characteristics stand out in the work of these theologians as each highlight Christ as Creator. First, Jesus emerges as the agent of creation, the *Schöpfungsmittlerschaft*,<sup>18</sup> which highlights Jesus presence and role in the creation of all things. This terminology recovers the language of Jesus as the firstborn of all. All things in creation are held together by and through him as presented in the Paul's letter to the Colossians. Second, Jesus rules over his creation. This is drawn from his life on earth where Jesus calms the sea, walks on the water, curses the fig tree, and brings life to Laz'arus's dead body. Third, Jesus is the one who begins the work of restoring creation at his resurrection in order to bring in the new creation. All Christ's work—in word and in deed—is directed toward the restoration of creation. Through both his words and actions, he manifests his rule over creation.

### **Jesus as the Agent of Creation**

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<sup>9</sup> Colin E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> Loren Wilkinson, "Cosmic Christology and the Christian's role in Creation," *Christian Scholar's Review* 11 (1981): 18–40.

<sup>11</sup> Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology* (Waco: Baylor University, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006) and *Surprised by Hope* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Gibbs, "Christ is Risen: The Beginnings of the New Creation," (presenter, Theological Symposium at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, September 24, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Sean M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Paul E. Deterding, *Colossians* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> A good translation and the one this dissertation will use is "the one in the midst of creation."



In Genesis, the Word of God speaks creation into being. In John, the Word was with God, and through him all things were made. When Christ's agency in creation is discussed, the focus most often turns to identifying Jesus with the term *logos*. Philo, a Jew who wrote out of the philosophical tradition, singles out three aspects of the term *logos* in the Gospel of John, two of which will be considered here. "First, Philo declares that God's *logos* is the instrument of creation—or, in his own powerful metaphor, the rudder by which the universe is steered"<sup>19</sup> and second, he contends that the *logos* is not only the instrument but the source of God's creation. Wilkinson, highlights that Jesus' agency is visible in the biblical text. He includes examples such as rebuking the sea and the Word becoming flesh.<sup>20</sup>

The strongest biblical text to ground Christ in his role as *Schöpfungsmittlerschaft* is Col. 1:16, "For in him all things were created, in heaven and one earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." This idea is reaffirmed in John 1:1–3, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; and all things were made through him, and without him not anything was made."

For years the Col. 1:15–20 text has been referred to as "The Christ Hymn." In fact, Deterding's commentary calls Col. 1:15–20 "The Christ Hymn: Creation and Reconciliation."<sup>21</sup> Deterding shows that the text of Colossians is divided into two sections. The first section deals extensively with creation and cosmology (Col. 1:15–18a) whereas the second with reconciliation and soteriology (Col. 1:18b–20). Col. 1:18a, "He is the head of the body, the church," referring to Christ, holds the two sections together. "The agent of creation is also the Head and Redeemer

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<sup>19</sup> Wilkinson, "Cosmic Christology," 22–23.

<sup>20</sup> Wilkinson, "Cosmic Christology," 22–23.

<sup>21</sup> For a more in-depth study of Col. 1:15–20, see Paul E. Deterding, *Colossians* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2003).

of the church. Moreover, the redemption that he provides has to do with the restoration of his creation, as implied by the term ‘reconcile.’”<sup>22</sup> Just as Jesus is the agent of creation, the apostle Paul also designates him as the agent (δι’ αὐτοῦ) of restoration, the one who will restore the fallen creation.

Paul in Col. 1:15–20 lays out the “Hymn of Christ” in order to show the world who Jesus is and what his role as agent of creation and redemption looks like. Everything in creation, visible or invisible, depends on Christ. It was created through him and for him, and it is upheld and sustained by him today. The Greek text Colossians states, πρῶτοκος πάσης κτίσεως, which translated means, “Christ is the cause/source of every created thing. He is the Creator of everything and not a part of what was created.”<sup>23</sup> As the agent of creation and redemption, he will come again to restore and redeem all things unto himself and usher in his new creation.

### **Jesus’ Command Over and His Relationship with Creation**

Evidence of Jesus’ relationship with creation can be found throughout the New Testament and provides a framework for understanding his role as Creator. Throughout his ministry Jesus interacts with the *things* of creation. His fondness for creation appears everywhere. It can be seen as Jesus sows seeds, feeds the multitudes on a hillside, teaches on mountains and lakesides, travels shore to shore upon the lakes, casts nets into sea, and drinks of the fruit of the vine. The bible uses metaphoric language of creation when Jesus speaks of the kingdom of heaven. He uses images like a vineyard, a mustard seed, a net thrown into the sea, and leavened flour.

Richard Bauckham argues, “Jesus’ full significance is found in his relationship to all creation.”<sup>24</sup> The prepositional phrases found in Colossians 1 further describe Jesus’ relationship

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<sup>22</sup> Deterding, *Colossians*, 48.

<sup>23</sup> Deterding, *Colossians*, 44.

<sup>24</sup> Bauckham, *The Bible*, 157.

to creation; “in him,” “through him,” and “for him” are all about relationality. Jesus, while a creature on earth, was related *to* and was part *of* his creation. Bauckham recognizes this fact as he reads the Synoptic gospels and highlights that Jesus’ preaching and his discussions around the Kingdom of God are all in respect to creation. Jesus not only preaches and explains the Kingdom of God,<sup>25</sup> but instantiates it in the activities of his ministry.

Bauckham also spends a significant amount of time discussing Jesus as the one who pacifies the forces of chaos in creation. In the account provided in the gospels of Mark and Matthew, Jesus shows his command and control over the forces of chaos when he rebukes the storm, “Peace, be still!” which prompts the disciples to ask, “Who is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?” Scripture provides other episodes in which Jesus takes command over the creation. In Mark 11, Jesus curses a fig tree that is in leaf, yet provides no fruit. The tree withers away to its roots. In this account and in the record of his multiplication of loaves in feeding the five thousand men, Jesus demonstrates his control over the processes of creation, the plant, the flower, and the seed.

C. S. Lewis<sup>26</sup> draws attention to the underlying connection between Christ’s miracles and his creation. Lewis considers the “smaller” miracles Jesus performed during his life of earth:

Look down into every bay and almost every river. This swarming, undulating fecundity shows He is still at work ‘thronging the seas with spawn innumerable.’ The ancients had a god called Genius; the god of animal and human fertility, the patron of gynaecology, embryology, and the marriage bed—the ‘genial’ bed as they called it after its god Genius. But Genius in only another mask for the God of Israel, for it was He who at the beginning commanded all species ‘to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.’ An now, that day, at the feeding of the thousands, incarnate God

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<sup>25</sup> This topic is dealt with to a much greater degree in Bauckham’s book *The Bible and Ecology* than will be covered in this dissertation.

<sup>26</sup> Clive Staples Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

does the same: does close and small, under His human hands, a workman's hands, what He has always been doing in the seas, the lakes, and the little brooks.<sup>27</sup>

Here Lewis provides a picture of Jesus' involvement with creation. It is intimate and relational, but it also shows his command over creation. Probably the most significant miracle comes when Jesus raises his friend Laz'arus from death to life. With only a few words, "Laz'arus come out," dry, dead bones are brought back to life. Only the one who creates life is able to restore life. This provides the perfect example of Jesus, who as the Creator of life now creates new life.

### **Jesus Restores Creation and Brings in the New Creation**

Jesus' resurrection changes everything. Jeffrey Gibbs uses Christ's death and Good Friday as a way to understand Jesus' resurrection and Easter. He states, "In terms of the grand story of God's ways with his creation, death is a profound disfigurement, a ripping apart of creaturely existence . . . deeply twisted and marred by sin, this is still our home, and death smashes our relationship with our home—and with one another."<sup>28</sup> And yet, in Jesus, death has been nullified, reversed, and destroyed. "Jesus' humble obedience unto death gave way to Easter, to a new reality of power and lordship and authority—a new reality that will be universally acknowledged on the Last Day when every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord."<sup>29</sup> Christ's resurrection launches a new reign, a new creation. "God's kingdom is now launched, and launched in power and glory, on earth as in heaven."<sup>30</sup> Because Jesus died, the birth of the new creation comes in his resurrected body. "A new power is let loose in the world, the power to remake what was broken,

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<sup>27</sup> Lewis, *Miracles*, 222–23.

<sup>28</sup> Gibbs, "Christ is Risen," 3–4.

<sup>29</sup> Gibbs, "Christ is Risen," 9.

<sup>30</sup> N. T. Wright, *Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters* (New York: Harper One, 2011), 193.

to heal what was diseased, to restore what was lost.”<sup>31</sup> The kingdom Jesus partially and mysteriously began in his earthly ministry, his healings, miracles, and teachings will now be unveiled in a totally new way. Jesus’ resurrected body begins his reign in the new heavens and earth. Jesus now becomes that new creation in person.<sup>32</sup>

But the God of creation and of the real beginning is, at the same time, the God of the resurrection. From the beginning the world is placed in the sing of the resurrection of Christ for the dead. Indeed it is because we know of the resurrection that we know of God’s creation out of nothing. The dead Jesus Christ of Good Friday—and the resurrected *Kyrios* (Lord) of Easter Sunday: that is creation out of nothing, creation from the beginning.<sup>33</sup>

Jesus’ ministry on earth was often about restoration. An example is the story of the man blind from birth as recorded in John 9:1–12. Jesus not only restores sight to the blind man, but he uses elements of his creation to restore. The man’s sight is restored with mud. Jesus spits on the ground, makes clay, applies the clay to the man’s eyes, and tells him to wash. This echoes the text of Isa. 64:8, “We are the clay, and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand.” Upon reading this passage Irenaeus, a Church Father, is the first to assert Jesus’ role of Creator.<sup>34</sup> The text also provides a representation of the Creator’s hand in the forming and molding of his creatures in Genesis. According to Genesis 2, God formed the man, the beast, and the bird of the air out of the dust of the ground of the earth. Thousands of years later, Jesus takes dust, makes clay, and restores a blind man’s sight. McDonough reflects on John 9 and states, “John portrays Jesus as standing firmly in the place of the Creator God, fashioning from the earth new eyes for the man born blind, bringing his portion of creation to its intended fullness.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Wright, *Simply Jesus*, 193.

<sup>32</sup> Wright, *Simply Jesus*, 194.

<sup>33</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 16.

<sup>34</sup> McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 35.

<sup>35</sup> McDonough, *Christ as Creator*, 35.

In many Christian traditions today, discussions about restoration and new creation are centered on only man's restoration. Exegetes continually work to show that this is an incorrect reading of the biblical text. In a 2010 article, Douglas Moo attempts to show that redemption and restoration in Paul's writings are to be applied to *all* creation; it is universal redemption not just human redemption, and all creation is part of the new creation:

Colossians 1:20 climaxes what was probably an early hymn about Christ with the claim that God has 'reconciled to himself all things.' The reconciliation, while applied in the context of Christians (vv. 21–33), cannot be limited to human beings. The "all things" reconciled by God on the cross explicitly include "things on earth or things in heaven" and must have the same universal referent that the word *all* does throughout 1:15–20.<sup>36</sup>

This carries implications of Christian stewardship in God's world today. The act of redemption is not a rescue *from* creation but a renewal *of* creation.<sup>37</sup> When the Christian tradition focuses a bit more on teaching *renewal* over and above *rescue* they will begin to make the vital connection necessary for teaching a care of God's creation now.

Redemption, or the renewal of all things in creation comes about through Jesus' resurrected body. Easter morning sent a shock wave throughout all creation. Jesus, in his glorified bodily form, is not only the new creation; he is the one who ushers in the earthly new creation through the restoration and renewal. "Resurrection from the dead and the annihilation of death are not only the overcoming of sin and its evil consequences but also the completion of the original creation. They are nothing less than the negation of the negative and the perfection of the positive."<sup>38</sup>

This theme of a theology of creation is deeply rooted in the relationship that exists between creation and redemption. Colin Gunton points out that Irenaeus's writings provide a helpful

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<sup>36</sup> Douglas Moo, "Creation and New Creation," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20 (2010): 56.

<sup>37</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 224.

<sup>38</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, "The Resurrection of Christ and the New Earth," *Communio Viatorum* 49 (2007): 41–49.

model because Irenaeus understood that if only the first creation is stressed in the doctrine of creation, then the teleological dynamic is lost. “Creation is not merely through Christ, but *to* him: from the beginning, it has an eschatological thrust. Salvation takes place *within* the created and material order with an eye to the perfection of that which was begun.”<sup>39</sup>

A theology of creation focused on Jesus as the Creator who ushers in the new creation provides what environmental philosophy or ethics cannot provide—hope. Environmentalism often mirrors in some ways the Christian story. It begins with a pre-fall Edenic paradise that proceeds to a fall usually due to the development of agriculture and technology and culminates with a dystopian apocalyptic future. Such an account can only lead one to resignation and despair in the face of the daunting ecological challenges. In contrast the Christian story culminates in the hope of the renewal of creation, thus casting an entirely different light upon the work a Christian does in creation. The resurrection of Christ provides the basis for the Christian’s work in caring for creation. As Christians wait with expectant hope for the redemption of their own bodies, they too look forward to the redemption of the whole world.

This chapter’s theme focused on Jesus as Creator, the one who will in the end bring about the new creation for all. Although the hymns available for this theme were quite numerous, this dissertation chose those that may not be as familiar in order to cultivate a new way of thinking about this theme. All the hymns chosen speak to the theme of Jesus as Creator who ushers in the new creation. Most also underscore the vital connection between creation and redemption.

Table 4: Hymns of Jesus as Creator Who Ushers in the New Creation

<b>Hymns of Jesus as Creator Who Ushers in the New Creation</b>
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<sup>39</sup> Colin E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation: The Didsbury Lectures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 97.

Hymn Title	Hymnals that Include Hymn
Beautiful Savior/Fairest Lord Jesus	<i>LSB</i> #537, <i>LW</i> #507, <i>Christian Worship</i> #369, <i>LBW</i> #518, <i>Worship</i> #838, <i>Hymns of Glory</i> #463, <i>New English Praise</i> #634
Praise Be to Christ	<i>LSB</i> # 538,
Earth, Earth, Awake; Your Praises Sing	<i>Hymns of Glory</i> #420
God Who Made the Earth, Declared it Good in the Beginning	<i>Hymns of Glory</i> # 228
Isaiah the Prophet has Written of Old	<i>Hymns of Glory</i> #241
Then the Glory	<i>Christian Worship</i> #218

## Beautiful Savior

### Hymn Verses

1 Beautiful Savior, King of creation,  
 Son of God and Son of Man!  
 Truly I'd love Thee, Truly I'd serve Thee,  
 Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

2 Fair are the meadows, Fair are the woodlands,  
 Robed in flow'rs f blooming spring;  
 Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
 He makes our sorr'wing spirit sing.

3 Fair is the sunshine, Fair is the moonlight,  
 Bright the sparkling stars on high;  
 Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer,  
 Than all the angels in the sky.

4 Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,  
 Son of God and Son of Man!  
 Glory and honor, Praise, adoration  
 Now and forever more be Thine!<sup>40</sup>

### Fairest Lord Jesus

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<sup>40</sup> The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, “Beautiful Savior,” *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 537.



1 Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,  
O Thou of God and man the Son,  
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,  
Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown.

2 Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,  
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.

3 Fair is the sunshine, Fairer still the moonlight,  
And all the twinkling starry host;  
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer,  
Than all the angels heaven can boast.

4 All fairest beauty, heavenly and earthly,  
Wondrously, Jesus, is found in Thee;  
None can be nearer, fairer or dearer,  
Than Thou, my Savior, art to me.

5 Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations!  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,  
Now and forever more be Thine.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Joseph August Seiss is recognized as the translator of the fourth verse of the hymn, "Fairest Lord Jesus." It is translation from German into English done in 1873. The other three verse translations are still a mystery today.<sup>42</sup> Together the translations have become known as the hymn "Beautiful Savior." Seiss originated from an Alsatian family whose name was "Seuss." He was born, raised, and educated in a German Moravian colony situated in Fredrick County, Maryland.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** There is much mystery surrounding the origin of this hymn. While many claim that German Jesuits probably wrote the hymn, its true

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<sup>41</sup> <http://cyberhymnal.org/htm/f/a/faljesus.htm> (accessed on August 11, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 24–25.

authorship is still unknown. Its original title, *Schönster Herr Jesu*,<sup>43</sup> can be translated either as “Beautiful Savior” or as “Fairest Lord Jesus.” There is less information available today about the origin of the English translation than the German translation and several popular myths exist. One tells the story of German Crusaders making their way to the Holy Land singing this hymn, which explains why some have come to call this hymn “The Crusader’s Hymn.”<sup>44</sup> Richard Storrs Willis first introduced the hymn to American worshipers in 1850 in his *Church Chorals and Choir Studies*. It was accompanied with this explanation: “This hymn, to which the harmony has been added, was lately (1850) discovered in Westphalia. According to the traditional text by which it is accompanied, it was wont to be sung by German knights on their way to Jerusalem.” Others are not convinced by this explanation.<sup>45</sup>

The other story is that the hymn mysteriously and anonymously first appeared in the Roman Catholic *Müsterisch Gesangbuch*, a songbook of 1677. Over a century later the hymn appeared in a small town in the district of Glaz in Silesia. By this time the text had become altered and had adopted a Silesian folksong as its tune, which is still used today in many hymnals.

Since there is so uncertainty about the text and authorship of this hymn, Albert Baily suggests, “If we must have a ‘mythology,’ why not say that this lovely hymn which unites the fairest object in nature with the fairest Person in the history of religion in a true folk-song out of the soil of Silesia?”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> <http://cyberhymnal.org/htm/f/a/l/faljesus.htm> (accessed on August 11, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> E. E. Ryden, *The Story of Christian Hymnody* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana, 1959), 144.

<sup>45</sup> John Julian, DD. ed., *A Dictionary of Hymnody* (New York: Dover Publications, 1907), 1016. This is also quoted by Ryden, *The Story of Christian Hymnody*, 2:144.

<sup>46</sup> Albert Edward Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1950), 331–32.

In 1839, Hoffman Fallersleben heard the hymn for the first time. Through oral recitation he recorded the words and music and published them in his *Schlesische Volkslieder* in 1842.<sup>47</sup> This rendition is how most Christians have come to know the hymn today.

Based simply on the historical time period of the early 1840's, one might assume that the period of Romanticism had some influence on the author. During this period strong emphasis was placed on aesthetic experience and the emotions associated with that experience, such as apprehension, horror, terror, and awe. This awe of nature or aesthetic appreciation for creation, which becomes a confrontation with the sublimity and picturesque qualities of the untamed nature, may have influenced the author's writing of this hymn.<sup>48</sup>

Today this hymn can be found in the following hymnals: *LSB* 537, *LW* 507, *CW* 369, *LBW* 518, *Worship* 838, and *Hymns of Glory* 463.

### **The Hymn's Theological Content**

**Theme of Jesus as Creator and New Creation:** The main emphasis of this hymn lies in its comparison between the beauty of Christ and the beauty of creation. The hymn, which at first seems to be a simple song about the beauty of creation, is actually a proclamation of more. Although not explicitly stated, "Beautiful Savior" confesses Jesus as Lord and ruler of that creation, a statement, which today translates into a confession of Jesus as Creator.

**Poetry and Imagery:** The hymn uses similes to describe the image of creation and with the images to Christ. Always showing that Christ is more beautiful, fairer, and is brighter than all creation. The hymn's first line opens by calling Jesus "Ruler of all nature." Whether verse one comes from the translation of "Beautiful Savior" or from "Fairest Lord Jesus," Jesus is the

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<sup>47</sup> Ryden, *The Story of Christian Hymnody*, 144.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Arand and Erik Herrmann published an article in the Fall 2012 issue of *Concordia Journal* titled "Attending to the Beauty of the Creation and the New Creation". The entire issue deals with this idea of aesthetic appreciation for God's creation.

subject of the author's joy. There is an intimate connection between what the author sees with his eyes and heart and internally knows in his relationship with Jesus as Lord. Bailey expressed it this way:

The hymn is a bouquet of lovely things taken from the Nature these people knew: meadows and woodlands in their lush spring green; sunshine, moonlight, the stars. And just as these objects steal into their heart, nestle there and keep us warm, so the Saviour, unadorned by the pontifical robes of the theologians, steals into our heart and makes His home there, Himself the crowning glory of life. This simplicity of thought about Jesus, like that of a little child, coupled with a child's unreasoning reaction to the beauty of the world, is what makes this hymn as dear to children as it does to grownups.<sup>49</sup>

Sometimes, the simple and recognizable best reflect the heart of the people singing, and this hymn is a perfect example. The author simply wants to connect the beauty that is seen throughout creation with the beauty a Christian knows about Jesus Christ. Although it may not be explicit, that the author's thoughts are of Christ as the Creator, the hymn's language uses Jesus as King and Ruler of that creation, that of *Pantocrator*, or "ruler of all." The words of verse one, "King of Creation," firmly state this.

Verses two and three begin to catalog the beauty found in creation. While verse two focuses on the beauty of the earth itself, verse three focuses on the beauty of the heavens and the skies above. In verse two the author reflects on a pastoral landscape as he mentions meadows and woodlands. Of special interest is the way he focuses on the time of spring and how the flowers evoke a joy within, just as joy arises when it breaks the depths of despair caused by the winter freeze. Here the author makes the point in his comparison not only that Jesus is fairer and purer; he "makes the sorrowing spirit sing." For what is evoked in spring joy translates into the joy Jesus brings. In verse three the author directs the reader's attention to the beauty of the objects of the sky above the sun, the moon, and sparkling stars. The brilliance of the object of

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<sup>49</sup> Bailey, *Gospel in Hymns*, 332.

creation becomes the point of comparison for the brilliance of Christ. Then in verse four the author summarizes verses two and three by saying, “All fairest beauty, heavenly and earthly, wondrously, Jesus, is found in thee.” Stating the fact that the beauty of creation should draw all creation to thoughts of Jesus, the Creator of *all* things.

Verse four of “Beautiful Savior” or verse five of “Fairest Lord Jesus” ties the hymn together in its proclamation of who this Jesus is. He is Savior; he is Lord; he is Son of God and Son of Man. This statement succinctly proclaims the Second Article of the Creed by recounting his incarnational birth, his death, and his coming again in glory. For this reason alone the author believes that all God’s children are to give him honor and glory, praise and adoration for who he is.

**Christian Confession:** This hymn portrays in a unique way how the beauty of creation draw attention to the cross of Christ. The hymn asks the reader to look at Jesus. In this way, it portrays a full proclamation of the Christian faith through an aesthetic appreciation of creation. The hymn contemplates and highlights the beauty of creation and then proclaims that nothing in all creation compares to the beauty and love of Christ.

### **Praise Be to Christ**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Praise be to Christ in whom we see  
The image of the Father shown,  
The first-born Son revealed and known,  
The truth and grace of deity;  
Through whom creation came to birth,  
Whose fingers set the stars in place,  
The unseen powers and this small earth,  
The furthest bounds of time and space.

2 Praise be to Him whose sov-reign sway  
And will upholds creation’s plan;  
Who is, before all worlds began

And when our world has passed away:  
Lord of the Church, its life and head,  
Redemption's price and source and theme,  
Alive, the first- born from the dead,  
To reign as all in all supreme.

3 Praise be to Him who, Lord Most High,  
The fullness of the God-head shares;  
And yet our human nature bears,  
Who came as man to bleed and die.  
And from His cross there flows our peace  
Who chose for us the path He trod,  
That so might sins and sorrows cease  
And all be reconciled to God.<sup>50</sup>

### The Hymn's Historical Context

**Composer's Biography:** Timothy Dudley-Smith is the author of this hymn. The date for writing "Praise Be to Christ" is not recorded, but Hope Publishing copyrighted it in 1984.

Dudley-Smith was born in Manchester, England on December 26, 1926 and was educated at Tonbridge School and Pembroke College. The Church of England ordained him as a deacon in 1950 and as a priest in 1951. He served the Church as the Archdeacon of Norwich from 1973–81 and as the Bishop of Thetford from 1981–91. In 1991, he retired in Salisbury, England.<sup>51</sup>

Dudley-Smith has composed hymns for almost forty years. His best-known and probably most-loved hymn is "Tell Out, My Soul, the Greatness of the Lord."<sup>52</sup> This is an interpretation of the *Magnificat*, the song of Mary in St. Luke's gospel. It has been sung throughout the Church of England and has today made its way across the shores of America. Today, even in retirement,

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<sup>50</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Praise Be To Christ," *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 538.

<sup>51</sup> These are historical facts as quoted in both resources, [http://www.hymnary.org/text/praise\\_be\\_to\\_christ\\_in\\_whom\\_we\\_see](http://www.hymnary.org/text/praise_be_to_christ_in_whom_we_see) and Dudley's personal webpage: <http://www.timothydudley-smith.com>.

<sup>52</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 935.

Dudley-Smith continues to write hymns. His collection today tops over three-hundred hymns, published in over two-hundred-and-fifty hymnals throughout the English-speaking world.

In 2009, Dudley-Smith was given an honorary Doctoral degree of Divinity at Durham University. During the introductions, it was stated that “Dudley-Smith’s hymns are true to human nature and respond to human need: they take our psychological anxieties, our imperfections and failures, and speak to us of forgiveness and hope.”<sup>53</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Dudley-Smith’s hymn was copyrighted in 1984 and was probably first published around this time in England. Although much of its hermeneutical interpretation will be based on Col. 1:15–20, it is difficult to miss the strong thrust the author places on reinforcing the deity of Christ by way of citing the language of the Nicene Creed in the midst of the hymn. For example in verse one, “through whom creation” and in verse two “before the world’s began.” This leads one to consider whether at the time this hymn was written the Church of England was questioning the deity of Christ. If so, the author, who served as both deacon and archbishop in the Church of England, felt it important to make this proclamation visible in his hymn. Today the hymn is included in one only hymnal the *LSB* hymn #538.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Jesus as Creator and New Creation:** “Praise Be to Christ” is rooted in the Col. 1:15–20. It abounds in the language of a theology of creation highlighting especially Jesus’ role as Creator. Throughout the hymn, Dudley-Smith not only highlights creation but he connects creation together with redemption. The hymn tells the entire Christian story from the moment

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<sup>53</sup> Honorary introduction of Timothy Dudley-Smith at Durham Cathedral, 2 July 2009 was found and accessed on his website on August 23, 2013. <http://www.timothydudley-smith.com>.

Christ places the first star in place to his upholding creation's plan today. In addition it uses the language of reconciliation between Christ and his creation.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Dudley-Smith's hymn uses poetic language in combination with scriptural text to emphasize the work of Christ and his relationship with creation. He uses Col. 1:15–20 as his framework. Verse one begins with a brief yet substantive explanation of who Christ is. "The image of Father shown, The first-born Son revealed and known. The truth and grace of deity." This line presents two Christological concepts: first, Christ reveals the Father and second, Christ is the deity of God. What does this mean? Deterding argues that the word *image* can be used to express an identity of essence, "being of one substance with the Father."<sup>54</sup> Only Christ is the true and full image of God, and he alone reveals the Father. Man and woman were created in the image of God, but that image has been marred. Christ alone restores man's image, and the process begins in Christian baptism. When Christ comes again he will fully restore that image. The hymn also presents Christ in his fullness, as the truth and grace of deity. This picks up Paul's language in Col. 1:9, "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell." The incarnation is the embodiment of God the Son in human flesh as Jesus of Nazareth. There is no way for the human mind to comprehend this concept, but it requires the faith to believe. Jesus is the meaning of grace and truth in this world. In the final lines of verse one, Dudley-Smith provides a picture of Jesus as Creator "whose fingers set the stars in place."

Verse two develops the theme of Christ's lordship over creation in two ways. First, it picks the language of Christ being the one who upholds the very creation that he had made. "Praise be to Him whose sov'reign sway And will up-holds creation's plan." Few hymns analyzed for this dissertation include so succinctly this language of *creatio continua*. As the verse continues it

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<sup>54</sup> Deterding, *Colossians*, 50.



introduces Christ's agency and relationship with creation, "Who is, before all worlds began And when our world has passed away." Christ was there when the world began, he is in control today, and he will be there to bring in the new creation. The last line proclaims Christ's reign, "To reign as all in all supreme."

Second the hymn underscores the fact that Jesus not only paid the price of human redemption, but he is also the source and theme of that redemption. This is evidenced by Christ's death on the cross and his bodily resurrection. The hymn proclaims his resurrection: "Alive, the first-born from the dead." In doing this, Dudley-Smith's hymn holds creation and redemption together by showing Christ is Creator as well as Redeemer. Dudley-Smith ends the verse by highlighting the fact that when Christ comes again to bring forth the new creation, Christ will take his rightful seat as Lord over all creation.

In the hymn's final verse, Dudley-Smith turns his attention to the role Christ plays in human redemption. In verse one we saw Christ as the Creator "whose fingers set the stars in place." In verse two we saw Christ as the agent of the present creation and the creation that is to come, "And will upholds creation's plan; who is before all world's began and when our world has passed away." Now in verse three, Dudley-Smith introduces Christ as both God and man being of two natures in order that he might redeem man to himself: "Lord Most High, the fullness of the God-head shares; and yet our human nature bears, who came as man to bleed and die." In one line, Christ' role in human redemption is played out. The verse continues, "And from the cross there flows our peace, who chose for us the path he trod, that so might sins and sorrows cease and all be reconciled to God." Once redemption and reconciliation between God and man have taken place, then all creation will be reconciled<sup>55</sup> to God. Col. 1:20 confirms this

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<sup>55</sup> Deterding discusses at length this theology of reconciliation and shows how various Christian hymns proclaim reconciliation and Christ's work in it. See Deterding, *Colossians*, 60. Consider for a moment a few of the

fact, “And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.”

**Christian Confession:** While Dudley-Smith’s hymn accurately summarizes the Col. 1:15–20 text, the hymn also makes a clear statement of the Christian faith, a proclamation of who Christ is, and a narrative of the work and role of Jesus of Nazareth. The hymn’s text not only covers the entire second article of the creed, it actually strengthens it by highlighting Christ’s role as Redeemer of all creation. That Christ is Creator is evident from the beginning and is carried through the entire hymn. Christ as Sustainer and Redeemer of creation is also clearly evident because all things are held together through his plan, and in him all creation in heaven and on earth will be redeemed and reconciled to God through the work of Christ.

It has been said that Dudley-Smith’s hymns often show biblical and liturgical concern for the church,<sup>56</sup> and, in this case, the hymn reflects that concern. “Praise Be to Christ” not only provides Christological insight but tells the Christian narrative of creation, redemption, and eschatological promise.

### **Earth, Earth, Awake; Your Praises Sing: Alleluia!**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Earth, earth, awake; your praises sing: *Alleluia!*  
Greet with the dawn your risen King: *Alleluia!*  
Bright suns and stars, your homage pay: *Alleluia!*  
Life reigns this Easter day: *Alleluia!*

2 All nature sings of hope reborn:

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verses from the hymn, “Joy to the World found in *LSB* 387: “And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing. And heaven and nature sing. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy . . . No more let sins ad sorrows grow nor thorns infest the ground . . . He rules the world with truth and grace. Deterding also suggests the following hymns, “All Creatures of our God and King,” “Earth and All Stars,” and “A Stable Lamp is Lighted,” all of which have been mentioned in previous chapter of this dissertation.

<sup>56</sup> George Thomas Kurian, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 740–41.

Christ lives to comfort those that mourn:  
First fruit of all the dead who sleep:  
Promise of joy for all who weep:

\*Note: When choirs sing this hymn there is small interlude here where the choir sings an *Alleluia* that is then repeated at the end of the song.<sup>57</sup>

3 Winter is past, the night is gone:  
Christ's light, triumphant, pales the dawn:  
Creation spread its springtime bloom:  
Life bursts like flame from death's cold tomb:

4 Praise we the Father, Spirit, Son:  
Praise we the victory God has won:  
Praise we the Lamb who reigns above:  
Praise we the King who rules in love.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr., the author of this hymn, was born in Pennsylvania in 1923. He studied at Susquehanna University (BA, 1945), Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg (BD, 1946), Union Theological Seminary in New York (STM, 1967), and Southern California School of Theology at Claremont (ThD, 1971). He served most of his time as a parish pastor in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Later, Stuempfle served as the associate director of the Board of Social Missions for the United Lutheran Church in America and as a professor of preaching at Gettysburg Seminary. From 1971 until 1976, he was the dean of Gettysburg Seminary where he subsequently served as president from 1976 until 1989. He died of Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) in 2007.<sup>59</sup> While GIA (originally the Gregorian Institute of America) published most of his work, around a dozen of his original pieces can still be found in Lutheran hymnals. Stuempfle wrote over five-hundred hymns.

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<sup>57</sup> Visitation Choir by Bob Moor 5:04, YouTube video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgvVquopcOA> (accessed on August 24, 2013).

<sup>58</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, "Earth, Earth Awake; Your Praises Sing: Alleluia!" *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2008), 420.

<sup>59</sup> Westermeyer, *Hymnal Companion*, 124.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** The uncertainty of this hymn’s origin, alongside the fact that the hymn was only introduced to a small sampling of hearers makes it difficult to determine its reception. The hymn’s language does suggest that the author intended the hymn to be used to celebrate Easter’s resurrection joy in the seasons of creation. The hymn also contains a repetitive theme of Creation’s King.

While most hymnals associate this hymn with Easter, *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* categorizes it under the main heading, “Life in Christ,” and subheads it under “Christ Risen — Resurrection and Exaltation.” The text of this hymn focuses on Christ’s command and his restorative power in creation. The author, Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr., portrays verse after verse how the entire creation breaks forth in joyous song of praise to its Creator Jesus.

Today this hymn can only be found in the hymnal, *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* #420. It was published for the first time in 1996.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Jesus as Creator and New Creation:** “Earth, Earth, Awake” proclaims Christ’s resurrection power in the dawning of each new day and into the new creation. In doing so, it highlights Christ as Creator. The hymn highlights Jesus raising Laz’arus from the dead, which proclaims his power over creation. Yet, this is only a glimpse of the power that the creation beheld when Jesus arose in resurrection power.

**Poetry and Imagery:** This hymn uses poetic language to emphasize the key features with respect to the resurrection of Jesus. In the first verse the author beckons creation to awake: “Earth, earth, awake; your praises sing.” Together with the dawn of the new day creation greets the risen King of creation. The hymn then invites all creatures to join in: “bright sun and stars, your homage pay.” Although there is no evidence to support the fact that Stuempfle’s hymn was

written to be sung on Easter morning, its language provides a wider opportunity for the hearer to celebrate the joy of creation each morning as the sun dawns to recall the miracle of Christ's resurrection. The hymn extols Christ's resurrection by drawing on the imagery of spring.

In verse two the author exhorts creation to sing, "All nature sings of hope reborn." This could suggest that creation need not to be told of the miracle of Christ's resurrection or perhaps that creation sings because it now emerges from the deadness of winter. Either way, it seems to focus on the sorrow of death. Perhaps it hints at the fact that creation's (and our) hope is found in Christ's resurrection as Paul speaks of it in Rom. 8:22–24:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?

The balance of the Stuempfle's verse speaks to the benefits that hope provides for the life of the Christian: "Comfort for those that mourn, joy for all who weep."

Verse three makes the most of the explicit connection between Christ's resurrection and the season spring. Its language identifies with the darkness and cold of winter and the harbingers of death throughout the created world. It instills images of a bleak creation by resonating with silence and loneliness of winter and night. Imagine for a moment the chill of winter in the middle of the night. It is cold, dark, and silent; this provides an image of man trapped in sin, a picture of life without any hope of rescue. Now imagine the world staying this way, never experiencing the break of dawn on a crisp spring morning. But God does not leave his creation without hope. Christ in his resurrected power bursts forth in new light, stronger than the dawn, and with it new life which is more glorious than the bloom of spring. "Creation spreads its springtime bloom." Just as the dawn breaks through a spring morning providing warmth and light to all creation, Christ "bursts through like flame from death's cold tomb." Stuempfle closes his hymn with a

simple yet powerful doxology, praising the Trinity, three in one and one in three. He singles out Jesus with terms that identify him as the one who reigns and rules over all.

**Christian Confession:** Stuempfle’s hymn provides a clear and distinct Christian perspective. It speaks of Christ’s resurrection power and the Christian hope that that power provides. As Gibbs states, “Easter is about the undoing of death. It’s not about re-naming death, or dressing it up, or pretending that death is something that it is not. Easter is actually about the permanent reversal and annihilation of physical death.”<sup>60</sup> Stuempfle’s hymn proclaims this in verse one: “Life reigns this Easter Day.” Christ’s resurrection awakens the earth, and all its creatures to join together in song and sing Christ’s praise as the King of Creation.

### **God, Who Made the Earth, Declared it Good in the Beginning**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 God, who made the earth, declared it good in the beginning,  
planned a time and purpose for all things that were and would be.

*While earth remains,  
there will be seed-time and harvest,  
summer sun and winter-moon,  
the dead of night, the bright day.*

2 Though humanity defiled the Eden God had cherished,  
God did not despise the world; its worth he always could see.

3 God, in Christ, then came from paradise to imperfection,  
repossessing earth and people through a tomb and tree.

4 Wood though felled to earth produces a flower that will not perish,  
seed, though dead and fallen, burst to life and rose up again.<sup>61</sup>

#### **The Hymn’s Historical Context**

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<sup>60</sup> Gibbs, “Christ is Risen,” 2–3.

<sup>61</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, “God Who Made Earth, Declared it Good in the Beginning,” *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2008), 228.

**Composer’s Biography:** Once again a hymn presents itself whose original text comes from an unknown source though it is believed to have originated in Korea.<sup>62</sup> The hymn was first published in 2005. It was earlier either translated or rewritten in English, by John Lamberton Bell who was born in 1949 in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. Bell is a hymn-writer and a minister of the Church of Scotland. He is also a member of the Iona Community, which was introduced in chapter two.<sup>63</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** While it was not possible to ascertain the year in which this hymn was written or translated, it is necessary to study the hymn because it confirms, albeit discreetly, Jesus as the Creator who ushers in his new creation. The hymn evokes images of the first creation, the damages caused today by human neglect, and prepares for and anticipates the coming of the new creation in Christ.

Since Bell’s translation of the hymn is what is available and since its publication was only eight years ago, any historical information about the hymn’s original reception is impossible to ascertain. Because of Bell’s membership in the Iona community whose focus is on peace and social justice, rebuilding community, the renewal of worship, and having a strong commitment towards the integrity of creation, it makes sense that Bell also values these qualities. The hymn also makes an appearance in the church during the age of heightened ecological sensitivities.

“God, Who Made the Earth” was found in only one hymnal, *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*, #228. It has been placed under the heading section “Our Response to God—in Times and Seasons.”

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

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<sup>62</sup> [http://www.hymnary.org/text/god\\_who\\_made\\_the\\_earth\\_declared\\_it\\_good\\_](http://www.hymnary.org/text/god_who_made_the_earth_declared_it_good_) (accessed March 14, 2013).

<sup>63</sup> For more information about the Iona Community visit the website: <http://iona.org.uk/>.

**Theme of Jesus as Creator and New Creation:** Bell's hymn declares Jesus as Creator of the world throughout. It is rare when a hymn utilizes creation imagery from beginning to end as it proclaims the continual care of creation to be the work of Christ. The hymn also declares Christ as the one through whom God's creation is restored and brought into the new creation.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Bell's hymn is not written as poetry though it does at times use metaphorical language to describe the work of Christ. The hymn tells the Christian story of the work of Christ in creation. The author begins by recalling in the first sentence of the hymn, the Gen. 1:31 text, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." The verse goes on, "(God) planned a time and purpose for all things that were and would be." This language recalls Eccles. 3:1, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." This means that God is intimately involved in his creation. Nothing happens on earth or in heaven that God does not control or know about from the beginning.

The refrain of this hymn plays a substantial role as it recalls God's promises of old, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). The text provides an image of God's continual work in his creation. If all things are under his care and his authority, then at his command the seeds will produce an abundant harvest, the winter snow will fall, and summer's rains will do their work. All these proclaim the Creator's care and his command over creation. There is uncertainty in Bell's use of the words "while the earth remains." This might imply that Bell believes there is a set end to this earth, but he could also be referring to the new creation. It is difficult to ascertain from just this line.

In verse one, Bell picks up several important themes. First, God declares his creation good. Second, Bell interprets that "good" in a functional sense. In other words, everything in creation



functions according to God's purpose. Here Luther's teaching on creation is helpful. Luther interprets the primordial biblical history as the beginning of all things and needs to be understood in terms of *principium* rather than *initium*. When understood in terms of *initium* there is an isolation of time, which stays in the past and has no further influence. Although the term *principium* portrays a beginning, which remains relevant, it is an ongoing creative event.<sup>64</sup>

Bell begins verse two by speaking of the damage sin brought to creation: "Though humanity defiled the Eden God had cherished." In the story of creation, Genesis 3, sin and chaos set off a domino effect for the destruction of God's first creation. Sin distorted and, in fact, corrupted all communication between God and humankind and between God and creation. This alludes back to verse one where God declared his creation good, showing that God does not allow destruction or separation with his creature to persist: "God did not despise the world; its worth he always could see." "God's new creation makes the old world into the new one and restores the original once again."<sup>65</sup> In the final two verses Bell presents God's new creation and Christ as the one who will usher it in.

Verse three declares by whom creation will be restored and redeemed by telling the Christian story: "God, in Christ, then came from paradise to imperfection." This language appears to be a reference to heaven or Christ's sitting at God's right hand, who now comes into a creation marred by imperfection to repossess "earth and people." The language of repossessing further highlights the alienation and perhaps even the satanic domination under which creation finds itself. Bell's final verse concludes by looking to the tomb and a tree.

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<sup>64</sup> Johannes Schwanke, "Luther on Creation," in *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 78–98.

<sup>65</sup> Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*. 117.

Verse four tells the rest of the story by using metaphorical language to speak of Christ's death, resurrection, and the breaking forth of the new creation. The author writes, "wood though felled to earth produces a flower that will not perish." This phrase uses metaphorical language to emphasize the tree that becomes the cross of Christ upon which he dies. But death cannot contain him. The earth produces a flower that will not perish, which brings to light Christ's resurrection. Here, Jesus is the flower. Flowers are usually considered a sign of renewed life, as in spring when they burst forth in new life after a long, cold winter. Bell's next phrase changes the metaphor of Christ from flower to the seed. The "Seed, though dead and fallen, burst into life and rose up again." Christ now the seed once dead upon the earth, takes root, sprouts, bursts into life, and brings with him new life for all. In this way, Bell's hymn speaks of the dawn of the new creation. Life from death is the hope and the promise of the Christian narrative.

**Christian Confession:** Bell's hymn presents the basis for the entire Christian story. He begins by declaring God as the Creator of the world (Genesis 1). He leads the reader to see humanity's fall into sin (Genesis 3), and he ends by proclaiming God, in Christ, as the who comes to earth as man, to restore his creatures and bring new life to all his creation. As such the hymn provides a springboard for discussing Christian stewardship for God's creation. Stewardship for the Christian begins and resides in the faith and hope of God's promise. Here Gibbs is helpful. The significance of Easter provides the promises by which the Christian faith stands and by which the Christian lives: "The tomb was empty—literally, as well as historically."<sup>66</sup> All of this leads to the "promises related to the Lordship of Christ, the Reign of God, the New Creation, and the Holy Spirit."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Jeffrey Gibbs, "Christ is Risen: The Beginnings of the New Creation" (presenter, Theological Symposium at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, September 24, 2013).

<sup>67</sup> Gibbs, "Christ is Risen," 2.

## Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old

### Hymn Verses

\*Note: Two different versions of this hymn exist. The first will be presented as it was found in the hymnal *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* and the second from the website that houses most published hymns, [hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org).

### Version One

1 Isaiah the prophet has written of old  
how God's new creation shall come.  
Instead of the thorn tree, the fir tree shall grow  
and the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the lamb,  
and the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.

2 The mountains and hills shall break forth into song,  
the peoples be led forth in peace;  
the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God  
as waters cover the sea, the sea,  
as the waters cover the sea.

3 Yet nations still prey on the meek of the world,  
and conflict turns parent from child.  
Your people despoil all the sweetness of earth;  
and the brier and the thorn tree grow wild, grow wild,  
the brier and the thorn tree grow wild.<sup>68</sup>

4 God, bring to fruition your will for the earth,  
that no one shall hurt or destroy,  
that wisdom and justice shall reign in the land  
and your people shall go forth in joy, in joy,  
your people shall go forth in joy.

### Version Two

1 Isaiah the prophet has written of old  
how God's earthly kingdom shall come.  
Instead of the thorn tree the fir tree shall grow;  
the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.  
The mountains and hills shall break forth into song,  
the peoples be led forth in peace;  
for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God

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<sup>68</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, "Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old," *Hymns of Glory Songs of Praise* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury, 2008), 241.

as the waters cover the seas.

2 Yet nations still prey on the meek of the world,  
and conflict turns parent from child.  
Your people despoil all the sweetness of earth;  
the brier and the thorn grow wild.  
Lord, hasten to bring in your kingdom on earth,  
when no one shall hurt or destroy,  
when wisdom and justice shall reign in the land  
and your people shall go forth in joy.<sup>69</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Joy F. Patterson was born in Lansing, Michigan in 1931 and was raised in LaGrange, Illinois. She is a Fulbright scholar who has taught French in the post-secondary setting and holds a BA in French Studies and an MA in French Literature, both acquired from the University of Wisconsin. Serving as an elder in the First Presbyterian Church she was intimately involved as a member of the committee that prepared *The Presbyterian Hymnal*.<sup>70</sup> Her aim was to use simple but timeless language in order to relate ancient truths of the Christian faith with today's world.

She has produced two collections of hymns; her first is *Come, You People of the Promise* (Hope, 1994), and her second is *Teach Our Eyes New Ways of Seeing* (Selah, 2005). A review written by John Core about her newest collection states, "Patterson's texts are often rooted in specific passages of scripture, but are never merely slavish versifications."<sup>71</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Patterson wrote "Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old" in 1981. Its text was one of seven winners in a hymn-writing contest jointly sponsored by The Hymn Society of America and the Choristers Guild. The hymn was published

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<sup>69</sup> [http://www.hymnary.org/text/isaiah\\_the\\_prophet\\_has\\_written\\_of\\_old](http://www.hymnary.org/text/isaiah_the_prophet_has_written_of_old) (accessed May 23, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> The Program Agency and General Assembly Mission Board, *Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990).

<sup>71</sup> John Core, "Teach Our Eyes New Ways of Seeing" *The Hymn* 58 (Winter, 2007): 58–59.

and first sung in 1982. Patterson said of the text, “I have always loved the tune SAMANTHRA and the images and words from Isaiah 1 seemed to be made for the tune. Thus scriptural language, a prayer for peace, and a good but little-used tune came together for this hymn.”<sup>72</sup> The hymn was originally written in only two verses as shown above. Verse one was based on Isa. 11:6–9 and verse two on Isa. 55:12–13.

Patterson notes that sometimes she composes tunes, but the majority of her work is in writing the text. Her concerns as a hymn writer are for the unity and inclusiveness of the church, justice, peace, and proper stewardship of the God’s creation. Here Patterson uses the texts of Isaiah 11 and 55 to focus the reader on Isaiah’s vision of peace, harmony, and joy in the new creation.

Patterson herself claims that she has a deep concern for the care of God’s creation. This becomes evident in her hymn. She is obviously aware of the discussions taking place within the environmental movement, but instead of using the hymn to focus on caring for the earth now, she turns instead to Christ’s return. The hymn’s impact could have been much more powerful if she had focused more on seeing the damage caused to God’s creation now and then had turned her focus to the hope that could be found when Christ returns in the new creation. The hymn was only published in *Hymns of Glory Song of Praise* 241 under the heading “Our Response to God—in the Stewardship of the Earth.”

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Jesus as Creator and New Creation:** Patterson’s hymn finds expression in this theme because it focuses specifically on the new creation by way of Old Testament proclamation as found in Isaiah. More specifically, Isaiah provides a vivid description of the new age and the

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<sup>72</sup> [http://www.hymnary.org/text/isaiah\\_the\\_prophet\\_has\\_written\\_of\\_old](http://www.hymnary.org/text/isaiah_the_prophet_has_written_of_old) (accessed August 24, 2013).

new creation, which will be ushered in by the Messiah. Patterson focuses especially on the need for peace within the world, which is filled with human violence. Since both versions of this hymn are similar in content, all comments regarding this hymn will refer to the second version shown above.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Patterson depends heavily on the work of Isaiah and uses metaphorical language to highlight specific expressions. Verse one begins by working with the imagery found in Isaiah, specifically Isa. 11:6–9, where Isaiah highlights harmony and peace of all God’s creation in the new creation:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

In verse one, Patterson begins by showing how Isaiah foretold the story of the coming of the new creation, which she calls God’s earthly kingdom. She continues, “Instead of the thorn tree, the fir tree shall grow.” This imagery reflects back on the Fall of man: “Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you” (Gen. 17b–18a). Patterson counters this imagery with the beauty and grandeur of the mighty fir tree. An average native fir at the height of maturity can reach thirty to two-hundred-and-sixty feet tall. Its trunk can grow in diameter from two to twelve feet. This is indeed majestic grandeur. Patterson then focuses on the peace that will exist between the wolf and the lamb a rendering of Isa. 11:6, “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb.”

In verse two, Patterson paints a picture of the hills and mountains breaking forth in song as the people are led forth in peace similar to the language of Isa. 55:12–13: “For you shall go out

in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills before you shall break forth into singing.” In the next line, Patterson states the reason for the joy creation now displays, “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God.” When Christ returns, Isaiah proclaims as Patterson declares in her hymn, that all the earth, the beasts, the birds, the seas, the clouds, and every human being will finally *know* God. There will be no place to hide from that truth. Patterson provides a potent image of that day by comparing the knowledge of God with “waters that cover the sea.” There will be no more doubt, no more confusion, and no more discussion. Jesus will reign, and all the earth will have the knowledge of him.

On a more solemn note, verse two takes an honest look at the world today: nations prey upon nation, the strong prey upon the weak—both human and non-human. Conflict, distrust, and deceit are upheld as truths. The world shows no care for the human neighbor, let alone concern for the inanimate neighbor, the land, or the sea. Patterson proclaims this in her hymn: “Your people despoil all the sweetness of earth.” And so, Patterson calls on the Lord to come quickly, to bring in the new creation in all its glory, and to begin his reign in the new creation. Patterson’s final line, “When no one shall hurt or destroy, when wisdom and justice shall reign in the land,” provides a vision of what the new creation might look like. Humanity will no longer hurt or destroy God’s beautiful creation. It will be a time when peace and harmony replace hatred and fear.

**Christian Confession:** Patterson’s hymn strongly provides a distinctively Christian perspective as it visualizes Isaiah’s first vision of the new creation and sets his vision to music. Patterson main focus is on the new creation and Christ’s reign in the new creation. It provides the images of hope and peace as proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah.

## Then the Glory

### Hymn Verses

Then the glory Then the rest  
Then the Sabbath peace unbroken  
Then the garden Then the throne  
Then the crystal river flowing  
Then the splendor Then the life  
Then the new creation singing  
Then the marriage Then the love  
Then the feast of joy unending  
Then the knowing Then the light  
Then the ultimate adventure  
Then the Spirits' harvest gathered  
Then the Lamb in majesty  
Then the Father's Amen  
Then Then Then.

### The Hymn's Historical Context

**Composer's Biography:** Jaroslav J. Vajda, a well-known hymn writer in Lutheran circles, wrote the hymn "Then the Glory." The hymn was arranged to the same tune that he and Carl Schalk had collaborated for the hymn "Now the Silence," a slightly better-known Vajda hymn. Vajda was born in 1919 and died in 2008 at the age of eighty-nine. He was of Slovak descent and was born to a Lutheran pastor who served in East Chicago, Indiana. Vajda himself became a Lutheran pastor in 1944, receiving his MDiv from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>73</sup>

While Vajda wrote over two-hundred original hymns, he did not write his first hymn until age forty-nine. During his life he served on two Lutheran hymnal commissions, the *Hymnal Supplement* (1969) and the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). After serving as pastor for many

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<sup>73</sup> Carl Schalk, "Commentary for Vajda Hymn Sing," presented at WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts in Kenosha, WI, July 2002.



years, he was called to serve as editor of *This Day* magazine and later served as an editor and developer at Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>74</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** “Then the Glory” is a well-manuevered continuation of Vajda’s more well known hymn “Now the Silence.” In both hymns Vajda’s repeats key words. In “Now the Silence” he repeats the word *now*. It begins each phrase and ends the final line, repeating three times. It is here where the hymn “Then the Glory” physically continues. The language shifts from the proverbial *now* to the futuristic *then*, which looks ahead in expectant hope of Christ’s return in glory. Both of Vajda’s hymns are intentionally unpunctuated in order to provide a continual flow of very specific phrases that track in a forward movement. Both intentionally use verbs to express a present action.

His hymn “Then the Glory” was written in 1970 and revised in 1986. No information is available as to why the hymn was revised. Vajda himself writes, “Subsequent to the writing of ‘Now the Silence’ I wrote this “sequel [‘Then the Glory’].”<sup>75</sup> Today the hymn “Then the Glory” is found in *Christian Worship* #218.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Jesus as Creator and New Creation:** Vajda’s hymn “Then the Glory” immediately drives one’s attention to the *not yet*, to the *then* of the new creation. Vajda begins by moving the readers attention forward to a Sabbath rest, rest from this life and the joyous jubilation of the next. It will be a rest that never ends, “a Sabbath peace unbroken.” It is here where Vajda paints a picture of the new creation most likely drawn from the first-hand account

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<sup>74</sup> Carl Schalk, “Commentary for Vajda Hymn Sing,” presented at WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts in Kenosha, WI, July 2002.

<sup>75</sup> Jaroslav J. Vajda, *Sing Peace, Sing Gift of Peace* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2003), 238–39.

provided by John in Revelation 22. Vajda, with few words, provides a myriad of images of the new creation.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Vajda's hymn relies heavily on the metaphorical language of the new creation as found in Revelation 22 and John's telling of new creation. In the hymn Vajda brings these important images to life. He begins with the Sabbath. He tracks toward the eschatological vision of being with Christ and all the saints through a contemplative image-driven approach. Vajda reflects on the vision of the garden with a crystal river flowing through it. He draws upon John, who speaks of a river flowing through the street of the city from the throne of the Lamb, a river surrounded by trees of life. In the midst of the city, a vision of the whole creation sings, "He will reign forever and ever." Vajda provides a vision of the city. He represents the city as a garden, but it requires no light because the glory of God is its light and the Lamb is its lamp. Vajda provides a vision of Christ and his bride, the church, as they unite together in marriage where both the marriage and feast are unending. In next phrase, "Then the knowing," he resolves the creature's question of knowledge because Jesus himself provides the answer. Finally, Vajda states, "Then the ultimate adventure" that begins with this hymn but will last forever!

**Christian Confession:** Just as in "Now the Silence," the last few phrases of "Then the Glory" create a reversal of the Trinitarian order. Vajda did this intentionally, not only to make the conclusion more memorable but also to indicate the order in which the Trinity actually approaches the Christian in worship.<sup>76</sup> Here in "Then the Glory," Vajda makes the final proclamation, "Then the Spirit's harvest gathered Then the Lamb in majesty Then the Father's Amen Then Then Then."

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<sup>76</sup> Westermeyer, *Hymnal Companion*, 287–88.

This hymn provides a central theological implication: the vision of the new creation in true eschatological form. It provides a picture of what is to come in the new creation and the reason to stay focused on Jesus while living in his creation now. To be in Christ now, means you to will be in Christ then, a wonderful play on the words of Vajda's two hymns, "Now the Silence" and "Then the Glory."

### **Chapter Summary**

Jesus as Creator who ushers in his new creation speaks to the very heart of Christianity. The theme proclaims the Christian story of who Jesus is, what he did, and why it matters. This theme provides a basis for Christian hope and a reason to care for God's creation today. In some ways, this chapter lies at the center of this dissertation because it is the glue that holds together Christian hope. One of chapter's main purposes was to show that creation and redemption are intimately woven together in the man Jesus of Nazareth. Three characteristics highlighted show: Jesus as the agent of creation, Jesus' command over and his relationship with creation, and Jesus' ushering in the new creation. These characteristics proclaim Jesus as Creator. Jesus is present in the first creation, he is active in the creation now, and he is the one who will bring in the new creation then. Each of the hymns analyzed visually walk the Christian through some segment of that theology.

The first two hymns, "Beautiful Savior" and "Praise Be to Christ," provide a basis for Jesus as Creator and his agency in creation. Together they proclaim the church's teaching of Jesus as Creator. "Beautiful Savior" professes the Christian faith as it compares the beauty of creation with the beauty of the Creator. In the hymn, "Praise Be to Christ," Dudley-Smith constructs a rendering of the biblical text of Col. 1:15–20 and puts it to song. It provides answers to who Christ is, what He did, and why He did it. "Praise Be to Christ" shows that Christ still reigns

today in all power and glory. Both the Apostle Paul and Dudley-Smith's hymn artfully unite creation and redemption together. They are one reality linked and bonded together in Jesus. Both hymns profess this truth.

"Earth, Earth, Awake; Your Praises Sing" and "God Who Made the Earth, Declared It Good in the Beginning," focus on the Christ's reign over creation now. "Earth, Earth, Awake," speaks to the powerful restorative work of Jesus. With its focus on the resurrection, Stuempfle shows how the entire creation breaks forth in song in praise of its Creator, Jesus. In, "God Who Made the Earth, Declared It Good in the Beginning," Bell walks the Christian through God's divine timeline with reflections of the first creation, images of the ongoing creation, and glimpses into the new creation. Bell's hymn provides the Christian the hope necessary to do the work of caring for God's creation today by looking forward to the new creation that is to come.

The final two hymns, "Isaiah the Prophet has Written of Old" and "Then the Glory," turn the Christian's focus towards the new creation. "Isaiah the Prophet has Written of Old" boldly proclaims the breaking forth of the new creation in Christ using the story that is told through the prophet Isaiah. Patterson hits on a critical point the damage caused to creation due to human neglect. "Then the Glory," powerfully, yet, in very few words, provides the Christian with a glorious picture of the new creation breaking through. It not only speaks to Jesus as Creator who ushers in the new creation but paints a picture of what that new creation might look like, based on John's vision in Revelation. Patterson and Vajda's hymns both provide a powerful vision of the Christian hope necessary to think through the issues Christians encounter each day in caring for God's creation. These issues might include human consumption, use of natural resources, or output of waste vs. recycling. All have an effect on God's creation today. The hymns provide a vision of Christian hope. Hope that matters reside in the fact that Christ in resurrection power

breaks the bonds of death to become a new creation and by his promise restoration of the new creation has begun.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CREATOR SPIRIT

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:1–2).

When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed; when thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground (Ps. 104:29–30).

The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life (Job 33:4).

It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life (John 6:63).

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22).

When one reads through the biblical passages above, one encounters how the Scriptures present the Spirit as Creator. Biblical texts both affirm and express the functional and dynamic significance of the word “Creator.” In other words, the Holy Spirit *creates*, or the Holy Spirit *acts as* Creator.<sup>1</sup> The Spirit hovers or moves over the face of the water,<sup>2</sup> the Spirit creates new life, and the Spirit renews that life. These are the things that distinguish the Spirit’s role in creation apart from the Father role and Jesus’ role. The phrase that is most frequently expressed

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<sup>1</sup> Raniero Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit: Meditations on the Veni Creator* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical, 2003), 27.

<sup>2</sup> This dissertation recognizes the fact that theologians and Church traditions do not find consensus when interpreting the Hebrew word *rûah*. Some translate *rûah* in the Gen. 1:2 text to mean the ‘Spirit of God’ while others say it simply means ‘wind.’ Volumes of books have been written on this topic alone. A good reference text would be *Presence, Power, and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, edited by David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner. Within this text is an article titled “Breath, Wind, Spirit and the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament,” written by Richard E. Averbeck.

within the church tradition is the Spirit's role as life-giver as stated in the Nicene Creed: "the Lord and giver of life."<sup>3</sup>

Not only do the Scriptures use language that expresses the Spirit's role, but the theologians of the past, the Church Fathers, also attribute the role of Creator to the Spirit as well. The church Fathers spent much of their time showing that the Spirit was "not a creature" but instead God himself. In doing so, they affirmed that he was indeed "Creator." In particular, "The Fathers accentuated the ontological meaning of the word, understanding "Creator" as a designation of the essence or the nature of the Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup> In other words, if the Holy Spirit is Creator, then He is God. But a few of the Fathers, Basil, Ambrose, and others, did not limit their thinking to the Spirit's divinity when they affirmed that he was Creator, but they focused on the Spirit's role in creation. For example, Ambrose saw that the Spirit was an essential element of life on earth:

If it were possible to remove the Spirit from creation, all beings would become confused and the life in them would appear to have no law, no structure, no ordered purpose whatever. Without the Spirit, the entire creation would be unable to continue in being.<sup>5</sup>

The Holy Spirit's role was so essential in Saint Basil's thinking that he wrote an entire treatise on the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> For Basil, the Spirit's work in creation was shaped by the Spirit's relationship within the Trinity. He wrote, "The Father is the principal cause, from whom all things come; the Son is the efficient cause, through whom all things are made; and the Holy Spirit is the perfecting cause."<sup>7</sup> One might say that the creative action of the Spirit is to bring to

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<sup>3</sup> The Commission on Worship, "Divine Service, Setting One," *Lutheran Service Book*, 158.

<sup>4</sup> Cantalamessa, *Come, Creator Spirit*, 26–27.

<sup>5</sup> Cantalamessa, *Come, Creator Spirit*, 35.

<sup>6</sup> Saint Basil the Great Archbishop of Caesaria, "The Treatise De Spiritu Santo," vol. 8 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church Basil: Letters and Select Works* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 33.

perfection all that exists, or better yet that the Spirit is the One who transforms all things from death into life.

More recent theologians who identify the Spirit as Creator and explore the Spirit's role within creation include Jürgen Moltmann, Colin Gunton, John Calvin, Regin Prenter, and Ranieron Cantalamessa. Most of these men highlight the Spirit's function and the way in which the Spirit works in his role as Creator. They highlight actions such as renewing creation, bringing life to the present creation, and re-creating in the new creation what he had created in the first creation. When the Spirit is active, life abounds; when the Spirit abstains, darkness, death, and silence prevail. "This means that the Holy Spirit is the efficacious power of the Creator . . . it also means that this (his power) is itself creative, not created, and that it has been breathed 'breathed forth' by the Creator, that is to say emanated."<sup>8</sup>

In the sixteenth century, John Calvin<sup>9</sup> added depth to the discussion when he described the Holy Spirit as the *fons vitae*, "the fountain of life." He stated, "If the Holy Spirit is 'poured out' on all created beings, then 'the fountain of life' is present in everything that exists and is alive."<sup>10</sup> Calvin believed that every experience one has in life could be a discovery of the Spirit's power. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin affirms that the Holy Spirit operates as God's fountain of life in three ways: in creation, in Scripture, and in salvation.<sup>11</sup> Although, Calvin's

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<sup>8</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985), 96.

<sup>9</sup> John Calvin was a French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. He was originally trained as a humanist lawyer. Calvin was born in 1509 in Noyon, France and died in 1564 in Geneva. Calvin's most famous work is his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin also wrote *Calvin's Commentaries-Complete* and an entire series called, *Calvin's Commentaries*.

<sup>10</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 11.

<sup>11</sup> Wessel Bently, "Calvin and the Holy Spirit as *fons vitae*," *Studia Historiae Ecclesianticae* 35 (2009): 77–85.



understanding of creation is a bit more anthropocentric than theocentric in thought,<sup>12</sup> his language of fountain of life is useful and deserves adequate attention.

More recently, Raniero Cantalamessa offers further insight into the Holy Spirit's activity in creation from a Roman Catholic perspective. In 2003, Cantalamessa wrote *Come, Creator Spirit: Meditation on the Veni Creator*, which is a complete analysis of the hymn "Veni Creator." In it he provides meditation on each verse, resulting in a complete treatise. He draws from Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the liturgy of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions. "Veni Creator" was written in the ninth century and is still in use in liturgy across the globe. Cantalamessa speaks of the Spirit's role as the one who transforms. He states, "The Holy Spirit is the one who makes creation pass from chaos into cosmos, and makes of it something beautiful, orderly, and clean. The Greek *kosmos* and the Latin *mundus* both mean clean, beautiful."<sup>13</sup> This echoes the thoughts of Ambrose of the fourth century: "When the Spirit began to hover over it, creation had no beauty as yet. But, when creation had experienced the action of the Spirit, it received all that splendour of beauty that makes it shine forth as the *mundus*."<sup>14</sup>

Jürgen Moltmann works in a similar fashion as he draws attention to the way in which the Spirit as Creator is daily present in the creation giving life to the world. Moltmann sees the Spirit as the creative energy of God. He states it this way: "The Father is the creating origin of creation, the Son its shaping origin, and the Spirit its life-giving origin."<sup>15</sup> When seen this way, a Trinitarian concept of creation unfolds and binds together God's immanence and transcendence without confusion. When God's immanence, his presence and ongoing actions in creation, are

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<sup>12</sup> Calvin taught that creation's main purpose was to display God's infinite power to humankind while inviting them into alliance with him in order that God's life giving power might be made known.

<sup>13</sup> Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 34.

<sup>14</sup> Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Moltmann, *God is Creation*, 98.

pushed to an extreme, God and his creation are seen as being one and the same. This often leads to pantheism. When God's transcendence, his being over and beyond creation, is pushed to an extreme, it often leads to deism. In this case, God himself becomes irrelevant as human reason replaces God's revelation. Both are extremes that confuse the Christian's understanding of a theology of creation and the Spirit's role as Creator within creation.

God's creative action is not limited to the first six days of creation. Christians cannot say that God "was." God "is" always creating and "is" always Creator. He continually communicates his energy and being; he stimulates, enlivens, moves, and renews creation. "To create is continually to make new."<sup>16</sup> Since the beginning of time, God's Spirit has been creating, nourishing, sustaining, and vivifying all things on earth and in heaven. God speaks, creation appears, God breathes, life is given, God proclaims, faith is sustained. All of these are the work of the Spirit. But, how does understanding this work of the Spirit help the Christian better understand the role of caring for creation? If the Spirit is always at work bringing about change—converting darkness into light, bringing order to disorder, changing brokenness to wholeness, and transforming deformity to beauty—can this help the Christian think differently about creation and the ecological issues that face the world today?

Of all the theologians, Jürgen Moltmann<sup>17</sup> in particular has spent years connecting the Holy Spirit's work in creation to the ecological problems that exist in God's creation today. In a paper

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<sup>16</sup> Martin Luther, "Resolutiones Disputationum de Indulgentiarum virtute." *Luthers Werke* (Germany: Verlag Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger Weimer 1 Band, 563:5. Original citation found in Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Jürgen Moltmann is a German theologian and Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen, Germany. Moltmann was born in 1926 in Hamburg, Germany. Karl Barth has heavily influenced Moltmann's theology, along with the philosophy of history of Hegel, and Ernst Bloch's philosophy of hope. What follows is a sample of Moltmann's work that has been translated into English: *Theology of Hope* (1967), *The Gospel of Liberation* (1973), *The Crucified God* (1973), *Man: Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present* (1974), *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975), *The Experiment Hope* (1975), *The Open Church* (1978), *The Future of Creation* (1979), *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (1981), *History and the Triune God, On Human Dignity* (1984), and *God in Creation* (1985).

he presented to The Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1990, Moltmann states,

as Christians see it, creation is a Trinitarian process: God the Father creates through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. All things are therefore created “of God,” formed “through God” and exist “in God.” . . . Western church tradition has for long stressed only the first aspect, in order to emphasize God’s transcendence. In so doing it has robbed nature of its divine mystery and abandoned it to desacralization through secularization. We therefore now have to rediscover the immanence of the Creator in creation, in order to bring the whole creation into awe of the Creator. This can be helped forward by the Christological concept of creation through the word of God and the pneumatological understanding of creation in the Spirit of God.<sup>18</sup>

Moltmann highlights two very critical issues. First, creation is a Trinitarian work. The role of each person of the Trinity, as stated in each article of the Nicene Creed, “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth . . . And in one Lord Jesus Christ . . . by whom all things were made . . . I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of Life,”<sup>19</sup> must be recognized. Second, one cannot separate God’s transcendence from his immanence. In order to better hold these two together, Moltmann suggests that Christians focus more of their efforts on seeing Christ’s role as Creator as shown in the previous chapter and the Spirit’s role as Creator, as highlighted in this chapter.

Moltmann begins by impressing upon his hearers that humanity needs to stop referring to God’s creation as “nature” in order to prevent the easy exploitation of creation according to the laws science. Instead, when creation is seen as God’s creation and not simply as “nature,” God’s creatures learn to respect it as such and liberate it from human subjugation.

Giving the name “creation” to the reality in and with which we live is the strongest expression of resistance to the transformation and destruction of nature in the human environment. Resistance results from hope for the liberation of creation from its present state to the eternal springtime of the new world. It is not only a resistance to

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<sup>18</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, “The Scope of Renewal in the Spirit,” *The Ecumenical Review*, 41 (1990): 100.

<sup>19</sup> The Commission on Worship, “Divine Service, Setting One,” *Lutheran Service Book*, 158.

the ecological self-destruction of a humanity which is destroying the basis of its own life, but also a resistance to the constraints of its fragility and its affliction.<sup>20</sup>

This renewal or liberation of all creation was proclaimed when Christ brought in his kingdom at his resurrection, and it frees all creation from the power of time and from the dominion of death. Christian hope lies in Christ’s resurrection where he triumphed over sin, death, and the devil. The rebirth of Christ, is a rebirth of the whole creation; this rebirth, established by the Spirit, renews creation, stops the chaos of sin, and brings life and hope back to God’s creatures.

The two hymns chosen for this chapter best represent the Spirit’s role in creation. Of the one hundred and ninety-eight hymns selected as best representing a theology of creation for this dissertation, only six reflected the theme of Creator Spirit. It is obvious from both the theological study and from the hymns available that the theme Creator Spirit requires additional development within the theological community.

Table 5: Hymns on Creator Spirit

<b>Hymns on Creator Spirit</b>	
<b>Hymn Title</b>	<b>Hymnals that Include Hymn</b>
Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid	<i>LSB #500, LW #167, Christian Worship #188, and LBW #164.</i>
Praise the Spirit in Creation	<i>Hymns of Glory #588, Let All the People #246, and With One Voice #682.</i>

### **Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Creator Spirit, by whose aid  
The world’s foundations first were laid,

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<sup>20</sup> Moltmann, “The Scope of Renewal in the Spirit,” 104.

Come, visit every humble mind;  
Come, pour your joys of humankind;  
From sin and sorrow set us free;  
May we Your living temples be.

2 O Source of uncreated light,  
the bearer of God's gracious might,  
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,  
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;  
Your sacred, healing message bring  
To sanctify us as we sing.

3 Giver of grace, descend from high;  
Your sevenfold gifts to us supply;  
Help us eternal truths receive  
And practice all that we believe;  
Give us yourself that we may see  
The glory of the Trinity.

4 Immortal honor, endless fame  
Attend the almighty Father's name;  
The Savior Son be glorified,  
Who for all humankind has died;  
To you, O Paraclete, we raise  
Unending song of thanks and praise.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Rhabanus (Hrabanus/Rabanus) Maurus lived between 776 and 856, was born in Mainz, and was educated by Alcuin in Fulda in Hesse and Tours, Germany. In 803, Maurus became the director of the Benedictine Abbey at Fulda and in 814 was ordained into the priesthood. In 822, he returned to Fulda and became the church Abbott. Although Maurus retired in 842 in 847 he was appointed as the Archbishop of Mainz.

Maurus was a distinguished Carolingian poet-theologian who wrote throughout his lifetime. Not only was he considered the author of many hymns, he also wrote numerous

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<sup>21</sup> The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Creator Spirit By Whose Aid," *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 500.

commentaries, a Latin-German glossary of the Bible, the *Encyclopaedic De Universo, De Institutione Clericorum*, and numerous poetic works that circulated throughout the middle ages.

John Dryden completed the English translation of “Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid.” It first appeared in 1693 in a work published by Jacob Tonson and later in *The Primer* of 1706 and 1732. Each translation included seven verses of the hymn. Since that time, the altered or abbreviated text is all that has been found in hymnals today. John Wesley was one of the first to adopt the hymn for congregational purposes.

John Dryden born in 1631 and was the grandson of Sir Erasmus Dryden. He is best known for his poetry and was the first poet to make poetry a lucid vehicle for political and religious discussion. Two of his works, *Religio Laid* and *The Hind and Panther* were used in this platform.

Until recently, Dryden’s contribution to hymn translation was seen as minimal; in fact, he is known to have translated only three, with “Veni Creator,” being his best known. The other two are translations of the “*Te Deum*” (“Thee Sovereign God Our Grateful Accents Praise”), and “*Ut Queant Laxis*” or “*Hymnu in Loannem.*” Yet in 1706, Mr. W.T. Brooke,<sup>22</sup> shocked many by showing, with strong conviction, that Dryden translated nearly one hundred and thirty Latin hymns.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** It is believed that the basis for this hymn comes from the Latin hymn “*Veni, Creator Spiritus.*” It is an important and well-known hymn with uncertain authorship.

The Latin text of *Veni Creátor Spiritus*:

*I Veni Creátor Spiritus,*

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<sup>22</sup> John Julian, ed., *A Dictionary of Hymnody: Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations* (New York: Scribner, 1892), 314.

*mentes tuórun vísitá,  
imple supérna grátia  
quae tu creásti péctora.*

*2 Qui Paracletus díceris,  
dónum Dei altíssimi,  
fons vivus, ignis, cáritus,  
et spiritáalis únctio.*

*3 Tu septifórmis múnere,  
déterae Dei tu digitus  
tu rite promíssum Partis,  
sermóne ditans gútera.*

*4 Accénde lumen sénsibus,  
ínfunde amórem córdibus,  
ínfírma nostri córporis  
virtúte firmans pérpeti.*

*5 Hóstem repéllas lóngius,  
pacémque dones prótinus,  
ductóre sic te práevio,  
vitémus omne nóxium.*

*6 Per te sciámus da Patrem,  
noscámus atque Fílium  
te utriúsqu Spíritum  
credámus omni témpore.<sup>23</sup>*

Those to whom possible authorship is credited for the hymn “*Veni, Creator Spiritus*” are Charlemagne, Ambrose, Gregory the Great, and Rhabanus Maurus.<sup>24</sup> Today, most scholars agree that authorship of both “*Veni, Creator Spiritus*” and the hymn under consideration here, “*Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid,*” should be attributed to Maurus.

The hymn “*Veni Creator Spiritus,*” a ninth century hymn has been translated in excess of sixty known languages. When the Latin text is used, it is sung in a Gregorian chant. “*Veni Creator Spiritus*” has been the typical hymn of Pentecost extending the Holy Spirit over the

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<sup>23</sup> Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Marilyn Kay Stulken. *Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 494–95.

whole of humanity and the Church. It is the one ancient Latin hymn that almost all major churches of the Reformation have adopted. Martin Luther, who undertook the task of a German translation titled “Komm, Gott Schöpfer heiliger Geist,”<sup>25</sup> and other Reformers regard the hymn highly, and it has become a regular part of the Protestant liturgy. Titles for the different translations include; “O, Come, Creator Spirit, Come,” “Come Holy Ghost Our Souls Inspire,” “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest,” and the translation which will be used for analysis in this chapter, “Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid.”<sup>26</sup>

It is believed that the hymn “Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid,” is a translation of “Veni Creator Spiritus.” The earliest recorded use of “Veni, Creator Spiritus,” was during the week of Pentecost when the hymn was chanted at Vespers.<sup>27</sup> But during the tenth century it began to be chanted daily at Terce, usually around 9:00 am, a time which was considered the hour the apostles received the Holy Spirit.<sup>28</sup>

A side-by-side comparison of the hymn “Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid” and the literal translation of “Veni Creator Spiritus” can be found in appendix II. An overview here will highlight important points that each brings out in respect to the Spirit’s role as Creator. First, the hymn takes some liberties of better defining what the Spirit does in relation to creation when he comes. The Spirit aids in laying the foundation, whereas the original text better highlights the work of the Spirit, “the gift of God most high, living fountain, fire, love, and anointing for the

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<sup>25</sup> Stulken. *Hymnal Companion*, 351.

<sup>26</sup> E. E. Ryden, *The Story of Christian Hymnody* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana, 1959), 35–36.

<sup>27</sup> The typical Litany of Hours were as follows: Matins (during the night), Lauds (at dawn or 3:00 am), Prime (first hour, approximately 6:00 am), Terce (third hour, approximately 9:00 am), Sext (sixth hour, approximately 12 noon), None (ninth hour, approximately 3:00 pm), Vespers (evening prayer, “at the lighting of the lamps,” around 6:00 pm), and Compline (before retiring, around 9:00 pm).

<sup>28</sup> Both Vespers and Terce are known as an hour of the Liturgy of Hours, the Divine Office, or canonical hours, which are official times set during the day to recite prayers, prescribed by the Catholic Church, by clergy, religious institutes, and laity. Liturgy of Hours originally consisted of singing the psalms, reading Scripture and celebrating the Mass. Today you can find the Liturgy of the Hours contained in both the Lutheran and Anglican traditions.



soul.” Second, the hymn highlights the Trinitarian role of the Spirit “trice holy fount, thrice holy fire,” whereas the original text identifies the Spirit as “the finger of God’s right hand” and the “Father’s solemn promise,” who puts the words we speak upon our lips. Finally, the hymn ends by praising the Spirit, while the original work asks the Spirit to grant the creature knowledge of the Father and Son and allow to cling to him in faith.

The hymn “Creator Spirit by Whose Aid” has been placed under the heading of Pentecost in *LSB* and has typically been used for special services when invocation of the Holy Spirit was appropriate, such as at the ordination of a new pastor. Today the hymn can be found in *LSB* 500, *LW* 167, *Christian Worship* 188, and *LBW* 164.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Creator Spirit:** Although the authorship of this hymn is uncertain, what is not uncertain is that the author holds to a clear understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role as Creator and his participation in creation. The Spirit’s role as Creator is to provide life. Studying this hymn will clarify the truth that the life he provides is not only physical but also spiritual. Through baptism, the Holy Spirit delivers new life by creating in him a saving faith.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Both the original text’s author, Rhabanus Maurus, and the hymn’s translator, John Dryden, were poets. The hymn “Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid,” uses both poetic literature and metaphors throughout the text.

The author begins by reflecting on Gen. 1:2, “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving (hovering) over the face of the waters,” with the first five words of the hymn “Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid.” In Luther’s Genesis commentary he states that some theologians have argued that the Spirit of God

simply means “wind,”<sup>29</sup> but if that is true, it would mean that a created thing—in this case wind—existed before the creation of the world when it was void and without form.”<sup>30</sup> Luther continues, “Wind is a creature which at that time did not yet exist.”<sup>31</sup> So, Luther saw the Holy Spirit in his role as Creator, as the one who “broods” over and provides life for creation; he writes: “As a hen broods her eggs, keeping them warm in order to hatch her chicks, and, as it were, to bring them to life through heat, so Scripture says that the Holy Spirit brooded, as it were, on the waters to bring to life those substances which were to be quickened and adorned. For it is the office of the Holy Spirit to make alive.”<sup>32</sup>

Verse one then shifts from the Gen. 1:2 text to the text of 1 Cor. 6:19, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own,” this finds expression in the hymn’s words “From sin and sorrow set us free; may we your living temples be.” So, in addition to the Holy Spirit being the one, who provides life, the author, proclaims using the 1 Corinthians text that the Holy Spirit now dwells in the body of the Christian, not only the individual body but also the entire family of believers who have become a temple of the Holy Spirit—literally.

Verse two poses a few questions that make it a bit more difficult to analyze. The verse opens with the words “O source of uncreated light, the bearer of God’s gracious might.” Who is the source of uncreated light? To whom or what does uncreated light refer? If the uncreated light refers to Jesus, then the Holy Spirit can’t be its source and if the uncreated light refers to Jesus, then the source of that light must refer to the Father.

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<sup>29</sup> See footnote 378 for additional information regarding translation.

<sup>30</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapter 1–5*, vol. 1 of *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, Concordia, 1958), 9.

<sup>31</sup> Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, 9.

Maurus, the author, lived during the eighth and ninth century, a time when the church was struggling to properly define the roles of the persons of the Trinity, especially in light of the term God. Throughout the scriptures light is widely used to speak of God: “God is light and in him no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). If the word *source* refers to gaining knowledge of the uncreated light, then the verse might be speaking of the Holy Spirit. This uncertainty makes it difficult to know.

The verse then provides a Trinitarian focus on creation; “Trice holy fount, trice holy fire.” *Fount* and *fire* are words that evoke images of baptism especially as proclaimed by John in the words of Matt. 3:11: “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

Verse three imparts a list of explanatory verbs that describe the Spirit’s role in terms of sanctification, that is, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit leads the creature to faith in Christ. The verse begins by unfolding the gift of grace given by the Spirit, “Giver of grace, descend from high.” The balance of the line begs a question, “your sevenfold gifts to us supply.” Here the author is speaking of the seven-fold gifts as described in Isa. 11:1–2:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

But if this is the text the author is reflecting on, then these sevenfold gifts here are being outpoured on the coming Messiah, Jesus, not “the Christian.” In Christian Baptism, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the one being baptized, but that is a bit different than what is taking place in the Isaiah text. The Church recognizes spiritual gifts<sup>33</sup> given by the Holy Spirit to the

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<sup>33</sup> Scripture notes that spiritual gifts are given to each Christian as seen in 1 Cor. 12, beginning at verse 7: “To

believer. But, in the final line, the author asks the Spirit to “help us to practice all that we believe.” This verse summarizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christian, to create life, to impart truth, and to grant the Christian faith. Although verse three does not focus heavily on the Spirit’s role as Creator, it does provide good descriptors of how the Holy Spirit functions in the life of the church and the life of the Christian.

Verse four pulls the hymn together in true Trinitarian form by praising Father and Son and in the final line offering up all thanks and praise to the Paraclete<sup>34</sup> “To you, O Paraclete, we raise, unending songs of thanks and praise.” Perhaps it is easier to understand this hymn’s importance in the celebration of Pentecost, but in order to celebrate the Spirit’s role as Creator the hymn should be used throughout the church year.

**Christian Confession:** This hymn brought two theological insights regarding the Holy Spirit to the mind of the reader. First, the Holy Spirit is an active and ongoing participant in creation. He was there before the world was created “brooding” over the waters, preparing to bring forth all creatures to which he gives life. This is significant, as the church usually does not highlight this fact. The hymn highlights the Spirit’s role as the one who gives life. He is the Giver of Life. This fact is proclaimed each time the church recites the Nicene Creed: “The Lord and giver of life.” Second, this hymn describes the function of the Spirit in creation. This has profound implications for the way in which the Christian responds to creation. Maurus’ hymn calls on the Creator Spirit to visit, pour out, and set free, the Christian so that he might become a living temple for the Spirit. The next hymn, “Praise the Spirit in Creation,” also highlights the

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each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who appoints to each one individually as he wills.”

<sup>34</sup> Paraclete is another name for the Holy Spirit, which translates as comforter or counselor.

Spirit's role in creation but takes that role a bit further than the author did in "Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid."

## **Praise the Spirit in Creation**

### **Hymn Verses**

1 Praise the Spirit in creation,  
breath of God, life's origin:  
Spirit, moving on the waters,  
quickenings worlds to life within,  
source of breath to all things breathing,  
life in whom all lives begin.

2 Praise the Spirit, close companion  
of our inmost thoughts and ways;  
who, in showing us God's wonders,  
is for us the power to gaze;  
and God's will, to those who listen,  
by a still small voice conveys.

3 Praise the Spirit, who enlightened  
priest and prophets with the Word;  
holy truth behind the wisdoms  
which as yet know not our Lord;  
by whose love and power, in Jesus,  
God by us was seen and heard.

4 Tell of how the ascended Jesus  
armed a people for his own;  
how a hundred men and women  
turned the known world upside down,  
to its dark and furthest corners  
by the wind of heaven blown.

5 Pray we then, O Lord the Spirit,  
on our lives descend in might;  
let your flame break out within us;  
fire our hearts and clear our sight,  
till, white-hot in your possession,  
we too, set the world alight.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> "Praise the Spirit in Creation," *With One Voice: A Lutheran Resource for Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 682.

In a second hymnal, *The New English Hymnal* a very similar hymn was found. It is uncertain which hymn Hewlett may have written first. This hymn, “Sing to Him in Whom Creation,” was written in 1975 and published in 1985.

### **Sing to Him in Whom Creation**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Sing to him in whom creation  
Found its shape and origin;  
Spirit, moving on the waters,  
Troubled by the God within;  
Source of breath to all things breathing,  
Life in whom all lives begin.

2 Sing to God, the close companion  
Of our inmost thoughts and ways;  
Who, in showing us his wonders,  
Is himself the power to gaze;  
And his will, to those who listen,  
By a still small voice conveys.

3 Holy men, both priest and prophet,  
Caught his accents, spoke his word;  
His the truth behind the wisdoms  
Which as yet know not our Lord;  
He the love of God eternal,  
Which in Christ was seen and heard.

4 Tell of how the ascended Jesus  
Armed a people for his own;  
How a hundred men and women  
Turned the known world upside down,  
To its dark and furthest corners  
By the Wind of Whitsun blown.

5 Pray we then, O Lord the Spirit,  
On our lives descend in might;  
Let they flame break out within us,  
Fire our hearts and clear our sight,  
Till, white-hot in thy possession,  
We, too, set the world alight.

6 Praise, O praise the Holy Spirit,

Praise the Father, praise the Word,  
Source, and Truth, and Inspiration,  
Trinity in deep accord:  
Through your voice which speaks within us  
We thy creatures own thee Lord.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer of the Hymn:** Michael Hewlett wrote both hymns “Praise the Spirit in Creation” and “Sing to Him in Whom Creation.” Born in England in 1916, he died at 83, on February 23, 2000. Very little biographical information is available about Hewlett. Most of the information available was found in an obituary. It stated that for most of his career, Hewlett was a team vicar who served the diocese of Exeter. Hewlett a well-known English hymn-writer composed around thirty-nine hymns during his lifetime. Most of these today can be found in British hymnals and/or supplements published between 1970 and 1990.<sup>37</sup> Hewlett was also active member of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** The hymn “Sing to Him in Whom Creation” was written in 1975 and published in 1985. In an article entitled, “Thoughts About Words” published in the Hymn Society’s bulletin, Hewlett offers a reflection of the hymn’s text. Hewlett argues that the words of the hymn are what should matter most, but the singing public judges its hymns more often, not by its words, but by the tune to which it is sung. Hewlett lays out four vital points for a hymn to do what it is meant to do. First, a hymn must employ an image. Second, it must have “one” message even if that message is only to recreate a picture already established in the Bible. Third, the hymn must express strong genuine emotion, something that is actually felt by the author, and fourth it must evoke the Christian Faith, but not

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<sup>36</sup> The English Hymnal Company Ltd, “Praise the Spirit in Creation,” *The New English Hymnal* (Norwich: Canterbury, 1986), 142.

<sup>37</sup> The Hymn Society of Great Britain & Ireland, *Obituaries*, <http://www.canamus.org/Hsoc/obiter.htm#Hewl> (accessed October 6, 2013).

by evoking theological technical terms. Hewlett always preferred to work with a tune in mind in order to influence the character and possibly the theme in which he wrote.<sup>38</sup>

Although very little is known about Hewlett, his hymns, speak to the theology of the church, his passions, and the legacy he wished to leave the church. It was important to Hewlett to teach the church the different ways in which the Holy Spirit functions in the church and within the life of the Christian.

The hymn “Praise the Spirit in Creation,” was found in three of the hymnals, *Hymns of Glory*, *Songs of Praise* #588, *Let All the People Praise You* #246, and *With One Voice* #682, while “Sing to Him in Whom Creation,” was only found in *The New English Hymnal* #142.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theme of Creator Spirit:** Although very little is known about Hewlett, his hymns, speak to the theology of the church, his passions, and the legacy he wished to leave the church. It was important to Hewlett to teach the church the different ways in which the Holy Spirit functions in the church and within the life of the Christian.

His second verse provides the Christian a clear vision for seeing the wonders of God’s creation. This will continue to unfold as the hymn is analyzed.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Hewlett uses no specific literary device in his hymn. He views the Spirit’s role as Trinitarian. Verse one identifies the Spirit as the giver of life in creation, particularly as the “breath of God, life’s origin.” The breath of God is scriptural language and appears most often in Job. It speaks not only to the human creature receiving life, “the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4), but all creation comes to life by the breath of the Spirit, “By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters

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<sup>38</sup> Michael Hewlett, “Thoughts About Words,” *The Hymn* 20 (1969): 89–92.



are frozen fast” (Job 37:10). Verse one reflects the language of the first creation: “Spirit, moving on the waters, quickening worlds to life within.” As the Spirit hovers he gives breath and brings forth “swarms of living creatures” (Gen. 1:20). Often, the church confines the work of the Spirit to the role of sanctification as listed in the Third Article of the Creed. When in fact, as this hymn and Scripture has shown, the Holy Spirit is the vital element that connects breath and life together making a direct link to the First Article of the Creed and showing the Holy Spirit as Creator.

In Hewlett’s second verse the Spirit is called a “close companion of our inmost thoughts and ways.” This signifies that the Spirit is always that Christian’s constant guide. The verse continues with the words “who, in showing us God’s wonders, is for us the power to gaze.” It is difficult to discern whether the verse is suggesting that the Holy Spirit provides the Christian with the power to better see the beauty of God’s creation or the power to gaze upon God himself. John Calvin, in his *Institutes*, provides a helpful guide, “Creation is a beautiful, glorious, and excellent reflection of God, but in comparison to God himself, it is but a limited reflection.”<sup>39</sup>

In verses three and four, Hewlett turns his focus to the Spirit who enlightens. In verse three, the Spirit enlightens “priests and prophets with the Word.” This reaches back before Jesus’ time. It speaks to the priest and prophets who by the power of the Holy Spirit are given God’s truth to proclaim the coming Messiah.

In verse four, the author calls attention to those that were enlightened because of their witnesses to Christ’s ascension. Those who personally witnessed Christ’s ascension to the Father, only “a hundred men and women,” gave their witness throughout the entire world and millions came to hear of Jesus and call him Lord. Hewlett’s verse stresses how remarkable this

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<sup>39</sup> Diana Butler, “God’s Visible Glory: The Beauty of Nature in the Thought of John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards” *Westminster Theological Journal* 52 (1990): 17.

fact is, that through seemingly a small and perhaps pointless number of people the Spirit continues his work. The Spirit is present when life begins, he is present in the priests and prophets of old, he is present when Christ walks the earth, and he is present in the life of believers today as his Word continues to be spread across the world. Hewlett uses the phrase, “the wind of heaven blown,” to explain how the Spirit still works today spreading the news of Christ across the face of the earth.

In verse five, Hewlett connects the terms fire with the Holy Spirit. There are only two places in Scripture, Matt. 3:11, which is the same story in Luke 3:16, and Acts 2:2–4, which make this connection. Perhaps Hewlett considered these texts as he wrote this hymn. While both Matthew and Luke relate fire and the Holy Spirit through baptism, the account in Acts reflects on the first day of Pentecost. These biblical texts provide a better understanding of the hymn’s text which states, “Fire our hearts and clear our sight, till, white-hot in your possession, we too, see the world alright.”

The Matthew and Luke texts state,

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matt. 3:11). And John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Luke 3:16).

The Acts 2 text states,

And suddenly a sound came from heaven like a rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting upon each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:2–4).

To put this within a Lutheran framework, Dr. Jeffrey Gibbs’s commentary on Matthew provides direction. Gibbs begins by challenging the reader not to think of the words “baptize” and “Holy Spirit” in terms of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, but instead to turn one’s thoughts

to the Lord's activity on the Last Day.<sup>40</sup> On that day, Jesus will administer or "pour out," salvation and final judgment on the entire world. This salvation, Gibbs determines, is "the Holy Spirit," while judgment or "fire" will be dealt to the unbelievers at the Eschaton.<sup>41</sup> Gibbs goes on to explain that when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, this too was for the purpose of salvation, forgiveness of sin, and for reconciliation with God. This directs attention back to the text of Acts 2.

In Acts 2:2 text Scripture again refers to the wind: "a sound came from heaven like a rush of a mighty wind." This wind brought tongues of fire to rest upon the twelve apostles. Immediately they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit allowed. Hewlett's verse, "Let your flame break out within us," speaks not of the final day, but the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Hewlett's hymn prays that the Holy Spirit will "fire our hearts and clear our sight" today, in order that we might "set the world alight." Hewlett's verse uses that imagery to help the reader envision, how just one Christian filled with the power of the Holy Spirit can ignite the world about the truth of Jesus.

Hewlett's final verse as found in the second version of the hymn, "Sing to Him in Whom Creation," provides a doxological proclamation of the Three-in-One, "O praise the Holy Spirit, praise the Father, praise the Word." It does not follow the traditional pattern of "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." The words directly following this proclamation, "Source, and Truth, and Inspiration, Trinity in deep accord," disseminates new way to view each person of the Trinity. It is difficult to know if each of the words represents one person of the Trinity or if they should be understood as work the three do as Creator.

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<sup>40</sup> Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Concordia Commentary Matthew 1:1–11:1* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 172–74.

<sup>41</sup> Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 174.

**Christian Confession:** Hewlett's hymn bestows a full Trinitarian and Creedal proclamation of the Creator Spirit by portraying the roles of the Holy Spirit from the first creation, his function in creation today, and his role in spreading the Word that Jesus is Lord over all creation. The flow of the hymn is similar to Moltmann thinking of the Trinity, the Father is the creating origin, the Son shapes the origin, and the Holy Spirit is the life-giving origin.

Today very few hymns offer the Christian this kind of insight, but vital in order to understand creation from the perspective of Creator Spirit. "The whole creation is a fabric woven by the Spirit, and is therefore a reality to which the Spirit gives form,"<sup>42</sup> and "it is always the Spirit who first brings the activity of the Father and the Son to its goal."<sup>43</sup>

## Chapter Summary

This chapter's theme, Creator Spirit, is not trying to place the Holy Spirit within the First Article of the Creed and thereby removing it from the Third Article, as this would result in a separation of the Articles. Instead, the theme opens up a way for understanding the Spirit's role within a Trinitarian framework, and allowing that role to flow out of all three articles.

One way in which the role of the Holy Spirit had previously been highlighted took place during the early to mid-1960 up through 1970. The Christian church experienced what is known today as the Neo-Pentecostal Movement, more commonly known as the Charismatic Movement. This movement permeated not only the Pentecostal tradition, but also the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran traditions. What follows is a definition of Pentecostal theology.

Pentecostal theology is pneumatologically Christocentric, meaning that salvation is by faith in Christ, as believers confess through the enabling of the Spirit (Abba

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<sup>42</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 99.

<sup>43</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 9.

Father). The believer is re-created into a person of the Spirit who on the basis of love is able to act according to the fruit of the Spirit and to lead a life of holiness.<sup>44</sup>

Some of the main activities within the church included “speaking in tongues, miraculous healings, prophecy, and the claimed possession of a special ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit.’”<sup>45</sup>

The Charismatic movement focused solely on the role of the Holy Spirit while often neglecting the work of the Father and Son, thus separating the Trinitarian teaching of the church at large. But to understand the Creator Spirit, one must see his function within the larger Trinitarian view. Luther’s teaching on the nature of the Holy Spirit as recorded by Regin Prenter provides some insight:

According to Luther the Spirit is God himself. It is nonetheless important to him to distinguish clearly between the personal being of the Spirit and of the Father and of the Son. Only when the Spirit is distinguished clearly from the Father and the Son is it possible to preach Christ’s real redeeming presence as *fides Christi*. When the personal being of the Spirit is more or less dissolved in the being of the Father and the Son the relation to Christ becomes possible only as a relation to his historic figure, to the idea of him or to a power of Christ grasped in a mystic experience. That is, the historic Christ remains in the grave. A relation to the risen and living Christ is possible only through the Spirit in a realistic sense and not understood as a mere expression for warm feelings.<sup>46</sup>

Using Creator Spirit as a name to describe the Spirit within a Trinitarian framework expresses the Spirit’s work in different forms.

The hymns introduced in this chapter, “Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid” and “Praise the Spirit in Creation,” both provide a Trinitarian vision of the work of the Holy Spirit in creation. Creator Spirit is necessary in a theology of creation to round out complete Trinitarian understanding of God as Creator. In the first hymn, the Christian is reminded that the Spirit’s

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<sup>44</sup> Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 356.

<sup>45</sup> “The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology.” A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, January 1972, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 183–84.

role is to provide life—not only physical but spiritual life. The hymn identifies the Holy Spirit as an active participant in creation today and because he is active today, the work of the Spirit needs to be active in the life of Christian, which translates into caring for God’s creation.

The second hymn highlights not only a Trinitarian view of the Spirit’s work but also his role as the source of breath of life for every living thing. God is not far off. He is intimately engaged in his creation. It is incorrect to say that God “was” the Creator. God is always creating, always making new, and always renewing. It is the Spirit who is always the one at work continually creating and renewing the face of the earth.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE SACRAMENTS OF THE FIRST CREATION AND INTO THE NEW CREATION

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart (Ps. 104:10–15).

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13–14).

And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:22–25).

All things of the earth come from the hand of God. Water provides drink and nourishment, while the fruits of the earth provide an abundance of food for every living creature: the crane, the humpback whale, the pileated woodpecker, the ant, and the human creature. God alone provides the sun, the rain, the seed, and the crop. Then he uses these same simple beneficial physical gifts of his creation and *regifts* them as even greater gifts, as the gifts of grace and the forgiveness of sin. Seeds once planted in the earth and fed by the waters, now grow to produce the wheat of the field and wine of the valley, which become the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. God gathers the gifts of creation together with his people, in his church, to take the ordinary and make it extraordinary. In his church, God doesn't just alleviate physical hunger and thirst; he gives eternal life. God takes simple water and creates new life. He takes simple bread and wine and

offers forgiveness of sin and healing for the broken soul. The fruits of the earth become the fruits of new life in Christ.

The church has put in place certain rights and rituals that it has come to call *sacraments*. Both the Catholic and Lutheran traditions agree that sacraments of the church “are not simply marks of profession among people, . . . but rather they are signs and testimonies of God’s will toward us, through which God moves hearts to believe.”<sup>1</sup> Traditional Catholic theology recognizes seven sacraments.<sup>2</sup> Catholic tradition states, “Theology defines the sacraments as “efficacious signs,”—this being the sense of the scholastic saying (*significando causant*).”<sup>3</sup> In the Lutheran tradition, the church recognizes only three sacraments: Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Absolution (the sacrament of repentance).<sup>4</sup> Lutheran tradition has come to define sacraments “as rites, which have the command of God and to which a promise of grace has been added.”<sup>5</sup> The two more commonly known sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, not only contain God’s command (his word) and his promise of grace, but they also contain a physical element of creation. Both will be discussed at length in this chapter.

With the rise of the environmental movement over the past fifty years, the world has become acutely aware that planet earth is in danger of being plagued by a variety of ecological

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<sup>1</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession XIII.1 in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book Of Concord: The Lutheran Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 219.

<sup>2</sup> The Roman Catholic Church recognizes seven sacraments: Baptism, Penance/Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Extremunction or Anointing of the Sick. The purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the body of Christ, to nourish one’s faith, and to worship God

<sup>3</sup> Jean Danielou, S. J., *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 3.

<sup>4</sup> If we define the sacraments as rites, which have the command of God and to which the promise of grace has been added, it is easy to determine what the sacraments are, properly speaking. For humanity instituted rites are not sacraments, properly speaking, because human beings do not have the authority to promise grace. Therefore sines instituted without the command of God are not sure signs of grace, even though they perhaps serve to teach or admonish the common folk. Therefore, the sacraments are actually, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and absolution (the sacrament of repentance). For these rites have the command of God and the promise of grace, which is the essence of the New Testament. Apology of the Augsburg Confession XIII.3 in Kolb and Wengert, 219.

<sup>5</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession XIII.3 in Kolb and Wengert, 219.



issues. For the last few decades, Christian authors have become more outspoken in discussing these issues, making Christians more aware of the responsibility they carry in caring for God's creation. Some of the theologians that have engaged in this ecological discussion have done so by making a vital connection between a theology of creation and the sacraments of the church. They include Benjamin M. Stewart, H. Paul Santmire, Frank C. Senn, Kevin Irwin, James K. A. Smith, and others. These authors link faith and ecology together in a way that heightens the Christian's awareness of God's creation.

Each of these theologians has spent time developing new ways in which church liturgy connects with ecological wisdom. Most of them work within a twofold focus. First, they want to show the critical connection between what the church believes and the priority it places on its practice in worship. They do this by focusing on how those beliefs and practices are subsequently portrayed in the life of the Christian. This is referred to as *lex orandi*, *lex credendi*, and *lex vivendi*.<sup>6</sup> Second, they want to show that because the physical elements of the sacraments—the water, the wine, and the bread—all come from God's good creation, the sacraments present the Christian with an opportunity to celebrate a theology of creation in a unique, plausible, and physical way.

The elements of creation become the instruments by which God physically comes to his human creatures. In the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, God uses created elements to draw attention to what a theology of creation looks like and how it might be lived out in the church and celebrated in church hymnody. This chapter will first offer an overview of liturgical theology in order to understand the Latin terms *lex orandi*, *lex credendi*, and *lex vivendi* so that the reader might better grasp the role the sacraments play in the life of the Christian. This

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<sup>6</sup> "The rule of prayer is the rule of belief, which is the rule of one's life." The church reveals its traditions, beliefs, and priorities through Christian worship. These teachings then need to be lived out in the life of the Christian.

excursus will be followed with an explanation of how a theology of creation becomes visible in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Although there is no agreed-upon meaning for the term *liturgical theology*, Kevin Irwin<sup>7</sup> states that contemporary writers continue to work with the following two operative meanings:

First, liturgical theology is considered to be a reflection on the church's act of worship that draws out and explores in catechesis and systematic theology (particularly sacramental theology) the theological meaning of the liturgy: the actualization of the paschal mystery for the believing church through an act of proclaiming and hearing the Word and celebrating sacramental rituals. Second, liturgical theology is the use of liturgy as a source for systematic theology in the sense that terms and concepts operate theologically in liturgy; for example God, Christ, Spirit, redemption, salvation, and sanctification can be probed for their theological meaning as derived from their use in liturgy.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, liturgical theology is a study of the structures that make up the worship service and then determine the importance those structures have in forming God's people. What is the form of the service, and how does it function in the life of the Christian? For example, in almost any Lutheran worship service the central focus is the word and sacrament. Liturgical theology will study where and how these critical elements are placed within the worship service, asking questions such as, are they strengthened by the elements that surround them, hymns, prayers, etc. and, do these elements give theological meaning to the worship service? But, liturgical theology

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<sup>7</sup> Rev. Msgr. Kevin W. Irwin is a priest of the Archdiocese of New York and serves as the Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of American located in Washington, DC. He holds the Walter J. Schmitz, Chair of Liturgical Studies and serves as an Ordinary Professor in the area of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental Theology. He has authored fifteen books on the topic of liturgy and sacraments with his latest one just recently published called *Serving the Body of Christ: The Magisterium on Eucharist and Ordained Priesthood* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2013). He will write another book that is due out in early 2014. In addition to his academic work, Irwin regularly celebrates Mass and preaches at the Basilica of the National Shrine in DC.

<sup>8</sup> Kevin Irwin, "The Sacramentality of Creation and the Role of Creation in Liturgy and Sacraments," *Preserving the Creation: Environmental Theology and Ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 67–111.

cannot stop there. It must have an impact on the Christian's life. Christ's life, death, and resurrection must be made a real event in the life of the Christian in Christian worship.<sup>9</sup>

Liturgical theology is a ritual act. When the texts of a liturgy are accompanied by symbolic actions and gestures, both spiritual and theological meanings are unveiled. "All Christian worship—whether Anglican or Anabaptist, Pentecostal or Presbyterian—is liturgical in the sense that it is governed by norms, draws on tradition, includes bodily rituals or routines, and involves formative practices."<sup>10</sup>

James Smith<sup>11</sup> differentiates between a thin habit, such as brushing one's teeth, and a thick habit, one that shapes core values such as church attendance, daily prayer, and the like. Thick habits are meaningful and identity-significant.<sup>12</sup> Smith defines them as "identity forming, *telos*-laden,"<sup>13</sup> things that grab hold of one's core desires; in fact, Smith suggests that these thick rituals "constitute and function as *liturgies*."<sup>14</sup> His main thrust is to show that "liturgies are ritual practices that function as pedagogies of ultimate desire."<sup>15</sup> Secular liturgies, such as continual self-indulgence, constitute a malformation of one's desires, a turning away from Creator to self, whereas Christian worship functions to counter this malformation by being an intentionally formative, liturgical, and pedagogical turning of one's desires away from self towards the

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<sup>9</sup> For a more in-depth study of liturgical theology see: Arthur A. Just Jr., *Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2008), David Fagerberg, *What is Liturgical Theology? A Study in Methodology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), and Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*. Third Edition (Crestwood, NT: St. Vladimirs Seminary, 1966).

<sup>10</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, vol. 1 of *Cultural Liturgies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 152.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. James K. A. Smith is currently a Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College and the editor of *Comment* magazine. Born in 1970, he is a Canadian-American philosopher. He received his PhD from Villanova University. Today he is in the process of writing the third volume of his series on Cultural Liturgies. His second volume, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* was published in 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 82–83.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 85.

<sup>14</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 85.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 87.

Creator and his creation. When Christian worship uses the things of creation in liturgy, it begins to show a reverence for creation and to reflect back on the Creator.<sup>16</sup>

As sacraments, the Lord's Supper and Baptism play a vital role in Christian worship. Both are intentionally formative and pedagogical. Since church traditions define these terms differently, this dissertation for clarification purposes, will define them according to the Lutheran tradition. Baptism is a washing of water, "not simply water, but water placed in the setting of God's Word and commandment and made holy by them."<sup>17</sup> The Lord's Supper "is the true body and blood of the Lord Christ, in and under the bread and wine, which we Christians are commanded by Christ's words to eat and drink."<sup>18</sup> Just as the water of baptism is not mere water, so too here the Lord's Supper is not just mere bread and wine; "rather it is bread and wine set within God's Word and bound to it."<sup>19</sup>

Baptism as a rite illustrates new birth, a dying and rising with Christ to become a new creation. Baptism *does* something. The Lord's Supper also *does* something. It takes the "stuff of creation"—the bread and wine, the mundane staples of daily life—and hallows both them and the recipients of these gifts with God's promise of grace. In both of these sacraments, God offers a creational affirmation of the stuff of the earth.

When God's creation is seen as good instead of evil, human creatures begin to overcome some of the dualistic and Platonic confusion of spiritual versus material, where spiritual is thought to be "good" while material is considered to be "bad." Quite opposite to an anti-material worldview, God uses the material things of creation to bring his promise of grace and his

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<sup>16</sup> Irwin, "The Sacramentality of Creation," 73.

<sup>17</sup> Large Catechism IV.14 in Kolb and Wengert, 458.

<sup>18</sup> Large Catechism V.8 in Kolb and Wengert, 467.

<sup>19</sup> Large Catechism V.9 in Kolb and Wengert, 467.

blessing; He declares water, wheat, and grapes to be good just as he did in Gen. 1:31, “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” These good material things of creation are an integral part of the liturgy of the church. As churchgoers interact with these physical elements, their ideas about the things of creation begin to make a change in a more positive direction. This indoctrination is good and right. Understanding this in terms of *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* helps shape one’s thinking about the role the sacraments play in the life of the Christian.

*Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* means that worship reflects what the Church believes, and what the Church believes shapes how the Christian will live. The Christian should expect the church to teach its members, and this teaching should have a profound impact on how one lives in the world. When this indoctrination includes a theology of creation focused on the Christian’s responsibility in caring for God’s creation, the elements of creation such as water, wheat, and wine begin to take on new meaning.

Consider the elements of bread and wine. These elements rely on an agrarian cycle, a cycle that consists of a continuous dying and rising. When a seed is planted, it *dies* in the earth in order to *rise* as a grape vine or a stalk of wheat. At the harvest, the plant *dies* once again such as when grapes are crushed to produce wine or when the heads of wheat are cut with a sickle to remove the stalk. These raw materials are then combined with other elements of creation to *rise* again as something new, such as bread and wine.<sup>20</sup> This sacrament, along with baptism, pulls believers into the very cycle of dying and rising as it “brings God’s children into death as sinners and into new life through Christ’s resurrection.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Irwin, “The Sacramentality of Creation,” 85.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Kolb, *The Christian Faith* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993), 229.

## **Baptism: Water**

In baptism, God joins his powerful word together with simple water and brings the sinner from death into new life. The old *Adam* is crucified with Christ and resurrected with him as the new Adam through the living waters of baptism. As the Apostle Paul put it, “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). “And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). God’s word is clear: baptism kills and creates new life.

Unfortunately, not all church traditions understand baptism in the same way. What follows is a Lutheran understanding of baptism in accordance with God’s word. Luther<sup>22</sup> defines baptism as “not simply plain water, but water placed in the setting of God’s word and commandment and made holy by them.”<sup>23</sup> Baptism is not “simply a natural water, but a divine, heavenly, holy, and blessed water—praise it in any other terms you can—all by virtue of the Work, which is a heavenly, holy Word that no one can sufficiently extol, for it contains and conveys all that is God’s.”<sup>24</sup> Luther is not trying to disparage the water but explains that the water in baptism becomes even more; it opens the door to eternal life. “Baptism is a very different thing from all other water, not by virtue of the natural substance but because here something nobler is added, for God himself stakes his honor, his power, and his might on it.”<sup>25</sup> The waters of baptism carry God’s word and his promise. Like the Apostle Paul, Luther recognized that baptism kills and

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<sup>22</sup> Theologians of today that have written on Luther’s understanding of baptism include, Robert Kolb, Oswald Beyer, and others.

<sup>23</sup> Large Catechism, IV. 14 in Kolb and Wengert, 458.

<sup>24</sup> Large Catechism, IV. 17 in Kolb and Wengert, 458.

<sup>25</sup> Large Catechism, IV. 17 in Kolb and Wengert, 458.

makes alive: “the sinner needs to die, in order to be wholly renewed and made into another creature.”<sup>26</sup> The Christian’s life becomes a cycle of dying and rising each day. God’s child wrestles daily with the *old* Adam and is renewed in the promises of the *new* Adam.

Water has become such a mundane part of everyday life that most forget its life-giving power. Consider the wilderness, a parched land lacking water. Survival in such a place is difficult at best. Plants that do survive usually tend to be tough and wiry with few or no leaves. While it seldom rains in deserts, occasional downpours usually result in flash floods. These floods nourish and bring life to the parched land. Just as the waters of the desert produce life, so too do the waters of baptism.

Benjamin Stewart<sup>27</sup> makes a connection between a theology of baptism, eco-theology,<sup>28</sup> and ecological ethics. He suggests practical ways to engage the believer in the rite of baptism. He recounts Luther’s language that calls baptism “a flood of grace,”<sup>29</sup> submerging the world in God’s mercy. In similar fashion, beholding a water-nourished landscape provides the Christian with a glorious vision of God’s overflowing blessings upon his creation. Stewart suggests that when creating a space for baptism, thought should be given to its eco-theological dimension. The baptismal water-place should be considered in terms of four characteristics: that it be “a place of life, that it be an oasis; [a place that has] water that is living, that flows; that it be a place that holds depths of water; and that it be a place that welcomes what one might call the untamed or

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works AE* 36:68, *WA* 6:534.

<sup>27</sup> Rev. Dr. Benjamin M. Stewart presently holds a faculty position at the Lutheran School of Theology located in Chicago where he has taught since 2009. He is the Gordon A. Braatz Assistant Professor of Worship and Dean of the Augustana Chapel. Stewart has written numerous journal articles, which include: *Worship, Liturgy, and The Christian Century*. He is also the author of *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth’s Ecology* (2011). As a member of the North American Academy of Liturgy he serves as convener of its Liturgy and Ecology Seminar.

<sup>28</sup> Eco-theology is a constructive theology that focuses on the interrelationships of religion and nature, or theology and creation, in light of the environmental concerns today.

<sup>29</sup> Benjamin M. Stewart, *A Watered Garden: Christian Worship and Earth’s Ecology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2011), 34.

even wild character of water.”<sup>30</sup> Each of these characteristics, Stewart believes, when enhanced deepens the Christian’s senses thereby engaging in more thoughts of creation and the new creation.

Using these characteristics, Stewart offers several suggestions for transforming and enhancing the church’s baptismal space. He hopes the space might become a more eco-friendly one in order that the congregation sees it as a place that offers life. In order to do this, he suggests adding plants and potted flowers around base or changing that the elements of creation during the church seasons, such as rocks and dry branches during Lent, lilies at Easter, and holly during the Christmas season.

As an oasis Stewart suggests that that the baptismal font provide flowing water to remind the congregation of God’s pouring out of the waters over the landscapes of earth. Through these living waters—rain and streams, rivers and waterfalls—the earth is nourished, and life is given to the parched and desolate places. So too, baptismal waters flow over the baptized and nourish them.

As a place that holds the water, Stewart suggests that the ideal baptismal font will great depths of water hold water similar to a lake or pond. He explains, pooled waters preserve ecological riches, house great sea creatures, and feed the land creatures as they travel their migration trail. Here, Stewarts suggests churches consider more of a walk-in type font where full submergence takes place.

Finally, the baptismal space might contain what Stewart calls “the untamed of even wild character of water.”<sup>31</sup> Stewart points out that “baptism into Christ is a radical thing;” it changes and profoundly rearranges one’s life. The poured-out water disrupts, disturbs, and disenchant

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<sup>30</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 27.

<sup>31</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 27.



the evil in human lives. A child or adult brought to the baptismal font eradicates evil, Satan, and sin. Having been *drowned*, God's child is raised up just as Christ was raised into a new life in him. By way of these eco-friendly characteristics of the baptismal font, Stewart challenges the church to consider how they might welcome the living waters of God's good creation into the church's worship space, in order to engage the senses with living, forgiving, promise-filled water.

Of the seven Lutheran and four Anglican hymnals investigated in this dissertation, only one hymn was found that connected the blessings and benefits of the living waters of baptism to the gift of water in God's creation. Although many hymns speak to the blessings of baptism they do not make the connection to God's waters of creation. Here is a sample from the *Lutheran Service Book* regarding baptism. The topic of baptism is broken into two categories: "Holy Baptism," and "Baptismal Life." Under the heading of "Holy Baptism," the hymns recount how the one being baptized becomes God's child by the power of the Triune God. A few hymns mention being buried with Christ and dying to sin,<sup>32</sup> thereby becoming heirs of heaven.<sup>33</sup> Others reference how the miracle of baptism provides a life reborn in the creature.<sup>34</sup> The majority of the hymns focus on being baptized into Christ<sup>35</sup> and being washed by Christ's cleansing sacrifice on Calvary. While few, if any of them, touch on the power the physical water has once combined with the word to create *new life*. Only one comes close to this idea; it is found in verse four of the hymn "See This Wonder in the Making."<sup>36</sup> It states, "Here we bring a child of nature; home we take a newborn creature, now God's precious son or daughter, born again by Word and water."

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<sup>32</sup> Commission on Worship, "Baptized into Your Name Most Holy," verse 1, *Lutheran Service Book*, 590.

<sup>33</sup> Commission on Worship, "Dearest Jesus, We Are Here," verse 1, *Lutheran Service Book*, 592.

<sup>34</sup> Commission on Worship, "This is the Spirit's Entry Now," verse 2, *Lutheran Service Book*, 591.

<sup>35</sup> Commission on Worship, "God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It" verses 1–4, *Lutheran Service Book*, 594.

<sup>36</sup> Commission on Worship, "See This Wonder in the Making" verses 1–4, *Lutheran Service Book*, 593.

Under the heading of “Baptismal Life,” one might expect to find hymns that explain what the Christian life looks like after one has been baptized. In some ways, these hymns accomplish this goal by directing one’s attention to being joined to Christ. While the hymns in this section highlight how the Christian, after baptism, sees creation and life through eyes of faith, most of the hymns focus only on the burial of sin,<sup>37</sup> the story of Jesus’ baptism,<sup>38</sup> or Christ’s redemptive sacrifice.<sup>39</sup> These are all central truths of the Christian faith, but the hymns could say so much more. Armed with a theology of creation, the Christian begins to see water in a new light. The hymns chosen to represent this provide an image of the power of water when God’s word is in connection with it. When one hears or sees the water flow down a riverbank or from a mountaintop, this should invoke images of one’s own baptism and images of new life.

Table 5: Hymns on Baptism

<b>Hymns on Baptism</b>	
<b>Hymn Title</b>	<b>Hymnals that Include Hymn</b>
Crashing Waters at Creation	<i>Worship #455</i>

### **Crashing Waters at Creation**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Crashing waters at creation,  
 ordered by the Spirit’s breath,  
 first to witness day’s beginning  
 from the brightness of night’s death.

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<sup>37</sup> Commission on Worship, “Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying” verse 2, *Lutheran Service Book*, 597.

<sup>38</sup> Commission on Worship, “Mark How the Lamb of God’s Self-Offering” verse 1, *Lutheran Service Book*, 600.

<sup>39</sup> Commission on Worship, “All Who Believe and Are Baptized” verse 1, *Lutheran Service Book*, 601.

2 Parting water stood and trembled  
as the captives passed on through,  
washing off the chains of bondage—  
channel to a life made new.

3 Cleansing water once at Jordan  
closed around the one fore-told,  
opened to reveal the glory  
ever new and ever old.

4 Living water, never ending,  
quench the thirst and flood the soul.  
Wellspring, source of life eternal,  
drench our dryness, make us whole.<sup>40</sup>

### The Hymn's Historical Notes

**Composer's Biography:** Sylvia Dunstan was raised by her grandparents and was deeply influenced by the Methodists and Salvation-Army traditions. She was born in 1955 and died in 1993. When Dunstan first began writing songs in the early seventies, she wrote music with no real Christian substance. In the mid-seventies she met Sister Miriam Theresa Winter who encouraged her to write music based on Scripture. Eventually, Sylvia realized that her gift in writing lyrics. In 1980 she was ordained as a minister in the United Church of Canada where she served as a prison chaplain and as editor of *Gathering*, a Canadian worship resource journal.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** Dunstan's writing of "Crashing Waters," was meant to accompany the prayer the Church of England uses for blessing the waters of baptism entitled "Prayer of Thanksgiving and Pouring of Water."<sup>41</sup> The hymn provides

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<sup>40</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Crashing Waters at Creation," *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 455.

<sup>41</sup> What follows is the prayer as found in the Common Book of Prayer used by the Church of England for the rite of Baptism.

We thank you, almighty God, for the gift of water to sustain, refresh and cleanse all life. Over water the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through water you led the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. In water your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us from the death of sin to newness of life.

numerous visual elements of water: crashing water, parting water, cleansing water, and living water. Each provides not only a visual of what the water does, but also a purpose for that water. One might suggest that water in each verse gives witness to God. In verse one the waters witness light, thereby acknowledging God as Creator. Verse two gives witness to redemption, verse three witnesses to God's revelation of his Son, and verse four gives witness to God's continual care for his creatures by providing living water. Today the hymn can only be found in *Worship* #455.

### **The Hymn's Theological Content**

**Theology of Sacraments:** The theology of creation in this hymn expresses the power of water when God is at work in it. The hymn follows the biblical events from Genesis through Revelation in which water serves a crucial purpose. In Genesis, God speaks, and the waters separate the heavens from the earth. They give witness to the dawn of the first day of creation. The hymn retells the story of Moses at God's command taking the people out of Egypt to freedom through the waters of the Red Sea in order to become God's people. Dunstan recounts the waters of the Jordan. The waters part to reveal Jesus' true identity as God's beloved Son, the one about whom the prophets of old had prophesied. Finally, Dunstan turns the reader's focus to the living water and the life-giving power of God in retelling the story of the Samaritan woman.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Dunstan's hymn is filled with poetic imagery. She uses literary devices to help the reader visualize the "stuff" of creation as she tells the biblical narrative of God's power. Dunstan uses verbs and presents them as present participles, as a way to refer to

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We thank you, Father, for the water of baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in joyful obedience to your Son, we baptize into his fellowship those who come to him in faith.

Now sanctify this water that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, they may be cleansed from sin and born again. Renewed in your image, may they walk by the light of faith and continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and forever. Amen.

things still happening, to describe what the water is doing. The water is crashing, parting, cleansing, and living.

The “crashing waters at creation . . . first to witness day’s beginning from the brightness of night’s death.” Dunstan is reflecting on the power of the water in the first creation. She speaks of the water being a witness to the dawn’s first day. In the last few words of the verse, “the brightness of night’s death” it is unclear exactly what the author means. She could just be using poetic language to refer to the dawn itself breaking forth, or she could be reflecting on how baptism breaks the bondage of death. When a child of God is baptized, sin and the power of Satan are washed clean and the child becomes white as snow (Isa. 1:18). Dunstan’s verse tells of the waters that crash and move as they form the world around them giving life to the earth. This is the quintessence of baptism and its life-giving power.

In verse two, Dunstan shifts to the story of Moses and the Israelites at the Red Sea. The verse begins, “Parting water stood and trembled.” Dunstan uses two verbs to describe the parting water: “stood” and “trembled.” *Trembled* is not a verb usually associated with water. Might the trembling imply that the waters held God’s wrath that would soon wash over the Egyptians? Or is the author simply showing God’s ultimate control over his creation? More importantly, just as God led the Israelites across the Red Sea to save them from bondage, he now washes his children in the waters of baptism to save and free them from bondage. In the story of the Red Sea, the life-giving water transforms the chained, enslaved Israelites into a people free and made new. In baptism, the human creature bound to sin comes to the life-giving waters of baptism. Although chained and enslaved by sin, death, and the devil, they are washed in the life giving waters of baptism. The last line of verse two, “channel to a life made new,” suggests that just as the Israelites walked through the channel created by the parted waters, so to the pastor with his hand

parts the waters, creating a similar channel into which a child now moves from death into new life.

The parting water of verse two becomes cleansing water in verse three. Dunstan recalls for the reader the waters of the Jordan, another significant baptismal place. It is at the Jordan River where Jesus' true identity is revealed as God's beloved Son. God has again come to rescue his people, this time through his Son. In this verse, Dunstan states that the water "closed around the one fore-told." Here the Old and New Testament unite in Jesus' revelation, which ties in nicely with Dunstan's phrase "ever new and ever old." The prophesied Messiah, now visible in the waters of the Jordan, parts the cleansing waters. But Jesus' baptism is different. Not only do the waters of the Jordan part, but the waters of heaven part. "And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove: and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased'" (Mark 1:10–11).

In Dunstan's final verse she turns to the living and life-giving water of God. In John 4, Jesus offers the Samaritan woman the water, but not just water, the water he gives "will become in [the recipient] a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). This water "quenches the thirst and floods the soul." What does this mean? In Ps. 42:1–2 this kind of water is described: "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." The human soul thirsts for God! The human is not whole without a relationship with God. God's living waters of baptism restore the relationship with God.

In verse four, Dunstan creates an artificial movement using verbs. In the first three verses she uses the verbs adverbially. In verse four, she uses them in the present tense verbs to describe

the action the water takes. All the waters of verses one, two, and three through the action of a verb become *living* water. For example, in verse one she speaks of the crashing water, now in verse four that crashing water now quenches. In verse two the water parts and trembles, now in verse four the water floods. In verse three the water cleanses, now in verse four it drenches the dryness. This living water now makes the Christian whole.

**Christian Confession:** Dunstan's hymn highlights the power of water visually, and in doing so, shows theologically how the water gives life, not simply life but eternal life, as is given in baptism. Dunstan speaks of how the first waters of creation escorted in the first day of creation, how the waters of the Red Sea washed off the chains of bondage, how the waters of the Jordan parted and opened the waters of heaven revealing God's glory, and finally how those same waters now quench the human soul. This connects for the reader the power God's word has on the water.

Water combined with God's word always has an effect; it changes the human creature.

Luther captures the power of baptism in his final paragraph of the Large Catechism:

Therefore let all Christians regard their baptism as the daily garment that they wear all the time. Every day they should be found in faith and with its fruits, suppressing the old creature and growing up in the new . . . . As we have once obtained forgiveness of sins in baptism, so forgiveness remains day by day as long as we live, that is, as long as we carry the old creature around our necks.<sup>42</sup>

### **Lord's Supper: Bread and Wine**

Just as elements of creation play a role in baptism, so too do elements of creation, bread and wine, play a role in the Lord's Supper. As highlighted earlier, the seed of the fruit dies when planted in the earth to produce the grape vine or the wheat stalk; once fully grown, the vine and stalk are killed once again, thrashed in order to make them into something new. Thus, wine and

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<sup>42</sup> Large Catechism IV.84 in Kolb and Wengert, 466.

bread are both gifts of God's good creation that will be used by God to once again bless his creatures as the text of Mark 14:22–25 states,

And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

Because God's promise is combined with his word, simple materials of the earth, bread and wine, are draped in and under Jesus' precious body and blood to bring salvation, forgiveness, and the promise of grace to his people.

In the early Church, Irenaeus, probably the most prominent figure in fighting the Gnostics, taught that to denigrate the material things of the earth was wrong because God himself created them. Irenaeus saw that his mission was to affirm the goodness of creation. The Gnostics taught that physical things, such as the earth itself and its elements were evil, while the spiritual things, such as angels and the heavens, were good. Here was the crux of Irenaeus' struggle: in saying that material things of this life were evil the Gnostics also condemned the incarnation, the resurrection of Christ, and God's entire creation thereby negating God's words, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31a). This Gnostic way of thinking became a point of contention for Irenaeus especially in regards to the Lord's Supper. How could the things of creation be evil when God calls them good and uses them for good as a way to come to his people? Irenaeus taught that the Lord's Supper stood as the strongest witness to the church's faith in regards to the creation. Joel Kurtz<sup>43</sup> summarizes Irenaeus' thoughts in this way: "The Eucharist is informed by the truth that Christ and creation are bound together."<sup>44</sup> "For

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<sup>43</sup> Joel R. Kurtz, "The Gifts of Creation and the Consummation of Humanity: Irenaeus of Lyons' Recapitulatory Theology of the Eucharist," *Worship* 83 (2009): 113.

<sup>44</sup> Kurtz, "The Gifts of Creation, 114.



as the bread, which is produced from the earth receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of resurrection to eternity.”<sup>45</sup>

The simple elements of God’s creation are elevated and cherished by God in order to bring about forgiveness and healing to the brokenness of creation. Augustine explains the Lord’s Supper as: “When the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament.”<sup>46</sup> Luther takes Augustine’s definition one step further stating that it is “food for the soul, for it nourishes and strengthens the new creature.”<sup>47</sup> Luther continually affirmed the gifts of creation, the bread and wine, against those who either did not recognize them as good or as those that diminished their meaning.

During Luther’s lifetime, the Roman Catholic Church sought to explain the miracle of the Lord’s Supper by means of the term *transubstantiation*. This is the Latin term *transubstantiatio*, meaning “essential change.” According to Roman Catholic theology, during the consecration of the bread and wine in the Mass, the substance of the bread truly becomes the body of Christ, and the substance of the wine truly becomes the blood of Christ. The *accidens* (the incidental properties) of the bread and wine become only mere forms of what they were, and lose their original substance by way of this mystical transformation. This teaching diminishes the importance God places on the elements of his creation because Catholicism teaches that the elements no longer exist.

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<sup>45</sup> Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson eds., “Against Heresies” *The Apostolic Fathers–Justin Martyr–Irenaeus*, vol.1 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 4.18.5.

<sup>46</sup> Large Catechism V.10 in Kolb and Wengert, 468.

<sup>47</sup> Large Catechism V.23 in Kolb and Wengert, 469.

The other teaching, held by most in the Reformed tradition, recognize only the elements and disregard Christ's body and blood. Huldrych Zwingli argued that Christ's words, *this is my body*, should be read, *this signifies my body*. Zwingli's reasoning was that if Christ is seated at the right hand of God, there is no possible way for him to be in the bread because he would have to be in two places at the same time. When understood this way, the Lord's Supper becomes only a symbolic memorial, and the elements of creation become only representations of "the far-distant body and blood of Christ."<sup>48</sup>

Here the Lutheran tradition is helpful. Lutherans understand the elements of creation, the bread and wine, and Christ's body and blood as both being present in the Lord's Supper. Together they coexist with Christ's body and blood being in, with, and under the bread and wine. In this way, both the elements of creation and Christ's words, "Take; this is my body. . . . This is my blood of the covenant" (Mark 14:22b and 24a), are held in high regard.

Benjamin Stewart provides insight to affirming the gifts of creation as he tells of "a brief encounter with field and vineyard."<sup>49</sup> Stewart experiences firsthand the biblical and liturgical images of creation that have enriched and changed his Eucharistic participation. As Stewart recounts his field trip he learns how a small, remote village crafts the fruits and grains of the earth in order to make something new. Because he was physically present in the wheat fields and vineyards of this village, Stewart experienced how the wheat and grapes were tended, harvested, and gathered in preparation for making the elements of the Lord's Supper. The encounter changed Stewart's understanding of the Eucharist. As a result, he developed a very real thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth.

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<sup>48</sup> Epitome VII.28 in Kolb and Wengert, 507.

<sup>49</sup> Stewart, *A Watered Garden*, 60–61.

The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are not just commodities; they are the essence and physical elements of creation farmed and harvested. Bread, a staple food across the world and probably one of the world's oldest foods, is a necessity for life. Wine too has served as a staple in the lives of people for thousands of years and was consumed possibly as early as 6 BC. Bread and wine, the gifts of creation are used and *regifted* to unite God's children: "The gifts of creation—soil and water, grain and fruit, and all that engenders and sustains life—have been consecrated by the Creator and declared "good."<sup>50</sup>

Santmire<sup>51</sup> devotes an entire chapter to the Eucharist. In the midst of the chapter, he states, "The faithful participants in this Eucharistic feast in some small measure experience the great cosmic banquet that is yet to come, when God will indeed be all in all."<sup>52</sup> This cosmic banquet feast, a foretaste of the feast to come, is the language most Lutheran liturgies use when celebrating the Lord's Supper. But how can a celebration that partakes of the physical gifts of creation be a foretaste of the feast to come? "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined" (Isa. 25:6). The Lord's Supper is a banquet feast shared with Christ and all believers. The meal connects the past with the present. It strengthens and encourages the partaker to look forward to the feast that never ends.

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<sup>50</sup> Kurz, "The Gifts of Creation," 132.

<sup>51</sup> Rev. Dr. H. Paul Santmire is both a pastor and historian who for the past 30 years has written in the discipline of ecological theology and environmental ethics. In 1970, he wrote one of the first books of its kind called, *Brother Earth: Nature, God, and Ecology in a Time of Crisis*. Since that time he has written additional books *The Travail of Nature: the Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (1985), which provides a historical overview of Christian theologies of nature. Santmire's book *Nature Reborn: The Ecological and Comic Promise of Christian Theology* (2000), constructs a "revisionist" vision of ecological theology, which ranges from creation and cosmology, Christology and mission, spirituality and liturgy, and provides an ecological ethos and environmental ethic, which draws on the thinking of Augustine, St. Francis, Luther, Martin Buber, and John Muir. Although retired he continues to serve as pastor and guest lecturer.

<sup>52</sup> H. Paul Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature: Renewing Christian Liturgy in a Time of Crisis* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 168.

Another way to describe this feast is to see it in terms of a new creation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer<sup>53</sup> speaks of Christ as the sacrament who makes the bread and wine of the Lord's

Supper into a new creation:

As sacrament he [Jesus] is the restored creation of our spirit-bodily existence; he is the new creature, and in such a way that he is the human humiliated in bread and wine. Because he is the new creature in the bread and wine, therefore bread and wine are the new creation . . . Christ is present in the sacrament simultaneously as creator of all nature and as creature. As Creator, he is present as *our* Creator, who, through this new creation, makes us ourselves into new creatures.<sup>54</sup>

Jesus' body broken and sacrificed now gives eternal life to the creature. He provides his body and his blood to be for his people a foretaste of the feast to come in the new creation.

God reveals himself to his people through the both word and sacrament. Santmire states, "This is the milieu, and the only milieu, where Christ is known personally and salvifically (*pro me* [italics original]<sup>55</sup>)."<sup>56</sup> When one experiences Christ intimately, by partaking of the bread and wine, Christ becomes known *not only* as the giver of life, salvation, and the one who forgives sin for us but also as the Lord of all things. "In the Eucharistic experience, the incarnate Lord reveals himself to us as the *pantokrator*—or in Teilhardian language, as the omega point—of the whole

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<sup>53</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, born in 1906 and died in 1945, was a German theologian, martyr, pastor, poet and writer. Bonhoeffer took a stand against Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party, which ultimately cost him his life in a Nazi concentration camp.

<sup>54</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932–1933*, vol. 12 of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 322:305.

<sup>55</sup> According to Luther, the *pro-me* should not be forgotten. Dietrich Bonhoeffer stated it this way: "The *pro-me* structure means three things for the relation of Christ to the new humanity: (1) Jesus Christ, as the one who is *pro-me*, is the beginning, the head, the firstborn within a large family (Rom. 8:29 and Col. 1:18). So the *pro-me* structure refers first of all to the historical Jesus. (2) He is there for his brother and sisters in that he stands in their stead. Christ stands for his new humanity before God, that is, he takes their place and stands in their stead before God. If this is so, then he *is* the new humanity . . . by virtue of his *pro-me* structure . . . (3) Because Christ acts as the new humanity, he is in it, because it is in him, because in him God both judges the new humanity and pardons it. The God-human Jesus Christ is the one who, in his *pro-me* structure, is present in his person to the church as word, sacrament, and church community." Bonhoeffer, *Berlin 1932–1933*, 314:296.

<sup>56</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 169.

creation.”<sup>57</sup> Santmire’s goal is to show that the recipient of the bread and wine is able to contemplate the works of the invisible risen-and-ascended Lord throughout the whole universe. Santmire quotes Luther from his Commentary on the Gospel of John: “Now if I believe in God’s Son and bear in mind that he became man, all creatures will appear a hundred times more beautiful to me than before. Then I will properly appreciate the sun, the moon, the stars, trees, apples, and pears, as I reflect that he is Lord over all and the center of all things.”<sup>58</sup>

Placing importance on the creaturely elements is essential if the church intends to help the Christian understand the role he plays in caring for God’s creation. The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, if for only a moment in time, joins the things of God with the things of creation. Therefore, the material things of creation, simple bread and wine, now constitute the gift of life in Christ. Those that receive the bread and wine together with the body and blood are nourished both physically and spiritually. In *Against the Heresies*,<sup>59</sup> Irenaeus draws on 1 Cor. 15:36 and John 12:24:

Just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also our bodies being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at the appointed time, the Word of God granting then resurrection to the glory of God.<sup>60</sup>

The elements of creation used for the Lord’s Supper today not only nourish the Christian’s life now, but guarantee a future life in Christ when all creation is renewed and raised up on the Last Day.

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<sup>57</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 169.

<sup>58</sup> Santmire, *Ritualizing Nature*, 170.

<sup>59</sup> For an in-depth overview of Irenaeus’ work on the Eucharist see the article by Joel R. Kurz “The Gifts of Creation and the Consummation of Humanity: Irenaeus of Lyons’ Recapitulatory Theology of the Eucharist,” *Worship* 83 (2009).

<sup>60</sup> Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, 5.2.3.

Water, bread, and wine are gifts of God’s creation, but Christ in a mysterious way *regifts* them as sacraments of his Church. Thus a vital connection between the liturgy and the God’s creation are held together by Christ’s words of promise and grace.

Just as with the section on baptism, very few hymns—in this case two—were found that hold together God’s gifts of creation with the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

Table 6: Hymns on the Fruit of the Vine

<b>Hymns on the Fruit of the Vine</b>	
<b>Hymn Title</b>	<b>Hymnals that Include Hymn</b>
Grains of Wheat	<i>With One Voice</i> #708
Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful	<i>LSB</i> #955, <i>LW</i> pages 168 & 187, <i>LBW</i> pages 66, 86 & 107, <i>Worship</i> #181–184.

### **Grains of Wheat**

#### **(Sheaves of Wheat Turned by Sunlight into Gold)**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Grains of wheat, richly gilded by the sun,  
purple clusters, collected from the vine:  
these are altered, becoming love’s own bread and sweet wine,  
now for us Jesus’ body and his blood.

2 We enjoy true communion in this meal,  
many grains God has planted and made thrive;  
like the grain we are ground beneath life’s sorrowful wheel,  
in the bread, like the grain, we come alive.

3 As the grains join to form one loaf of bread,  
as the notes come together in one song,  
as the raindrops unite into the single vast sea,  
so in Jesus one body we belong.

4 We shall all sit together at the feast  
sharing bread as God’s children, joined in one:

in this hope we rejoice as we go forward in peace,  
living sisters and brothers of the Son.<sup>61</sup>

### *Una Espiga Dorada por el Sol*

1 *Una espiga dorada por el sol,  
el racimo que contra el viñador,  
se convierten ahora en pan y vino de amor,  
en el cuerpo y la sangre del Señor.*

*\*Esta primera estrofa pueda cantarse como Coro por la Asamblea después de cada estrofa*

2 *Comulgamos la misma comunión.  
somos trigo del mismo sembrador,  
un molino, la vida, nos tritura con dolor:  
Dios nos hace eucaristía en el amor.*

3 *Como granos que han hecho el mismo pan,  
como notas que tejen un cantar,  
como gotas de agua que se funden en el mar,  
los cristianos un cuerpo fomarán.*

4 *En la mesa de Dios se sentarán,  
como hijos su pan compartirán,  
una misma esperanza, caminando cantarán,  
en la vida como hermanos se amarán.*<sup>62</sup>

### **The Hymn's Historical Context**

**Composer's Biography:** Cesáreo Gabaraín (1936-1991) was born in Gipuzko located in the Spanish Basque area. He composed the hymn now translated as "Grains of Wheat." He attended a minor seminary in Zaragoza (graduated 1946), a major seminary at San Sebastián (graduated 1952), and later the University of Madrid where he earned degrees in Theology, Journalism, and Musicology.<sup>63</sup> He was ordained into the ministry as priest in 1959. He later

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<sup>61</sup> Marty Haugen, "Grains of Wheat," in *With One Voice: A Lutheran Resource for Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 708.

<sup>62</sup> Garcia, Daniel. "Una Espiga." [d-garcia.net/cancion.php?idcancion=424](http://d-garcia.net/cancion.php?idcancion=424) (accessed March 7, 2013).

<sup>63</sup> Paul Westermeyer, *Hymnal Companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2010),

became known as one of the best-known composers of Spanish liturgical music for congregations.<sup>64</sup> During his early ministry, from 1960–1966, he served as chaplain at various colleges and nursing homes. In 1980, he was appointed the co-adjutor of the parish Our Lady of the Snows and as religious head at the College of San Fernando.

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** The hymn “Grains of Wheat” was written in 1973. Gabaraín began composing around age thirty. Today he has a collection of around five-hundred hymns and songs. He made thirty-seven recordings and conducted numerous workshops across Spain and the United States.

There exists some confusion as to who may have translated this hymn or if there are multiple translations of the same original piece of music. According to the hymnal *With One Voice*, Madeleine Forell Marshall translated Gabaraín’s hymn “Grains of Wheat” (*Una Espiga*) in 1995. According to Hymnary.org, Mary Louise Bringle translated the hymn “Sheaves of Wheat” (*Una Espiga*) in 2008. To confuse matters more there exists a third piece of music with the same Spanish title “Una Espiga Dorada por el Sol” translated as “Sheaves of Summer Turned Golden by the Sun” by George Lockwood in 1988. Either way, Cesáreo Gabaraín is consistently named as the author of the hymn, and all confirm it was originally written in 1973.

Gabaraín was well known and loved by all. His friend D. Carmel states, “He [Gabaraín] lived in constant awareness of situations of human needs, which resulted in songs of support for moments of personal or communal prayer. All are vehicles approaching the transcendent world, expressions of praise to God and the Virgin, expressions of zeal liturgical music that consumed

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<sup>64</sup> A few pieces of work Gabaraín is better known for include; “Come, come, Lord,” “Together as Brothers,” “Peace Be With You,” and “Fisher of Men,” which has been translated into multiple languages and sung throughout the world.



him.”<sup>65</sup> Reflecting on this hymn, “This text by a leading Spanish author-composer expands vivid images of grain and grape used to provide bread and wine for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper into symbols of the interconnection of all human experience, but especially of the shared life in Christian community.”<sup>66</sup> Today the hymn was only found in only one hymnal: *With One Voice* #708.

### **The Hymn’s Theological Content**

**Theology of The Lord’s Supper:** The hymn “Grains of Wheat” provides the vital connection between the elements of God’s creation and those elements being used by God in the Lord’s Supper. It affirms the gifts of creation. It provides God’s promise of grace and promise to his creatures.

**Poetry and Imagery:** Gabaraín’s hymn is rich in imagery and metaphorical language. Verse one begins with graphic descriptors of the wheat and grapes being nourished and tended by the sun: “Grains of wheat, richly gilded by the sun, purple clusters collected from the vine.” The delicately tended fruits of the earth are the first the gifts of the Creator. He then recreates them to become an even greater gift of creation—the gift of grace. The author’s words paint a picture of a succulent purple grape being picked from its vine before it becomes the wine that will be shared by all in the Lord’s Supper.

The end of verse one describes how these gifts “are altered, becoming love’s own bread and sweet wine.” Lutherans could agree that the physical elements of the bread and wine are altered in the sense that the wheat becomes bread and the grapes become wine, but Gabaraín is

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<sup>65</sup> [http://www.hymnary.org/text/sheaves\\_of\\_summer\\_turned\\_golden\\_by\\_the](http://www.hymnary.org/text/sheaves_of_summer_turned_golden_by_the) (accessed June 14, 2013).

<sup>66</sup> [http://www.hymnary.org/text/sheaves\\_of\\_summer\\_turned\\_golden\\_by\\_the](http://www.hymnary.org/text/sheaves_of_summer_turned_golden_by_the) (accessed June 14, 2013).

more likely speaking to the physical transformation of the bread and wine becoming the body and blood of Christ because of the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation.<sup>67</sup>

Verse two compares the life of a Christian with the cycle of a grain of wheat. Gabaraín states, “We enjoy true communion in this meal, many grains God has planted and made thrive.” Here the author shows how those who gather to receive God’s gifts come from many places. The same is true of the wheat that was grown in many places, yet brought together to form one loaf. The phrase “like the grain we are ground beneath life’s sorrowful wheel, in the bread, like the grain, we come alive” uses metaphorical language to suggest that just as the grain is crushed, so too the Christian is crushed in his sin. Yet in the Supper God’s gift of forgiveness raises the creature out of the crushing depths of sin and provides new life as he receives the body and blood of Christ.

Gabaraín’s entire hymn stresses the point that just as the bread and wine are collected from many grains and vines to make one loaf of bread and one cup of wine, these very gifts also gather the people of God together, joining them as one in community to partake of and receive the transformed gifts as a community of believers. Verse three states, “As the grains join to form one loaf of bread . . . so in Jesus’ one body we belong.” In Christ, everything is brought together as one—one body, one bread, and one life in him.

Throughout verse three Gabaraín connects for the reader the importance of community. He shows that when single notes are brought together they form a song or when raindrops unite in one place they create a vast sea. This ties together with verse four, which highlights all God’s children of the church joining as one to share in the feast provided by the hand of the Creator.

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<sup>67</sup> See explanation presented earlier on the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation.

**Christian Confession:** Gabaraín’s hymn provides a clear understanding of how God uses the gifts of his good creation to become a sacrament in which God offers his forgiveness. The gifts of creation are brought together from across the world to make one loaf, one cup. Gabaraín directs the reader’s attention to share in the meal with all in community. How might the church better highlight God’s gifts of creation in its liturgy service? What if the church engaged with local farmers to grow and produce the wheat and wine used for the Lord’s Supper? What if members of the congregation worked with the soil, cultivated, aerated, and harvested the crop to produce the bread and wine? Perhaps these small steps would allow God’s people to make the connection between the elements of creation and the elements of the sacrament. Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri has begun this process by purchasing locally grown wine and asking the community to make the bread used during the Lord’s Supper. These are all just small ways that help one taste and see the gifts of God in a new way.

### **Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful**

#### **Hymn Verses**

1 Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,  
And fill to the brim our cup of blessing.  
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,  
That we may be fed with the bread of life.  
Gather the hopes and dreams of all;  
Unite them with the prayers we offer now.  
Grace our table with Your presence, and give us  
A foretaste of the feast to come.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, “Let the Vineyard Be Fruitful,” *Lutheran Service Book* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2006), 955.

## The Hymn's Historical Context

**Composer's Biography:** John W. Arthur (1922–1980) wrote the canticle “Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful” along with many other liturgical canticles used for special seasons or in the regular worship service.<sup>69</sup>

Arthur was born in Mankato, MN and attended Gustavus Adolphus College in 1944, earning both his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music degrees. Around this same time he began his schooling to become a pastor studying at Wartburg Theological Seminary. He completed his Bachelor of Divinity and was ordained in 1946 with his first call to Zion Lutheran Church in Duquesne, PA. By 1949 he had completed a Masters of Theology degree at Western Theological Seminary, today known as Pittsburg Theological Seminary.

During 1964 and 1965 he returned to his studies at both Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and Stanford University. In 1967, he was called to serve as assistant professor of liturgics and as the director of worship at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.<sup>70</sup>

**Immediate Occasion and Subsequent Reception:** During Arthur's life he served on many worship committees, which included the liturgical text committee of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, the Committee on Common Texts, the Liturgical Conference, the board of directors for the Center for Contemporary Celebration, and the Illinois Synod (LCA) Committee on Worship. His publications include *Oremus: A Book of Worship for Corporate and Private Prayer*, 1963; *Folk Song Feast*, 1966; and *Table of the Lord*, 1968; and *Contemporary Liturgy*, with Daniel Moe in 1963.

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<sup>69</sup> Additional liturgical canticles and hymns include: “Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain” (Advent), “The People Who Walked in Darkness” (Christmas/Epiphany), “I Called to MY God for Help” (Lent), “Sing Praise to the Lord” (Easter), “Now Listen, You Servants of God” (General), and “God Who Has Called You to Glory” (General). All were first published in *Contemporary Worship*–5 published in 1972.

<sup>70</sup> Mary Kay Stulken, *Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 428–29.

This canticle is used in most Lutheran churches as an offertory hymn that is sung as the gifts are presented for the Lord's Supper. The offertory is a natural break in the worship service in order to set the table for the Lord's Supper. In the church's history, Psalm 51 was usually associated with the procession of the gifts: "Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God." Today, canticles such as "Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful" are more commonly sung. Art Just suggests that the gifts of the offertory are given in response to the people hearing the word of Jesus as an offering of thanksgiving for gifts that about to be received: forgiveness of sin in the Lord's Supper.<sup>71</sup> The text of this hymn had to have been written around 1978. It was written for the church and by the church. Whether the author intended it use as an offertory hymn is unclear. Today the hymn was found in *Lutheran Service Book* #955, *The Lutheran Book of Worship* pages 66, 86, and 107, *Lutheran Worship* pages 168 and 187, and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* pages 181–184.

### **The Hymn's Theological Content**

**Theology of the Lord's Supper:** In a seemingly simplistic one-verse hymn, the entire vision of the gifts received in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is presented. The hymn is a prayer that begins by requesting the Creator to make the vineyards fruitful. This illustrates dependence upon God and highlights him as Creator. The hymn reflects on the text of Ps. 104:14–15 where the psalmist acknowledges God as the one who "causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart."

**Poetry and Imagery:** Arthur's hymn is a liturgically-structured piece of work rather than poetry, yet it provides images of creation's blessings. Arthur invites his readers to see God

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<sup>71</sup> Arthur A. Just Jr., *Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2008), 208–10.

working through his creation to bring about his gifts: “Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed.” He acknowledges that God is the one who cares for his creatures. He feeds them and blesses them. He provides the seeds that will be planted to grow the crop of wheat. In addition to the physical materials, the author implies that God provides the workers of the field to nurture and care for the crop prior to harvest time. And when harvest time arrives, he ensures that the workers will be there to cultivate the vineyards and harvest the wheat. Finally, after much toil, the bread and wine are produced that will be used to feed creation and to celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

The next line, “that we may be fed with the bread of life,” draws attention to the words *the bread of life*. Here, simple words give profound meaning to eternal life. In John 6:1, John emphasizes that twice Jesus calls himself the *bread of life* and a third time, *the living bread*. In the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the physical bread and Christ’s body mystically join as one in order to give the gift of eternal life to all gathered.

In the last line, “Grace our table with Your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come,” Arthur connects the vision of the now with the not yet. He speaks of Christ being present in the meal of the Lord’s Supper, while announcing the feast that is yet to come. This reminds the Christian that in this life God provides a vision of the hope that is to come when the final banquet feast will be laid out for all believers, a feast that will have no end.

Smith reminds the Christian of that same joy. He emphasizes that the Lord’s Supper celebrated today is an *eschatological* supper. Smith explains it in this way: “The Eucharist should be understood as a sign of the renewed creation. The Eucharist is our model of the eschatological order, a microcosm of the way things really ought to be.”<sup>72</sup> The Lord’s Supper is a

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<sup>72</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 200.

meal that constitutes Christians as eschatological people, a meal that anticipates the banquet feast in God's kingdom. "Thus it is a *normative* [italics original] meal: by showing us a foretaste of how things ought to be, the practice of the Lord's Supper carries norms in it, and these norms constitute both a basis of critique for the present order, as well as hint as to how the church should order itself as a *polis* that is itself a foretaste of the coming community."<sup>73</sup>

**Christian Confession:** Arthur's hymn confesses the Christian faith by means of the Christian sacrament of the Lord's Supper and its connection to the central redemptive act of Christ. This hymn provides a way to connect this Christian confession more tightly with its own theology of creation. For example the phrase *bread of life* could be understood as a double entendre. The hymn simply asks that we may be fed with the bread of life. Many Christians conclude that this is speaking of the Lord's Supper and spiritual life, but it may also represent the physical life being given through God's daily provision of bread.

At first glance this simple meal may not seem like a feast, but in faith this meal provides eternal life. Just as in the Old Testament where God worked in the lives of his people, now through this all-important continuing foretaste of the heavenly feast, God's people are brought to be with him forever.

## Chapter Summary

The hymns of this chapter have shown how the sacraments are thoroughly woven into a theology of creation. The creature is grafted into Christ through baptismal waters and spiritually nourished each time he receives the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. Christ, the incarnate Lord, sanctifies the water, bread, and wine, and is also the very source of the creature's life. As the hymns states, the Creator forms the waters, streams, lakes, and rivers that will be used for

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<sup>73</sup> Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 200.

baptism, and he creates the seeds that will produce the vines and wheat to make the bread and wine for the feast. The very elements of creation—the water, bread, and wine—become the things God uses to bless His people.

These hymns that were analyzed with respect to the theme “The Sacraments of the First Creation into the New Creation” provide imagery of living water, crushed grapes, and cultivated wheat that are used to create new life. They also create new insights for the Christian. When viewed through a theology of creation, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper provide not only the biblical narrative of the work of God but also the beauty and power of his created elements: crashing water and sweet wines. Armed with this knowledge, the Christian begins to contemplate through the church’s hymns the importance God places on his creation.

The baptismal hymn “Crashing Waters at Creation” gave witness to God’s power of water through various biblical stories. It began with crashing waters on the dawn of first day. It recalled parting waters as God freed his people and poured trembling waters upon the Egyptians. Dunstan showed forth God’s glory, parting the seas of the Jordan as an example of a pastor parting the waters of baptism on his newborn creature. He ends by quenching the thirsts of many through the life-giving waters of baptism.

The hymns “Grains of Wheat” and “Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful,” both impart new ways to view the elements of creation, the wine and bread. In “Grains of Wheat” the author reminds the creature of the gifts of God’s creation. He shows how man takes what God has grown, the purple grapes and golden wheat, to become the gifts of bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper. He accentuates how the grapes and wheat from across the globe re gathered to make one loaf and one cup. He shows how God’s gifts unite his children scattered across the world to become one body in Christ. This joining together of the gifts of heaven with the gifts of the earth provides a



foretaste of the feast that is yet to come. In “Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful” the now and the not yet collide in joyful praise. The meal becomes an eschatological supper.

This chapter illustrates how God uses the elements of his creation to bless his children. In the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, Christ reclaims his children. He uses the ordinary gifts of creation and makes them extraordinary. In Baptism, God takes simple water, combines it with his word, and makes living waters that wash and cleanse to bring eternal life to all. In the Lord’s Supper, God takes simple bread and wine, adds his word, and creates a feast for all gathered as a foretaste of the feast to come.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

We are beginning to regain a knowledge of the creation, a knowledge we had forfeited by the fall of Adam. Now we have a correct view of the created reality, more so, I suppose, that they have in the papacy. Erasmus does not concern himself with this; it interests him little how a fetus is made, formed, and developed in the womb. . . . But by God's mercy we can begin to recognize His wonderful works and wonders also in the flowers when we ponder His might and His goodness. Therefore we laud, magnify, and thank Him. In His creation we recognize the power of His Word. By His Word everything came into being. The power is evident even in a peach stone. Now matter how hard its shell, in due season it is forced open by a very soft kernel inside it All this is ignored by Erasmus. He looks at creation as a cow stares at a new gate.<sup>1</sup>

Interpreting the world as God's creation means precisely not viewing it as the world of human beings, and taking possession of it accordingly. If the world is God's creation, then it remains His property and cannot be claimed by men and women. It can only be accepted as a loan and administered as a trust. It has to be treated according to the standard of the divine righteousness, not according to the values that are bound up with human aggrandisement.<sup>2</sup>

Within an anthropocentric worldview, the human creature views both heaven and earth as being created for the sake of self. He becomes the crown of creation and forms for himself an unbiblical view of God's creation. However, when operating within a theocentric worldview, the human creature sees himself within and as a member of the community of creation with a special purpose to care for, nurture, and work alongside God to care for his creation.

This dissertation's purpose was to explore not only what the hymnody of the Christian Church teaches and confesses about the human creature's relationship to creation and the Creator but to explore if the texts of the hymns are able to shape and mold the Christian to be more

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<sup>1</sup> *WA TR*, I.1160.

<sup>2</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 30–31.

ecologically cognizant of God's creation. Hymnody plays a central role in Christian worship. When they are properly used within a worship service they should proclaim the Gospel, reinforce the readings of the day, and offer praise and thanksgiving to the Creator. Hymns are meant to tell the Christian story—not just a piece, but the entire story from the first creation, all the way through, and into the new creation. Hymnody should include “songs of death and rebirth, songs of sin and salvation, songs of repentance, renewal and new life.”<sup>3</sup> When properly used, hymns assist the Christian in living out a life that is pleasing to God.

The hymns for this dissertation were chosen based on the academic work of recent theologians who have spent a significant amount of time exploring the human creature's relationship to God and his creation. Many of their writings were mined to expose themes that identify with a theology of creation. This dissertation ascertained six themes that best describe a theology of creation in light of the Christian narrative. They include “A Community of Creation Uniting in Praise,” “Human Creatureliness,” “The Creative Word,” “Jesus as Creator Who Ushers in the New Creation,” “Creator Spirit,” and “The Sacraments of the First Creation into the New Creation.”

Once the themes of a theology of creation were identified, the hymnals of the Lutheran and Anglican Church bodies were analyzed in order to select hymns that best reflect each of the themes. Some of the questions that were asked of the text include, Do the church's hymns reflect a theology of creation? Do they teach the Christian about his role in caring for God's creation? Do the hymns highlight praise for the Creator and a care for the other creatures of God's creation? Unearthing these answers provided insight into the church's teaching and beliefs, a reflection of *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*.

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<sup>3</sup> Carl F. Schalk, *God's Song in a New Land: Lutheran Hymnals in a New Land* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1995), 13.

*Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* in literal terms is translated, “As we worship, so we believe, so we live.” A major component of this dissertation was to determine if the church has hymns that proclaim a theology of creation. If the answer was yes, then could these hymns have any impact on the life the Christian lives within creation?

The first theme, “A Community of Creation Uniting in Praise,” highlights what creation looks like when all God’s creatures, from the smallest to the largest, join together to praise the Creator. Throughout the hymns images of each creature are provided: the chirping bird, the blowing wind, the brooding northern skies in storm, and the human creature singing. Each echo its own sound, and when joined together with the next, offer as with one voice their praise and thanksgiving to the Creator of all. When all God’s creatures join together, their sound of praise begins to take on the sound of a perfectly orchestrated symphony.

The hymns paraphrased biblical texts such as Psalm 148 in order to show that an appreciation for creation is achieved by allowing each creature to praise its Creator simply by being what God created it to be. Another way in which hymns show praise takes place when the human creature considers what God’s world might look like if creation were deprived of all its beauty. After contemplating this thought, the human creature ultimately praises God for his creation. Lastly, the hymns direct the human creature to understand that creation was not made for the sole purpose of serving humankind or as a stage in which life was played out but instead that “all things were created through him and for him” (Col. 1:16b) to glorify Jesus as the King of Creation. Within this new awareness the Christian begins to reprioritize his thoughts about creation, and he praises the Creator rather than the creature or the creation.

Although this theme was well represented in respect to hymns expressing praise, a few key gaps still exist. First, many of the hymns do not address the idea of expressing an appreciation

for the simple beauty of creation or a delighting in creation. This may be better understood as aesthetics. God created a world of beauty, both an appreciation for and finding delight in God's creation still needs to be highlighted in church hymnody. Another area is the human creature's attentiveness to sounds of creation. God's creation is filled with the sounds of his creatures. The human creature needs to be a bit more attentive to hearing and understanding them as God's creatures praising their Creator. This may be a bit more difficult to express in a hymn, but it would help the human creature see himself more as a member of the choir of creation rather than as the director or a simple bystander.

The purpose of the second theme, "Human Creatureliness," was to differentiate between the characteristics the human creature shares with other creatures and the characteristics that are uniquely human. Common characteristics are represented in three ways, and each is understood as God's providence. They include God delighting in the details of his creation, his immanence and presence in his creation, and his continued faithfulness towards his creation. The hymns in this chapter intimately capture God's care for every creature. One creature did not reign over the others; all were equally cared for and loved by the Creator. The main characteristic identified as being uniquely human was the responsibility that came with being a human creature: the vocation of dominion. This chapter's hymns focused on what it means to be created in the image of God and details the responsibilities that come with that honor. But the hymns also gave the human creature the opportunity to contemplate the damage that a heart filled with greed and selfishness can cause to God's creation.

Creatureliness goes to the heart of human identity. Of all the hymns that represent the theme "Human Creatureliness," more highlight the characteristics that were shared by all God's creatures than characteristics that are uniquely human. The gaps that remain include the use of

the word *creature* to define a human being. The term *creature* was not found in any of the hymns as a term to describe the human being. Martin Luther frequently rejoiced in his creatureliness; it was an honor to him. “It is a costly, great thing, so it is yet a much higher and greater thing to be God’s work and creature.”<sup>4</sup> When the church includes hymns that speak to the human being as a creature, this theme would offer new value and humbleness. When people are called *creature* for the first time they often hear this moniker with a negative connotation; however, scripture is quite clear that the human is but one of God’s creatures. Using this terminology more regularly in hymns only strengthens the creature’s dependence upon God. The church needs to include more hymns that better express the word *dominion*. The hymns need to describe what dominion looks like and the roles and responsibility that are associated with it in order to better equip the human creature to fulfill that role. When these two gaps are better represented, the theme of human creatureliness gains value.

The third theme is “The Creative Word.” This is a more distinctively Lutheran theme and not widely discussed in larger theological circles; yet, it is a critical scriptural component of a theology of creation. When God speaks things happen. His word is effective. Without the word all creatures cease to exist. God’s word is active and effective today; it still accomplishes his purpose of creating, renewing, strengthening, and forgiving.

Hymns found to represent this theme emphasize the fact that God’s word is still the one-and-only reality, just as in the first creation. The hymns highlight that there is power contained in God’s Word, what it says it does. When God speaks a word of creation, it immediately exists. In the same fashion, when the creature confesses his or her sin, God’s word immediately forgives.

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<sup>4</sup> *WA* 45:15.1–2.

Unfortunately this theme offers the fewest number of hymns. Only ten hymns were found in the eleven hymnals that highlight the theme “The Creative Word.” As mentioned earlier, this may be because this theme is still not widely discussed among the larger theological circles. Much work is still necessary in order to make visible to the church the importance of the creative word. Some of that groundwork has been laid, but much more should be accomplished. Since this theme is central to the Lutheran tradition, it may be an area where a strong contribution could be made.

The next logical theme that flows out of the “Creative Word,” is “Jesus as Creator Who Ushers in the New Creation.” Jesus is the central focus of Christian theology and therefore makes sense as a theme of a theology of creation. This chapter identifies Jesus as Creator. It leans heavily on the text of John 1:1–3 and Col. 1:15–20. Three characteristics identified by theologians and these biblical texts include Jesus as the agent of creation (the *Schöpfungsmittlerschaft*), Jesus’ command over creation, and Jesus’ restorative work in bringing forth the new creation.

A critical component that is highlighted in chapter five includes a discussion on the essential relationship that must exist between creation and redemption. Here the Church Father Irenaeus was considered in order to help the reader understand that if the church only emphasizes the first creation a teleological dynamic gets lost. “Creation is not merely through Christ, but *to* him . . . Salvation takes place *within* the created and material order.”<sup>5</sup> Using the language of Jesus as Creator helps hold this vital relationship between creation and redemption together.

Although many hymns highlight this theme, in the end six were chosen as best describing the characteristics that represent the theme. Many highlight Jesus’ restorative work in creation

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<sup>5</sup> Gunton, *Christ and Creation*, 97.

now and focus on his ushering in the new creation later. Most tell the entire Christian story. Some tell of the first creation, others focus on the present creation, while still others turn to the new creation. Yet, they all show Jesus as Creator.

Although this theme was well represented, weaknesses exist. First, although recognizing Jesus as Creator is not a new way of thinking, the language is scarcely used in hymns. Most of the Christian hymns found highlight only Jesus' role as the Savior of humankind. Yet, Jesus in Trinitarian fashion is Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. He is creature and Creator simultaneously. Here a gap exists. Second, some of the hymns speak to Jesus' redemptive power, but this dissertation clearly demonstrates that Christ's redemptive power cannot be separated from his creative power. There was a clear lack of hymns that highlight this fact. In addition this theme requires additional work that highlights the role Jesus plays in bringing forth the new creation.

The theme of chapter six provides an opportunity to discover a theology of creation from the perspective of the "Creator Spirit." In Gen. 1:2, Christians first encounter the work of the Spirit in creation: "And the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters." More often than not, the Spirit is recognized by the Third Article of the Nicene Creed as "the Lord and giver of life." But, the Spirit always moves through creation, he creates, renews, restores, and transforms all things from death into life. The Spirit's work is broader than most Christians realize or give him credit for.

Because the hymns of this theme provide a Trinitarian vision of the work of the Holy Spirit in creation, the theme "Creator Spirit" is necessary for rounding out a Christian's correct understanding of the work of the Creator. It is not difficult to identify the Father as Creator. It is probably a bit more difficult to consider Jesus as Creator. But this chapter takes it one step



further and highlights the Spirit as Creator. The chosen hymns identify the Creator Spirit as an active participant in creation today, but just as importantly, the hymns recognize the Spirit as the source of the breath of life in every living creature.

There can be no doubt that the theme “Creator Spirit” requires additional work. Although two hymns were chosen, very few identify with the role the Spirit plays as Creator in creation. Historically, work in the area of the Holy Spirit has received much less attention than the overarching themes of Father and Son. Yet, the theme of Spirit as Creator is a vital component of a correct Trinitarian understanding of the term *creator*, and continued work in this area is necessary.

In the final theme, “The Sacraments of the First Creation and into the New Creation,” God gathers the gifts of his creation together with his people, in his church, and makes the ordinary extraordinary. God uses the ordinary elements of creation, water, bread, and wine, to offer his people the extraordinary gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. This theme provides the bridge that connects a theology of creation to the life of the church through Christian worship. This truth is best described by the Latin terms *lex orandi*, *lex credendi*, and *lex vivendi*.

The hymn choices available for this theme were scarce at best, yet the hymns chosen provide a rich imagery of this theme as a theology of creation. While only one hymn was found for the sacrament of Baptism, it clearly accentuates the importance water plays in the life of the church by showcasing water that is living and moving and how God uses that water each day to provide new life for his children. In regards to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, two hymns were discovered. Both provide images of how God uses his gifts of creation to recreate a new child in him. God unites the gifts of creation with the gift of heaven in order to offer the gift of eternal life.

This theme lacks imagery and language that could strengthen the Christian's understanding of all that takes place when God comes to his people in his church. In the sacrament of Baptism, the hymns often focus on the results of Baptism. In other words, what the life of the Christians should not look like since sin is washed away or role Jesus played in removing those sins. But the hymns also lack any visual expression of the life-giving power of the water when combined with God's Word. Many lack the language of the creature becoming a new creation and yet both are vital in order for a complete understanding of the power of Baptism. In regards to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, more emphasis needs to be placed on how God uses the *stuff* of creation, to take ordinary elements and make them extraordinary. Lines such as "ponder nothing earthly minded"<sup>6</sup> take one's thoughts off the gifts of creation that God *regifts* in order to offer forgiveness and eternal life. Much more work should be done to recognize God's gifts of creation in the church.

### **The Results**

In the end, this dissertation analyzed two church traditions: the Anglicans and Lutherans. Eleven hymnals were determined to best represent the two church traditions: four Anglican (three hymnals and one songbook) and seven Lutheran (five hymnals and two songbooks). After analyzing each hymnal, one-hundred-and-ninety-eight hymns were chosen that best represented the six themes of a theology of creation: "A Community of Creation Uniting in Praise," Human Creatureliness," "The Creative Word," "Jesus as Creator Who Ushers in the New Creation," "Creator Spirit," and "The Sacraments of the First Creation and into the New Creation." Again the hymns were analyzed for content against the themes and twenty-three hymns were selected to

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<sup>6</sup> The hymn "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" as found in *Lutheran Service Book* hymn #621.

represent one of the six themes. These six themes became the chapters of this dissertation. Every hymnal analyzed contains at least one of the hymns used for an in-depth analysis.

One hymnal, better recognized as a songbook, stood out. It contained more hymns that represent a theology of creation than any other. *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise* published by the Church of England contained eleven of the twenty-three final selected hymns. In a few cases, this songbook was the only one that contained a specific hymn. The second hymnal containing the most prolific creation-themed hymnody is *Worship* published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. It contained eight of the twenty-three final selected hymns.

*Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise* was originally published as *CH4* or *The Church Hymnary 4*. *Church Hymnary* was first published in 1898 and was typically used within the British Isles. The main church tradition using this hymnal was the Presbyterians. In its revised form, *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*, published by Canterbury Press in 2008, the songbook was meant to serve the Holy Catholic or Universal Church at large and not a single denomination. The songbook's goal, as stated in its introduction, is to reflect the contemporary experience of humanity and the fruits of God's creative Spirit in the worship of God in the twenty-first century.<sup>7</sup> This clearly reflects the contemporary issues the Christian church often faces today. After a lengthy process the hymnal committee opted to arrange the psalms and hymns "according to aspects of faith and life which closely corresponded to the three persons of the Trinity."<sup>8</sup>

Church hymns are a powerful tool used in Christian worship to teach and confess what the church believes, but they should also play a role in affecting the Christian's life. Unfortunately, at times, the lyrics of the hymn get lost in the music as the tune of the hymn plays a more predominant role than does the text of the hymn. This is a distinct reality for two reasons.

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<sup>7</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2008), ix-x.

<sup>8</sup> The Church Hymnary Trust, *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2008), xi.

Perhaps the tune is unfamiliar. Instead of reading the text of the hymn the congregation becomes focused on hearing and singing the tune. They completely miss what the words of the text are trying to portray, or the organist may potentially overextend the importance of the music, sometimes to the extent of a performance, taking away from the power of the words of the text. Both of these reasons distract the worshipper from the richness of the words of the text in the hymn.

There is another reason why hymns may not be used to their fullest potential within worship. At times, the hymns are not properly chosen or placed within the worship service to assist those worshipping to contemplate the words and thereby reach a deeper appreciation of the hymn. When hymns are haphazardly placed in the worship service or if thought is not given to the hymn's text, once-powerful hymns lose their strength as tools for teaching. The intention of Christian worship is to teach its people to daily live as children of God and to grow in their knowledge of Jesus as Lord. Church hymnody assists in attaining that goal.

It was the goal of this dissertation to show, by way of Christian hymnody, the ways in which the various theologies of creation are visibly expressed in Christian worship. Additionally, it attempted to show what these hymns teach and confess about a theology of creation that shapes and molds the life of the Christian to be more ecologically cognizant of God's creation. The hymns that were analyzed revealed that all creation has the responsibility to praise its Creator. Hymns revealed that the human creature plays an essential role in being the hands or mask of God in caring for his creation. They are not to live apart from creation but instead intimately as a member of the whole creation. The hymns revealed the power of God's spoken Word. It does what it says and says what it does. Jesus as Creator who ushers in the new creation provided new insight to speak of Jesus not only as Redeemer but as the Creator. The hymns highlighted the

Creator Spirit as a way not to bring the Holy Spirit into the First Article of Creed, but instead to highlight his role as Creator still active today as the breath of life. Finally, the hymns showed the value God places on the *stuff* of his creation. God's takes the ordinary, the water, bread and wine of creation, and make it extraordinary in the gifts of the Baptism and Lord's Supper. He *regifts* them as gifts of forgiveness and eternal life.

The hymnals of the Lutheran and Anglican Church provided hymns that express the themes of a theology of creation, but in order to grasp that theology, the words of the hymns need to be read for all their poetic literature and metaphorical language. The church might consider reading the hymns as prayers once in a while, so that the words might take on new meaning. When appreciated in this way, the hymns allow worshippers to gain a richer appreciation of the beauty and splendor of God's amazing creation.

## APPENDIX ONE

### THE HYMN “ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING”

Psalm 148	The Song of the Three Men	Canticle of Brother Sun	All Creatures of Our God and King	All You Works of God, Bless the Lord
<p>1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights!</p> <p>2 Praise him, all his angles, praise him, all his host!</p> <p>3 Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!</p> <p>4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!</p> <p>5 Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created.</p> <p>6 And he established them for ever and ever; he fixed their bounds which cannot be passed.</p>	<p>35 Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord, sing praise to him and highly exalt his for ever.</p> <p>36 Bless the Lord, you heavens, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>37 Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>38 Bless the Lord, all waters above the heaven, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>39 Bless the Lord, all powers, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>40 Bless the Lord, sun and moon, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>41 Bless the Lord, stars of heaven, sing</p>	<p>1 Most high, omnipotent, good Lord,</p> <p>2 all praise, glory, honor, and blessings are yours.</p> <p>3 To you alone, Most High, do thee belong,</p> <p>4 and no man is worthy to pronounce your name.</p> <p>5 Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,</p> <p>6 especially through my Lord Brother Sun,</p> <p>7 who brings the day, and you give light to us through him.</p> <p>8 And he is beautiful and radiant, with great splendor!</p> <p>9 of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.</p> <p>10 Be praised, my Lord through Sister Moon and the Stars,</p> <p>11 the heavens you have formed them bright, precious, and beautiful.</p>	<p>1 All creatures of our God and King, lift up you voice and with us sing Alleluia, Alleluia! Thou burning sun with golden beam, thou silver moon with softer gleam.</p> <p><i>Refrain: O praise Him, O praise Him, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!</i></p> <p>2 Thou rushing wind that art to strong, ye clouds that sail in heaven along. O praise him, Alleluia! Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice, ye lights of evening, find a voice: Refrain</p> <p>3 Thou flowing water, pure and clear, make music for thy Lord to</p>	<p>1 All you works of God, bless the Lord! All you angles, now bless the Lord; come, you heavens and powers that be, Praise the Lord and His majesty.</p> <p><i>Refrain: Raise your voices high, praise and magnify, all you works of God, bless the Lord!</i></p> <p><i>Raise your voices high, praise and magnify, all you works of God, bless the Lord!</i></p> <p>2 Sing, you sun and you moon above, stars of heaven, now sing His love; dew and showers, you winds that blow, heat and fire, you ice and snow:</p>

<p>7 Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,</p>	<p>praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>12 Be praised, my Lord through Brother Wind,</p>	<p>hear, Alleluia, Alleluia! Thou fire so masterful and bright, thou givest man both warmth and light: Refrain</p>	<p>Refrain</p>
<p>8 fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy winds fulfilling his command!</p>	<p>42 Bless the Lord, all rain and dew, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>13 and Air, for Clouds, and storms, and all weather, 14 through, which you give your creatures nourishment.</p>	<p>4 Dear mother earth, who day by day, unfoldest on our way, O praise him Alleluia! The flowers and fruits that in thee glow, let them his glory show: Refrain</p>	<p>3 Frost of winter with song so cold, dews of summer, your song unfold; light and darkness, you day and night, clouds of thunder, you lightnings bright: Refrain.</p>
<p>9 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!</p>	<p>43 Bless the Lord, all winds, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>15 Be praised, my Lord through Sister Water,</p>	<p>5 And all ye men of tender heart, forgiving others, take your part, O sing ye, Alleluia! Ye who long pain and sorrow bear, praise God and on him cast your care: Refrain</p>	<p>4 Hill and mountains, now sing His worth, all you green things that grow on earth; seas and rivers, you springs and wells, beasts and cattle, you birds and whales: Refrain.</p>
<p>10 Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!</p>	<p>44 Bless the Lord, fire and heat, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>16 she is very useful and humble, and precious and pure.</p>	<p>6 And thou, most kind a gentle death, waiting to hush our latest breath, O praise him, Alleluia! Thou leadest home the child of God, and Christ our Lord the way hath trod: Refrain</p>	<p>5 Come, humanity, sing along, sing, you people of God, a song, priests and servants, your Lord now bless, Join, you spirits and souls at rest: Refrain.</p>
<p>11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!</p>	<p>45 Bless the Lord, winter cold and summer heat, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>17 Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, 18 through who you light up the night.</p>	<p>7 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>	<p>6 Bless the Lord, all you pure of heart; all you humble, His praise impart; God the Father and Son adore, Bless the Spirit forevermore! Refrain.</p>
<p>12 Young men and maidens together, old men and children!</p>	<p>46 Bless the Lord, dew and snows, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>19 He is beautiful and cheerful and powerful and strong!</p>	<p>8 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>	<p>7 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>
<p>13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.</p>	<p>47 Bless the Lord, nights and days, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>20 Be praised, my Lord through our Sister Mother Earth, 21 who feeds us and rules us, 22 and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.</p>	<p>8 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>	<p>7 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>
<p>14 He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the Lord!</p>	<p>48 Bless the Lord, light and darkness, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>23 Be praised, my Lord through those who forgive for love of you 24 through those who endure sickness and trial.</p>	<p>8 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>	<p>7 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>
<p></p>	<p>49 Bless the Lord, ice and cold, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p>	<p>25 Happy are those who endure in peace, 26 for by you, Most High, they will be crowned.</p>	<p>8 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>	<p>7 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>
<p></p>	<p>50 Bless the Lord, frosts and snows, sing praise to him</p>	<p>27 Be praised, my Lord through our</p>	<p>8 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>	<p>7 Let all things Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, Alleluia! Praise,</p>

	<p>and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>51 Bless the Lord, lightnings and clouds, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>52 Let the earth bless the Lord; let it sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>53 Bless the Lord, mountains and hills, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>54 Bless the Lord, all things that grow on the earth, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>55 Bless the Lord, you springs, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>56 Bless the Lord, seas and rivers, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>57 Bless the Lord, you whales and all creatures that move in the waters, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>58 Bless the Lord, all birds of the air, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>59 Bless the Lord, all beasts and cattle, sing</p>	<p>Sister, Bodily Death, 28 from whose embrace no person can escape.</p> <p>29 Woe to those who die in mortal sin!</p> <p>30 Happy those she finds doing your most holy will,</p> <p>31 the second death can do no harm to them.</p> <p>32 Praise and bless the Lord, and give thanks and serve him with great humility.</p>	<p>praise the Father, praise the Son, and praise the Spirit, three in one.</p>	
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	<p>praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>60 Bless the Lord, you sons of men, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>61 Bless the Lord, O Israel, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>62 Bless the Lord, you priests of the Lord, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>63 Bless the Lord, you servants of the Lord, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>64 Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the righteous, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>65 Bless the Lord, you who are holy and humble in heart, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever.</p> <p>66 Bless the Lord, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, sing praise to him and highly exalt him for ever; for he has rescued us from Hades and saved us from the hand of death, and delivered us from the midst of the burning furnace;</p>			
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	<p>from the midst of the fire he has delivered us.</p> <p>67 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever.</p> <p>68 Bless him, all who worship the Lord, the God of gods, sing praise to him and give thanks to him, for his mercy endures forever.</p>			
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## APPENDIX TWO

### THE HYMN “CREATOR SPIRIT BY WHOSE AID”

<i>Veni Creator Spiritus</i>	Come, Creator Spirit	Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid
<p><i>Veni Creator Spiritus, mentes tourum visita, imple superna gratia quae tu creasti pectora.</i></p> <p><i>Qui Paracletus diceris, donum Die altissimi, fons vivus, ignis, caritas et spiritalis unctio.</i></p> <p><i>Tu septiformis munere, Dexteræ Dei tu digitus, tu rite promissum Patris sermone ditans guttura.</i></p> <p><i>Accende lumen sensibus, infunde amoren cordibus, infirma nostril corporis virtute firmans perpeti.</i></p> <p><i>Hostem repellas longius, pacemque dones protinus, ductore sic te praevio vitemus onme noxium.</i></p> <p><i>Per te sciamus da Patrem,  Noscamus atque Filium, te utriusque Spiritum credamus omni tempore.</i></p> <p><i>Amen.</i></p>	<p>Come, Creator Spirit, Visit the minds of those who are yours; Fill with heavenly grace The hearts that you have made.</p> <p>You who are named the Paraclete, gift so God most high, living fountain, fire, love and anointing for the soul.</p> <p>You are sevenfold in your gifts, you are finger of God’s right hand, you, the Father’s solemn promise putting words upon our lips.</p> <p>Kindle a light in our senses, pour love into our hearts, infirmities of this body of ours overcoming with strength secure.</p> <p>The enemy drive from us away, peace then give without delay; with you as guide to lead the way we avoid all cause of harm.</p> <p>Grant we may know the Father through you, and come to know the Son as well, and may we always cling in faith to you, the Spirit of them both.</p> <p>Amen.</p>	<p>Creator Spirit, by whose aid the world’s foundations where laid, come visit every humble mind; come pour our joys on humankind; from sin and sorrow set us free; may we Your living temples be.</p> <p>O Source of uncreated light, the bearer of God’s gracious might, thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire, our hearts with heavenly love inspire; your sacred, healing message bring to sanctify us as we sing.</p> <p>Giver of grace, descend from high; Your sevenfold gifts to us supply; Help us eternal truths receive and practice all that we believe; give us Yourself that we may see the glory of the Trinity.</p> <p>Immortal honor, endless fame attend the almighty Father’s name; The Savoir Son be glorified, who for all humankind has died; to you O Paraclete, we raise unending songs of thanks and praise.</p>

## APPENDIX THREE

### ORIGINAL HYMN

Hymn Title	Dissertation Chapter	Verse (s)	Theme	Author	LSB	LW	Christian Worship	LBW	Worship	Hymns of Glory	Hymns Ancient & Modern	New English	Let All the People	With One Voice	New English Praise
A Stable Lamp is Lighted	Chapter 2	1 and 4 metaphoric	Praise	Richard Wilbur				74							
All Creatures of Our God and King	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Francis of Assisi		436		527		147	105	263			
All Creatures, Worship God Most High	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Francis of Assisi					835						
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	Chapter 2	Refrain	Praise	Edward Perronet	549	272	370	328 & 329	634	457	140	332			
All the Works of the Lord	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Song of the Three Young Men	931	9		Canticles 18							
All You Works of God, Bless the Lord	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Stephen P. Starke	930					151					
Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs	Chapter 2	4	Praise	Isaac Watts	812	204	227	254	847		144	349			
Earth and All Stars	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Herbert F. Brokering	817	438	247	558	731						
Evening and Morning	Chapter 2	1 and 4	Praise	Paul Gerhardt	726	419	430	465	761						
Father Most Holy	Chapter 2	3	Praise	Latin 10th century	504	175	191	169	415			144			
Glory Be to God the Father	Chapter 2	3 and 4	Praise	Horatius Bonar	506	173	239	167		110					
God Created Heaven and Earth	Chapter 2	1 and 2	Creator	Taiwanese traditional					738						
God is Love: Let Heaven Adore Him	Chapter 2	1	Praise	Timothy Rees						123	365				

God of the Sparrow	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Jaroslav J. Vajda						740					
Good is Our God Who Made	Chapter 2	All	Praise	J. K. Gregory							371				
Have You Thanked the Lord?	Chapter 2	1 and refrain	Praise	Bill LaMotta						829					
Holy, Holy, Holy	Chapter 2	1, 2 and 4	Praise	Reginald Heber	507	168	195	165	473	111	95	146	120	618	
How Marvelous God's Greatness	Chapter 2	2 and 3	Beauty of Creation	Valdimar Briem				515	830						
Is This the Way You Made the World	Chapter 2	2 and 5	Creator	Douglas Gay						242					
Joy to the World	Chapter 2	1, 2 and refrain	Praise	Isaac Watts	387	53	62	39	267	320					
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	Chapter 2	2	Praise	Henry Van Dyke	803			551	836				164		
Let All Things Now Living	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Katherine K. Davis			260	557	881						
Let the Whole Creation Cry	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Stopford A. Brooke				242	876						
Light Dawns On a Weary World	Chapter 2	Refrain	Praise	Mary Louise Bringle					726						
Morning Glory, Starlight Sky	Chapter 2	1 and 2	Beauty of Creation	Mrs. Isabella Shore											608
Nourished By the Rainfall, the Earth Can Come Alive	Chapter 2	All	Praise	Pablo Fernandez Badillo				138							
Now Join We, to Praise the Creator	Chapter 2	All	Stewardship	Fred Kaan							500				
Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow	Chapter 2	1, 2 and 3	Praise	Paul Gerhardt	880	485	587	282	568						
Now That the Daylight Fills the Sky	Chapter 2	4	Trinitarian Praise	Latin, 5th-6th	870		583	268				151			
O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth	Chapter 2	1 and 3	God's Earth	Martin Franzmann	834	319	400 (2 tunes)	396							



From All That Dwell Below the Skies	Chapter 2 and 5	1 and 2	Praise and Christ	Isaac Watts	816	440	250	550		146	98				
Heavenly Hosts in Ceaseless Worship	Chapter 2 and 5	2	Creature and Creator	Timothy Dudley-Smith	949										
When Morning Gilds the Skies	Chapter 2 and 5	1, 2, 4, and 5	Praise and Christ	Katholische Gesanbuch, Würzburg	807	460	251	545 & 546	853		146	473			
Morning Has Broken	Chapter 2 and beauty	All	Beauty and Praise	Eleanor Farjeon						212	237	237			
Light Shone in Darkness	Chapter 2, 5 and 9	All	Praise, Christ, New Creation	Delores Dufner					307						
Songs of Praise the Angels Sang	Chapter 2, 5 and 9	1, 2 and 3	Praise, Christ, New Creation	James Montgomery		447	222				196	451			
When Long Before Time	Chapter 2	1, 2 and 3	Praise	Peter W. A. Davison						861					799
All Things Bright and Beautiful	Chapter 3	All	Creature and Creator	Cecil Frances Alexander						137	116	264	6	767	
Beauty for Brokenness God of the Poor	Chapter 3	All	Ravaged Earth	Graham Kendrick						259					
Change My Heart, O God	Chapter 3	All	Creature	Eddie Espinosa						801					38
Come, Rejoice Before Your Maker	Chapter 3	1, 2 and 3	Creature	Michael A. Baughen			228								
Come, Ye Thankful People, Come	Chapter 3	1 and 3	Creature Harvest Time	Henry Alford	892	495	613	407	693	233	289	259			
Consider How the Birds Above	Chapter 3	1, 2, and 3	Creature Creator Provider	Stephen P. Starke	736										
Creating God, Your Fingers Trace	Chapter 3	1, 2 and 3	Creature	Jeffery Rowthorn						684					757
Entrust Your Days and Burdens	Chapter 3	1	Creature and Creator	Paul Gerhardt	754	427									
For the Beauty of the Earth	Chapter 3	1 and 2	Beauty of Creation	Folliott S. Pierpoint				561	879	181	104	285			
For the Fruits of His Creation	Chapter 3	1 and 2	Creature	Fred Pratt Green	894		611	563	679	231	457			760	621
God of Concrete	Chapter 3	All	Creature and Creator	Richard Jones							366				
God of Great and God of Small	Chapter 3	All	Creator	Natalie Allyn Wakeley Sleeth						174					





This is My Father's World	Chapter 3	All	Creator	Maltbie D. Babcock				554	824						302
We All Believe in One True God, Maker	Chapter 3	1	Creator	Martin Luther		213			411						
We Plough the Fields and Scatter	Chapter 3	All	Creature and Creator	Matthias Claudius				362	680 & 681	229	290	262			
We Sing the Almighty Power of God	Chapter 3	All	Creator	Isaac Watts		441	261								
When All the World to Life is Waking	Chapter 3	All	Creator	Jack Winslow								240			
Who Put the Colours in the Rainbow?	Chapter 3	All	Creator	Joseph Arthur Paul Booth								143			
Lord of the Boundless Curves of Space	Chapter 3 and 5	All	Creator	Albert F. Bayly							493	405			
Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth	Chapter 3 and 5	1 and 2	Creature and Christ Creator	Jean Janzen						735	117				769
O Lord of Heaven and Earth and Sea	Chapter 3 and 5	All	Christ	Christopher Wordsworth		487					287	422			
Almighty God, Your Word is Cast	Chapter 4	All (metaphoric)	Word	John Cawood	577	342	324	234	516						
God Who Spoke in the Beginning	Chapter 4	All	Word	Fred Kaan								468			
Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings	Chapter 4	2	Word	Gregory J. Wismar	782										
Preach You the Word	Chapter 4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6	Word	Martin Franzmann	586	259	544								
Shout for Joy Loud and Long	Chapter 4	2	Word	David Mowbray											793
The Word of God is Source and Seed	Chapter 4	1 and 2	Word	Delores Dufner											658
This Day As Your Creating Word	Chapter 4	1	Word	William W. How			229								
Thy Strong Word	Chapter 4	1, 2, 3, and 6	Word	Martin Franzmann	578	328	280	233	511						



Day of Wrath, Oh, Day of Mourning	Chapter 5	1 and 2	New Creation (Earth's Destruction)	Thomas de Celano			209										
Earth, Earth, Awake: Your Praises Sing	Chapter 5	1, 2 and 3	Christ	Herman G. Stuemple							420						
Fairest Lord Jesus	Chapter 5	All	Christ	Münsterisch Gesangbuch												634	
From East to West	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Christ	Coelius Sedulius	385	43		64					20				
From God the Father, Virgin-Born	Chapter 5	2 and 5	New Creation	Latin, 5th-10th century	401	74		83									
From Heaven Above to Earth I Come	Chapter 5	4, 8 and 9	Christ	Matin Luther	358	37	38	51	268								
God, Who Made the Earth	Chapter 5	All	Jesus as Creator	Korean Text, English trans. John Bell							228						
God's Will For Creation	Chapter 5	All	Jesus as Creator	Compilers of <i>Common Ground</i>							136						
Hail Thee, Festival Day	Chapter 5	1, 2 and 4	Christ	Venantius Honorius Fortunatus	489	125 & 148 & 159	179	142	394	581			109				
He Comes to Us as One Unknown	Chapter 5	3	Christ	Timothy Dudley-Smith						737						768	
He's Risen, He's Risen	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Christ	CFW Walther	480	138	143										
How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts	Chapter 5	3 and 4	Christ	Isaac Watts		474	509										
I Am Jesus' Little Lamb	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Christ	Henrietta L. von Hayn	740	517	432										
I Am the Word that Spoke and Light Was Made	Chapter 5	1 and 5	Christ	James Quinn							670						
I Danced in the Morning	Chapter 5	1	Christ	Sydney Carter									375	375			

I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I am, Lord)	Chapter 5	All	Christ	Daniel L. Schutte						251					752
I'm But a Stranger Here	Chapter 5	All Platonic implication	New Creation	Thomas R. Taylor	748	515	417								
Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old	Chapter 5	All	New Creation	Joy Patterson						241					
Light of Light, O Sole-Begotten	Chapter 5	2 and 3	Christ	Stephen P. Starke	914										
Lord Bring the Day to Pass	Chapter 5	All	New Creation	Ian Masson Fraser						238					
Lord God, We See They Power Displayed	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Christ	Donald Wynn Hughes						390					
Lord of Beauty, Thine the Splendor	Chapter 5	All	Beauty of Creation	C. A. Alington							106	265			
Lord of Lords, the Sparking Heavens	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Christ	Margaret Stinton			237								
Lord, By Whose Breath All Souls and Seeds	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Christ	Andrew Young						486					
Lord, In thy Name Thy Servants Plead	Chapter 5	1, 2, 3 and 5	Christ	John Keble								126			
Lord, Your Hands Have Formed This World	Chapter 5	All	Christ	Ramon Oliano and Sario Oliano					140					727	
Neither Death Nor Life	Chapter 5	4	New Creation	Marty Haugen					622						
New Songs of Celebration Render	Chapter 5	2 and 3	Christ	Erik Routley	792						498				
Now the Green Blade Rises	Chapter 5	All	Christ	John M. Crum			148	379	417	501	115				
O Blessed Spring	Chapter 5	All (human focus)	New Creation	Susan Palo Cherwien	595				447						695
O Christ the Same	Chapter 5	1	Christ	Timothy Dudley-Smith			760				258			778	

O Christ, Our King, Creator, Lord	Chapter 5	1, 3, and 4	Christ	Gregory I				101						
O Lord, Who Gave the Dawn Its Glow	Chapter 5	All	Christ	Mrs. Margaret Williams										622
O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide	Chapter 5	2 and 3	Christ	Friedrich von Spee	355	32	22	38						
Of the Father's Love Begotten	Chapter 5	1 and 3	Christ	Aurelius Prudentius Clemens	384	36	35	42	295	319	33			
Once We Sang and Danced	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Groaning of Creation	Susan R. Briehl								701		
People, Look East	Chapter 5	All	Against Creation (Negative)	Eleanor Farjeon				248	281					626
Praise and Thanksgiving, Father We Offer	Chapter 5	All	Sense of Place	Albert F. Bayly	789	403		409	689	170	415			
Praise be To Christ	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Christ	Timothy Dudley-Smith	538									
Rise Up, O Saints of God!	Chapter 5	4	Groaning Creation	Norman O. Forness				383	669		418			
See Amid the Winter's Snow	Chapter 5	2	Christ	Edward Caswall	373									604
Sing to the Lord of Harvest	Chapter 5	1 and 2	Harvest and Sense of Place	John S. B. Monsell	893	493	614	412	694					
The Hills are Bare at Bethlehem	Chapter 5	1	Christ	Royce J. Scherf				61						
Then the Glory	Chapter 5	All	New Creation	Jaroslav J. Vajda								218		
There in God's Garden	Chapter 5	All	Christ	Király Imre von Pécselyi				342		514				
This is the Feast of Victory	Chapter 5	All	New Creation	John W. Arthur	DS pg 171	265								

When Seed Falls on Good Soil	Chapter 5	All (metaphoric)	Christ	Norman P. Olsen		338		236						
You are the Seed	Chapter 5	All	Christ	Cesareo Gabarian									753	
Your Kingdom Come, O Father	Chapter 5	4	New Creation	Kauko- Veikko Tamminen			384							
Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid	Chapter 6	1 and 2	Holy Spirit	Rabanus Maurus	500	167	188	164						
Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing	Chapter 6	All	Holy Spirit	Timothy Dudley-Smith	584									
Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing	Chapter 6	All metaphoric	Holy Spirit	Timothy Dudley-Smith	691									
O Holy Spirit, Root of Life	Chapter 6	1	Holy Spirit	Jean Janzen									688	
Praise the Spirit in Creation	Chapter 6	1	Holy Spirit	Michael Hewlett						588		246	682	
Sing to Him In Whom Creation	Chapter 6	1	Holy Spirit	Michael Hewlett							142			
Your Word, O Lord, is Gentle Dew	Chapter 6	1 and 2	Word	Carl B. Garve				232						
As Saints of Old	Chapter 7	1	Sense of Place	Frank von Christierson			404	695						
Crashing Waters at Creation	Chapter 7	All	Baptism	Suylvia G. Dunstan					455					
Grains of Wheat	Chapter 7	All	Sacraments	Cesareo Gabarian									708	
Let the Vineyard Be Fruitful	Chapter 7	All	Sacraments	John W. Arthur	955	168 & 187	66, 86, & 107	181 & 184	Service Music 181					
Now the Silence	Chapter 7	All	Sacraments	Jaroslav J. Vajda	910		231	205	460					
Reap Me the Earth as a Harvest to God	Chapter 7	Refrain	Sacraments	Peter Icarus						507				

Seed That in Earth is Dying	Chapter 7	1 and 3	Sacraments	Svein Ellingsen						330					
You Satisfy the Hungry Heart	Chapter 7	Refrain	Sacraments	Omer E. Westendorf	641					484	671				711
Eternal Father, Strong to Save/Almighty Father, Strong to Save	Non-specific	1, 2, 3, 4	Creation Images	William Whiting and Robert N. Spencer	717		517	467		756	260 & 261		354		
From Greenland's Icy Mountains	Non-specific	1, 2	Sense of Place	Reginald Heber		322	571								
God in Such Love for Us Lent Us This Planet	Non-specific	All	Stewardship	Fred Pratt Green							240				
God, Whose Farm Is All Creation	Non-specific	All	Harvest	John Arlott					734	226	370				
Jerusalem, My Happy Home	Non-specific	3, 4	Sense of Place	F. B. P. 16th century	673	307	215	331		628		187			
Lord, to You Immortal Praise	Non-specific	2	Harvest	Anna L. Barbauld		496									
Oh, the Life of the World is a Joy and a Treasure	Non-specific	1	Beauty of Creation	Kathryn Galloway							141				
Teach Us, O Loving Heart of Christ	Non-specific	2, 3	Damage to creation	Shirley Erena Murray							488				
To Thee O Lord Our Hearts we Raise	Non-specific	1, 2	Harvest	W. Chatterton Dix								291	261		
Touch the Earth Lightly	Non-specific	All	Care of Creation	Shirley Erena Murray					739	243					
When Your Father Made the World	Non-specific	1, 2 and refrain	Stewardship	Ann Conlon							239				
Where are the Voices for the Earth?	Non-specific	All	Stewardship	Shirley Erena Murray							244				

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