

“God’s Technicolor Creation”
Psalm 104:24-35, 35b
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Carol Lewis

Sitting in my favorite chair by my picture window,
I was supposed to be thinking about my sermon.
However, I was distracted by my feathered friends,
who were coming to dine, at the two birdfeeders in front of the window.
A ruby breasted grosbeak, red winged blackbird, gold finch, and purple finch
all vying for a position at the table.
Then my eyes migrated to the white birches gleaming in the late day sunshine;
To the deep wine colored leaves of the plum trees
dancing to the rhythm of the breeze;
to whimsical white puffy seeds from the cottonwood trees
traveling on the whim of the air currents;
to the many shades of green representing new life bursting forth from the earth;
and finally my eyes fell on the robin’s egg blue of the cloudless sky.
God’s creation dressed in Technicolor and singing praises to its creator!

I reigned in my thoughts and returned to the Psalms.
As I read Psalm 104 again, there was that AHA moment—
I had just observed what the Psalmist’s words were extolling.
The psalm recalls creation in a beautiful poetic way.
God’s covenant was not only with human beings

but with every part of creation:

Air, water, creeping things, winged creatures, swarming creatures, wild animals,
God declared that never again would the earth be cursed or
every living creature be destroyed.

“As long as the earth endures seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

Establishing a covenantal relationship means

God has chosen to be limited.

“God has chosen to enter into an interdependent and
intimate relationship with us where obedience and trust are key factors.

The idea that God relies on us to bring about God’s purpose places a matter of urgency on
our role in the partnership.”¹

God’s purpose in this covenant is to see that creation and all its creatures flourish.

If our role is to help bring about God’s purpose,
what role does the nonhuman component play in this covenant?

Perhaps the answer lies in the Book of Job 12:6-10.

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“Parish Life and Ministry Team of Local Church Ministries, a covenanted
Ministry of the UCC

God holds every living thing in God's care.

I can remember a time in my life when I had little regard
for some of God's creatures.

Bugs were on my list of the top most useless creations.

If it crawled, crept, or otherwise landed on me,

I thought nothing of squishing the creature.

Fortunately for me, with age came wisdom.

With the Holy Spirit breathing wisdom and compassion into my very being,

I no longer have the right to harm that which God has created.

I cannot justify harming or disrupting the balance
of God's magnificent Technicolor creation.

Now you may find it hard to believe but I even find beauty in slugs.

As I was walking our two dogs around our neighborhood the other day,

something glistened like diamonds on the sidewalk.

I stopped to take a closer look.

There on the concrete were many thin trails left by slugs.

I thought about the beauty of the slug's trails and how

it far outweighed the ordinary appearance of the creature that had made it.

I offered a prayer of thanksgiving

for having experienced such simple brilliant beauty
from one of God's lowly creations.

Creation has been the focus of our mission moments these past fifty days
which featured the UCC Mission 4/1 earth:50 great days.

How appropriate it is that the mission moments 4/1 earth end on Pentecost Sunday. For it
is the Holy Spirit that connects us to creation.

It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that empowers us
to act and function as children of God in the world.

Psalm 104 reminds us that human beings and creation are in a partnership
of praise and thanksgiving to our creator.

Additionally it reminds us of the ongoing work
of the Holy Spirit poured out for all living creatures.

The choir of creation includes rocks and trees,
skies and seas, as well as humans.

The psalmist writes that God's word
transcends our human ears and tongues,
and moves out to and through all creation.

God's Technicolor creation sings praises to its creator
each in its own voice: the songs of the birds, the buzzing of the cicadas,
the call of the seals, roar of the lions.

Scripture tells us it was the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

who translated God's word

allowing each person to hear it in their own tongue.

The Spirit's Pentecostal gift was translation; therefore we

who persevere in translation

must learn to hear and speak

more languages than the Psalmist's ancient audience.

God's voice came like a mighty wind.

Listen can you hear it?

Listen to the sound of the wind.

Listen to floors as they creak and groan.

Listen to the pops of expanding woodwork

as your house breathes in the warm Spring air.

Listen to the babbling brook as it wends onward.

Listen to the crash and roar of the ocean waves.

Listen to the still ponds garbed in morning mist.

Listen to the hum of the hummingbird's wings.

Listen to the rustling of the trees.

Listen to the tree frogs as they sing their night time lullaby.

Listen to the sound of the roadbed beneath the wheels of your vehicle.

All creation sings praises to their creator.

All Creation echoes God's holy name in a trillion different tongues.

Listen can you hear it?

Too often we have been a people
Who passively observe creation.
What must God and creation feel
when their attempts to communicate with us
fall on half hearted, half listening ears?

Leviathan in this Psalm frolics
yet in many other biblical stories
Leviathan is angry—upset at being overlooked
taken for granted
discharged as unimportant
and therefore to be feared.

If nothing else we humans have learned that we are not the masters of nature.
We vacillate between being partners, victims, or defilers of nature.
All partners suffer when human communication with nature
chooses force over negotiation.

How then do we enter into
passionate, productive, compassionate communication with creation?

Sure we are aware of the need to reduce reuse and recycle.

But even that becomes challenging
and we tend to lose our passion
and begin to revert to our old habits.

How many of our churches have actively led the way in a deep meaningful way?

If the diversity of God's Technicolor creation reveals God's wisdom,
should we be content exerting only the minimum effort
in preserving the environment and its inhabitants?

Superficial action is not true communication either between humans
or between human beings and creation.

The move to becoming a "green" church
and sustaining that covenant is an act of praise.

Learning a new language just like navigating a relationship
takes a great deal of effort and ongoing learning
to bridge the gaps in translation that ultimately occur.

Fruitful communication requires a commitment to practicing the art of translation. The
gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was not miraculous but magical.

The disciples had to convince the people
that it truly was the Word of God being spoken.

The listeners had to rely on patience to discover the truth.

Likewise it is the same for us as we move from passive observer to active participant with
nature, to translation of its praise, and to partners in its glory .

We pray like the Psalmist: May our meditation be pleasing to God,
and add that our translation be pleasing also.

This is the day to raise our voices and declare our solidarity with all creation; humbly recognizing that we are simply one part of a vast biodiversity, one that comes with covenantal rights and responsibilities.

May our eyes experience the wonder of God's Technicolor creation today and everyday.

May our ears truly hear what God's manifold works are saying.

May our heart's translation stimulate vibrant conversations on becoming a church that leads the way in becoming an active, compassionate, and pleasing partner sharing in God's purpose for ALL creation.

Listen can you hear it?