

“Creation Continues”  
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Genesis 1:1-2:4a  
San Dimas Community Church, United Church of Christ

May 18, 2008

The theme of “Creation Continues” is very appropriate on this Sunday when we are preparing for a celebration of God’s creation in the person of Frederika Preszler, a member of this church for many years. For 90 years Frederika was part of God’s glorious earth, and this afternoon we will remember with celebration and thanksgiving some of the ways she gave of herself to the continuation of God’s creation during her life with us.

Perhaps it will comfort us to know that the biblical text from Genesis was written by people also experiencing grief and loss. In about the year 560 BCE the Israelites were not living in their blessed land of milk and honey. They had been conquered by the great army of Babylon and then forced into exile to live and serve the Babylonian empire. Scripture says: *By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept, and wept for thee Zion.*

Every New Year celebration surely they watched as the Babylonians dramatized their creation story, and it was not a pretty sight. The gods who created Babylon were vicious and barbaric. Their creation story said that their mother and father gods became annoyed when their young gods made too much noise, and they went on a killing rampage.

We may not enjoy the noise of our teenagers, but we don’t kill them for it. As the Babylonian story plays out, violence is the method through which creation comes into being. I’ll spare you the gory details!

Imagine the Israelites watching this drama, all the while remembering the stories of their own beginnings; stories of Yahweh’s creation of the world. This is what they recalled: God’s spirit wind swept over the waters of chaos and God spoke the words: “Let there be light; and there was light. Day becomes both day light and moonbeams. And it was good!

Then God tackled the waters of chaos pushing up some of the water, to form the sky. In their imaginations they saw a solid dome to contain some of the water and create space for creation to continue and room for dry land. So there was water but now also earth, and it was a blessing! Creation continued when God said bring forth plants and fruit with seed, especially with seeds--so that life will go on.

Then God created lights in the sky, but they were not called sun and moon for sun and moon were names for other people’s gods. These lights were called greater and lesser lights and also the stars--the diamonds of the night sky.

And then out of the waters, creation continues and brings forth swarms of living creatures. Out of the waters they came and God blessed them and said “make more, make more.” And then God said, “let us make something that looks like us, so that the God image will appear all over the earth and make claim to this new creation as belonging to God. In their minds this was like the ancient kings who placed statues of their own images to mark the boundaries over which they claimed sovereignty. God says, humankind will be my images to stake claim over my creation. So God made humankind and blessed them. And then God rested, God rested from all this creativity, this hard work of giving birth to a new creation.

But the Israelites knew deep in their souls that unlike the pageant of Babylon’s creation story where violence brought life, Yahweh God created from a great longing for order and life. Yahweh God did not use weapons, spears, and armies (like the gods of Babylon); God simply spoke; the voice of the divine brought creation to life! It must have given Israel great comfort as they sat beside the waters of Babylon and wept to remember their stories passed from generation to generation of how Yahweh God had created their world. And so in exile from their beloved

land, it became so important for scribes to write down these words of a God who created through mighty words and with the power of love.

I believe that creation continues even today! I believe God's creative love is still speaking words of comfort and hope, words of birth and becoming. God is in constant conversation with all that God loves and often whispers (sometimes shouts!) words that are so powerful that miracles happen. I believe that God creates even while disasters happen.

It is not God's doing that an earthquake happened in China. It IS God's creative love that brings help, healing, and hope. Though we were created in God's image, we do not know all God's ways, and like Job learned through his sufferings and his conversations with God, God is God and we are we.

The singer Jane Froman was 5 years old when her dad left her and her mom. Jane developed a stutter which plagued her all her life except when she sang. In the 1940's she rose to fame but was severely injured in an aircraft crash in 1943, when a USO plane carrying Froman and 38 others crashed in Lisbon, Portugal. Froman was one of fifteen survivors. She sustained horrible injuries that effected her all her life. Froman underwent 39 operations over the years and wore a leg brace the remainder of her life. However, she returned to entertain the troops in World War II, despite having to walk with crutches. She gave 95 shows throughout Europe. In 1952 she was deeply troubled by the uprising of the Korean conflict so soon after World War II, and she requested that a song be composed that would be a song of hope and faith. The name of that song became: "**I Believe**".

I believe for every drop of rain that falls

A flower grows

I believe that somewhere in the darkest night

A candle glows

I believe for everyone who goes astray, someone will come

To show the way

I believe, I believe

I believe above a storm the smallest prayer

Can still be heard

I believe that someone in the great somewhere

Hears every word

Everytime I hear a new born baby cry,

Or touch a leaf or see the sky

Then I know why, I believe

I believe that at the ground of our being is the same creator God that spoke words to calm the waters, still the seas, and create life. And I believe that power is alive and still at work in our world. It is in each of us, and each in our own way we can make that creativity bring about something beautiful for God, something beautiful in our world. And we can do it with the power of our words, our work, our presence, our prayers, and our devotion. May this be so!