

The Good News of Deuteronomy for All Creation: A Pentecost/al Rehearing

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Introduction

The task of engaging creation care from a Biblical perspective is a matter less of seeking direct texts of Scripture—chapter and verse—but of hearing and re-hearing the Scriptures *in prophetic conversation with* contemporary contexts and realities.¹ It should not be imagined that the ancient Israelites thought in direct terms of “creation care” as we find in our contemporary global contexts—issues such as ozone depletion, pollution on global scales, over-industrialization, and global warming. Yet this does not mean that the Scriptures have no word to speak to such matters. It only means our responsibility to have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying must be more finely attuned to the dialogical prophetic conversation of contemporary realities and ancient divine messages spoken and heard anew. It is in this vein that the following seeks to rehear, in the light of Pentecost,² the Scriptures (in this case, Deuteronomy)³ as offering good news for all creation.

One might wonder about three phrases with regard to the proposed title of this article: good news, all creation, and Pentecost/al rehearing. First, the issue of “good news” to be found in a book of the Torah like Deuteronomy. Second, that such good news might pertain to “all creation” as a move toward a more biblically and theologically robust creation care praxis.

¹ This “prophetic” element is found in numerous of the citations below, but also owing in some measure to the helpful essay by Cherice Bock, “Climatologists, Theologians, and Prophets: Toward an Ecotheology of Critical Hope,” *Cross Currents* (2016), 8-34.

² The specific choice of “Pentecost” is meant to allow the ecumenical nature of the experience of Pentecost in Acts 2 to inform and be informed also by a Pentecostal hearing of such. In this fashion, I am following somewhat the lead of Amos Yong who has taken up the idea of the church living in the Spirit post-Pentecost and thus hearing the Scriptures as post-Pentecost. Yet I would carry this further, in localizing my own contextual hearing post-Pentecost as already informed and being informed by a Pentecostal context within the global and historic Church. For a number of Yong’s publications engaging various theological constructs and Biblical texts from this post-Pentecost perspective see, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (New York: Orbis, 2008), *Mission after Pentecost: The Witness of the Spirit from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), *Renewing the Church by the Spirit: Theological Education after Pentecost* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), and “Theological Education between the West and the ‘Rest’: A Reverse ‘Reverse Missionary’ and Pentecost Perspective.” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 24.1 (2021): 21-37.

³ Sandra Richter has also sought to construct a biblical theology approach to creation care in light of Deuteronomy, “Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation Care,” *BBR* 20.3 (2010), 355-276.

Third, what might any “Pentecost/al rehearing” have to say about such matters and why should that matter anyways.

Regarding the first issue, the “good news” is writ large across the pages of Deuteronomy in pointing toward Yahweh’s desire to make a people who were not a people including the nations that surrounded Israel (32:21), divine circumcision of hearts to be faithful to Yahweh (30:6) and sharing in the divine life (30:20).⁴ These are just some of the very themes sewn into the renewed covenant at Sinai/Horeb found in Deuteronomy that find their aim unpacked in much of the good news made even more explicit in the writings of the New Testament. More to the point, Deuteronomy is an ancient Near Eastern covenant text that explicates the reign of Yahweh over land and people (and as such, over all things). Deuteronomy is the divine ruler’s covenant indicating the divine reign on earth as in heaven. Thus, Deuteronomy serves as “good news” to those who were delivered from Egypt, provided for in the wilderness and are about to enter into the promises to their ancestors. This good news is intended also to be good news for the flourishing of the land and, thus, all of creation in the land upon which they will shortly enter.⁵

Regarding the second issue, “all creation” is offered the care of Yahweh in Deuteronomy. The care of Yahweh for the created order of the land is addressed in the ways that the new Israelite inhabitants must both possess the land properly and care for it for the long-term health and fruitfulness of all within it. Domesticated and wild animals will find both protections and nurture in the land. The trees, vines, and crops will be cared for toward fruitfulness without abuse or exhaustion. Even the watering of the land in rain and dew will find blessing in the faithfulness of this newly covenanted people in the land. This seems to miss the strong *herem* language committing certain peoples, places, and creatures to “total destruction” (e.g., Deut. 7:2). How could Deuteronomy be heard as good news for “all creation” if some of that creation is to be *totally destroyed* in its commitment to Yahweh? This total committal speaks to the reign of Yahweh who seeks to remove that which was destroying the land and would destroy the reign of the God of Israel in the land through the rebellion of the people and bringing about the reign of death upon all those dwelling in the land. The removal of some is the preservation of the whole apart from the few. Such a removal would free those suffering under the destruction of the destroying inhabitants of the land. People, creatures, land would all find the liberating S/spirit of Deuteronomy to bring fruitfulness in the reign of Yahweh.

⁴ For two extended treatments of ways in which one OT scholar has sought to speak to the good news in the book of Deuteronomy, see Daniel I. Block, *Gospel According to Moses: Theological and Ethical Reflections on the Book of Deuteronomy* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012), and *The Triumph of Grace: Literary and Theological Studies in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomical Themes* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2017).

⁵ This is not to suggest the timing of the writing of Deuteronomy in its final form, but only the literary reception of this book as part of the five books of Torah given before the departure of Moses east of the Jordan. Thus, there are no historical claims inherent by the statement, but only attunement to the literary character of the text itself and leaving aside any historical discussion not because it may not offer an alternate reading, but because the nature of the approach in this article is intentionally literary and theological.

Regarding the third issue, a “Pentecost/al rehearing” is intended as a contextualized rehearing of this book and its themes within it as a means of rehearing Deuteronomy not only as properly *Christian* scripture that is heard post-Pentecost as event and experience, but as heard within the matrices of *Pentecost* (as event) conceived more broadly than simply *Pentecostal* appropriations, with the Pentecostal communities as an embodiment of the situated community wherein this text is being heard for this article. This rehearing from Pentecost means that there can be no proper Churchly hearing/rehearing without being this side of the Spirit of Jesus, the gift of the Father, poured out at Pentecost upon this prophetic community. Such a rehearing of the Scriptures is reorienting in light of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus as the one pouring out the Spirit as witnessing to God’s reign. Yet the context for this rehearing is situated (in the context of this written contribution) within a Pentecostal milieu that offers a particular experience and testimony of Pentecost in the ongoing life of the Church.⁶ This Pentecostal experience and testimony also cannot but hear Deuteronomy in light of the reign of God in Jesus the Spirit Baptizer.

It is regrettable that there is no exhaustive way to offer up such a proposal within an article-length project, so a narrowing of the scope considering a specific text Scripture is essential. It may be that the message of Deuteronomy 30:19-20 can be reheard as a means of teasing out the shape of the good news in Deuteronomy (as a unit) for all creation with an ear attuned by the event heard post-Pentecost and within Pentecostalism. The text selected is offered as an exemplar and not as if others could not also have been selected. Thus, Deuteronomy 30:19-20 is offered as a focal text for rehearing Deuteronomy 30, Deuteronomy proper, the Torah, the OT/NT, and conversing with contemporary contexts in prophetic dialogical fashion. As a prophetic dialogical rehearing, it is intended that the rehearing is attuned to the Spirit speaking *in, through, and beyond* the enscripturated word and answered with a response of faith-filled/faithful obedience that testifies by the Spirit in prophetic reply. This prophetic rehearing is not intended nor written as a “how-to,” but as a broadly conceived project for immediate contextualized application to be discerned within individual community contexts. The vision is thus intended as playing out in the lives of actual communities responding to the One whose life they bear.

1. Rehearing Torah: Deuteronomy and Prophetic Reimagining

I call heaven and earth to testify against you today: I have put in front of you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life for you and your descendants: *that is* to love Yahweh your God, to obediently listen to his voice, to cling to him! He is your life⁷ and

⁶ One such example may be found in Kenneth J. Archer, “God—Creation’s Hope, Creation—God’s Home: A Pentecostal Theological Response to Terence E. Fretheim’s *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation*,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 19 (2010): 198-212.

⁷ The Hebrew is ambiguous as to the exact referent, but it was felt that Yahweh serves best in this theological hearing. This is the same reading followed by CSB, ESV, NKJV, NIV1984, NIV2011. Duane Christiansen follows this reading and notes it finds resonance in the Jewish commentaries of Ibn Ezra and Shadal, see his

length of days for living in the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to you. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)⁸

Deuteronomy literarily and theologically functions as not simply reiterated Torah (which the name Deuteronomy could suggest), but as recontextualized, reinterpreted, even reimagined Torah.⁹ The instructions of Deuteronomy belong to a different generation than the newly liberated Egyptian slave community camped at the foot of Sinai as this later community find themselves now on the cusp of entering the land promised back in Genesis to their fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. While Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers speak with a particular eye upon life in the wilderness (and some attenuation to the life in the land of promise), Deuteronomy looks to the establishment of Israel's life in the land. An establishment where tents are replaced by houses, daily harvesting of manna is replaced by the seasonal harvesting of crops, and the gathered congregation of Israel is replaced by the need to gather annually from scattered inheritance. Deuteronomy speaks to the new realities and *potential* realities of the community of Israel such as a fixed location for the house of Yahweh and the eventual ascension of kingship. It is these new realities and potentialities that Deuteronomy addresses in new ways and gives new voice to the Torah delivered once-for-all at Sinai, reheard (through reimagining) in that new day at Horeb on the far side of forty years in the wilderness.¹⁰

Deuteronomy has been chosen as a text functioning with Janus-like features as it looks back to the Torah that precedes it (Genesis-Numbers) and forward to the unfolding story of life in the land (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings). Such reimagining is not exhausted by these contexts. Still further, it seems to serve the prophetic words of the writing prophets including the likes of Jeremiah who will make use of its language for his words to the community going into Babylonian exile and Egyptian flight (some would even say it serves a community in Exile toward remaining the possibility of restoration of land and the people to the land).¹¹ Still further, Deuteronomy gives prophetic response for Jesus to the temptations suffered in the wilderness by the devil (Matt.4.4 citing Deut.8.3; Matt.4.7 citing Deut.6.16; Matt.6.10 citing Deut.6.13). Deuteronomy seems to theologically inform the care for the poor in the Book of Acts in ways in which these new communities would live into the Spirit of Deuteronomy. As one further example, Paul will make use of the nearness of God's word for bearing the life of the good news in his letter to the Romans (Rom.10: 6-8 citing Deut.13.12-14). This reimagined

Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12 (WBC 6B; Thomas Nelson, 2002), 748. See also, J.G. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2002), 421. The alternate reading that the love, obedient listening, and clinging are themselves the life of Israel (through gift of Yahweh) in some form is read by CEV, NAB, NASB, NET, NJB, NLT, NRSV.

⁸ All translations are the author's own unless otherwise indicated.

⁹ Walter Brueggemann and Todd Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 2020), 111-120.

¹⁰ See an extended discussion on the relation of this once-given yet ever-new *torah* in relation to the community of Israel (and later Church) in Terence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 132-139, and also Fretheim's "Law in the Service of Life: A Dynamic Understanding of Law in Deuteronomy," pp. 248-263, in Michael J. Chan and Brent A Strawn, eds., *What Kind of God?: Collected Essays of Terence E. Fretheim* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015).

¹¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 269.

(reiterated, recontextualized, reapplied) testament of Deuteronomy may also now offer help in our discerning toward a Pentecost/al appreciation of creation care as good news for all creation, but first a more carefully attuned rehearing of the prophetic witness/es of Deuteronomy seems apropos.

2. Rehearing the Prophetic Creation: The Heavens and the Earth Testify

It is not often remembered that the cosmos bears prophetic response-ability. Heaven and earth, land, creatures, crops, stones, water ... all bear prophetic witness to the God of Israel. This prophetic witness is a reminder to faithfulness for all people, indeed, all creatures to live before the creator and ruler of all in faith-fulness. It is a call to repentance for any abuse of the kingdom and rebellion against the King, Yahweh. It is the possibility of removal from the land *by* the land, in this case, by the Land of Promise.¹² The creatures of that kingdom will turn upon the rebels and drive them from the land just as previous inhabitants found themselves driven away (Deut.7:20).

The heavens and the earth bear prophetic witness to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel as reiterated in Deuteronomy 30:19. As witnesses to this covenant, they serve a prophetic role in holding the parties to account in keeping the covenant. If either party should fail to keep their end of the covenant (of which Yahweh will never fail!), then the very cosmos itself will prophetically engage in judgement. This witness is not a silent one but echoes loudly in the life of Israel.¹³ The testimony of creation against Israel will be served in the uncreating of created order (e.g., the wild animals turning against the inhabitants of the land and even the land turning against the inhabitants), the dissolution of patterns of life (e.g., in rain, in gestation). This prophetic role of creation where the heavens declare the faithfulness of Yahweh and the earth bears witness to the love of Yahweh testifies *to, for, and against* Israel. Israel must “love Yahweh ... obediently listen to his voice ... [and] cling to him” (30:20). Such love, listening, and clinging will be found in Yahweh as the very life of Israel (people, land, and all creation with them). The life of Israel was only found in the life of Israel’s God, and abiding in this God. There was never a guarantee of continued existence as if such was an automatic given. It was always and only as the gift of Israel’s God that was embraced by the participation of choice toward “life” and “blessing.”

¹² This is the manner in which Walter Brueggemann also has read the identifying forms of Israel’s self-narrative ending in 2 Kings and reimagined in 2 Chronicles where exile is a defining mark of Israelite identity regardless of any issues of historicity or ideological license. The relation to the land identifies this people even in exile. See Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), xvii-xix, though the entire volume unpacks at length the various ways Brueggemann perceives the texts of the OT to speak of relation to “the land” and who this plays out *in* and *against* and *for* Israel.

¹³ Against the “silent witness” proposed by Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 366. While following a different approach (though not entirely different), Rick D. Moore contends that “heaven” and “earth” are prophetic witnesses against the temptation to idol making as a turn from the “dynamic word” to a “static form”, see “Canon and Charisma in the Book of Deuteronomy,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), 86-87.

Life and blessing in this passage stand for the flourishing of existence for (1) the land, (2) the people, and (3) all creation included with them. It addresses issues of bearing offspring that survive and bear their own offspring. It addresses protection of the weak and vulnerable. It addresses the preservation of healthy lives and a healthy environment for nourishing life.

First, while “the land” refers very specifically to those places geographically delineated to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses as taken from others and given to the tribes of Israel, it is not intended to be exclusive. These boundaries were always porous, fluid, and flexing. They were not fixed in stone though written in Torah. They were the space for honoring and loving Yahweh and representing his reign to the wider world. This function of “the land” as a space for demonstrating the character of the God of Israel was essential to the covenant with the people of Israel. The boundaries could expand as including other places and peoples (and seems to call for such inclusion) toward God’s reign over all. The life that was to be enjoined and enjoyed in the land was meant as a witness to the “nations” and as a blessing for the created order. It was a place where *shalom* would reign and the welcome of the stranger, the nurturing of flora and fauna,¹⁴ and the continuation of life for the land would be a persistent witness to the God of the land as faithful and as the source of all life.

The care of the land is not a matter of simply defaulting to a mode of *always* preserving *everything*. This would be to miss the ways in which care necessarily includes such things as pruning, harvesting, feeding, grazing as more positive modes of removal toward flourishing. These can all play a part in the wholeness of the land and its faith-filled care. It is not that the land needs absolute reign as it also must be in submission to the Lord. All creation remains in a relationship of symbiosis where the peoples of the land hold primary responsibility for the care of all even as each part must do its part in relation to all other parts. The brokenness of all creation means this task is beyond complicated, even as such responsibility still remains for the covenantal partners. This responsibility stands more as response-ability before the owner and sovereign over the land: Yahweh. All of creation (caretakers and those-taken-care) belong to Yahweh. As such, all are committed to response to the divine word concerning the choice of life and death. All stand in this covenant either as the land-granted, or as prophetic witnesses of covenant faithfulness or failure.

Second, concerning the people, one wonders at the command for *herem* in this book. Pruning, harvesting, feeding, etc., are acceptable in many modern constructions of healthy ways of

¹⁴ An example of concern for fauna includes numerous texts about livestock such as the ox and donkey used throughout the ancient world for farming. The ox and donkey would each serve their purposes and not be abused by being treated as other than they were created to be (Deut.22.10). The ox that worked to grind the grain would be given some as part of the blessing and care due it (Deut.25.4). Paul himself would make good use of this passage for engaging in the wider issues of the care of those who serve (1 Tim.5.18). The helping of a neighbor included the helping of that neighbor’s livestock as the consideration of the blessing of preserving life (Deut.22.4).

possibly caring for the land (though even here it must be noted that these belong in proper ranges of acceptability toward flourishing). However, what is not immediately apparent is the ways in which removal of some inhabitants (including their properties and livestock) as completely destroyed by Israel should itself serve toward flourishing in the land and thus toward ancient creation care. This is not to put the pruning of trees in any sense into the same category as the killing of persons, but it is to recognize the ancient understanding of pollution of the land and the possibility therefore of eventual destruction of all some are not removed. This is the danger posed to Israel. If they fail to remove what must be removed (which is already destroying the created order prior to their arrival) then they will find themselves among those also being removed as having become part of the uncreating of God's creation intent for enjoyment of life.

The goodness of "the land" was present before Israel was present in it (Deut.1.25). It was blessed as the dwelling of the earlier inhabitants that were removed from the land and supplanted by Israel only because they were in fact destroying what the Lord intended to bless. Such goodness being demonstrated in the produce was a witness to the faithfulness of Yahweh despite the unfaithful inhabitants of the land and their abuse of the land. These peoples were removed because of such abuses even as Yahweh maintained the blessing for a witness to his faithfulness against (and not simply directly correlative to) the unfaithfulness of humankind. The language of covenant with Israel would prove to detail such.

Third, the potential of the covenant in Deuteronomy means generations of blessing upon all creation (Deut.28.4ff) and/or generations of death and destruction upon generations of all of creation for disobedience. In the judgment against the disordering of life, life itself is further undone where the creatures that were once destroyed, now become the destroyers, where the land seems itself to take on enemy status against Israel as inhabitants (Deut. 28). The removal of the people would also mean the destruction of their many building projects and homes. To think that one could give life through manipulation and abuse of the creation in such things as the fashioning of idols, in violence, in overuse of land, creatures, and produce, is to dismiss the ways in which one participates in the life of Yahweh in the care of creation. Such failure to live into the life of Yahweh in creation-care would result in the judgment of the inhabitants at the hands of Yahweh. If earlier abusers of the creation would be removed, so would Israel as covenantal caretakers—and this with still greater violence (even as always also with mercy and compassion by the Faithful God).

It is creation (people and land) that exists and is maintained as the gift of the life of God. "Creation, the network of living organisms that provides a viable context and 'home' for the human community, is an outcome of Yahweh's generous, sovereign freedom."¹⁵ For Brueggemann the theology of "generativity" born of the life of the God of Israel in and for

¹⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 528.

and through Israel plays out in the generativity of creation including bearing of children (which is not taken for granted in the Genesis narratives, nor in the later Torah).¹⁶ He proposes three themes relevant to the blessing of creation: wisdom, righteousness (as ethical action), and public worship.¹⁷ He further contends for the ways in which creation and people are knit *together* and *against* and ultimately *for* one another. “When Yahweh is not obeyed, all of creation is placed in profound jeopardy. There are limits to Yahweh’s toleration of Israel’s recalcitrance in this curse recital, just as there were limits for the world (Genesis 6-7) and for Sodom (Genesis 19).”¹⁸ Brueggemann describes at length the testimony of Israel concerning Yahweh’s partnership with creation as having (1) a “season of blessing,” (2) “a radical fissure” where creation seems to obtain the possibility of being utterly undone (a sort of breaking) by destructive forces in rebellion against the good reign of Yahweh, and (3) “a radical newness” as living hope in Yahweh’s abounding generosity against and overcoming judgment.¹⁹ Let the reader give ear to re-hear as a prophetic community this prophetic word of covenant with them: blessing, breaking, renewing.

3. Rehearing in Prophetic Community: Ancient and Contemporary Witnesses

The text of Deuteronomy arises in prophetic community with Moses as prophetic spokesperson *par excellence*. His voice is given to the community for their remembering, repeating, rehearing in perpetuity. Even the text of Deuteronomy anticipates the prophetic in force among the people (for good and ill; Deut. 13; 18.15-22) who take up response-ability to test the prophetic as a prophetic community living in a land that will bear prophetic witness as well. This communal prophetic element bears a further rehearing toward our proposal of the good news for all creation.

The covenantal language of Deuteronomy addresses individuals and individual responsibility for faithfulness, but more particularly focuses upon the community itself and community responsibilities. First and foremost, the communities would either find their land blessed or cursed, find themselves removed or remaining. Secondly, the individuals that made up the communities would participate or fail to participate in the covenant and receive blessing or curse, life or death. Ancient near eastern contexts gave emphasis to the family, clan, tribe, and people for decision making and responsibilities. The consequences were rarely conceived as applying only to individuals as if they were not members of a community in accountability. In fact, the judgment of individuals could bring a curse to the land if the community failed to carry out judgments in ways that honored the wider community and the very land of the community (Deut.21.22-23). The individual was thus accountable to the community. However, Deuteronomy also held the community responsible for the individual (Deut.13.12-17).

¹⁶ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 530.

¹⁷ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 532.

¹⁸ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 540.

¹⁹ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 528-550.

This prophetic community was tied to the rest of creation as prophetic (micro)cosmos, each bearing witness to each toward faithfulness. The faithfulness was not what generated the blessing but enjoyed the blessing without seeking its breaking. The breaking could not finally destroy the blessing that would be found in the overabounding life of Yahweh to make all things new and to do better than even the blessing in brokenness. Mercy and grace would triumph over justice. The covenant-God would bear the weight of the covenant demands as life for the people, land, and all of creation. This would find itself playing out in the prophetic life of the community to choose life by the One who is life.

Post-Pentecost, the Church also is taken up in the covenant with Israel through faith in the faithful one, Jesus the King. The Spirit of Jesus outpoured on the Day of Pentecost is the Spirit of Life: loving God, clinging to God, obeying God. It is the life of the Father (with ever proceeding Son and Spirit) in the life of the community of God's people. It is the eschatological inbreaking of the reign of God not being finished with creation but seeking the final redemption of all things through this prophetic community. Such an eschatological re-envisioning for creation is not that all will be destroyed, but that all will be made new in the life of God.²⁰ It is this eschatological vision of life which must capture the imaginations and the testimony of the prophetic community of the Church. This people of the good news of God's reign bear prophetic witness *in* and *for* and *against* creation as prophetic community. We may even say creation also still bears prophetic witness *to* and *for* and *against* this community.

A Pentecost/al rehearing of Deuteronomy 30:19-20 is a rehearing toward the life of God in Christ Jesus by his Spirit of the prophetic poured out on all of creation. This is the good news of God's reign. As such, the good news of God's kingdom come, and coming, in Christ Jesus and by the Spirit must indeed speak prophetically to ecological issues. As Amos Yong notes, "[C]oncerns about human interconnectedness, including environmental situatedness, cannot be ignored or dismissed."²¹ The prophetic responsibility of this community must address contemporary needs within the wider world and even more particularly within the community itself as toward the faithful life-giving reign of God. As one author notes, "If

²⁰ Andrew Ray Williams provides both theoretical and practical engagement with multiple voices against a primarily negating eschatology that neglects creation. He picks up these voices toward re-envisioning Pentecostal eco-theologies and eco-eschatologies within the Pentecostal imaginary, "Flame of Creation: Pentecostal Ecotheology in Dialogue with Clark Pinnock's Pneumatology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 26 (2017), 272-285, and "Greening the Apocalypse: A Pentecostal Eco-Eschatological Exploration," *PentecoStudies* 17.2 (2018), 205-229. See also, Lamp, Jeffrey S. "New Heavens and New Earth: Early Pentecostal Soteriology as a Foundation for Creation Care in the Present," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 36 (2014): 64-80; Agustinus Dermawan, "The Spirit in Creation and Environmental Stewardship: A Preliminary Pentecostal Response toward Ecological Theology," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 6.2 (2003): 199-217, and for the first edited volume providing scholarly engagement on the topics of Pentecostals and creation care, see A.J. Swoboda, A.J., ed. *Blood Cries Out: Pentecostals, Ecology, and the Groans of Creation* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

²¹ Yong, *Renewing the Church by the Spirit*, 58.

Christianity is indeed part of the underlying problem, as is widely assumed from outside Christianity, then the most significant contribution that Christians can make to address ecological problems may be to get their own house in order.”²² Yet prophetically speaking to issues of matters such as ecotheology within the Church is not simply about calling the community to faith-filled living *in* and *for* creation, but also at times *against* creation.

Could it be that part of creation care for the Church (as for Israel before her) was to oppose powers of chaos, death, and destruction that are themselves at work within creation in general and embodied in dark powers and principalities, and human will? One should not imagine a passive creation, but one which itself is often in rebellion against the reign of God. Such power of negating or opposing the reign of God in creation is testimony of a creation in rebellion (both visible and invisible). Such rebellion must be addressed by the prophetic community. Creation is not simply amoral but broken and finds itself in opposition to God’s reign even as it cries aloud for redemption. As with those bearing God’s image, so with God’s world.

If the Church that is birthed at and in Pentecost *against*, but ultimately *for* the creation, must take up such prophetic voice, it remains that Pentecostals (as one part) who already claim this prophetic calling would more readily do so as members of this historic and global Church through the ages. The global fellowships which self-claim as Pentecostals take upon themselves (as having received such by the Lord) the response-ability to answer God’s self-revelation with playing out the life of God in the life of the cosmos. Creation must bear the marks of God’s reign as the Spirit-filled Church must bear the marks of God’s reign. The prophetic community must pray toward the healing and wholeness of all things. The prophetic community must bear witness through practices which reveal the life of God *against* but ultimately *for* creation.

It is this vision which must fill the imaginations of a community committed to prophetic remembering and retelling of God’s intentions from the beginning. This community must discern practices which judge, cut off, and remove what does not bear the life of God. Yet this community must do so toward the life of God in creation and not for self-gain, nor self-assertion, nor abandonment of creation to a great eschatological conflagration. This community must re-envision itself as living faithfully *in* creation, as both *against* and *for* rebellious creation, *against* and *for* the community itself. This community must re-envision itself as caretakers of creation (as living the life of God), with all the goodness of the good news of the God who is life.

²² Ernst M. Conradie, “The Four Tasks of Christian Ecotheology: Revisiting the Current Debate,” *Scriptura* 119 (2020): 1-13 (5). Conradie offers critical prophetic responses toward prophetic re-envisioning ecotheology as life in the world living in light of the kingdom of God.

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