

“Creating Love”

Colossians 1:15-28

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Growing up on the farm I was in awe of seeds that burst forth into an abundance of plants, cows that turn forage into milk and the dancing colors of the northern lights. In college, my awe grew as I studied agriculture. The harmonious interaction of worms, microbes, soil structure, water, sun, nutrients, the plant, and on and on. The more we learn the more creative order, harmony, and synergy we discover. A cow consumes around 100 pounds of food a day which is converted to life and milk through four stomachs. The rumen is a compartment of synergistic, complex, and harmony with bacteria, fluids, mixing, ruminating to power the cow. The Northern Lights made getting up at 4:15 am in the winter more enjoyable. I am not educated regarding cosmic happenings, but I do know they are driven by a relational order. Throughout all of creation, harmonious relationships create and sustain magnificent life and wonders, a reflection of our Triune God, a perfect loving relationship.

When we notice the relational harmony of the cosmos, we experience God. The Apostle Paul explains that all things hold together in God who created all to thrive in synergistic relationships.” **Colossians 1:15-28 (NRSV) “Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Jesus all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through Jesus and for him. Jesus, himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Jesus is the head of the body, the church; Jesus is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Jesus God was pleased to reconcile to Godself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel. I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is Jesus whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”**

Diarmuid O’Murchu in *Quantum Theology* spends one hundred pages sharing findings from science revealing how everything exists in relationship from the smallest particles to galaxies. He then writes, “Contemporary culture prizes dominance and control. This translates into the political preoccupation with law and order and the religious emphasis on obedience and subservience. To enforce this philosophy everything is viewed as autonomous, individualistic and isolated. But nature and cosmic evolution thrive on interdependence and relatedness. Meaning arises from connections and relationships, leaving humanity with a formidable challenge to change our perceptions and fundamental understanding of how creation operates. Can you personally relate to the notion that each one of us is the sum of our relationships and that we develop personal identity from our relationships and not from our autonomous

independence? We must learn to befriend our universe as a subject with whom we relate, a living organism within which we live and move and have our being. If creation at large thrives on relationality, why do we cling so rigidly to a culture of fierce competition? Across the sciences there is mounting evidence for the fact that everything is created out of relatedness, sustained through relationships and thrives on interdependence. What might churches and religions look like if the emphasis was more on trust rather than on control, on relationality rather than on dominance?"

For seven years, I was a dairy nutrition consultant. The animal is only as healthy as its relationships. It doesn't matter if you have 999 of those relationships in the proper rhythm; the animal is only as healthy as the weakest relationship. If the animal is formulating protein and one amino acid is not there at the moment, the entire chain is broken and will need to be reformulated. If the diet is correctly formulated but it is not resulting in a lethargic animal that doesn't get up to eat, then all the farmer's efforts to serve a tasty meal goes to waste. If the meal, temperature and thousands of relationships are all in harmony but the farmer is grumpy creating stress for the cow, then that will be the limiting relationship.

We thrive when we are in a harmonious synergetic relationship with the cosmos and every other person on earth. When Jesus walked the earth, the religious leaders thought they could create purity, healthy, faithful living by putting up walls. They strived to identify clean and unclean, then keep the unclean out of the temple. They identified certain people as outcasts and excluded them. They established criteria that had to be upheld to experience the love of God. Jesus broke through every wall. Jesus loves everyone. Jesus taught and healed to bring everyone into relationship with each other. The entire cosmos is designed to thrive in harmonious relationships.

Hate is murder, it kills the cosmos, because a relationship is broken. What is the root cause of our hate? Does hate spring from fear? Does fear and hate start with binary thinking? One must choose conservative or liberal, prosperity or caring for others, a growing economy or stewardship of the environment, republican or democrat instead of nurturing all relationships. Binary thinking fuels competition, one side must win, be right or at least be the better option. We are created to be in relationship with all people, to be a community, to serve together to find a common way of love. Jesus taught in parables that enable each person to hear a unique message. If there is only one right way to live and love, why do we have a Bible full of a multitude of ways to be in loving relationships? Perhaps it is because when we unite our uniqueness in harmonious relationships we are able to create an array of wonder and beauty. Is there only one way to write a love song, create art, cook a meal, be romantic with your spouse, celebrate friendship, parent a child?

God created the cosmos and us to generate beauty through relationships. When we let go of binary thinking and let come an appreciation for diversity, we are able to create solutions that are a way of love for everyone.

Rebecca Florence Miller wrote, "God, we cannot change everyone else, but we ask you to change us. Live your goodness through us. Break our hearts with the things that break your heart. Use us to bring life and peace to a broken world, instead of more hatred and anger."

Synthesis newsletter explains, "Life is not a problem to be fixed, but a mystery to be explored and embraced. To listen to another and to be truly listened to, is a gift through which the uniqueness of every individual is honored. Thus we are transformed, our hearts and souls are expanded and we come more fully alive. Such moments become occasions of holy listening."

Sue Monk Kidd wrote, "History is not just facts and events. History is also a pain in the heart and we repeat history until we are able to make another's pain in the heart our own."

Cathy Kolwey shared the following statement of faith recently, "I believe in the Divine Creator, maker of heaven and earth."

I believe that I am a creative being made in the image of this Creator God. This Creator God is expressed in a Trinity that I understand as Divine Creator (God), Chaotic Destabilizer (Jesus), and Creative Muse (Holy Spirit).

I believe that separation from our inherent creativity will separate us from God, self, and others and that in that separation, sin occurs. In addition, when this separation from creative energy and self-expression occurs intentionally it lays a foundation for the oppression of self and others.

I believe that Jesus was the perfected expression of this creative spirit. We experienced this creative energy in his healing, his storytelling and his community building practices. Through his example, I can see a path to achieving this creative spirit, as well as a path to resisting the oppression that steals that creative spirit from others.

I believe that each individual embodies an inherent dignity that we must foster through the development of creativity in ourselves and each other. It is our responsibility to foster this inherent creativity within our lives and with others, so as to develop the fullest expression of God and the divinity within and among.

I believe that the church is the intentional and covenantal commitment to the chaotic entanglement that already exists throughout our universe.

I believe that worship is the creative expression of love for this Creator God, the one who created from the beginning and who is creating still.”

Cathy will be ordained on Saturday, October 8, at 2 pm at Robbinsdale UCC. You are invited to join the celebration.

Separation is sin. Every broken relationship is sin. Anyone who is promoting separation, fear, hate, divisiveness is sinning. When we are lethargic in building relationships with those we disagree with, that is sin. We are called to love our enemies. Anytime love is lacking, that is sin. When we choose sides, dig in our position, insist on only one way, our way, whenever we force another to live our view we are damaging relationships. Anything that damages a relationship, that hinders love for another or any part of the cosmos is sin. When we fail to utilize the creative ability God gives us to love, to find mutual solutions we are sinning.

It is easy to get stuck in binary thinking. Limiting the choices to A or B and then deciding one is right and the other is wrong. If one thinks they have the only solution, reads only information that supports that position and stops listening to people on the other side of the issue, then that person will start to exaggerate to make their point and question everything the other person does. If one lets this fester, it will grow into fear and hate. The good news in today's scripture is each of us, all of us, all of the cosmos, God has given the creative ability to unite in harmonious, synergetic, loving relationships.

Often binary thinking keeps us from discovering solutions that thrive in the tension and solutions that emerge from looking at the entire puzzle with every piece, even the extremes, revealing the way. There are as many perspectives and solutions to every issue as there are people in the world. Jesus taught in parables to reveal various good and loving ways to respond to situations. We see an aspect of ourselves in each person in the parable. We exclude a multitude whenever we try to limit an issue to two options. Perhaps you disagree with this sermon, but that does not make it wrong for it is just one perspective. Hopefully, it expands your perspective enabling you to articulate more clearly what you believe.

Cathy believes Jesus is a “chaotic destabilizer”. Where religion severed relationships creating chaos, Jesus destabilized their excluding rules inviting people to form loving relationships. Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery. Jesus healed the unclean. Where society severed relationships creating chaos Jesus destabilized the excluding, inviting people to form loving relationships. Jesus shared a meal with a tax collector. Jesus healed the daughter of a Roman soldier.

We are still creating plenty of chaos with our binary thinking, our attempts to categorize others, to exclude, and separate. Is God destabilizing systems that separate today, destabilizing powers that oppress, destabilizing economies that value money over God and over people, destabilizing a culture that adores only one body type, destabilizing politics that refuses to seek the most excellent way of love, destabilizing racism, even destabilizing churches that limit God's grace? Is God destabilizing each of us so we can be open to the Holy Spirit, which Cathy calls the "Creative Muse"? Is God destabilizing so we can be creative in love, creative in finding ways to share, creative in discovering how to live together in harmony? God is recreating love from our chaos.

Colossians 1:15-20 (MSG) "We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in Jesus and finds its purpose in him. Jesus was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to the church, Jesus organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body. Jesus was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—Jesus is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is Jesus, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in Jesus without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross." God will fit every piece of the cosmos, people, animals, things, sub-atomic particles, galaxies together in vibrant harmonies. We are invited to speed up the process by building loving relationships. Stop being afraid, hating, and worrying. Stop name calling and blaming. Stop all forms of divisiveness. Nurture a relationship with someone from a different political party. Have a loving conversation with them, affirm the good in each other's party, be creative in identifying a mutual way of love. Nurture a relationship with a fundamental, evangelical Christian. Love each other. Learn from each other. Share meals with people who are from a different cultures. Viking fans and Packer fans befriend each other. God is fitting us all together in vibrant harmony. Amen