

The Season of Creation 4: God has created a place of wonder, keeping it all in balance,

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As we read the Psalms, we become aware that the writers stood in awe of the created world, and constantly praised God as the creator. Over and over again, we read phrases like...(Ps. 8:4&5) *"when I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you have set in order, what are we that You should be mindful of us?"* Also Ps. 19:1 *"The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork."* The Hebrews recognised the splendour of God's creation, praised Him for it, and pointed out that only the wisdom and power of God could bring it into being. Indeed this was their proof of the existence of God.

As a child, the beauty and immensity of the created world was wondrous to me, but it did not yet point me to the glory of God, the Creator. But, as a child, I wondered why orange trees always produced oranges, and not avocados sometimes, or a mixture of both. Something or someone of intelligence was keeping things constant, not chaotic. As I learned about God through correspondence Sunday School lessons, I came to understand that God was the source of a stable and reliable creation all around me. How wonderful! And here are some instances that struck me as wonderful, and revealed a God of glory to me.

Brisbane Sunsets

Real awareness began when I was about 18, and the family had moved to Brisbane. We lived in an old Queenslander house on

the top of a hill, in a suburb called Wavell Heights. The front verandah looked to the West, and often in the Summer there would be a heavy rainstorm at the end of the day. Residual clouds packed like fairy floss on the top of the ranges in the distance, at sunset, with colours that dazzled you. They were bright red, luminous green, royal purple, shiny yellow, and all colours in between. It was unbelievable. It made my heart glow. It made me think of God, in whom there is no darkness at all. The clouds could have been all black, grey and brown...but they weren't. Neither was a rainbow, when it appeared. Nor was sunrise. Clouds were white, except when warning us of a storm. It seems that God planned the colours of such events to lift up the human heart, and to be glorious to behold. I was beginning to see the glory of God displayed in His creation.

I sometimes mentioned these wonders to others, and if they hesitated to use the word "God", they gave the credit to a wondrous woman called Mother Nature. I could never track her down. There was no record of Father Nature, nor their children, but she seemed to be the source of all the wonders of creation, and no-one knew where she lived.

Reading the History of the Earth:

I was starting to see the Wisdom of God all around. At University I studied Mining Engineering and one major subject was Geology. Like all geology students, I bought myself a little geology pick, to collect specimens of rock. We would be travelling in the car, and I would say, "Dad! Stop" . He would say, "Oh, no, not again, more rocks to take home!" We were also taught how to read the history of local areas by studying exposed rock faces in quarries and road cuttings. The highway cuttings through the sandstone north of Sydney were great, but the cuttings on the South Eastern Freeway from Adelaide were the best. Clear for all to see were layers of sand, then clay, then maybe ocean sediments, where maritime fossils stood out. You could see where there had been a fault, where the earth

had moved, and layers shifted relative to each other. Our geological history was not chaotic, but ordered, controlled by an intelligent mind.

Made in the Womb:

In the Old Testament, Psalm 139 says:- *“For you have created my inward parts: you knit me together in my mother’s womb. You knew my soul, and my bones were not hidden from you; when I was formed in secret, and woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my limbs when they were yet imperfect. Day by day they were fashioned: and not one was late in growing.”*

Even then, King David and others recognised that the world had not randomly developed, but was the product of a divine intelligence, which maintained order and constancy. If it were not so, then woman could give birth to animals, fruit trees would produce any fruit at all, flowers would be chaotic, and the atmosphere would be totally unpredictable. Life would be unbearable and we would go mad in the confusion of it all.

Evensong in the Grove:

As part of creation, we have an ability to recognise its beauty and attraction. For example, when, on one occasion, as a Bush Brother I was on a long drive from one centre to another, I saw a grove of tall trees on a sand hill just off the road a bit, I was drawn to stop and have my Evening Prayers there. I later mentioned this to Brother Godfrey, who said, “That is strange. I was attracted to something in that Grove, and I say Evening Prayer there too!”

Flying from Birdsville to Alice Springs:

Now that is a small thing, but significant to me. Now for something bigger. I have already told some of you here today about the following phenomenon, so please forgive the repetition. I was elected to be Head Brother of the Bush Brothers, and part of my duty was to visit other Brothers in

isolated places to encourage them in their ministry. I was greatly blessed to have a Cessna 182 to get around all over Western Queensland and NSW and the NT. I was the pilot. It so happened that I needed to fly to Alice Springs, and the fastest way was from Birdsville, a distance of about 600 km. This required me to cross the Simpson Desert, which I had never done before, and which, quite frankly, scared me a bit.

Our plane had two Automatic Direction Finders, or ADFs. Nearly all aerodromes at that time had a radio beacon which broadcasted a signal in all directions, on a particular frequency, which could be picked up by an ADF in a plane. The ADF's needle then pointed to the destination. I knew that I would lose the Birdsville signal about 100 km out into the Desert, and that there would be a considerable time before I could pick up the signal from Alice Springs. I would be flying about 100 km or more without any visible means of knowing where I was, but I would have radio contact with Alice Springs for some of the way. So I sat down with my aeronautical maps, and studied the route. There was sandhill after sandhill for most of the route. But I discovered something wonderful. Every sandhill was recorded on the map, all the way along my path. This meant that those hills were stationary. They did not move. They could be used as landmarks for navigation. Some forked then rejoined, some just terminated. Others just started. Obviously, God had designed them especially for aviators.

So then, with full fuel, I started the engine, and activated the signal from the Birdsville beacon, about 100 metres away. It was a strong signal. Then I switched on my second direction finder, dialled up Alice Springs, and, wonder of wonders, the needle slowly swung round to point to Alice Springs. It should not have happened like that. I was not in the air, and I was certainly out of range. Thanks be to God, I now felt much better. The trip went well, with recognisable sandhills all along the path.

But it doesn't have to be something major like that trip over the desert to see the glory of creation. Anyone can see it.

Consider a sunflower. It's big and there is an evident pattern to the arrangement of its parts ,which never changes. It is called fractal, and it happens with many flowers. Here is a tiny flower, so small that it takes a magnifying glass to see the detail. And guess what? It has the same repeated pattern of a fractal. Coincidence? I don't think so. God appears to have a whimsical nature.

Conclusion:

Finally, I want to say that God's Creation is wonderful for us, like it was for the Hebrews, even if we live in a technological world, and that it is relatively stable, allowing for the fact that Los Angeles is prone to earthquakes, that Hawaii has active volcanoes, and that certain islands grow while others disappear. If we respect these anomalies, then our world is a safe and predictable place to be. If we know that our wildlife has specific habitats, we must respect and preserve them. But, above all, it is clear to see, for those who open their eyes, that our God has created a place of wonder, keeping it all in balance, where we can live in harmony with it all. And if you are spiritually depressed, look into a tiny flower, and realise that God made it to lift your heart to Him, and say "Thank you". End.