

# GROWING Together

ISSN: 1481-9465

## DISCOVERING GOD IN CREATION

It's a beautiful day. The sun is shining. A gentle breeze blows across the river. Ripples break the light into many sparkles. Reflected, they dance on the mud bank, and play upon the leaves of cottonwoods that line the shore. Scanning the horizon, a flock of geese comes in to land. Their webbed feet skim the surface of the water before settling in to rest. A bird sings. "Look at this," my companion says, pointing to a tiny wildflower, one I almost stepped on. "Isn't this amazing?"

Whether staring at the vastness of the heavens, or examining the smallest detail up close, God's creation does indeed dazzle and amaze. The opening words of the Bible declare: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And ever since, humanity has been discovering hints and clues about the nature of God in the world that God has made. (*Romans 1:19-20*)

For Christians, God's self-disclosure reaches its fullest expression in the person of Jesus Christ. (*Hebrews 1:1-4*) Creation, however, continues to be a source for our knowledge of God, available to all.

A Hebrew poet once wrote: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the skies proclaim God's handiwork." (*Psalms 19:1*) People of faith have often encountered God through the things that God has made. The 13<sup>th</sup> century poet and visionary, Mechtild of Magdeburg, remarked: "The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw and knew I saw all things in God and God in all things." For Mechtild, God's presence permeated the whole world around her. Christians do not worship creation, but the God revealed through every star in the sky, every microscopic particle of the earth and every living creature. All things disclose the presence of the Creator.

Spending time in creation can be a great way to grow closer in our relationship with God. How might this happen?

First, by paying attention to the world around us. If creation declares God's glory, then we need to listen to its message. When we rise in the morning we are greeted by the sunrise. Could God be speaking to us? On the way to work we pass a hedge of purple lilacs in fragrant bloom. What does this say about the beauty and extravagance of our Lord? On the kitchen window a perfectly formed snowflake rests for a few seconds before it melts away. What hymn of praise has just been sung?

Second, we can cultivate an attitude of awe. No matter how much science tells us about the structures and processes of nature, we must not lose our sense of wonder. New discoveries point us to a deeper appreciation of the complexities of the created world and the One who stands behind them. In church we sometimes feel ourselves in the presence of tremendous mystery. In the sanctuary of creation we may feel a sudden urge to pray, express our thanks, or simply acknowledge the presence of God.

Third, we can bring healing to the relationship we have with the earth. Too often we find ourselves pitted against creation. We clear-cut forests. We scar the face of the earth, digging for minerals. We pollute our ground water. Smokestacks spew tons of chemicals into the air. If instead we care for creation, shunning over-consumption and making responsible choices, we help restore the relationship that God desires.

For Mechtild, creation is an important part of her spiritual awakening. And so it may be for us as we discover God in the world around us.



GROWING TOGETHER is a series of five Sunday bulletin inserts for the ecumenical education of Christ's faithful.

Prairie Centre for Ecumenism  
600 - 45th Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9  
CANADA © 2008



phone: (306)-653-1633  
fax: (306) 653-1821  
email: pce@ecumenism.net  
www.ecumenism.net