

THEME:

“WE BELIEVE IN GOD THE CREATOR MAKER OF HEAVENS AND EARTH”:

Meaning, Implications and Applications of the Nicene Creedal Affirmation

(Short title: **GOD THE CREATOR**)

Presented at

the CATS X Assembly of the CCA

on

2024 October 26

at

the WP Hotel Hall, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

by

Rev. Dr. **Rajan Chacko Thomas**

(Mar Thoma Church, Kerala, India)

Outline

Introduction

I

Deciphering the Theme: “WE BELIEVE IN GOD THE CREATOR”

- 1 *Structure and Aim of the Presentation:*
- 2 *Pre-suppositions of the Paper:*
3. *Nicene Reflection of the Biblical Creator God*
- 4 *Inevitability of the Nicene Creed:*

II

Some Historical Leaps of the Theme “WE BELIEVE IN ... CREATOR:

- *Some Perspectival Shifts after 1980:*
- *Distinguishing Temperature, Weather and Climate change:*
- *From Anthropological to Anthropocene:*
- *Linking Ecology to Economy and Gender:*
- *Ecumenical Inclination: towards “... God the Creator....”*
- *Theologians of the Church*
- *St. Ephrem the Syrian Poet: St. Gregory of Nyssa and other Cappadocian Fathers; St. Francis of Assisi: relating to Creatures as Brothers & Sisters; Pope Francis on **Laudate Deum** (2021); Jürgen Moltmann (1920-2024):*

CHAPTER THREE

Application of the theme “... God the Creator...”:

Conclusion

:

“We believe in
GOD THE CREATOR
of Heaven and Earth”

Introduction:

In the month of July 2024, a huge land slide and flood happened in the Wayanad district in North Kerala) India. During the utter pandemonium a mother and little girl were trying to escape, and they came in front of a roaring tusker in the night. They had nothing to do except with folded hands to plead and beg: *njangale onnum cheyyatruthe* (Malayalam for “do not harm us”). It was still pitch dark in 2 am. It is no exaggeration that the animal guarded them till the impending dawn. On the other hand, humans in that area used to trap or place crackers inside their fodder and harm the elephants under the guise that they destroy their cultivation.

Once a group of students in Kerala was asked about their ambition in life and one boy replied veterinary doctor. His rationality was that no relative of a dog or cow will sue a file against the veterinary doctor for an incompetent and improper treatment.

1 Structure and Aim of the Presentation:

What is meaning of the faith affirmation of God as the Creator not only in relation to humans themselves but also in relation to the non-human world? Who needs whom? Is human existence inevitable for the sustenance of animals and plants or is it that humans depend upon the non-human created order for their existence? Since 1960, a drastic change has skewed the Christian interpretation of human- nonhuman relationship. Did our concept of God as creator trigger this?

These two above cited incidents indicate the typical undue claim and attitude that humans are superior to the non-human world. This approach reflects our lopsided rationality in relation to the non-human created order. One refuses to accept that God as creator preference for whether humans can exploit the non-human world to their advantage. These two anecdotes compel one to ask the question: ‘*Do we humans accept the sovereignty and freedom of an almighty God which cuts across all our pre-suppositions?*’ One of our presuppositions is that the creator has endowed us with more rational faculties than the animals. Another is that humans can manipulate non-human world as per their whims and fancies. Are humans more intelligent animals? It is dubious. One may succumb to the statement what the biblical author Job had already told: “*Ask the animal; they will teach you or the birds in the sky; they will tell you.....*” (refer to Job. 12:7-25). Any claim or argument of humans as superior to the non-human world is only a chimera and a mirage. That presupposition has already turned redundant because God is the creator of

all seen and unseen things. These incidents compel us to rethink our relationship to nature to acknowledge that humans have a natural and biological relationship to the non-human world.

This short essay is divided into three main chapters starting with an *Introduction and ending with a conclusion* to understand the first creedal affirmation in the Nicene Creed. “**WE BELIEVE IN GOD THE CREATOR FATHER ALMIGHTY MAKER OF HEAVENS AND EARTH**”. This statement was formulated in a different milieu than ours. Through this paper one examines the meaning and implications of this faith assertion. The primary question is not ‘Who is God? Or ‘What is his/her /its name’? But, what is this divine Almighty doing in relation to humans and the non-human world?

Firstly, it is digging out the biblical ideas of a creator God in relation to some of the basic characteristics of God. Moses asked God, “what is your name?” God did not reveal his name. But replied “*I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE*”. God meant that through my actions you will know who Am I. Biblical writers never describe “God-in-isolation” but as “God-in-action” in relation to humans and the environment. One cannot speak of a pure anthropology but only a theological anthropology; not a “cosmology-in-isolation” but a “cosmology-in-relation” to a sustainable world, not a depleted nature. Biblical insights are drawn in the first chapter to validate this presupposition.

Secondly, some exciting leaps have changed the contour of this assertion though the jump was sporadic and intermittent. A few of them are spotted out to validate the main argument.

Thirdly, one may draw some lessons in relation to some of the contemporary challenges so that we can apply the faith affirmation God as creator for a more sustainable world.

2 Pre-Suppositions:

Any talk on Creator is inextricably related to the Created order. Created - Created continuum in terms of continuity- discontinuity remains inevitable.

- *Any discussion on God as creator involves a logic of God-Human-World tripartite relation.*
- *A flux in the biblical hermeneutics since 1980 has changed the warp and woof our God concept of God as Creator bringing to surface many submerged ideas.*
- *Though God the Creator is an ancient faith assertion, it has not become obsolete or redundant. Its vibrancy enables us to visualize a better world.*

3. Nicene Reflection of the Biblical Creator God:

The Nicene Creed may be reinterpreted in the light of the Creation description as reflected in the book of Genesis and other books. The creation process in *Genesis* develops at three stages; (a) *Creation of the celestial bodies*; (b) *Creation of the non-human earthly beings*; (c) *and the creation*

of human beings. Of the many features of the creation account only a few can be highlighted. When the church Fathers of 325 Council said “**WE BELIEVE IN GOD THE CREATOR FATHER ALMIGHTY MAKER OF HEAVENS AND EARTH**”, it epitomized the following facts;

The Creation description of the celestial bodies convey the following ideas: (*basic ref. Gen.1:2-19*)

God (elohim) as Intelligent designer:

The biblical writers are flabbergasted as they observed the design, grandeur of the created order. (Ps.8:3,4;19:19:1-6;147:5,20) All biblical passages, without any ambiguity assert that the biblical God is the creator God. (Gen. 1:1; Ps.8; 19; 33.6-9. Pro. 8:22-31: Jn1:1-3; Col.1:16; Heb.11:3

The Divine Creation Theory presupposes a divine entity creating the universe and all there in. It is also known as *Creationism*. It visualizes a supernatural origin, intelligent design and a purposeful, teleological creation. Creation concept in the Judeo-Christian traditions affirm and confess some crucial concepts about the being of God in contrast to many other religions and ideologies which hold an entirely different nature of God.

“creatio ex nihilo”:

The expression *Creatio ex nihilo* means *Creation out of nothing*: It connotes that God did not need any prior material for creation. We confess that God has created. That is all. It is akin to what science speaks about the *big bang*. Science does not ask the question how this matter for bang originated. It is only an assumption that matter existed. Similarly, the church confesses that God created this world out of nothing. The question what existed prior to it is an illogical question.

The primary difference between the Bible's creation story and those of other religions is the concept of a single, all-powerful God creating the universe "ex nihilo" (out of nothing), whereas many other creation myths involve deities shaping the world from pre-existing materials like an ocean or cosmic egg, or through a more collaborative process with other beings, often including animals or natural elements; additionally, the Bible's story is typically presented as a linear, sequential event over a set period of time, unlike some other narratives which may be more cyclical or symbolic. In the Bible (Genesis), God is the sole creator, speaking the world into existence. The transient nature of created matter has to be underlined.

In the Bible, humans are created in God's image and given dominion over the Earth. Other narratives may present humans as emerging from animals or being part of a larger cosmic balance.

Creation as free act of a Creator God;

Creation as the temporal act of God implies that time began with creation. It is a measurable unit, but an enigma. It is only creation of our mind. “In the beginning” in Gen. 1:1: Jn. 1:1 refer to this fact. Time is compared in relation to God’s nature. God is *nitschi* (Heb.) *eternal eternal, timeless, everlasting, immortal, perpetual, undying*.

More one thinks about it, the more one enters a labyrinth. St. Augustine observed that *when you ask about time, I don't know anything when you do not ask I know everything*". (*Confessions* ch.11) Time is not eternal.

The Bible distinguished between the "temporal" and the "eternal." Paul says that the visible things are "temporal" but unseen things not are "eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). In describing God, the psalmist declares: ". . . from everlasting to everlasting, you are God . . ." (Ps. 90:2). Yet, in the same context, of man it is said: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten . . ." (v. 10).

"Time" clearly does not relate to God and man in the same way. Eternity is endless, but time is measured by a "beginning" and an "end." The Bible commences with these words: "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Gen.1:1). Jesus once said: "*But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them*" (Mk. 10:6). Christ contrasted, in some sense there will be an end. In the Parable of the Tares, he said that the "harvest" represented the "end of the world" (Mt. 13:39). Elsewhere, the Lord announced: "He that rejects me, . . . shall be judged in the last day" (Jn. 12:48). Paul discussed the concept of the future resurrection of the body, which, he affirmed, will occur at the time of the Lord's "coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). In an epistle to the saints at Corinth, In that connection the apostle writes: "*Then comes the end, when he shall deliver the kingdom to God . . .*". Consummation. Ultimately, the consummation of time will occur. "Time" is moving towards a goal which will be realized at the time of Christ's return. In that connection, Paul affirms: "Then comes the end when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God . . ." (1 Cor. 15:24). "The end of the world" is contemplated in terms of Time as Jesus spoke repeatedly about the coming "last day" (Jn. 6:39-40,44,54; 12:48); The created universe will "perish" (Heb.1:11). The elements therein will be "dissolved" (2 Pet. 3:10-11) and "pass away" (Mt. 24:35; Rev. 21:1). All the ravages associated with this sinful environment and earthly Suffering will be eliminated (Rev.7:16-17; 21:4); Physical death, as man's final enemy, will be destroyed (1 Cor.15:26). Opportunity for Salvation – The door of opportunity for spiritual reconciliation with the Creator will be closed (Mt. 25:10; Heb. 9:27); Deceptive Teaching – The deceptive doctrines that have confused and destroyed souls will be vanquished (Rev. 20:3).

Goodness of Creation:

After every creation God assessed and waited for feedback of the creation process. *Goodness of Creation:* Creation is basically good according to the Bible whereas many religions consider creation as a mass of damned matter. In the creation description at least seven times it is said: "*God saw it good*" (Gen.1:3,10,12, 18, 21,25 31).

What is good? All that which do not go against the will of God can be called good. They are 'good' because they do not have a free will and all of them operate on a definite principle. Humans are exceptions which will be entirely different. To caricature, one may say that a fixed Physics is possible where a permanent sociology or anthropology or psychology is impossible. More on it, in the following lines.

Creation continua:

Creation does not end up with one creative activity. But creation is continuing. Humans participate and share in the Creatio. It is not either random or value- neutral but purposeful;

The Creation description of the celestial bodies conveys a message. Don't be afraid of the celestial bodies. They do not control you. But the Lord of Hosts hover over you. Don't worship these bodies as a chasm exists between the creator and the created. Remember that God did not need any intermediary or an agent to aid God's creation. He is the sovereign one. The unutterable and ineffable word YHWH conveys all these meanings.

(b) *Creation of the non-human earthly beings (see Gen.1:20-25):*

(c) *and the creation of human beings.*

Our contention is that the Nicene Fathers did not invent anything on their own. They were only unravelling what the Bible basically holds. The Nicene Creed appropriated some convictions and affirmations on *God, Christ, the Holy Spirit etc. God as the Creator* is the first and foremost doctrinal assertion to which our attention turns in this paper.

Humans as Imago dei of a free Creator God:

In many religions' gods are bound to create. In the Bible love, is the motive for God's creation rather than any necessity. The Biblical concept of creation has challenged all theories such as *dualistic theory, Emanation Theory, Evolution theory etc. Emanation theory* envisions a ladder of hierarchical structure in higher levels influencing the lower nature. *Evolution theory* advocated the principles of natural selection, survival of the fittest, genetic variation, and speciation of a common descent proposes that the universe has emanated from an eternal unchanging source of unity.

Gen.1:27 says: "Let us make them in our own image". It is suggestive that it does not say "Let me make". As New Testament church we interpret that creation is the free act of a Triune God; One may speak of an act of *ex Trinitate* vs. *Creation by a Monad*. In the New Testament, it is the triune God who had created the universe not the Father alone. (cf. Jn. 1: ; Col.). The church is concerned not only about creation, but also recreation and reformation. A few creation stories in other faith systems claim that gods created humans to serve them and to be their slaves. Judaeo-Christian interpretation on the contrary asserts the freedom of humans. "God created humans in his own image" (Gn.1:27). Here image means freedom to choose between 'to be or not to be'. to choose good or evil, freedom of will to decide not merely a pawn in the hands of *Haimermene. Morai or Fates* the Greek gods of Fate.

Only a free God can create free humans. God in *Genesis* blew his breath only to the nostrils of the humans (Gen.2:7) assuring a divine continuity and eternity of the soul compared to other organisms.

Creation as Gender equality

Among all other created species), sex is distinguished (male-female) but gender difference (man-woman) is maintained in biblical accounts. It means that human creation goes beyond any sexual definition and the two remain mutual support and shares the same responsibility.

Creation process conveys the idea that God is aware of the uniqueness of humans. The Supreme Divine needed only sound waves to command the creation of the celestial bodies. In creating the animal kingdom he blessed and 'spoke' to them (Gen. 1:22) and told them to multiply. Thus, God gave a biological nature to all of them developing a 'pet-like' nature for them.

However in the creation of humans, there were some key “technical” nuances. He could have said: “*Let there be a man: let there be a woman*”. If so, the Intelligent Designer knew that humans themselves will exercise a “blesses the” freedom and they will be obstinate and recalcitrant. Some of the biblical words regarding human nature in relation to the animal kingdom are very suggestive. After, the creation of humans God did not say ‘good’, God did not ‘bless’. God did not ‘feel sorry’ for any of his creation except humans (Gen. 6:6; see 6:5-7). When He created them, they were ‘good’; but in their *imago dei* the Creator knew the potential danger of sin.

4. Inevitability of the Nicene Creed:

Was the Nicene Creed an exigency of some pedantic theologians? No. Was it inevitable? Yes, as far as Christian faith was concerned when the whole Bible was under editing (canonization) even in A. D. 325. So, the Nicene creed became the yardstick for interpreting faith and to ward off all doctrinal contaminations. “*We believe in God the Creator*” was formulated in background of a certain socio-political milieu.

Only the first two clauses of the present *Nicene Creed* (*God the Son*, but not on *God the Holy Spirit*) were shaped in A.D. 325 as part of Christian confession. God as Creator was not an exclusive theological innovation of the Christian Church. The church fathers who gathered in A.D. 325 had only appropriated and improvised the existing Hebrew faith. It reveals the Christian identity and theological stand in relation to Hebrew faith and in opposition to many pagan religions. The royal patronage which accelerated the formation depended on the Hebrew Bible (Old testament) rather than New Testament corpus for any idea of God as Creator. Some of the Hebrew pre-suppositions of God as Creator are so crucial and decisive for Christian theology. Some of them may be jotted as follows.

For the early church doctrinal formulations were not luxury but a matter of life and death during heresies and heterodoxies. The Nicene creed was formulated as a matter of doxological, apologetic and didactic task. The original creed was very simple: *Iesus Kurios* (*Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour*) which was the faith declaration of the newly baptized at the time of baptism. The present *Nicene Creed*, properly called as the *Niceo-Constantinople Creed*, is a later expansion during A.D. 325-381. The faith of the church had to guarded against all lop-sided and partial theological and biblical assertions. It was formulated in the light of heterodoxies such as Arianism, Apollinarianism etc. More than the theological issues, there were other polity matters and non-doctrinal factors which triggered such formulations.

With the formulation of this creed, church defined and set the parameters of Orthodoxy-heterodoxy /heresy. The 325 Council categorically declared that God the Father has created this world. Thereby the early church Fathers reiterated what the biblical faith had already established. A personal God is the cause of this good world and he created it *ex nihilo* through his word. . Nicaea was in fact a rejection of existing all existing pagan concepts of creator God and it considers creation as good in relation to the non-human world.

The biblical background of the theme has been already unearthed. Now, the task is to spot out some of the important junctions in the Christian circles where the theme has been highlighted. A few areas are identified

II:

Some Historical Leaps of the Theme “WE BELIEVE IN ... CREATOR”

One cannot claim that the church consciously and consistently developed this Nicene theme of a Creator *God*. Though the church did not reject it, its inclination waxed and waned.

Some Perspectival Shifts after 1980:

- *Deciphering Nature, Environment, Eco-system:*

The Bible's perspective on nature and the environment is that God created the world and entrusted it to humans to care for and protect: "*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it*" (Gen. 2:15); "*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it*" (Ps. 24:1) "*Through Jesus, all things were made*"; "*O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures*"; "*O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures*" (Ps. 104:24-25);

- *Distinguishing Temperature, Weather and Climate change:*

In the traditional meteorology, one was satisfied with the daily, monthly, annual cycles of weather, atmospheric pressure, wind speed daily temperature etc. As human intervention and manipulation of the earthly resources increased, new experiments caused either aridness, or heavy torrents, deluge, landslides, or increase of CO₂. Hidden dangers of the climate change began to be highlighted after 1980.

- *From Anthropological to Anthropocene:*

Anthropocene is a term which denotes the current geological era when human activity has had a significant impact on the Earth's climate and ecosystems. *Anthropological* connoted humans at the winning end, as champions and harbingers in the rat race of development and progress whereas, *Anthropocene* indicated the impending danger.

- *Linking Ecology to Economy and Gender:*

The concept God as the creator gave impetus to shift to a new formula of *Ecology-Economy - Gender*.

Ecumenical Inclination: towards “... God the Creator....”

There is no time in the history of the Church when it rejected the role of the created order completely. The best example is the contour of our theological education before 1975. God the creator was a matter of discussion confined to a few paragraphs. Implications of this concept were reflected in the concern for the survival of planet earth had been growing in the secular circles during the 1970s. Slowly this new theme found space in the World Council of Churches (WCC) discussions and it encouraged churches to make public commitments and acted on

threats to life. In the 1970s, the WCC began to recognize the nexus among justice, peace, and ecological sustainability. The WCC invited churches to view their journey of faith as a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

Out of that commitment the World Council of Churches convened a conference in 1979 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on “*The Contribution of Faith, Science, and Technology, in the Struggle for a Just, Participatory, and Sustainable Society*”. Leading scientific experts and theologians made a report. *The Club of Rome* in 1972, the influential book *Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet*, and the concept of “sustainable development” by Barbara Ward and Renee Dubois, the founding of the *International Institute for Environment and Development* (IIED), reminded us of the alarming and ticking ecological danger caused by human intervention. In 1990, the WCC held a World Convocation on JPIC in Seoul, Republic of Korea. *Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation* (JPIC) movement since the 1970s. Since 1991, the WCC has focused on articulating a “theology of life”.

A few of the theologians of the universal church are highlighted for their interest in the theme God as creator in relation to the environment.

St. Ephrem the Syrian Poet:

St. Ephrem the Syrian, a teacher in the Syriac theological tradition, made use of nature-based imagery in his poetry. In his sermon on the Cross of Christ, St. Ephrem uses the image of a tree to describe how mankind crossed over from death to life. He says that the bitter branch of the ancient tree was replaced by a sweet young shoot, which represents the Lord. In his *Hymns on the Nativity*, St. Ephrem describes how the sun gave longer light in the month of Nisan, overcoming darkness and proclaiming the victory of the First-born. He drew on images from everyday life, such as putting on and taking off clothes and looking into a mirror, to describe four main stages.

For Ephrem, God created the first man Adam for a specific purpose (Mathews, Edward and Amar, Joseph. “Selected Prose Works: Commentary on Genesis...” in *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, ed. Kathleen McVey, 1994). The *Peshitta* Bible refers to this as the “fashioning” of Adam. Unlike the other creatures who came alive at the voice of God, Adam was specially crafted and given honors like authority to rule, a “garment of glory”, and intelligence to perceive the God’s majesty. Adam and Eve cast off their “garment of glory” when trusted the deceit of the serpent. They tried to gain mastery of things beyond the limits placed by God. They set aside their God-given intellect to follow the logic of the serpent (Gen 3:1-5).

St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca.335-395) and other Cappadocian Fathers:

The Orthodox theologians catch hold of the logic reflected in the book of Genesis. Though the biblical authors start with the creation of celestial bodies and extra-terrestrial entities, they do not dwell on that theme but move to temporal and tangible realities like creation of earth and all that therein. In this vein, Nyssa takes the parable of the ninety-nine intact sheep and compares it to the celestial bodies and the lost one is the replica of the lost world which needs redemption.

Among the trio of the Cappadocian Fathers St. Gregory of Nyssa had discussed about the creation more meticulously. Constraints of space allows only three ideas of Nyssa to be mentioned. (For details see Paulos Mar Gregorios, *Öusia and Energia*, in *Cosmic Man: The Divine Presence*, (1988), pp.110-123.) *Ousia and energia of God and diastema* may be mentioned as catch words. Natural resources is going on incessantly. ed. He argues that humans cannot know God in his *ousia* (as-it-is) but only his works (*energia*). Actions of God is the only means to know God as a spatial distance (*diastema*) exists between God and the created.

St. Francis of Assisi: relating to Creatures as Brothers & Sisters

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) is known as the Catholic *Patron Saint of Pets and Animals, and the Environment*. Many pet owners pray to him to bless their pets. He treated all creatures as equals and his interactions with animals: As a young man, Francis sought inner peace abandoning churches and lonely places and found solace relation to flowers, tumbled down walls, and bird song, Francis found the solitude he needed to hear his deepest yearnings. Gradually St. Francis realised that he was truly a brother to the sun, moon, stars, fire and water, and to the whole cosmos. Expressing his attitudes through a simple and peaceful lifestyle, Francis modelled an ecological consciousness, a spiritual and mystical vision of all creatures as brother and sister having one source in God the Creator and Father of all. Francis made this discovery through prayer and a simple but sincere interaction with other people and with nature. He prayed: “*Praised be You, my Lord with all Your creatures especially Sir Brother Sun*”. St. Francis preached that all creatures are brothers and sisters under God, and that humans and other creatures should be treated as equals. He told interesting stories about birds, fish, and rabbits in his sermons.

Pope Francis on Laudate Deum (2021):

Laudate Deum is an *Encyclical and Apostolic Exhortation* “by Pope Francis on climate Crisis. “Praise God for all his creatures” is the quint-essence of this well written document which has 73 paragraphs. It identifies that humans have triggered this crisis and an indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources is going on. For this reason, we are now unable to halt the enormous damage we have caused. It is ticking and we should stop this irreparable destruction. It reminds us that everything that exists ceases to be a gift for which we should be thankful, esteem and cherish. Instead of becoming slaves and prey to any caprice of the human mind and its capacities, we must be recognized as a part of nature. Human being are the only extraneous, a foreign element capable of harming the environment. Human life, intelligence and freedom are elements of the nature that enriches our planet, part of its internal workings and its equilibrium.

It calls for a healthy ecology as a result of interaction between human beings in which we recognize that our power and the progress are in turn boomerang us. It is a clarion call for a new ethical goad by which we will be guided. It analyses the hoax of the international politics in executing decisions made at conferences. It seems to run with the hare and the hound. Humanity needs an ethics for a better world:

Since humans are the culprits, they can only they can put a reverse gear in extenuating the destruction of the environment. We barely have time to prevent even more tragic damage. We should have a sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint”.

Jürgen Moltmann (1920-2024):

Jürgen Moltmann, a German Protestant theologian, developed a complex doctrine of creation that includes the following ideas. He believed that creation is a continuous process, with three parts: *original creation*, *continuous creation*, and *new creation*. He linked creation and eschatology as interdependent, and that the goal of history is a panentheism where God is in everything and everything is in God. It was a middle ground between pantheism and a God who is radically separate from creation. For him, the Sabbath is central to the doctrine of creation, and that the doctrine should culminate in the celebration of the Sabbath. He believed that God's love for all creation is real, and that theology should be a living experience of God's love breaking into the suffering and salvation of all creation. He rejected the idea that evolution is a beautiful and grace-filled reality, believing that it has too many victims and cannot exhaust God's aim for creation. Moltmann suggested Evolution as God's Continuous Creation - “Creation” refers to the temporal and eternal scope of the cosmos, including its eschatological redemption. His cosmology therefore defines God not according to nature (i.e., the way things are) but rather according to creation (the eschatological end of nature).

Above observations represented the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant concerns over the Diocletian sword changing over the head of humanity, viz., the environmental destruction. In tandem with this, six questions may be raised as the Nicene Creed is more than a doctrinal treatise. *Nicea* motivates us to reconceptualize the assertion God the Creator. That is what we attempt in the next chapter.

III

Application of “... God the Creator...”:

The affirmation, “... *God the Creator*...” should be applied to a few quivering and pulsating vulnerable areas.

(i) *Is God the Creator, at the end of the rope?*

Are we, humans, playing God in an era of AI? Are we ousting God the Creator in the age of IVF? Ian Wilmut who pioneered the SCNT (Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer) technique in biological bodies to create exact genetic replica. Thus, he cloned a sheep called ‘Dolly’. He practically achieved what Mary Shelley spoke about the classic tale of Victor Frankenstein’s experiment to create life’(cf. *Frankenstein* (1818) ; or Aldous Huxley’s dystopian novel *Brave New World*, visualizing genetically engineered humans, or refer to H. G. Well’s *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896). Artificial intelligence and the latest technological innovations start with the notion of a human being with no limits, whose abilities

and possibilities can be infinitely expanded thanks to technology. In this way, the technocratic paradigm monstrously feeds upon itself.

God of *Genesis* said to man and women that sperm and eggs are yours; but life is mine. He gave this breath to humans (Gn.2:7) thus assuring an exclusive continuity between God and human. But experiments are conducted to short-circuit God in this creation process to give life. Probably, during the coming years this may turn a possibility. But the question is regarding the commercial interest of such inventions (e.g. The Western world has accused China of creating some absolute muffs with no IQ but with strong muscles to toil in their Sisyphean task and gruelling ordeal or mocking and lampooning the Chinese). Are the inventions equitable, just and sustainable?

(i) *Role of God the Son:*

The Pauline contention is that Jesus Christ is the harbinger of New Humanity through the redeemed humanity. Any concept of God cannot be a matter of faith in the bygone millennia but the role of Christ in creating a new humanity remains crucial where humanhood is jeopardised through poverty, injustice, avarice for money, xenophobia, bigotry and so forth. This aspect is highlighted by theologians such as Jürgen Moltmann and other liberation theologians who plead for a new humanity considering Jesus Christ as its archetype.

(ii) *Resuscitation of our doxological task: ,*

According to the principle of “*Lex credenti, lex orandi, lex vivendi*” (*we confess what we believe, We practice what we confess*). A Christian is challenged in the Sunday corporate worship. That is the definition of worship and it culminated in the Holy Qurbana (Eucharist) of the church. Only our true worship can assure us the creatorship of God.

Greening of the church and its campus is a practical thing. The impact of harvest festival has shrunk in this computer age where agriculture is no more means of livelihood. The traditional way of that festival may be impossible. So, in some of the churches people buy a small portion of vegetable, egg or live chicken from the market and bring them for auction during the harvest festival. The point is to maintain a biological link between the humans and the non-human world.

(iii) *Feminist Inclination of Nicea:*

The New Testament pattern is unique that contrary to the Hebrew practice of eliminating the names of women from any account and counting. *Mathew and Luke* mention the names of women in the genealogical account. Nicaean approach is akin to it. It mentions the one and the only name of Virgin Mary, the archetype of women and the second Eve. Let us assert that it is the extension of a New Testament vision that God has no partiality and preference for men.

(iv) *A New Vision and the Fourth Dimension of the Human Body:*

In the contemporary world, at least seven perspectives of the human body can be identified:

■ “Soma seema” of the Ancient Greeks:

Greeks believed and taught that human body is a cage in which the golden bird called soul remains in captivity. For them body was a tomb and death is the exit.

- *Body as a machine*: Since William Harvey who discovered the phenomenon of blood circulation in 1628 and Christian Bernard in 1967 December 3, told us that human body has a mechanical rhythm and any part can be pulled out or and any part can be replaced.
- *Human Body is a commodity*: The world of manicure, pedicure, beauty pageants, beauty contests, fashion vogues convey the message that body can be decorated, festooned and ornamented.
- *Human Body is for ‘Gaze’ and sale*: Pattaya, Mekong, Amsterdam, Las Vegas and other places are only a few places among many spots where human flesh can be bought for pleasure.
- *“My Body is Mine”*: Virulent feminist studies claim that I, the woman would decide what to do with my body. It is not the man who decides whether and when his wife would get pregnant.
- *Human Body is for Pleasure*: Our society in Kerala is no more traditional in keeping old value system. Pre-marital sex is not uncommon among school children. New pleasure principle pressurizes the younger generation. Paedophilia is another aftermath of this approach.

It is in this context we think of human body biblically. In biblical terms one may make the following observations regarding varied dimensions of human body.

- * The sinless, ethereal body created by God in the Garden of Eden;
- * The fallen body in Eden;
- * The Incarnated body of Jesus Christ
- * The deformed body of Christ on the cross which saved our body from corruptibility;
- * Resurrected body of Christ which attained a fourth dimension (Jn. 20:19. Jesus entering a closed room)
- * The body which one leaves in this world;
- * Human body to rise in glory

All these derivations take their cue from our basic assertion: “God is our creator”.

Concluding Remarks:

To sum up:

- * The Bible does endorse and guard the final sovereignty of God.

* We have gathered as CAT X participants and we are the threshold of 1700 Anniversary of the Nicene Council and the Creed. A vista of insights is open before the young theological novices in an ecumenical vision to fortify the theological edifice in Asia.

* We are hooked at the individual ethics, at the parish, global levels to act upon concrete actions “to make this world a better place to live in” as Michael Jackson has sung.

This presentation was intended to identify the various zones of general agreement and disagreement within the subcategories present in different discussions on the theme God as Creator in particular and Creation Theology in general, in order to clearly isolate the areas that require further research.

THANK YOU: GOD BLESS

1/10/2024

-- R. C. Thomas (India)

(Rev. Dr. Rajan C Thomas hails from Tiruvalla, Kerala (India). He was a theological facilitator in various theological institutions including the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam, Faridabad Theological Seminary and others. Now he has retired from all offices but continues to be involved in theological teaching and authoring books. A few more remain in the press.

Thomas has earned his doctorate from the University of Bochum (Germany) on the theme: “People Concept in the CCA discussions from 1963-1990” under Prof. Dr. Konrad Raiser. He has led a few classes in some of the previous CCA gatherings. In 2024 February, he has published a book in Malayalam under the title “1700 Anniversary (A.D. 325-2025); Nicene Council and the Creed: A Free View. Its abridged English version is now available [here](#)).

End Notes

For Further Reading

