

The Two Types of Divine Declarations in Genesis One

"With historical precedent, Moltmann encourages us to distinguish three types of creation: original (*creatio originalis*), continual (*creatio continua*), and new (*creatio nova*).¹ Although the world came into existence at a certain point in the past, God is still creating at the level of not only upholding but even altering creatures."²

"The first two classic theological categories are receiving renewed attention because of their closer resonances with contemporary science--an absolute beginning and changes through time. The notion of continual creation teaches that although the world came into being at a certain time, it also is in the process of becoming, which again is nothing new to traditional (non-deistic) Christian teaching. Nature, no less than history, is dynamic. God is the author of both original and continual creation, but in different ways--in the first instance, by a fiat declaration (*ex nihilo* creation); in the latter, by the ordinary work of his providence in which natural secondary causes are at work. In that light, it may be better to speak of this ongoing work of God as providence rather than continual creation."³

"Reacting against naturalistic accounts, it is easy for us to embrace a hyperspiritualizationism that attributes this continual creation or providence to immediate divine interventions. However, is this warranted by Scripture?"⁴

Divine Declarations of Fiats of *ex nihilo* Creation⁵

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Gen 1:3)

Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters... and it was so." (Gen 1:6-7)

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens ... and it was so. (Gen 1:14-15)

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.... (Gen 1:26)

Divine Declarations to Creation to Put Forth Its Own God-Endowed Powers Directed by the Spirit⁶

Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. (Gen 1:9)

Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth
and seed in them"; and it was so. (Gen 1:11)

Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." (Gen 1:20,22)

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. (Gen 1:24)

Conclusion

"We may put these two types of speech acts in the form of "Let there be..." and "Let it become what I have 'worded' it to be."⁷

¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation* (London: SCM, 1985), 192-93 quoted in Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 345.

² Horton, *Christian Faith*, 345.

³ Horton, *Christian Faith*, 345.

⁴ Horton, *Christian Faith*, 345.

⁵ Horton, *Christian Faith*, 345.

⁶ Horton, *Christian Faith*, 345.

⁷ Horton, *Christian Faith*, 345.