

HOPE OF A NEW CREATION
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Introduction

The Hope that God will renew all things in Christ is foundational Christian faith. In “Finish then Thy New Creation” T. Scott Daniels argues that this Hope-filled ending of our story shapes decisions and reactions within our narrative arc. Meanwhile, Ivelisse Valentin-Vera’s “Hope of New Creation” explores the nature and scope of Hope, which anticipates the story’s end while anchoring it to the very beginning of creation. Both authors grapple with the tension of living between these two truths. Valentin-Vera emphasizes transformational relational holiness grounded in the power of the Holy Spirit, while Daniels explores how Jesus embodies and proclaims *new creation* eschatology.

Defining New Creation

Valentin-Vera description of New Creation as “a collective redemption of radical inclusivity in the midst of a globalized world” opens several avenues of thought. First, it creates a healthy counterbalance to excessive individualism. Western thought tends to perceive New Creation primarily as individual salvation. This cultural filter influences readings of texts like 2 Corinthians 5:17, which Daniels uses to introduce his *new creation* eschatology. While the verse is singular in grammar, it indicates a new relationship to the collective. Paul addresses a relational orientation – the person’s relationship to the collective. In this instance, New Creation is personal, yet relational since the old “I” becomes part of a new “We.” Manfred Marquardt suggests that Jesus embodies the kingdom of God and thus our initiation into Christ implies our liberation from self-centredness, unleashing God’s power to work in and through us according to God’s reign. “God’s reign enters into the lives of human beings already in the present, evoking a new awareness of God’s presence and bringing forth practical consequences.”¹

Second, the notion of “collective redemption” echoes Paul’s observation in Romans 8:21 that the liberation of “creation itself” is connected to the “freedom and glory of the children of God.” Conceptualising creation in “bondage of decay” is a powerful reminder of the interconnectedness between humanity and environment. While eschatological concepts of New Creation point towards a future restoration, there is a present expression of how restored balance between humanity and nature ushers in New Creation. Christian’s have been complicit in the exploitation of Creation, as noted by Daniels’ critique of dispensationalism. Escapist eschatology that regards creation as temporary and of lesser value, can lead to irresponsible environmental action. Paul’s personification of creation is a relevant reminder that humanity has a responsibility toward creation. The relationship distorted in Genesis 3 has now begun to be restored through the resurrection of Jesus. Creation care has become a significant part of today’s Christian responsibility.²

The third aspect of Valentin-Vera’s insight into New Creation is its “radical inclusivity” articulated as social inclusivity - Acts 2:9-11, Galatians 3:28, Romans 3:22 and 1 Corinthians

¹ Manfred Marquardt, “The Kingdom of God and the Global Society,” in *Wesleyan Perspectives on the New Creation*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2004), 163.

² Young Seok Cha, “Theological and Ethical Implications of Creation Care,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 88–106.

12:13. This inclusivity is described as a mosaic with each tile, while fully contained, contributing to a bigger picture. This Hope of a new society is especially relevant in our fractured world. Only by finding a new centre of being in Christ can we experience unity that reflects that of the Trinity. Our inclusion in Christ is inclusion in the community of God – the ground of all existence.

Daniels' paper reflects the hope of establishing a new humanity in Christ. He identifies three themes from the Old Testament – “the goodness of creation, the return from exile and the significance of the temple” – which he argues find fulfilment in Jesus and become the eschatological hope for humanity. We are called to participate with God in bringing to completion that which has been started through Christ, not relying on our own human capacity as taught in early twentieth century eschatology, but by being filled with God's Spirit that “reanimates all that is dead and brings it to new and everlasting life.” According to Daniels, the renewal of humanity marks the beginning of the renewal of all creation.

Valentin-Vera agrees that New Creation's radical inclusivity extends beyond human society affecting all creation. She references Romans 8:19-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:28 which point to the complete transformation of “all things.” Salvation is more than the rescue of a few individuals, encompassing the liberation of all creation. The image of death as the ultimate enemy to be defeated is a powerful picture of New Creation. Even after Jesus' resurrection, death and decay are still pervasive in the current creation. Daniels notes that just as exile will not have the last word in God's creation, neither will death. However, Valentin-Vera emphasizes that Christian Hope is for restoration not destruction, challenging distorted views of eschatology that depict death and destruction as decisive – even used as a tool wielded by the returning conquering Christ. Valentin-Vera highlights continuity in the character of Christ, stating that the one who returns is the same one who already came, and thus will act justly in the end, as the one who taught us to love our enemies. Restorative justice in the eschaton, although often overlooked, is at the heart of New Creation, transforming what was broken into something beautiful and beneficial. The image of the remaining scars on the risen Christ reinforces the anticipation of what is hoped for in the resurrection of Jesus.

Essence of Hope

Valentin-Vera's draws from Jurgen Moltmann to explore the essence of Christian Hope as an anticipation of New Creation. For Moltmann, New Creation is discovered specifically in the resurrection of Jesus, while anticipation of New Creation is not passive, but actively engages current reality in the light of the resurrection. Consequentially, Valentin-Vera asserts that creation can be restored through Hope, not just concrete human acts. However, humanity is invited to participate in the mission of God. Paul declaration that all in Christ are New Creation and given the responsibility of God's reconciling mission in Christ. We are not simply passive recipients of salvation but become active agents of God's purpose in historic creation and eschatological New Creation, all the while participating in the Kingdom of God in the present reality.

Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* states that God's promised future will surpass what God his done in the past. We should not seek to go *back* to the “beginning-genesis,” but press on to fulfilling the mission of God. The biblical narrative does not end with a return to Eden but culminates in the descent of the Holy City from a new heaven to a new earth, establishing a new relationship between God and humanity (Revelation 21). Eric Vail asserts that the key to

understanding the arc of biblical narrative is the presence of God,³ as creation has always been intended as God's dwelling place. Since God Spirit brings life, the community of God's people are empowered to live beyond self-interest for the sake of all creation.⁴ This is bound to result in life affirming outcomes.

The Hope of Christians, however, is not wishful waiting for a blissful end. Daniels correlates the end of the story to present living. Hope is a catalyst for engaging in this present reality to produce a better future and “makes us ready to bear the ‘cross of the present.’”⁵ Cross bearing is participating in the mission of Christ in this present world, not passive waiting for the future. According to Moltmann, we do not simply reinterpret current reality, history, and the human condition, but “transform them in expectation of a divine transformation.”⁶ As holiness people believing in God's transforming power, we must move beyond words and actively engage in the work of Hope to realise God's promises. Revelation 21:5 speaks of God's restorative justice, where brokenness is healed, and the *imago Dei* is restored, embodying true Hope.

God's promises for the future must be acted upon in the present. John Wesley's emphasis on God engaging humanity and creation in salvific transformation continues to influence Wesleyan Traditions highlighting the present reality of the dynamic partnership between divinity and humanity.⁷ This emphasis counters dominant forms of Christian determinism which reduce humanity to powerless pawns in God's grand plan. The Christian Hope of New Creation is about empowered transformation in this life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8). Randy Maddox suggests that this transformation is not just personal, because each person included “in Christ” contributes to nurturing New Creation.

Conclusion

Both Daniels' and Valentin-Vera's papers emphasize that Christian Hope is not mere wishful thinking about a utopic future, but a manifestation of that future in the present. New Creation is founded in the historic reality of Jesus's resurrection and fuelled by God's promise of renewal. It is *not* a reset that erases scars of past pain but a vital *redeeming* of what was lost. This gives hope to all who have lost and been scared. Valentin-Vera's insights into collective redemption and inclusive transformation through the Spirit of God affirms the possibility of authentic transformation into God's holiness. This is not just an idealistic dream for the future but a reality to be embraced in our broken world with the Hope in the New Creation through which God will make all things new.

³ Eric M. Vail, *Eschatology*, The Wesleyan Theology Series (Kansas City, MO: The Foundry Publishing, 2020), 39.

⁴ Vail, 40.

⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), 31.

⁶ Moltmann, 85.

⁷ Randy L. Maddox, “Nurturing the New Creation: Reflections on a Wesleyan Trajectory,” in *Wesleyan Perspectives on the New Creation*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2004), 50.