

# A TIME FOR A RESET

By Elizabeth A. Eaton



In the first seven chapters of Genesis, we move quickly from the glory of creation to disobedience, expulsion from the garden and fratricide to the wickedness of humankind. We read, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). God’s beautiful creation, in harmony with itself and its creator, had gone completely off the rails. God had given the creation as a gift—and the gift was rejected. Time for a reset.

“And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry I have made them’” (Genesis 6:6-7). Then, in chapter 7, we get the flood.

This is a story of God’s deep and terrible pain. We were created by love for love. And now this terrible betrayal moves God to destroy God’s own precious creation. Another part of this tragedy is that human disobedience and arrogance resulted in the destruction of creation. It is too deep for me to understand the depth of God’s horror when beholding how twisted humankind had become and God’s agony in sending the flood.

Some days—or if I am honest, many days—I want to press the reset button. We are still stuck in this pandemic. The whole world is anxious and angry and grieving. And though the world is living through this together, not all people are affected equally. Some (I among them) have access to vaccines, medical care, a safe home in which to shelter and the privilege of working from home. And this is just one pandemic.

There is the continuing pandemic of racial inequity. When I say the Pledge of Allegiance, I want to believe that we are a people “with liberty and justice for all.” Whether we see the racial inequities laid bare, feel

freedom threatened by mask and vaccine mandates, or see voting rights threatened—all positions voiced by members of this church—it is painfully clear that we aren’t living up to that pledge. There are societal forces that seek to tear us apart and set us against each other. And as I write this, Russia appears to be on the brink of invading Ukraine and plunging Europe into war.

Over and over again humankind has betrayed the hope God has for us. God declared the creation very good. We have fallen short. This must certainly be a time for a reset. I can think about how I would reset. Many others in our church who have been wounded by society, and even the ELCA, would have legitimate cases for what needs to be reset. And I wonder, if all of us simultaneously pressed the reset button, would that cancel all of us out?

And God said to Noah, “I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth (Genesis 9:11). The rainbow, interestingly, is the sign of this covenant with all of creation, a rainbow that only comes after a storm. This is God’s reset.

We are in a storm. In no way would I minimize or silence the real pain experienced by our people. But I want to hold out the truth and the promise of God’s ultimate reset—the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this act of redemption, God has brought about the reconciliation of all people and of all creation. This reset, though not completely realized, gives us a way to speak and hear truth from one another.

Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:32) †

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