

Articles

MIDWIFERY AS A MODEL FOR ECOLOGICAL ETHICS: EXPANDING ARTHUR PEACOCKE'S MODELS OF "MAN-IN-CREATION"

by Gloria L. Schaab

Abstract. In *Creation and the World of Science* (1979) scientist-theologian Arthur Peacocke asks what the role of humanity might be in relation to creation if conceived within the scientific perspective that favors the theological paradigm of the panentheistic God-world relationship. Deeming roles such as dominion and steward as liable to distortion toward a hierarchical understanding of humanity's relation to the rest of creation, Peacocke proposes seven other roles to express the proper relationship of humanity to the cosmos in panentheistic relation to its Creator. Although each of these models has merit within a panentheistic paradigm, Peacocke and the paradigm itself suggest that the panentheistic model of God in relation to an evolving cosmos may be most effectively imaged through a model of female procreativity. In keeping with this proposal, I develop the understanding of humanity's ecologically ethical role in relation to the evolving cosmos in terms of the midwife to the process of procreation. I evaluate the efficacy of the midwife as a paradigm for ecological ethics by means of several criteria, including the propositions of the Earth Charter, "a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century" (Earth Initiative 2000).

Keywords: cosmology; creation; Earth Charter; ecology; ethics; evolution; God-world relationship; images of God; immanence; midwife; panentheism; Arthur Peacocke; procreativity; transcendence

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Throughout the great volume of his writing on the relationship between evolutionary science and Christian theology, there is perhaps no theological concept that Arthur Peacocke strives so fiercely to maintain as the radically transcendent, incarnate, and immanent presence of God as Creator in, with, and under the evolving cosmos. This radical transcendence and immanence of God as Creator is held together in his writings by means of the Christian concept of the Triunity of God (Peacocke 1979, 206).

Peacocke's early emphasis was on the primacy of the Triune God as transcendent and immanent Creator of and in the cosmos. At that time, Peacocke expressed this notion in explicitly traditional categories. Pointing to the Nicene Creed as theological grounding for the Triune creativity of God, he maintained,

God the Father is believed in as "Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible"; God the Son as he "by whom all things were made"; and God the Holy Spirit as "the Lord, the Giver of life" . . . [It] is notable that in this Creed one God is said to be creator, but that each 'Person' of the Triune God is explicitly involved with creation. (Peacocke 1971, 120)

Expanding this insight in terms of the evolutionary development of the cosmos, Peacocke affirmed,

God is one and acts fully, completely, in all his manifestations (he is "coinherent") yet the postulate of three modes within his being seems unavoidable and since the whole is suprapersonal and the individual modes cannot be less than personal . . . the one God as transcendent, incarnate, and immanent in one creative process . . . is distinguishable in three forms. As transcendent, God (the Father) initiates by his will the whole cosmic development; as incarnate, God (the Son) focuses and reduces his being into the confines of a human personality; as immanent, God (the Holy Spirit) works through the whole cosmic development, which culminates in the life "in Christ." (1971, 176)

In subsequent writings, Peacocke explored alternative theological models that functioned to maintain this balance of divine transcendence and immanence. The Greek philosophical system, as well as the Gospel of John, inspired the model of the *Logos* as the expression of God in creative activity. The Wisdom literature of the Hebrew scriptures suggested the concept of the Wisdom (*Sophia*) of God active at the creation of the world and powerfully immanent in the cosmos and in humanity. Both the biblical and theological traditions influenced Peacocke's notion of the Spirit of God as "not as referring to a divine hypostasis . . . but as indicating God himself active towards and in his human creation" (Peacocke 1979, 207).

In *God and the New Biology* (1986) Peacocke explicitly unfolds a sacramental view of the universe in which he integrates a Christian understanding of God as Trinity with an evolutionary scientific perspective. He expresses this integrated view of the universe thus:

The world is created and sustained in being by the will of God. . . . The Son, or Word of God (the *Logos*), is the all-sufficient principle and form of this created

order. At every level, this order reflects in its own measure something of the quality of the deity. . . . The continuing creative power which is manifest as a *nisus* at all levels of existence to attain its intended form is . . . God as “Holy Spirit.” (1986, 125)

In recent works, however, Peacocke largely abandons his attempts to correlate his evolutionary theology of God with the traditional categories and models of Christianity. Inexorably drawn by the classical Christian tradition, Peacocke himself admits,

It is tempting to relate the triply formulated concepts which denote ways in which God is understood to relate to the world specifically to the three traditional *personae* of the Trinity, that is to Father, Word/*Logos*/“Son” and Holy Spirit. But if God is to be one in all of God’s interactions with the world . . . then we are impelled towards affirming that “*God*” in God’s own unity must be the subject of those verbs which represent God’s relation to the world ((1) to transcend over, (2) to be incarnate in, (3) to be immanent in); and also of those verbs which represent the relation of God to humanity in the Christian revelation ((1’) to create, (2’) to redeem/liberate/atone/reconcile, (3’) to sanctify/come into union with). God, in God’s own triune unity, is active in all these triple modalities, even if we, because of our experience and the way we have come to make these distinctions within the Godhead, associate each kind of activity more particularly with one mode . . . of God’s being and becoming rather than with another. (Peacocke 1993, 348)

However, rather than engaging in such “intellectual vertigo,” Peacocke prefers

to be non-assertive about the nature of any differentiation within the divine Being and Becoming, willing to accept that it is threefold but not to speculate about the relationship of the three to each other . . . [and] to remain reticent about any more positive, ontological affirmations concerning the, by definition, ineffable and inaccessible Godhead. (2001, 167–68)

Hence, we do not find inferences concerning the “immanent” and “economic” Trinity or concerning God *in se* and God in creation. Rather, we increasingly see in his writings an understanding of the One God distinguished as personally Transcendent, personally Incarnate, and personally Immanent and characterized in panentheistic relation to the cosmos.

THE PANENTHEISTIC MODEL OF THE TRIUNE GOD-WORLD RELATION

Peacocke’s focus on a panentheistic model of the God-world relationship results from his perception of the inadequacy of the Western theistic concept of God as Creator in transcendent, incarnate, and immanent relation to the cosmos. This inadequacy stems in part from its insistence on maintaining the ontological distinction between the Creator and creation in terms of discrete “substances.” Because of the ontological impossibility of the interpenetration of different substances, the created realm was conceived as “outside” of God, and thus God’s ongoing influence on creation

could be conceived only in terms of interventions from outside the world. Hence, Peacocke maintains,

it has become increasingly difficult to express the way in which God is present to the world in terms of “substances,” which by definition cannot be internally present to each other. . . . We therefore need a new model for expressing the closeness of God’s presence to the finite natural events, entities, structures and processes and we need it to be as close as possible to imagine, without dissolving, the distinction between Creator and what is created. (2001, 138)

This insight concerning substance ontology is echoed in the work of theologians such as Walter Kasper, Catherine LaCugna, and Denis Edwards. According to Kasper, “the ultimate and highest reality is not substance but relation” (1983, 156). Edwards has written similarly, suggesting “reality . . . is more a network of relationships than a world of substances” (1995, 60). LaCugna cites the ontological traditions of Greek and Latin theology to suggest, “*Personhood is the meaning of being*. To define what something is, we must ask who it is or how it is related. . . . We need now to specify the ontology appropriate to this insight, namely an ontology of relation or communion” (1991, 248–49). Hence, a critical element in appropriating the panentheistic model is to make the move away from substance ontology to personal or relational ontology. As described by LaCugna,

A relational ontology understands both God and the creature to exist and meet as persons in communion. . . . The meaning of to-be is to-be-a-person-in-communion. . . . God’s To-Be is To-Be-in-relationship, and God’s being-in-relationship-to-us *is* what God is. A relational ontology focuses on personhood, relationship, and communion as the modality of all existence. (1991, 250)

Peacocke’s imagery of intimacy, internality, and interpenetration in the creative process suggests to him that the language of human procreation may offer a viable means by which to talk about God as transcendent, incarnate, and immanent Creator. However, search as he might among traditional theological images of the God-world relationship—images that predominately reflect a patriarchal imagination and symbol system—Peacocke was not able to find a model that adequately communicated the understanding of the interpenetration of God in the cosmos and the cosmos within God in ontologically distinctive yet internal ways. According to him, traditional Western models of God’s creative activity place “too much stress on the externality of the process—God . . . regarded as creating rather in the way the male fertilises the female from outside.”

In response to this theological difficulty, Peacocke suggests that a “more fruitful” model derives from the female procreative process and, thus, from female imagery. As he observes,

. . . mammalian females nurture new life within themselves and this provides a much needed corrective to the purely masculine image of divine creation. God, according to panentheism, creates a world other than Godself and “within her-

self” (we find ourselves saying for the most appropriate image)—yet another reminder of the need to escape from the limitations of male-dominated language about God. (2001, 139)

Elaborating the panentheistic procreative imagery, Elizabeth A. Johnson writes:

To be so structured that you have room inside yourself for another to dwell is quintessentially a female experience. To have another actually living and moving and having being in yourself is likewise the province of women. . . . This reality is the paradigm without equal for the panentheistic notion of the coinherence of God and the world . . . [and for] women’s experience of pregnancy, labor and giving birth . . . as suitable metaphor for the divine. (1993, 234–35)

For Peacocke and for this essay, integrating the models of female procreativity and of panentheism produces one cohesive model for the evolutionary creativity disclosed through the sciences and the Christian theology of Trinity. Moreover, based as it is on a relational ontology, the panentheistic-procreative model safeguards the distinct identities of God and of the cosmos while yet recognizing their interdependence and relatedness.

THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN IN THE PANENTHEISTIC PROCREATIVE MODEL

How might one characterize the proper role of humanity in this panentheistic-procreative model? As noted earlier, Peacocke himself proposes seven roles or clusters of roles to express possible relationships of humanity to creation conceived in panentheistic relation to its Creator, which are summarized in Table 1 (Peacocke 1979, 281–312).

Certainly, each of Peacocke’s models has merit within his evolutionary theology. However, in keeping with a female panentheistic-procreative model of God as Trinity, I now propose an additional model of humanity’s role—the model of the midwife in the process of procreation. In this model, God is conceived as transcendent Mother, birthing the incarnate cosmos through the immanent creativity of the cosmos itself. The emphasis in this model is on natural processes and interdependence. It parallels the human procreative process as it is when facilitated through the practice of midwifery. In a midwife model of care, pregnancy and birth are respected as normal and natural life processes that, under most circumstances, do not require the intervention of technology or the use of chemical agents. Based on ancient wisdoms that trust the mother’s instincts and intentions for her child, midwifery exercises a holistic model of care that attends to every aspect of the well-being of the expectant mother, the developing child, and their vigilant loved ones (Citizens for Midwifery 2005a). Those who exercise the role of professional midwife embrace a variety of values—education and expertise, vigilance and attentiveness, nurturance and gentleness, sensitivity and respect—toward the persons and processes involved in the emergence of new life.

TABLE 1

**Human Roles, Ecological Values, and Ethical Actions toward Creation
in the Evolutionary Theology of Arthur Peacocke**

Humanity's Role	Theological Basis	Ecological Values	Ethical Action
Priest of creation	Immanent presence of God in the cosmos as creative agent; derived sacredness of creation = world as sacrament	Respect and reverence for creation as mediating the presence of God	Mediate between insentient nature and God; seek to further and fulfill God's purposes in creation
Symbiont	Panentheistic God-world relation; sacredness of all life; creation as sanctuary	Gentle, reverent, and discriminating attitude toward creation and its creatures	Partner with cosmic creatures in adaptive and sustaining relationships
Interpreter	God as self-communicating agent, expressing purposes and meanings through the sacrament of creation	Attentiveness to God's revelation of Self, purposes, and meanings in creation	Discern, articulate, and communicate God's purposes and meaning for creation and its creatures
Prophet	God's intention that creation respond to divine communication of Self and meaning in creation	Attentiveness to God's revelation of Self, purposes, and meanings in creation	Call humanity to recognize and respond to the communication of the Divine in creation
Lover of Nature	Unfathomable richness, uniqueness, connectivity, and complexity of God's creativity in the cosmos	Sensitivity to the interdependent complexity of the cosmic organism	Cultivate I-Thou relation with creation in its irreducible mystery and splendor
Trustee and Preserver	God's creation of the cosmos for its own sake and not for human utility	Appreciation of the uniqueness and irreplaceability of each created being	Care "before God" for what is of intrinsic value to God
Co-creator Co-worker Co-explorer	God as continuous Creator, as Composer of the cosmic fugue, and as Explorer of cosmic possibilities	Creativity and cooperation with regard to the cosmic potentialities	Participate with God harmoniously in the evolution of the <i>opus</i> of the cosmos

ETHICAL ACTIONS OF THE MIDWIFE MODEL OF CARE

These values that ground the midwife model of care lead to a series of ethical actions undertaken by trained midwives. The first is *respectful treatment* that fosters gentle nurturance and care for all those involved in the event of pregnancy and birth. The midwife supports natural processes as they unfold uniquely in each emergence of new life and promotes the autonomy of both mother and child in the birthing processes.

The second is *personal attention* that explores the questions involved in the process of birth, attempts to resolve fears and concerns, and develops trusting and nurturing relationships among family members. The midwife provides vigilant care and support attuned to the mother's needs and desires at every stage of the process.

The *acquisition and dissemination of information* is the third ethical action of the midwife. She collects and shares information pertinent to pregnancy and birth and provides practical suggestions for the care and nutrition of mother and child. She researches the various tests, procedures, and interventions that might be undertaken so that informed choices may be made as to their necessity, effects, and risks.

Fourth, the midwife acts as *monitor, advocate, and companion*. She carefully evaluates the progress of pregnancy and birth and differentiates normal, natural processes and events from those that require diagnostic or remedial interventions. In the event of difficulties, she knows the appropriate specialists from whom to enlist aid. The midwife also empowers the mother to value her own embodiment, to discover her own life-giving capacities, and to move through a healthy process of laboring and birthing. Ultimately, the midwife serves as a "sympathetic female companion," mothering the mother as the life within her comes to full term (Citizens for Midwifery 2005b).

MIDWIFERY AS A MODEL FOR ECOLOGICAL ETHICS

From this overview of the role of midwifery in the human process of procreation, certain values and actions present themselves for humanity as ecologically and ethically consistent with a panentheistic-procreative paradigm of God-world relation. The model of midwifery offers the values of education and expertise critical to understanding the entities, processes, and structures of an evolving cosmos. It promotes active acquisition and dissemination of information crucial to facilitating the emergence and survival of the world's fragile ecosystems. The model encourages attentiveness to those choices that facilitate the healthy growth and development of the cosmos and its creatures and vigilance that guards against the incursion of elements that are deleterious to its well-being. In so doing, it urges the human person to monitor and advocate for the full flourishing of all forms of life in the cosmos and encourages particular attention to the misuse or

abuse of the environment caused by unregulated technology or chemical pollutants.

The model of midwifery further supports attitudes of nurturance and gentleness toward the cosmos that result in respectful treatment of creation and its creatures. Such treatment militates against approaches to the biosphere and atmosphere that trigger abuse, despoliation, and destruction of ecosystems and their inhabitants. Ultimately, the model of midwifery fosters respect and reverence for the transcendent Mother, the incarnate Firstborn, and the immanent Creativity of the evolving cosmos. It inspires the human person to be an active companion in the creative travail of the Trinity who, in a labor of tireless and unconditional love, strains toward the emergence of fullness of life and new creation.

EVALUATION

How might we evaluate the viability of the model of midwifery as a paradigm of ecological ethics toward an evolving cosmos?

I test the proposal by means of four principal criteria: (1) fit with data, (2) simplicity, (3) fecundity, and (4) pastoral efficacy. The *data* with which such a proposal must *fit* are the values and actions that Peacocke proposes as ecologically responsible within the pantheistic-procreative paradigm of the God-world relationship. The *simplicity* of the proposal is judged by the directness and clarity of its expression, free of circumlocution and convolution that would evade the logical consequence of an experience or of its inference. The *fecundity* of the proposal requires that it have generativity, a vitality about it that has the capacity to foster new ideas and creative responses regarding God and the God-world relationship regarding suffering. Its ideas and responses also must demonstrate *pastoral efficacy*, the capacity to inspire, transform, and liberate human persons and the universe in ways that promote the full flourishing of all manner of being in the midst of a suffering world.

The model of midwifery that I set forth as an ecologically responsible and ethically viable stance within an evolutionary understanding of the relationship of the human person to the cosmos has great consonance with the models proposed by Peacocke. It demonstrates sound fit with the ecological values and ethical actions that Peacocke identifies as essential to the flourishing of an evolutionary cosmos while at the same time expanding Peacocke's examples to include a specifically female model that is consonant with the pantheistic-procreative paradigm. The simplicity of the model of midwifery derives from its direct connection to the pantheistic-procreative paradigm and from its emphasis on inherent, natural processes for the fostering and emergence of life. While the model demonstrates simplicity, there is also a novelty to it that suggests fecundity in its use and interpretation. This fecundity is evident in the ability of the model to address issues that affect the transcendent mother, the incarnate firstborn,

and the immanent processes in the panentheistic-procreative paradigm, as well as in its intrinsic vigilance concerning abuse of the body of the cosmos through misuse of technology and chemical pollutants.

By using such a model, one also is able to image the profound intimacy and mutuality of creation and its Creator, the God whose essence is Love. Like a mother with the child of her womb, God in this model envelops, enfleshes, and permeates the being of the cosmos. God provides for the cosmos of her womb a fecund environment in which to thrive, the matter and structures by which to develop, and the vitality and nourishment by which to flourish. Moreover, "when the natural world, with all its suffering, is panentheistically conceived of as 'in God,' it follows that the evils of pain, suffering, and death in the world are internal to God's own self: God must have experience of the natural" (Peacocke 2004, 151). It follows when the cosmos is imaged embryonically in the womb of God, whatever the child suffers in its wholeness or in its most minute parts the mother suffers as well in painstaking sensitivity until the health and well-being of her offspring are restored.

As for pastoral efficacy, the model of midwifery, like the panentheistic-procreative paradigm, affirms female embodiment and celebrates the natural processes of pregnancy and birthing. In so doing, it inherently critiques and condemns the subordination, denigration, and abuse of women and encourages an ethics of worth, equality, and mutuality within Christianity and within the various cultures of the world. Moreover, it advances a specifically female form of advocacy and praxis into ecological theology and environmental ethics. Finally, the model of midwifery solidifies the connection between the life and processes of human existence and the life and processes of cosmic existence of which humanity is an integral and inextricable part.

A further practical way of evaluating the midwife model of ecological ethics would be to demonstrate its fit, simplicity, fecundity, and pastoral efficacy with the values and actions deemed vital to the sustainability of the cosmos at this juncture in history. These values and actions are effectively expressed in the Earth Charter, "a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century." An outgrowth of the Earth Charter Initiative, the Charter was "created by the largest global consultation process ever associated with an international declaration, endorsed by thousands of organizations representing millions of individuals." Clearly in tune with the relational emphasis of the midwife model of care, the Charter "seeks to inspire in all peoples a sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The Earth Charter is an expression of hope and a call to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history." Moreover, the mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is precisely an ethical one: "To establish a sound ethical

TABLE 2

**Comparison of Values and Actions of the Model of Midwifery
and the Earth Charter as Ecological Ethic**

The Model of Midwifery	The Earth Charter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education and expertise</i> concerning the entities, processes, and structures of an evolving cosmos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advance the study and exchange of the knowledge</i> about ecological systems and sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acquisition and dissemination of information</i> regarding the emergence and survival of the world's fragile ecosystems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure the availability</i> of information of vital importance to human health and environmental protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attentiveness</i> to those choices that facilitate the healthy growth and development of the cosmos and its creatures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adopt lifestyles</i> that safeguard earth's regenerative capacities and emphasize quality of life and sufficiency in a finite world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vigilance</i> against the incursion of elements that are deleterious to cosmic well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems</i> with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monitor</i> the misuse or abuse of the environment caused by unregulated technology or chemical pollutants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prevent harm to any part of the environment</i> caused by pollutants, radioactivity, toxins, or environmentally hazardous technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advocate</i> the full flourishing of all forms of life in the cosmos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Uphold the right of all without discrimination</i> to a natural and social environment supportive of the flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nurturance and gentleness</i> toward the cosmos and its creatures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Care for the community of life</i> with understanding, compassion and love
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respectful treatment</i> of creation that safeguards against abuse, despoliation, and destruction of ecosystems and their inhabitants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respect Earth and life</i> in all its diversity, interdependence, and intrinsic value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Companion</i> in the creative travail of the Trinity who, in a labor of tireless and unconditional love, strains toward the emergence of fullness of life and new creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Live in right relationship</i> with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.

foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, diversity, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace" (Earth Charter 2000).

The Charter is not a theological document, but it resonates with the insights of the premier thinkers in the ecology-theology dialogue and derives from the wisdom of the world's great religious traditions. Table 2 (Citizens for Midwifery 2005a, b; Earth Charter 2000) parallels the ecological values and actions suggested by a midwife model of care with some of those proposed by the Earth Charter. Like the model of midwifery, the Charter *advocates study and knowledge* concerning ecological systems and sustainability and stipulates that such *knowledge be available* as it relates to human and environmental well-being. The Charter urges individuals and groups to *adopt lifestyles* that safeguard the regenerative capacity of the earth and that provide for a quality of life consistent with a finite world. The Charter also insists on a vigilance that *protects and restores Earth's ecological systems* with emphasis on the natural processes that sustain and promote life. Both the model of midwifery and the Charter warn about the necessity of *protecting existing and emerging life from harm* caused by pollution, toxins, or environmentally hazardous technology to promote the full flourishing of all members of the cosmic community. Each endorses a stance of *care and respect toward all cosmic life* recognizing its intrinsic value and its interdependent diversity. Both the model of midwifery and the Earth Charter accentuate that in an evolving cosmos, from the micro- to macro-level, "*relationships are not just interesting . . . they are all there is to reality*" (Wheatley 1992, 9).

Fundamentally, it is this reality of relationship within a panentheistic paradigm that the midwife model affirms and promotes ecologically, ethically, and theologically. Ecologically, the midwife model of care preserves and protects the relationships that exist between the beings and processes of human and nonhuman life in the cosmos. It also stresses the profound relationship between creation and its Creator, between the cosmos and the source of its being and becoming. Imaging the cosmos within God and God within and around the cosmos graphically demonstrates that what is experienced by the cosmos and by its creatures is immediately and acutely experienced by God. Earthquakes and tsunamis reverberate within God. Toxicity and pollution poison the offspring of God's womb. Rain forest depletion and strip mining disfigure the form of God's beloved creation. This realization fosters an ethical response that inspires and promotes values and actions consistent with the interdependent and supportive relationships essential to the cosmos.

Ethically, the midwife model effectively denounces the despoliation and devastation of the cosmos through human choices and behavior. It accentuates the intrinsic rather than instrumental value of the cosmos and urges humanity "to be co-creator with God . . . acting for the good of both humanity and the Earth's eco-systems . . . in such a way that it can go on

being the medium through which life can continue and explore new forms of existence under the guidance of God" (Peacocke 1979, 316).

Theologically, the midwife model of ecological ethics sustains and nurtures the gracious and gratuitous relationship between creation and its Creator God, that larger life and Ground of Being of which the cosmos is an intimate part. Furthermore, it generates myriad new perspectives and possibilities for contemplating and symbolizing God, the cosmos and its creatures, and the God-world relationship and expands the settings in which symbols of God, the cosmos, and their interrelation function. The midwife model of care in a panentheistic paradigm explicitly asserts that God's creative activity extends not only to the full flourishing of creation's human emergents but also ceaselessly labors in, with, and under the processes of the cosmos for the healing, salvation, transformation, and liberation of the whole of the cosmos itself. Moreover, God does so as a mother who yearns to bring new and abundant life to the child of her womb.

NOTE

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