

Art Making and the New Creation

In his book *Surprised by Hope*, theologian N. T. Wright states that “art at its best draws attention not only to the way things are, but also to the way things will be, when the earth is filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.” If Wright’s argument is correct, then faithful artists must continually look intently and intimately at the risen Christ, through whom all things have been created and are held together, for the purpose of reconciling them to God, through the blood of his cross (Col. 1:15-20). In this session, we are invited to explore and make room in our minds and hearts for the theological reality that the new creation is central to our living and art-making.

Cristian Cazacu is a songwriter, worship leader, and performing artist for over 25 years. His passion is to see Christian artists engage their craft theologically, as an act of worship and witness to the risen Christ. Cristian is the director of *imagoDei Romania*, an emerging initiative designed to cultivate community among the faithful artists by means of spiritual formation, theological reflection, networking and culture-making, for the purposes of the kingdom of God. He also coordinates the Artists Network as a part of the Romanian Leadership Forum. Cristian holds an M.A. in Intercultural Studies (Global Christian Worship), from Fuller Theological Seminary (2010). Cristian and his wife, Bella, have three sons, living near the city of Timișoara, Romania.

I. A biblical theology of the *New Creation*

A. Where we have been: of heavenly depictions and rapture/escapist hymnodies.

*“When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And **take me home**, what joy shall fill my heart.”*

How Great Thou Art (late 19 century - early 20th)

*“Till He returns or **calls me home**
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand”*

In Christ Alone (early 21st century)

B. Where we need to be: New Creation Matters. “Behold, I make all things new.” (Rev. 21:5).

*“This is my Father’s world:
The battle is not done:
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
And **earth and Heav’n be one.**”*

This is my Father’s world (early 20th century)

*“Christ will return again, again
All of the dead will rise
Evil will be no more, no more
Heaven and earth collide”*

Christ is Risen - The Brilliance (early 21st century)

1. In the New Testament, *New Creation* refers both to the current state of a person who has been regenerated by faith in Jesus Christ, through water and the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15), and the ultimate reality of Jesus’ return, when all things will be made new (Rev. 21:5), and Heaven and Earth will be united (Rev. 21:1,2).
2. As the firstborn over all creation and the firstborn from among the dead (Col. 1:15,18), the risen Christ inaugurates this New Creation and invites us to live in its reality, as people of the resurrection, interceding for this creation to align to God’s will on earth as it is in heaven (The Lord’s Prayer).

II. New Creation and the Arts

A. Thinking theologically about the arts.

B. From creation to new creation as a source of inspiration.

III. Glimpses of the New Creation

A. Creative expressions of arts in the New Creation, for Christian worship and witness.

B. Implications: theological, liturgical, and missional.

As they voice the creation’s praise through their artworks, the faithful artists must “join the praise of the Firstborn of all creation, who, by virtue of his Spirit-enabled resurrection and ascent to the right hand of the Father, is able to announce and enact the praise of the new creation” (Taylor, Glimpses of the New Creation: 2019, p.65).