

Season of Creation 1, 2017
Peace, Seattle
June 11, 2017

SETTING: Three characters: a scientist in a lab coat, a student, and an offstage voice (embodying the microbiome). Scientist walks out with microscope in hand and student by side. They peer into the microscope to see sample of microbiota. They have conversation about life.

SCIENTIST *(Walking in while talking to student...Goes to table front and center of chancel)*
...So my latest investigation involves exploring the human microbiome.

STUDENT The micro—what?

SCIENTIST Micro-biome—it means “*little life*.”
It’s the name we use for the microbial community that lives in your gut.

STUDENT Hold on a minute—there’s a community living in my gut?

SCIENTIST Yep. Little tiny organisms—up to 500 separate species—are found on every surface of our bodies. Even straight out of the shower we carry 10 times more bacteria than the total number of our human cells—we’re talking hundreds of billions.¹

STUDENT WHOA... *(Said slowly while staring blankly ahead as info is pondered.)*

SCIENTIST Yeah, pretty amazing, right?

STUDENT *(Snapping out of trance)* Amazing, yes...but also kind of GROSS!

SCIENTIST Gross? What’s gross about it?

STUDENT HOLD ON!—You just told me there’s this whole micro population of germs—billions of them—living on and in my body and you don’t think that’s gross?!

SCIENTIST Well...I guess there is a certain YUCK factor at play here...

STUDENT WELL YEAH!

SCIENTIST But by the time we’re done with our investigation, I think you’ll have a different impression—at least I hope so.

STUDENT OK, I’m willing to give it a try.

¹ <http://www.actigenomics.com/2012/09/microbiota/>

SCIENTIST *(Looking in microscope)* Hmm...where are you...Alright... there you are. OK, I've isolated a gut colony. Check out our friend *lactobacillus*.²

STUDENT *(Looks in microscope.)* Wow. They're shaped kind of like a vitamin capsule... and so tiny. *(Keeps looking, then suddenly exclaims)*
Oh my gosh! I can't believe it!

SCIENTIST What?

STUDENT *(Looking up)* That little thing I'm staring at?—it just waved at me.

SCIENTIST *(Incredulous)* Don't be ridiculous. Bacteria don't wave.

STUDENT Well, these do...see for yourself. *(steps aside and scientist looks)*

SCIENTIST *(While he looks, he hears a little, friendly voice calling—from offstage)*

LACY Yoo-hoo! Hello! We see you...can you see us?

SCIENTIST That's impossible! *(Pulling back and rubbing eyes/glasses)*

LACY It's us! Lactobacillus! But you can call us LACY...all our friends do.

STUDENT *(Hands on hips)* What did I tell you.

SCIENTIST *(Talking to congregation)* It must have been something I ate...

LACY Umm...well, you're on the right track...

SCIENTIST OK, OK...suppose for the moment I accept the premise that you are real, and that I am actually talking to a colony of *lactobacillus* bacteria. What do you have to say for yourself?

LACY Oh, we just wanted to say thank you.

SCIENTIST Thank you?

LACY Yes, thank you. You scientists have been giving us microbiota lots of good press lately.

² <http://aem.asm.org/content/74/16/4985.full>

SCIENTIST Come to think of it, I guess you're right—and for good reason.

We're discovering things about microbiota we never knew before, like

- how important they—sorry—YOU—are to the health of our bodies;
- and how you're in constant communication with the brain;
- and how diverse you all are, and all the jobs you take on to keep us healthy, like: digesting food and producing vitamins, warding off invaders, and supporting the immune system, to name a few.

STUDENT You mean LACY and their pals are responsible for all that?

SCIENTIST *(To student)* That's right—pretty amazing, huh?

(To Lacy) So, my tiny friends, it's WE who should be thanking YOU.

LACY *(Singing line from film, MOANA)*

♪ *What can I say accept, YOU'RE WELCOME!*

SCIENTIST & LACY Awww.

STUDENT Well, I guess I'm not surprised.

SCIENTIST & LACY You're not?

STUDENT No. Because of this whole thing about community—people community, plant community, ocean community— and now gut community—everywhere you look these days, communities keep showing up. It's like it was the way things were meant to be, designed to be!

LACY We certainly feel that way—it IS the way things are meant to be...all of us working together, little guys like us, big guys like you, interconnection and interdependence is the name of the game!

SCIENTIST Lacy's right. Like one of my heroes, John Muir, was fond of saying:
*"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."*³

STUDENT The God who's behind all this—the HOLY TRINITY—is a community, too: One God, three persons.

SCIENTIST Now you're waxing theologically.

³ John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911)

STUDENT But don't you see—it all fits! God as Trinity shows us how to live in harmony, interdependently, each giving way to the other, and by doing so, finding our own identities affirmed; joining hands in the cosmic dance that's been going since before the world began...

SCIENTIST You lost me there.

LACY Didn't lose me. In fact what she's saying reminds me of a song I heard.

STUDENT You hear songs?

LACY Of course! We bacteria pass all kinds of things around, including music.

STUDENT *(skeptically)* OK...

LACY The song goes like this: *(clears throat and then sings, slowly and clearly)*

♪ *When minds and bodies meet as one and find their true affinity,
we join the dance in God begun and move within the Trinity,
so praise the good that's seen and done in loving, giving unity,
revealing God, forever One, whose nature is Community!*

STUDENT You are amazing! That's *exactly* was I was trying to say!

SCIENTIST OK, I'm beginning to see the light now. You're saying these intersecting, interdependent, interfunctioning, symbiotic communities are part of the Creator's design from the beginning.

STUDENT Right!

SCIENTIST Well, you've given me lots to ponder.
And Lacy, you've opened my eyes to a whole new perspective, and for a guy/gal like me who can get pretty set in his/her ways, that's saying something!

LACY *(Singing, joined by the others, a la Moana)*
♪ *What can we say except, YOU'RE WELCOME!*
♪ *For the flora that flourish in side,*
♪ *What can we say except, YOU'RE WELCOME!*
♪ *We germs aren't all that bad, we're rather bright!*
♪ *YOU'RE WELCOME! YOU'RE WELCOME!*
See you later!