SYNOPSIS

Create vs. Copy: Embrace Change. Ignite Creativity. Break Through with Imagination

Our world today is characterized by rapid changes. This reality brings uncertainty and anxiety because many people are scared that they would not be able to keep up with the changes well. Previously proven effective methods of doing things may not be applicable anymore because of these changes. Many people, in turn, are forced to find different ways. Wytsma identifies two approaches that people adopt; to create or copy. The first group of people may borrow existing ideas, with the intention to explore possibilities rather than to duplicate. The second group only seeks to emulate proven good ideas that work. Wytsma believes that the mentality to create is a habit that everyone should implement because God has given that creativity in every individual.

The fundamental principle of Wytsma's conviction lies on the fact that man is created in the image of God, who is creative. God creates and continues to create. Thus, creativity "is one way we manifest and exercise the image of God" (Wytsma, p. 26). It is the capacity that God has given to man. At the same time, this capacity is a responsibility that human should bear. Therefore, in order to unleash this God-given capacity, it requires intentionality in using and developing creativity. This is an important principle that should be remembered because everything in the world deteriorates and become obsolete. Creativity infuses life to this world because in its acceptance of the reality, it refuses to give in to the norm and instead brings in new possibilities. Unfortunately, many people need to be reminded that they need to intentionally exercise their creativity in this decaying world.

Bringing together the fact that humans are created in the image of the creative God and the reality of deterioration, Wytsma stresses that the goal of intentional creativity should be aligned with God's ongoing creative activities. He suggests that it involves making "space for life to flourish" (Wytsma, p. 56) when fear and anxiety traps human mind and restricts perspectives from seeing possibilities. It is a redemptive creativity that sees different ways of restoration and renewal for human to flourish. Hence, nobody can stop the changes in the world, but humans have been given the creative capacity to respond to this change by their creative Creator.

The creative capacity that everybody has is manifested in human imagination. This imagination is evident in the fairy tale story which has its own reality and logic. More often than not adults fare worse than children in appreciating this because they cannot imagine new realities. It is important that one continues to learn to recapture the capacity to imagine as new possibilities that lead to good innovation may not be apparent without it. Wytsma differentiates three types of imagination that should be recaptured to bring about innovation.

a. Comprehensive imagination. It is the ability to think through a certain challenge in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the situation.
b. Artistic imagination. It is the capacity to imagine new scenarios and possibilities. Many new ideas may be conceived, but only a few will be relevant.
c. Practical imagination. It is the imagination that bring together all the ideas and decide which ideas should be applied.

There are at least two challenges to cultivate these imaginations. The first one is the willingness to dismiss unworkable ideas in order to move forward. The second is the realization that everybody can and must imagine before one or more workable innovations can be conceived.

Having said that, it can be observed that the process of imagination takes time until it can be eventually realized. Wytsma reiterates the importance of intentionality to bridge imagination and its application. This intentionality, he believes, should be practiced with the mentality of forward movement and alignment. It should begin with the first step

of movement, followed by few small steps afterwards. Borrowing from Epstein, he provides suggestions on the first few steps to start creative habits and disciplines to keep a fresh mind:

a. Capture new ideas by writing down all ideas, insights, and imaginations that come to mind.
b. Seek out challenging tasks by training our brains to work on, for example, unfinished projects, unanswerable questions, or unsolvable puzzles.
c. Broaden knowledge by learning one thing as a starter.
d. Surround yourself with interesting things and people to engage in meaningful dialogues and exercise the brain for new experiences.

Wytsma cautions that the above movement without alignment may lead to chaos. The alignment seeks to encourage new ideas within certain boundaries by setting a conscious direction of a certain end goal. He gives a reminder that the end goal should "fall within the redemptive role of creativity: making space for life" (Wytsma, p. 143) as God intends. Thus, simple yet clear end goal, guidelines, and expectations may help to foster clarity and confidence in the creative movement to reach worthy innovations.

Wytsma closes his discussion on creativity by promoting what he calls as generous creativity. It can be seen from three key lenses, i.e. collaborative, progressive, and redemptive. The first lens sees creativity as a collaborative effort. It acknowledges that people come from different starting points, but people need each other to reach the full potential of creativity. Thus, it requires relationship between people who collaborate for a purpose. The second lens recognizes the imperfection of creativity that consequently needs continuous improvement. It is a work in progress; it does not demand perfection. The third lens understands the value of people in any creative works. It serves greater ends than self-fulfilment, and seeks to redeem the broken world with what is good for God, people, and creation.