

Creativity for Life & Love



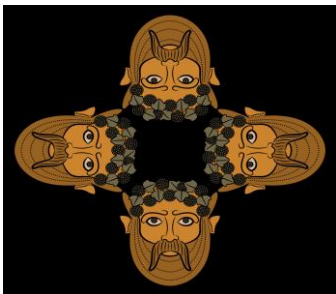
What do you like in God's creation? There is an endless list for me. I love juicy peaches! They are delightful. When the season comes, I invest my money into this fruit. Crispy apples? Yes, they give me joy! Sunsets, oceans, mountains? They are mysterious, powerful, and beautiful. All of God's creation is so amazingly, wonderfully, surprisingly fascinating.

God is super intelligence that no scientist can follow. The stars that are spinning and circulating in the universe praise the Lord. The laughter of a baby, the wide eyes of an infant, and the wisdom of grandparents. All of creation is holy.

The language of creation is love, and the entire ecosystem is harmonious. And the balance, power, and love are permeated throughout the universe and creation. And it is healing by itself. It heals by itself even after a big, wildfire. You don't see the damage that devastated a vast region. God's creation has the power to heal, and it takes care of each other through the balance of the ecosystem. When God gave the divine creativity to humanity; it means that it is for love, joy, beauty, healing, and balance of life.

In Zechariah 1, we read a very interesting and thought-provoking passage. **Zechariah 1:20-21; "Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. What are these men coming to do?" I asked. The angel replied, "These four horns—these nations—scattered and humbled Judah. Now these craftsmen have come to terrify those nations and throw them down and destroy them."**

Horns in Scripture represent authorities or powers of the world. So, the Bible is describing four horns that rise up to destroy people of God through deception and oppression. Four is the number of the Earth: North, South, East, and West. It means a worldwide phenomenon of deception, destruction, and oppression. Which means the world where we live right now.



The Lord's answer to those four horns was to raise up **four blacksmiths, artisans, or craftsmen**, those anointed with the wisdom for creativity. They are called to forge and change the oppressive system of the world creatively. God didn't send a standard army toward worldly power. Instead, He sent skilled individuals filled with the art of molding, forging, shaping, and creating spirits. It was the answer. A very unusual solution for a global problem. Creativity that breaks the molds you are in your lives. Let's see how it works.

Cuban Story

Several years ago, in the California-Nevada conference where I was ordained, there was a group of pastors who visited the Cuban Methodist Church that grew wildly. When the Cuban Revolution happened in 1959, one of the first acts of the Castro government was to shut down churches. Priests and pastors were jailed. After the new socialist government had stabilized, they began to let churches open again, but only for worship services. No other ministry for people, such as feeding people or running schools, was allowed. Only worship services existed in the building. No new church. Only the government could take care of people, and they did that by giving every person in the country \$22 a month for a family.



That's socialism; you got \$22 a month whether you worked or not. \$22 that started in the year 1956 continued to 2016. (Now it has changed a little.) It wasn't enough to feed a family for a month. People were hungry. They skipped meals, often breakfast, to make their food go farther. And so, every morning, the Church invited people to come and pray. 'Come and bring your hunger,' the Church was saying to them. 'And when we are finished praying, we will break our fast together.' People fasted involuntarily imposed by poverty.

The Church saw that people were hungry. Not only did the Church figure out a way to serve a meal, it helped people turn their hunger into something spiritual. And it met their need and turned their hunger into an experience with purpose and meaning. It's brilliant. Of course, the people came.



Creating "Hygge" and Hospitality

Creativity for healing of community often manifests as the intentional design of spaces. When people focus on "hospitality-centered" environments—sometimes described through concepts like *hygge* (a quality of coziness and comfortable conviviality)—they are using aesthetic creativity to solve social problems like loneliness or marginalization. Sensory Design: Using lighting, beauty, warmth, and shared meals to lower the "defenses" of a stranger.

Our Fifth Avenue Neighborhood Table (FANT) is upgrading into a Hygge space more and more. By serving tea at the table, so that people may feel valued. We decorate with real beautiful flower, which God provided through a local flower shop, Bits 'n' Pieces. Our FANT is social architecture that is not just functional, but beautiful, and signals to guests that they are worthy of effort and care.

Love toward other human beings creates a space that gives life to those who are marginalized by lies and oppression of the world. Divine creativity is not selfish; it's usually intended to provide hope and help especially to those human family who need the hope and joy of God.



Let's go to our **story of a woman** anointing Jesus' feet. Our scripture highlights Simon's thoughts "to himself," judging Jesus for allowing a woman "like her" (a "sinner") to touch his feet with her oil, her hair, her tears. Simon's judgement about "the way things ought to be" is common among people. You and I have that too. Simon saw Jesus' interaction in out-of-the-box ways with others—especially those others considered unworthy of Jesus' attention.

But Jesus senses Simon's displeasure. Simon didn't treat Jesus as an honored guest at all. However, this woman recognized Jesus' identity as a Messiah as he relates to others, even her. It was with a boundary-breaking attitude, a different way, a creative way to see people as more than what society has labeled them. She saw the creative Spirit in Jesus that heals and forgives, gives peace, inspires others.

Creativity demands a different perspective: seeing situations from a different angle to find solutions. Creativity perceives people differently to foster harmonious relationships, and also see ourselves differently to transform our inner judgments toward ourselves. If you say, "Oh, I do not have that gift," it is self-doubt and self-denial, which are manifestations of the world's deceptive lies.

When you have love for others, there's always a creative way to express it and fulfill their needs. It's strangely beautiful. Love finds a way to fill the needs. Even with the cost of self-sacrifice, as exemplified by Jesus. We

are sons and daughters of God, the creator of the universe, whose language is love and power. Divine creativity resides within us. When you present a problem to God persistently, our brains begin to find solutions. Love is inherently creative, and God's creativity joins us in this process.

In Zachariah 1, the concept of a creative artisan is about **protective love**. This artisan uses their craft to dismantle harmful systems and create safety for the vulnerable. The artisan in Zachariah is anyone who utilizes their unique talent to "hammer out" a better reality for their neighbor.

To think freely, we need to be released from fear. Only God can provide liberation from the world's deceptive lies. When you have this freedom, your hearts can soar like the song of Bobby Jo Valentine, allowing us to reach the heights of creative Heaven on Earth. This is a calling for all Christians.

Do you desire the healing of the world? Abide in Jesus. Do you seek the balance of the world? Abide in Jesus. In union with Jesus, your perspective will transform, and you'll become more creative. Love will flourish, and you'll receive brilliant creativity from the Creator of this captivating world.

Would you ask Jesus, "How do you perceive this?" "How do you perceive me?" "What do you see in our church?" "What purpose have we overlooked in our community?" And hold those questions until the answers arise. God will restore our church and your dreams. They will be fulfilled. You will witness that God's ways of restoration are far superior to human ways.