

# Created *to be* Creative

Sue Tanner,  
artist and  
National Office  
team member,  
challenges us to  
break creativity  
out of the box  
we've put it in  
and rediscover  
our creative DNA.

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* GENESIS 1:1

Right from the beginning of time, God demonstrates His creativity. In an extraordinary act, He creates the heavens and the earth. Do you know anyone else who can include that in their resumé? The first chapter of the Bible describes God speaking each element of creation into being. "Let there be light", He said. **"And there was!"** ...Land, plants, sun, moon, stars and creatures of all kinds.

*"...In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."*

GENESIS 1:27

We are the only part of creation that has been created in the likeness of God. Not only the 'talented' ones, but all of us have been created in the image of a creative God.

This aspect of God's nature in us is evident in children. Children love to express themselves creatively, and this is strongly encouraged.

Abstract, splattered painted artworks have proudly adorned family fridges for generations and when at school, children are encouraged to write stories and create worlds from their imagination. However, as children grow, creative expressions become likened to childish behaviour, and only the 'talented' are encouraged to continue to create.

**Are we forgetting that creativity is part of who we are and how we're made?**

Maybe we are putting creativity in a box. When we hear the word, our definition often starts and ends with the arts. Expressions of creativity that reflect the senses, visual arts (sight), music (sound) and dance/movement (sensory). Creativity is much more than this and we can all access it.

*"Creativity is intelligence having fun."* ALBERT EINSTEIN

We are the most intelligent of all of God's creation and creativity begins in our intellect. Our thoughts and imaginations, our ability to find solutions to complex problems and to see different possibilities... these are all expressions of creativity.

Dr Edward de Bono (the six thinking hats guy) describes creativity as the mind breaking out of established ways of thinking in order to view things in different ways. This sounds to me like a mind explosion. Imagine the power of a team, of many minds breaking out of established ways of thinking bringing together a kaleidoscope of thoughts and imaginings.

People across all times and cultures have creatively expressed thoughts, ideas and stories through everything from dance, paintings and music, to inventions, technology and literature. If creativity is an innate part of how God made us, and part of all cultures, then it must mean something for our faith communities.

*"... Go and make disciples of all nations..."* MATTHEW 28:19

It is easy to become complacent about what it looks like to gather as believers. We may even think that the way we do 'church' is the right way and expect anyone who walks through the door to understand and feel comfortable with our rituals.

## Creativity in Local Ministry

As church planters, creative thought and innovation have been core to how we connect with communities. After pioneering four church plants, what appeals to us is that no church is the same. What makes the church community is the people who gather together and the unique stories, perspectives and gifts they bring. Right now, we are at the very beginning of building a new faith community in Melbourne and we're asking God to show us how we can use what He has given us to connect with this community.

SUE AND ROB, CHURCH PLANTERS



**However, notice that the Bible does not spell out exactly how, but just tells us to.... Go, make disciples, baptise them and teach them (Mathew 28:19-20). Maybe God's design is for us to think creatively about how we fulfil this command within our context.**

In Acts 2:42-47, we read that the early church devoted themselves to the Word, fellowshiped together, witnessed signs and wonders, cared for each other and praised God. We are not told what time to hold the morning service or whether to have a two or three song bracket before the twenty-minute sermon. However, we are told a simple list of characterises that form the foundations of a thriving church.

In each community, whether local or global, the 'church' should look different. Our challenge is to not fall into the same old comfortable patterns, but to seek the local people of peace, respond to the needs of the community and to creatively look for ways, new ways, to connect with people and share the message of Jesus.

## Creativity in Global Mission

I never considered myself 'creative' when I was younger, but I've had plenty of opportunity in Mozambique to discover how creative God made me. When we build relationships we engage in varied ways – one day we attend a funeral and the next shell beans on a verandah or share a meal. We think about how to craft and share Bible stories so people not only engage but understand. Creative solving of practical problems. Creative collaboration as a team. Creative ways to journey with and empower others. This year we had the opportunity to share during village initiations. We selected, shaped and told stories in order to engage the women and girls, asked questions that connected with their worldview and performed songs and dances to reinforce teaching – definitely some creative (and collaborative) thinking required!

BEK, CROSS-CULTURAL WORKER

