

F O C U S

Bimonthly Newsletter of the American Creativity Association™...promoting a creative society

TRIBUTE To Anne Durrum Robinson

by Barry Silverberg



She was a gentle lady who believed in many things, including the power of intuition and creativity. Mostly, she believed in the power of people to achieve their potential.

“Let it be known of Anne Durrum Robinson, that she is a wonderful model and strong proponent of creativity; that she has a charming wit and a wisdom that improves our world; that she is a gracious and general supporter of the American Creativity Association; that she is a sparkling speaker and a great Texas lady; that she lights up rooms and lightens hearts.”

So reads the plaque presented to her by the ACA Board on May 5, 2000.

Some weeks ago, her light dimmed but it was not extinguished.

Anne Durrum Robinson died a few weeks ago at 92 years young. Her ability to turn a phrase, encapsulate a moment in a pun, and spread warmth to all she encountered embedded a spark of Annie in all of us who held her dear in our hearts. She was more than a person. Anne Durrum Robinson was a phenomenon of unsurpassed proportions. She was a gentle lady who believed in many things, including the power of intuition and creativity. Mostly, she believed in the power of people to achieve their potential.

When I met Annie, I was in transition, on a journey to find what I was going to do with my life after leaving a field of employment I had inhabited for over 23 years. A friend had suggested I talk with Anne Durrum Robinson to help clarify my thinking. I left her home with a sense of freedom and a mandate to loosen my creativity.

This is not the place to cite her many achievements or her contributions to multiple fields of study and institutions. Nor do

I wish to mourn her passing. These words are intended to celebrate her life and to remind us all of the pure joy that was Anne Durrum Robinson.

Annie’s family followed her lead in contributing her library and professional resources to the Center for Community-Based and Non-profit Organizations at Austin Community College, which I lead and manage. It adds to our Anne Durrum Robinson Special Collection that she previously created. In the coming months, we will categorize her resources and add them to the existing postings at www.nonprofitaustin.org so others may continue to benefit from Annie’s wisdom and robust curiosity of so many areas.

A picture of Annie in her well-known attire sits on my desk amidst those of my family. A decorated box sits on her head—her “presents hat.” Her smile is infectious. While not one of my blood relatives, Annie was, and remains, a part of my family, as she has, and will continue to be, for so many others.

May her soul be bound up in the gathering of all life.

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President's Column

by Darlene Boyd



re-birthday — re-birthing

I began writing this column on July 4th, our nation's birthday. As national birthday celebrations were being hailed, I recognized a celebratory connection to ACA and our recent initiatives. It became obvious to me that ACA is in the midst of a re-birthing. This is truly an exciting time for our members, both longtime and new members alike. For some time, our present board has been re-visiting each and every aspect of the association. Bylaws are being revised, the website is being re-vitalized, list serve is in place, conference format is under review and much more. I suspect our members, new or seasoned, recognized the flurry of recent board-driven actions.

Problem solving and problem finding continue to exist in the forefront of board-driven tasks. As we readily recognize, both can serve as a general model for intelligent thought and action.

A colleague of mine, Michael Martinez, in his recent book, *Education as the Cultivation of Intelligence*, reminds us that, "Models of problem solving in novel situations, in particular, strongly resemble models of fluid intelligence. When the family resemblance between problem solving and fluid intelligence is recognized, this knowledge can be used to design intelligence-enhancing experiences. Tradition, however, may present a hurdle."

As we, develop, propose and implement modifications in ACA policies and activities, we have kept ACA history, tradition and core concepts before us and will continue to do so.

Societal modernity has forced us to make some technological changes. In turn, we are far better connected as members than we ever have been. The next step is for us to take advantage of our new pathways and better connect with each other.

I encourage each of our members to assume, first a personal path of pro-activity. Read our newsletters and contact authors and board members with questions and ideas. Get a better feel for the mission and values of our organization by visiting our website regularly and often. We promise that we will strive to keep the website fluid, thought-provoking and stale free.

If you have not taken the time to bring your thoughts together in a manner to be shared, give it a try. You can see that your association will begin to offer you numerous forums for research-based writings and practical applications of your creative productivity. Even though we are still several months out from our annual convergence. It's not too early to begin develop an outline for a conference session proposal.

Happy re-birthday ACA members.

I encourage each of our members to assume, first a personal path of pro-activity. Read our newsletters and contact authors and board members with questions and ideas. Get a better feel for the mission and values of our organization by visiting our website regularly and often.

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Executive Director's Column

by Barry Silverberg



ACA mission

The American Creativity Association (ACA) is the national organization of professionals in the field of creativity. Through its programs and services, it offers individuals and organizations opportunities for learning, professional development and networking. It is dedicated to enhancing the use of creativity throughout our society for the betterment of the human condition.

ACA vision

ACA is the virtual academy that leaders and professionals in the field of creativity turn to as the primary source of ideas and information dealing with creativity and where initiates to the field can begin their journey of discovery.

To achieve its vision, the ACA provides:

- forums to present, test, and exchange ideas;
- opportunities for networking and fellowship;
- clearing-house services for information on the state of the art in creativity research and practice; and
- means to link theorists and practitioners.

It Is What We DO That Counts

During one of my visits to Israel, Yitzhak Navon, then the Israeli President, told our assemblage an old Arab story of two birds in the woods on a very, very cold day. In the distance, they saw a hunter with tears in his eyes from the cold. He was taking aim at them.

One bird urged the other to flee with him. "He's going to shoot us," he warned.

The other, seeing the tears in the hunter's eyes, urged his friend not to flee. "Don't worry," he counseled, "he's a compassionate man. He won't shoot us; see the tears in his eyes."

To which the first bird replied, "don't look at his eyes, but what he does with his hands."

And so it should be with the American Creativity Association. It is not what we appear to be doing, but what we really do to make ACA membership a valuable commodity. Increasing your membership's value has been our focus these past three months. What we outlined in the last **FOCUS** that we were planning to do, we have largely put in place already.

The weekly list serve you receive as an ACA member is hopefully a useful, quick read. **FOCUS** will aim to provide more timeless, thought-provoking material. The new ACA web site has numerous new sections and pages, and these will grow as more of you submit material, complete your membership information forms, and use the Online Store and other opportunities.

NOW is the time to strengthen our existing chapters and international affiliates, and build new ones in regions where there are sufficient numbers of ACA members, both current and potential. If you are interested in building a chapter in your area, e-mail barry@amcreativityassoc.org and Bud Wurtz, our volunteer guru in this area, and I will be there to help you. And if you want to know which other ACA members live in your area, e-mail barry@amcreativityassoc.org; tell me the zip codes or cities/towns that comprise your area and I will send you a list of other ACAers in your region.

I am thrilled that Ann Anderson Lemon has agreed to continue to serve as **FOCUS** Editor, which she has so ably done from its inception in 1989.

On a personal note, I thank all who have either e-mailed or called with their support for the initiatives Darlene, Larry and I, along with the ACA Board, are taking to strengthen ACA. Keep those cards and letters coming and always feel free to suggest new things. We should be ever more creative in our approach to strengthening our organization and adding value for your creative lives.

*It is not what we appear to be doing, but what we really do to make ACA membership a valuable commodity ...weekly list serve you receive as an ACA member... **FOCUS** will aim to provide more timeless, thought-provoking material... new ACA web site has numerous new sections and pages, and these will grow ...On-line Store and other opportunities.*

How to reach us

To change your contact information, e-mail us at

subscriptionchanges@amcreativityassoc.org

To join or renew your membership go to www.amcreativityassoc.org and click on JOIN ACA.

See us online at www.amcreativityassoc.org

Are We Co-Creators with the Creator?

by Russ Barnes

Human creativity resembles the creation of the universe, however it was created. Humanity is said in the Bible to be created in the image of God; that is, human beings are said to be manufactured as co-creators with the Creator. If that is true, it has profound implications for human creativity. These implications are explored in interviews with a bioethicist and a theologian who has experience with working artificial intelligence.



Photo (c) Josh Farley.

Russ Barnes is a playwright and journalist who works from Bethesda, Maryland. His web address may be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~rbarnes7/Bio.rbarnes7@earthlink.net>.

Consider what act of creativity deserves the most lavish recognition. How about the Creation itself? The Big Bang: the seminal, exploding white-hot fireball that flung the stars and planets into existence—or (depending on your mood and perspective) to kingdom come.

Think of it. Creation itself as the exemplar of creativity. It dwarfs all this little planet's think tanks, seminars, and training sessions on the subject of creativity.

Yes, the event took place a long time ago. But it's an omnipresent event that reaches us down through the aeons.

Cosmic creation's significance for any discussion of earthly creativity conducted by human beings becomes clear if you consider what Dr. Cynthia Cohen has to say.

She is one of this country's experts in bioethics and senior research fellow of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University in Washington and the chairperson for numerous publications on biotechnology and ethics (Ph.D., Columbia; J.D., Michigan). She speaks about end-of-life decisions that might involve such solutions as euthanasia and beginning-of-life decisions that might involve the use of such advancements as found in the new reproductive technologies. Or stem-cell research, which involves both.

The answer to these life-and-death questions arising from research into these areas, she says, hinges upon sensitive and difficult family soul-searching. Cohen surprisingly invokes the Bible for clarification.

Great Balls of Fire

Two divergent biblical injunctions, Cohen observes, are at the root of most disagreements and arguments about bioethics. They are at once contradictory and complementary.

The first injunction has a Latin tag: *imago Dei*. The phrase signifies, "in the likeness of God," or "in God's image," and is a statement that depicts how humanity was created. Consider the actual biblical passage—as cited by Cohen—and its implications for human creativity.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him...'" (Genesis 1:26-27, RSV).

This first biblical injunction, Cohen says, "evokes fruitful implications about how we should act; how we might think of ourselves.

If you take the passage seriously," she continues, "you must conclude that, since God is the creator, and since we are like the Creator, then it follows we must be co-creators with the Creator."

The phrase *imago Dei* reveals how one is to understand human creativity. It suggests that the creation is still in the making, in progress and thus to exercise our responsibility on earth is to exercise our creativity.

Co-Creators? — or Good Stewards of the Steady State?

The second biblical injunction, Cohen points out, states that the creation is a *fait d'accomplis*. "Creation exists from time immemorial. Creation needs no more work." So creation no longer requires application of creative power. "Consequently we need to act as stewards, conservators of that existing creation."

Creation needs a shepherd; someone like David—or us. "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd" (Ezekiel 34:23, RSV).

This more conservative biblical admonishment declares that we perform the role of steward, shepherd, rather than the more dynamic—and potentially more destructive—role of creator (don't forget the Big Bang!). Stewardship is more like housekeeping. It requires tending to the "economy" of the household, and to preserving resources already in place.

So our understanding of creativity oscillates between two polar biblical views: the one defining humanity as co-creators with the Creator and the other defining us as stewards of the creation. This apparent contradiction reveals a possible theological equivocation. For co-creation allows a position of maturity in a dynamic and equal relationship, at least in direct speech, with the creator—just as Job asks

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to lay his case person-to-person before his creator.

Even so, co-creation sometimes demands perilous innovation and a certain amount of destruction, waste, insecurity, and awful disorder; all of which are among the hallmarks of the Creator himself. The question is, "Should we be like the Creator?" The Bible seems to answer, "Yes."

Stewardship, on the other hand, demands obedience to creation and its Creator. The steward preserves what creation has already brought forth; paying parental attention to "the sheep," and caring for their welfare. All this is good. But stewardship can also engender stagnant domesticity, arbitrary rule making, security-seeking acquiescence, and sometimes arrogant despotism—all of which can freeze the living soul.

The second question becomes, "Should we be the obedient servant of the Creator and steward of the Creation?" The Bible again seems to answer, "Yes."

"Let Us Make Robots in Our Own Image"

What is it that is apparent for human creativity within the biblical fork of "creatorship"/stewardship? For answers, consider next how scientific advances in artificial intelligence (AI) help clarify the very problems raised by biotechnology and what that clarification implies for human creativity.

Given any bioengineering application, there are arguments pro and con about when, how, and, indeed, *if* to use the technology. Such decisions usually rest upon the theological views family decision-makers have gained in their struggles with the question of *imago Dei* versus stewardship formulations.

Dr. Anne Foerst, a theologian steps up, at this point, with some help.

Anne Foerst, in addition to being a theologian, is a research scientist. For a time she was simultaneously a post-doctoral student at both the Harvard Divinity School and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. She became in effect a resident theologian for the MIT Lab's experiments building intelligent—even creative—humanoid robots.

Foerst speaks about robots and their creation, about digital robots created in the image of human beings, and about human empathy for

those robots as created beings.

Still in progress at MIT is the construction of two robots, one named "Gog," short for cognition, and "Kismet," after the word Muslims use for fate. The creation of machines possessing creativity takes more than one day. The scientific effort is to write software for mechanical and electronic robots assembled *imago homini* (making robots in our own image) by beings already created *imago Dei* (in the image of God).

These MIT robot experiments obviously—and with some direct resemblance to new bioengineering—present some knotty social and political implications. That's why Foerst became theologian for the MIT artificial intelligence project.

To Educate Robots; Build them Eyebrows

The MIT Artificial Intelligence Lab stretches the limits of the technology. What the programmers and scientists have found is that, for a computer to learn—rather than merely execute instructions, it must "be programmed to mimic the dynamics and stages of child development," Anne Foerst explains. For such development to be "learned" and written within its software script, the robot must be able to interact with its environment. And to do that, the computer needs to have a human-like body.

Outside/inside communication is what allows artificial intelligence just as it permits carbon-based human intelligence. Such inward/outward communication identifies mistakes socially, encourages correction of those mistakes. The result is learning.

For example, the MIT technologists constructed movable eyebrows upon the face of the "female" robot, Kismet. Eyebrows, if one thinks about it, can provide powerful cues, communicators of useful information person-to-person.

A raised right eyebrow by a human, for example, might mean to a robot that she has made a *faux pas*, or that she has done something questionable requiring further explanation. Such information alters her software for future reference so that she may know how best to interact socially. She changes; she learns; and she teaches others. The movement of eyebrows and other cues telegraph the pedagogic message received via the body

Still in progress at MIT is the construction of two robots, one named "Gog," short for cognition, and "Kismet," after the word Muslims use for fate.

The creation of machines possessing creativity takes more than one day.



Kismet



Dr. Cohen and Dr. Foerst present remarkable perceptions, which lead to certain conclusions about human creativity.

Not only does human creativity provide useful productivity, gratifying joy, and often salvation for bewildering predicaments, creativity also implies a sacred obligation.

robotic.

Again, what the MIT Lab is finding is that a computer must have a body a bit like the human body to have something resembling human intelligence, what the MIT Lab calls “embodied intelligence.” The point Foerst makes is that human beings, similarly, must mimic the Creator in creativity (and in other ways) to become human.

Foerst, whose newest book is *God In the Machine* (Dutton, 2005), calls creativity “a speech act which constitutes a new reality,” an act of “performance which creates a new relationship between ‘I and You,’ which changes and modifies relationships.” (Words like “thank-you,” “congratulations,” and “I promise” are speech performances that create new social and political realities.)

The Gamble of Creation

But relationships can go bad. Think of the gamble. Both ways: God and human, there is risk involved. God creates beings that resemble him. In doing so, he allows for the possible emergence of Attila the Hun. Human beings create software for machines that resemble them. And so they allow for the possible emergence of Frankenstein, Hal, or worse. The Creator, it appears, gave us the power to create monsters, as he seems to create monsters as well.

Foerst moderates this assertion about the creation of monsters. She claims that our creations—biologic and electronic—“need love and acceptance” from us. And the presence or

absence of that acceptance is what will make the difference between fellow traveler or unhappy companion. We need to love what we create. We need to love our creativity, she says.

So one can see why designers of artificial intelligence hire a theologian to weigh all considerations—social, ethical, and religious—of their high-tech, creative works. Or why families struggling with life and death decisions seek out bioethicists as well as doctors. These decisions about creation and death, these acts of creativity, require not only the exercise of our diligence, our technology, and our intelligence, but also our active love for all our creative works: human, technological, artistic, and social.

And one can see too why the Bible may equivocate by communicating a paradoxical vision of humanity in which God creates humankind as co-creators and as stewards of the creation.

Dr. Cohen and Dr. Foerst present remarkable perceptions, which ggivity. Not only does human creativity provide useful productivity, gratifying joy, and often salvation for bewildering predicaments, creativity also implies a sacred obligation. Our responsibility, on one level of depth, is to be social. The exercise of creativity is no less than to get on equal speaking terms with our Creator as we struggle to originate our earth-bound creations and, at the same time, listen to their cosmic meaning.

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An Interview with Michael Gelb

by Harvey Mathason

Michael Gelb is an internationally renowned author and speaker in the field of creativity. He wrote *How To Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*, *Discover Your Genius* and *Da Vinci Decoded*.

He practices creativity through juggling, Aikido, cooking, as well as appreciation of art and music.
www.michaelgelb.com

How did you first become interested in creativity?

My interest in creativity came from not liking school. I thought school was boring, oppressive, limiting and uninspiring. Many teachers did not realize they were suppressing the natural creativity in children. They were just trying to get through the curriculum, to get a good evaluation and keep their jobs. I felt that was wrong and wanted to do something about it. That was the beginning of my interest in creativity. I wanted to contribute to a more creative world.

What excites you about creativity and who inspired you?

Great thinkers from history. Notably Leonardo da Vinci and the 10 geniuses in my book, *Discover Your Genius*, inspired me. Closer to home, my biggest inspiration was my parents and my grandparents who raised me to think beyond what could have been limiting circumstances. My grandparents were immigrants to this country. More than survival, they had an interest in learning and making life worth living. My parents introduced me to art, music, ideas, travel and a universal point of view. They inspired me to be interested in people like Leonardo da Vinci and Einstein.

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... who
inspired
you?



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How did you become interested in Leonardo da Vinci?

When I was a kid Leonardo seemed like superman. I discovered that he was a great artist, scientist and gifted musician. He was athletic, charming, funny, and could even cook. He was the embodiment of human potential. I've always been fascinated by how to develop human potential. Besides, my grandmother was Italian so I have that special feeling for *La Dolce Vita* that connects me to Leonardo and Tuscany.

How would you imagine that Leonardo da Vinci would perform in a modern world?

First, we would hope that he had the opportunity to develop his gifts. Dr. Glen Doman says that children are born with the capacity to be a Leonardo da Vinci but we degenius them. Leonardo's spirit is alive in the modern world. Mary Zimmerman did a play about Leonardo's notebooks that was a smash hit OFF Broadway. Leonardo's bridge was unveiled a few years ago linking Norway and Sweden. The Da Vinci horse was unveiled in Milan with a sister copy in Michigan and another smaller version in Allentown, Pennsylvania. A few years ago, the Last Supper was restored after 22 years of work. *The Da Vinci Code* is one of the most popular novels ever written. Yes, Leonardo's influence is greater now than ever before, and in my books and seminar I hope to guide people to access his genius to enrich their lives.

Although no one can match Leonardo da Vinci's talent, what person would you say comes closest?

No one comes close. Everyone suffers from comparison. The closest contemporary person that I know is Buckminster Fuller. He had a range and depth of abilities, a universal global vision, and incredibly comprehensive mind. Fuller really manifested da Vinci in the principle of everything connects to everything else. He was one of the few people who really made those connections.

How did you get the idea for *Da Vinci Decoded*?

I felt that a book had to be written to express the spirituality of Leonardo. Also, I was getting tired of people asking me what I thought about *The Da Vinci Code* and it's link to Leonardo's ideas. People forget it's a novel for entertainment. I love *The Da Vinci Code*. It's a wonderful novel, but the benefit to your life ends when you finish reading the book. On the other hand, the spirituality of Leonardo's ideas expressed in *Da Vinci Decoded* can transform you for life.

Whom do you admire in the field of creativity and why?

I admire my friend Tony Buzan because Tony created the whole discipline of mind mapping, which remains the most brilliant tool for teaching people how to think like Leonardo da Vinci. We started working together in 1975, and he had already been at it for ten years at that time. Buzan has been a totally focused warrior for creativity for about 40 years, and he continues to be focused on teaching people how to think creatively.

Jean Houston is also someone I admire. She *does* a tremendous amount to link creativity with compassion and consciousness.

Many people say, "You're either born with creativity or you're not." How would you refute that statement?

I would modify, rather than refute it. People are gifted with different talents. Mozart was born with musical talent and Picasso with artistic talent. I am not close to them yet; still, I can experience creative expressions through music and art. My fiancé is a world-class opera singer, so music is a big part of my life. I put together a CD of my ten favorite classical pieces of music, an exercise in *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*. One mistake we often make is to think of being creative as composing, playing the music or making the painting. Obviously, these are more active expressions of the creative impulse, but we are all born with the capacity to appreciate Mozart and Picasso. As we open ourselves to the finer perceptions of fine art, we touch within ourselves that innate creativity.

Bringing forth creativity is removing the interferences with natural creativity. It's in there. People have locked it in because of fear of failure, of being silly, or of being embarrassed. Unfortunately, these fears often go back to the early years of school and the fear of making mistakes.

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What do you consider your greatest accomplishment in the field of creativity?

I would say *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*. It is in 24 languages now, has sold about 1/2 million copies and it's still going strong. I heard from a father who said, "Your book gave me everything I always wanted to teach my children but did not have the words to say." My vision is to touch people around the world, especially by changing parents and giving them the inspiration of the history's greatest genius to help them inspire creativity in the next generation.

How can creativity best be promoted in our culture?

We need all the help and promotion we can get. I think it's through individuals embodying the principles of creative thinking in their lives and living creatively. Plenty of people support the arts yet live uncreative lives. Individuals have to come to terms with their own habits, limitations, and linear bureaucratic orientations. They have to learn, change, grow and then support the arts as well as do other things in the name of creativity. First they have to change themselves.

Are you in the process of writing another book? If so, what is the theme?

I have been asked to write another book about Leonardo, but the focus will be a surprise.

What would you like your legacy to be in the field of creativity?

To me the field of creativity alone means nothing without a commitment to ever-growing awareness, consciousness, compassion, love and kindness to all beings. I would like to inspire people to experience creativity with consciousness and compassion.

Harvey Mathason led the group

All Thinks Considered which promoted
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**Tom Tresser, Lead Organizer,
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An Interview with Tom Tresser

by Sherry Minnard Rappaport

Tom Tresser has advocated creativity in community since the early 90's. His Chicago activities included serving as director of Cultural Development, as a member of Mayor Daley's Digital Divide Committee, as column author 'Creative Economy' for the on-line magazine Newtopia, as Fellow in Arts and Culture at DePaul University's College of Commerce Ryan Center for Creativity and Innovation, and as a teacher of 'Creativity and Public Policy' at DePaul's School for New Learning.

"I became a creativity activist in the early 1990's when the National Endowment for the Arts came under attack. I was working as managing director at the Pegasus Players in Chicago, when my part in the "culture wars" became evident. I quit my job and worked to prevent the destruction of our country's creative potential.

"During the Culture Wars I came to believe that the ability to 'be' and 'do' creative is closely aligned with the ability to 'be' and 'do' democracy because imagination always precedes implementation, no matter what field you're in. Before you can change the world, you'd better have a picture of what that new world looks like and have the skills to work toward it. The idea of Creative America is to get people who work in the creative industries and to inspire and train them to run for local office in 2006 and beyond. Our long term objective is to elevate creativity to a national value and priority within the next 20 years.

"To do this we create and host workshops in theatres around the country with members of the Creative Class and discover together how and why to run for office as a creative champion. If we've prepared them well with position papers, skills and a solid foundation, they will be pleasing to their constituency. The learning is entirely experiential. A successful method of promoting creativity is by producing events that blend elements of entertainment, learning, fun, inspiration and a call to action. Call it 'edutainment' or inter-disciplinary special event production. I've produced over 100 different sorts of events and experiences drawing from my experiences as an actor and producer.

"We can't lecture to the learner any more, if we ever could. No matter a person's learning preference, to run for office requires exposure at a visceral level to some of the challenges that will befall them on their journey. Staging this learning in a theatre allows them a level of role-playing they might experience when the stakes for success are too high, during their campaign. I think getting creative champions into office around the country will be my biggest contribution as a creative consultant."

ABCs of Creative Thinking:

Where Science and Religion Mix

by Nathan M. Sachritz



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Now that this year's convention is over, we ponder conventional wisdom. One piece to ponder is that science and religion don't mix. Science is objective. Spiritual issues are subjective.

Goods and services and particles are tangible. Ideas are intangible.

Technological discoveries are indisputable. Beliefs are subject to interpretation.

Thinking people are open-minded and seek out the new. Spiritual organizations are staid old institutions steeped in unchanging traditions.

As thinking people, we are wrestlers rather than boxers. We wrestle with ideas and get outside the box. And yet, when we draw lines to separate the scientific and spiritual realms, we effectively force one area inside a box and force the other out. In truth, there should not be any box at all.

But these are the reasons that the scientific and the spiritual are thought to be like oil and water. Business, science and technology are the places for development and innovation. Spiritual matters, on the other hand, are personal and not to be shared with the world. There is a line between them that should not—or, some think, cannot—be crossed.

I submit to you, however, that not only is the line crossed all the time, but also there is no line at all. There are spiritual laws at work in the creative and scientific processes.

Let us define some terms. Science is a system of knowledge covering general truths, or the operation of general laws, validated by experimental testing that supports a hypothesis.

Spirit is that realm of feelings or perceptions that have no material body or form.

So, if you want to know about science, you get a B.S., but say you get a Ph.D. in Chemistry—Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry.

What's the philosophy of a science?

Philosophy is a search for truth through reasoning, rather than through observation of fact. It is a discipline comprising logic, ethics, and metaphysics—beliefs, concepts and attitudes relating to the subject.

So, the philosophy of a science involves beliefs rather than facts. And, all of a sudden, the line has been crossed.

Or consider psychology, where the subject of the science—the psyche—is the soul; where personality, character, emotion, and preferences are found; where your "want to" is.

And the "want to" is key, because people search for answers only if they want to. They want to, only if doing so is attractive to them. And what attracts them, what is desirable, is a matter of preference and attitude—which means that wanting to solve problems is a matter of the soul.

Yes, new thoughts create new nerve synapses, which are physiological, but the thoughts themselves are not. You can stimulate nerves to hear without using the ears, to see without using the eyes. You can transfer images and sounds, but you cannot transfer

thoughts. Whether one likes it or not, everyone must think for himself. I can tell you what I think, but my thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways, unless you believe them yourself. One can transfer an image of a printed page, but the mind has to think on what it "sees" for the facts to become knowledge.

So, where does reason reside?

What's the locale of rationality?

Edwin Louis Cole says, "Meditation is the matrix of creativity. And the reason many men are not creative is because they don't take time to meditate. They don't take time to think."

Science says matter can be neither created nor destroyed, but thoughts are created. So, it is not that thoughts do not matter. It is that thoughts are not matter. They are incorporeal. They have no form. Thoughts are part of the soul. They originate with the inner person.

This is pretty broad. So, let us look at a few specific examples. We will start with some ABCs.

"A" is for Agriculture. And agriculture works because a long time ago a law was established that, "As you sow, so shall you reap." There is seedtime, and harvest. It is biology. It is basic science. Except...

There is a spiritual law at work.

The law of sowing and reaping is NOT just biology. "What goes around, comes around" does not only apply to ConAgra or Tyson or Archer Daniels Midland. People sow "seeds of

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ABCs

Agriculture

Brainstorming

Creative communication

Destructive communication

Eyesight

Fermentation

discontent.” You also plant a thought. Venture capitalists provide “seed money.” And it is why encouraging young people “breeds” high self-esteem. “Give and it will be given to you...with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you.”

So, sowing and reaping is a spiritual law as well as a scientific law.

And it has a corollary—the law of kinds.

Things reproduce according to their kind. This is according to Genesis...

WHOA! Genesis? Surely you’re not going to start arguing against evolution?

No. This is not about the evolution of man, but it could be about the evolution of religion. Does anyone actually think that churches do not need new and creative methods of reaching people—just as businesses do?

So, yes, according to Genesis, “The fruit tree...yields fruit according to its kind...the earth bring(s) forth the living creature according to its kind.” Plant corn. Get corn. That’s what made Pioneer Hybrid International, but that’s also why brainstorming works. This is the “B” in our ABCs. Someone plants the seed of an idea. And one idea generates another idea. They start to feed off each other. Yes, an occasional mutant will pop up. You may be talking about rock formations, and somebody will bring up Rocky the Flying Squirrel or Sylvester Stallone movies, but generally, creative ideas lead to more creative ideas.

But beyond agriculture and brainstorming, communication has spiritual laws at work too.

Andrei Aleinikov alludes to it when he writes that, for creativity to reach fruition, any new thing must be communicated; and that communication may be either creative or destructive. The “C” and “D” of our ABCs. Communication can create positive feelings, understanding and a desire to communicate further. On the other hand, it can destroy positive feelings and lines of communications, or it can destroy negative feelings and obstacles to progress.

In the spiritual realm, it’s called the Power of the Tongue, because it is written in the book of Proverbs that, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”

Words can change the world. Words can hurt. Words can heal. A kind word can “make the heart of a man glad.” Words can even move armies.

But the world will not be transformed by words unless the world hears those words. From what’s in your heart, the mouth has to speak (Matthew 12:34). Belief in something

comes by hearing, and hearing is by words (Romans 10:17). The pen is not mightier than the sword, unless what is penned is read.

This is also where the Power of Positive Thinking plays a part. Certainly, if you don’t ask, you don’t get. “You have not because you ask not” (Luke 11:9). “Ask and it will be given” (Matthew 7:7). But positive thinking says you have to ask without doubting. If you doubt, you’re “double-minded.” So, you have to be consistent in believing that it’s going to happen.

And that means that positive thinking is just an act of faith. Believing and saying that something “will” happen—future tense—is just “(calling) the things that are not, as though they were” (Romans 4:17). It’s the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not yet seen.

I mentioned being positive that something would happen. And I mentioned positive and negative communication. Except in matters of electricity, “positive” and “negative” are spiritual terms. Some people may debate the existence of absolute right and wrong, but “good” and “bad” are relative. As “hot” and “cold” have no meaning except in relation to each other, socially acceptable behavior is a matter of consensus. A consensus is a fact, but social values are a matter of preference. People prefer things that benefit them.

Benefits come from positive changes. And positive changes come from creative communication about positive things and destructive communication about negative things.

It’s an old Proverb that says, “As a man thinks in his heart—in his soul—so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). And the root for the word “thinks” here is “a gatekeeper.” You are the gatekeeper to your mind. So, all it means is change your thinking, and you change yourself. You won’t change WHO you are; but you will change WHAT you are. You will be “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

And the world is changed as people are changed—one person at a time.

So, up until now we’ve talked about Spiritual Laws in terms of Agriculture, Brainstorming, and Creative and Destructive Communication. We’re not going to go through the entire alphabet, but let’s hit on two more.

E and F. Eyesight and Fermentation. What kind of Spiritual Laws relate to Eyesight and Fermentation?

Well, “Without vision the people perish”

People think there is a separation between the scientific and the spiritual because we think they operate in different realms. You never hear anyone talk about the belief or opinion of gravity, but just like laws of physics, spiritual laws work whether you believe them or not.

(Proverbs 29:18). You can't see how to reach a goal; if you can't even envision what goal you're trying to reach.

As a matter of fact, this was confirmed by a University of Maryland study. In August 2004, Louise Witt reported in *Fortune Small Business* that Robert Baum, an assistant professor of entrepreneurship at Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business, had studied 120 entrepreneurs over a 3-year period. And Baum found that vision—a clear idea of how the company would prosper—was one of five characteristics of the successful entrepreneur. And the intensity of that vision was important, too. Those who succeeded were “dreamers with grand schemes.”

Now, young men who see visions and old men who dream dreams, may be one thing, but fermentation? What does fermentation have to do with spirituality—besides enhancing your imagination when you have drunk too much spirits?

Some people would liken fermentation to letting an idea age. Just let it simmer on a back burner for a time. However, when things simmer, the various ingredients blend. Synergies emerge, but there is no increase.

On the other hand, Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “Man's mind stretched to a new idea, never goes back to its original dimensions.” Fermentation involves expansion, possibly even explosive developments. And just as you cannot put new wine in an old wineskin (Matthew 9:17), you cannot put new ideas into an old mindset. The soul must be willing to grow.

And organizations must be willing to grow. Consider this one:

An organization that has excellent name recognition has been around for over 50 years. Its organization chart is basically unchanged—names change, but positions rarely do. Its marketing has varied little over the years. And it sells its product mainly to existing customers.

Am I talking about a business or a church?

You say a church doesn't sell a product?

Sure it does. It markets a belief system.

The preacher is basically a “system engineer” for that belief system. And he needs to make that system “user friendly.”

And since there is generally little room for the product—the doctrine—to change, the manner of presenting it must. Creativity must be applied to the packaging, because the downfall of many spiritual organizations is to ignore marketing.

Sacrilege? Spiritual organizations soliciting? They had better. If they appeal to only the ex-

isting clientele—if they ignore changing demographics or changing demands of non-customers, in one generation, the organization is dead. Literally. Appeal to your 60 year old members only, and in 20-30 years, you have no members.

That is why religious organizations need to be creative in developing ways to attract people. Attraction works. That is why man fell to begin with “...the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise” (Genesis 3:6). That is why “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (II Corinthians 11:14). And that's why the Apostle Paul said, “I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (I Corinthians 9:22).

Think about it. Is most advertising targeted to AARP members or to 18-35 year olds?

Educators understand this concept. It is the basis for the Fog Index and the Flesch Kincaid readability scores; and its characteristics are common to best-selling books that attract people so they choose to spend their money when they do not have to.

How many church goin' folks choose to listen to lectures and hymns all day long—Monday through Saturday?

When on vacation and in the car for 10 or 12 hours, do you listen to Rock of Ages or Old Time Rock and Roll?

George Beverly Shea or George Strait?

The Kol Nidre or Cole Porter?

Even if YOU do, how many of your children and grandchildren do?

So, now we put this vehicle into reverse. Since “what's good for the goose is good for the gander,” we will apply this thinking to spiritual organizations now.

For example, the fermentation concept applies to churches, just as it does to other organizations. Spiritual organizations have to have a new mindset, to make room for new ideas. Not new doctrine but new ideas of how to “market” that doctrine and how to take care of business. As my own pastor has said so well, a church's competition is NOT other churches. The competition is MTV, and the tennis court, and the boat, and the video game.

This is new territory for many organizations, but churches need to know that there is a scriptural basis for creative thinking. Mark 5:15 reports that when a demon-possessed man was delivered, the people saw him clothed and in his right mind, and they were

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afraid. However, "...God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

Beyond marketing and outreach, some organizations need to expand their concept of whom they serve. Some have put their God in a box. And—to paraphrase the Gospel according to Kellogg's—they need to see Him again for the very first time, to see that He is bigger than any box.

This is the God who, the Psalms say, covers Himself with light as with a garment (Psalm 104:2). This is like putting on the northern lights—an interaction of solar wind and Earth's magnetic field that generates enough electricity to power a city of 180,000 homes for 7 years—as if it were a shirt.

A God who can loosen Orion's belt. (Job 38:31) He can hold in His hands stars that are 1,500 light years away, each 20 times the size of our sun with temperatures of 50,000 to 60,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

A God who not only created time, but can control it. In Joshua (10:13), He made the sun stand still; and in Isaiah (38:8), He made the shadow on the sundial move backwards. Stopping an Earth that spins with 36.5 trillion billion horsepower.

A God who—even though He knows everything—still thinks. Who says He is mindful of man. Who says His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts. Who says we will do what He did and greater things than that will we do. And He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

I could go on, but these are examples of how spiritual organizations may expand their understanding of their Lord.

Keep in mind that I am not suggesting doing "new" just for the sake of new. There is a place for the old tradition that can give peace. Familiarity can give comfort. I am talking about new methods that achieve your vision. And good eyesight is necessary whether you are conducting your business, or God's business.

Now, every synagogue, or mosque, or church is not right for everybody, but each has to know its own place in the grand scheme of things—so it can play to its strengths. If you are going to run the race set before you, you have to know what your race is in order to see where you are headed. In the Olympics, most of the hur-

dlers and sprinters do not run the marathon; they have their own race to run.

But just as the organization as a whole has to envision its goal, each member of the group needs to see his or her role. And, each one must "play nice" with others to reach the common goal. Destructive and creative communications—properly channeled—are vital. Yes, destructive communication, too—because you can speak death to discord, just as you can speak life to unity.

And you have to use the right communication. Many organizations say that their mission is to "reach the world." But they will not reach the world if they do not extend their reach to the world. For the world to know you are reaching, you have to communicate in ways the world understands. And you have to use all available tools of communication. That may mean changing the style of music. It may mean using audio-visual equipment or performing arts. A church may not be "OF" the world. But it is definitely "IN" the world. So, to reach the world, churches have to use the resources of the world.

And, to continue our alphabet, brainstorming is only one of those resources, but it is certainly a key method to linking all the others. Different people have different experiences and different perspectives, so that drawing from many is helpful. And it is scriptural. Proverbs that says, "Where there is no counsel, people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (11:14). "Without counsel, plans go awry. But in the multitude of counselors they are established" (15:22).

And this gets us back to "A" and Agriculture, which is familiar ground for most spiritual organizations, as most parables were Ag based; only few think of their operations in terms of "weed and feed" or cultivation. They know the parable about sowing seed and about how some will fall on the road, and some among the thorns, and some on good ground. But they do not think about their responsibility to AIM. Aim for the good ground. And what made that ground "good?" It was cultivated. It was prepared to receive the seed. There was some pre-emergent put down. The farmer knows he has to take into consideration the ground he has to work with. Is it sand? Clay? Good topsoil? Everybody knows you do not plant orange trees in North Dakota or wheat in Florida. Spiritual organizations need to be intentional in what and where they sow.

So, where does that leave us?

Well, I mentioned at the beginning that conventional wisdom is that science and religion do not mix. With these few examples, I have tried to show it is an old mindset. People think there is a separation between the scientific and the spiritual because we think they operate in different realms. You never hear anyone talk about the belief or opinion of gravity, but just like laws of physics, spiritual laws work whether you believe them or not.

So, whether you believe it or not, you were created in the image of God. And the first thing we learn about His nature is "In the beginning, God created." And while no person is the creator of everything—each of us can be the creator of something.