

We are often dismissive about the power of imagination. We say things like, “That was just my imagination”, implying that imaginary things aren’t real. Imagination is a real thing. The truth is, our imagination, after our capacity to love, is the most God-like power we humans possess. We are creators, made in the image and likeness of the Creator. Creation always begins in the imagination of consciousness.

As humans we are usually re-imagining the already created world. From that impulse, we re-imagine how to put foods together to make a meal, re-imagine a a pile of sticks as a piece of furniture, re-imagine the placement of furniture to make a more comfortable space, re-imagine the visual arrangement of people, things, and events to make art, re-imagine the relationships between sound, silence, and human emotion to make music. Everything that makes up the human experience begins in someone’s imagination.

Although I am not a gardener, surely gardening is the highest expression of human creativity. There, human creativity works directly with Divine Creativity and that singular activity - tending and caring for the Garden, a creative activity that supports everything else we are and do in the world. Interestingly, that is precisely what the second chapter of Genesis tells us humans were created to do, tend and care for the Garden. In a garden, we join our creativity with the Creator’s and thereby produce fruit.

Scripture repeatedly calls us to task for the selfish and evil “imagination of the heart” to which we are prone. Indeed, you need only look around you to see how much of the human imagination has been employed for the purpose of destruction and control throughout history and in this very moment. Instead of working in concert with the Creator, we use the power of pain and the threat of destruction to establish and maintain control for ourselves. It is a perversion of our creative power. Hitting a child may establish control for a moment; but it also can also sound a note of fear and chaos in their soul that will be echoed in everything that child then creates for generations to come, the cumulative effect of which is ... well, we are living in it.

We can all imagine a better human community. But there are spiritual forces at work in the world who tell us, “No. You can’t.” These are the “archons, the authorities, and cosmic forces of darkness that rule our world” ... and inhibit our imaginations. As Paul said to the Ephesians, these are not creatures of flesh and blood that we are up against. It will never avail much to rid ourselves of this ruler or that king until we go to battle against the spiritual forces that create them and allow them to exist as powers in our imaginations.

Reclaiming the power of creativity and imagination is now essential for the survival of our species, and it is going to take a lot of imagination to rearrange this world’s furniture. If we apply our creativity in concert with God’s Creativity, we will establish the kingdom of God on earth. Not “can”, but “will”. Then, we will be fruitful and, perhaps, get back to the imaginative work we were created to do, to tend and serve the Garden.