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In His Image: Creating As We Go

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In His Image: Creating As We Go

WHEN I STARTED MY EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED THAT EVENTUALLY I WOULD FIND MYSELF MORE THAN 8,000 MILES FROM HOME, STILL LEARNING AND HELPING OTHERS TO LEARN.

After grade school and high school, I studied theology at Solusi University in Zimbabwe, and then religion and psychology at Andrews University where, last summer, I earned an M.Sc. in Organizational Management. In my education, my focus expanded from being the best learner I could be to how I could help others learn and become all they can be.

My research led me to the work of the late Sir

Ken Robinson, noted educationalist and advisor on education in the arts to government, non-profits, and education and arts organizations. In a 2006 TED Talk, Robinson claimed that “creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.” One of his main critiques of traditional educational systems was that they “stigmatize mistakes,” and our young “get educated out of creativity.” In short, by creating a hierarchy of subjects and treating the arts as less important, or

as optional or extras, “we stifle creativity.” Robinson defined creativity as “the process of having original ideas that have value.” He helped me see that when we stifle creativity, deliberately or inadvertently, we devalue individuals, their talents, and their potential, and deprive not only them but ourselves and future generations of all that these young people might have imagined and enacted.

Listening to Robinson, I remembered two passages of scripture that are foundational to my understanding of education. Proverbs 22:6 tells us to “Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it.” This verse asserts that education matters, and matters supremely. It impacts not only a child’s present but their future—indeed, their entire life, a life that is meant to extend into eternity. Romans 12:2 also has profound implications for education. There we are admonished, “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (NKJV).

As I continue to ponder the imperative of “renewing” our minds, I have become increasingly convinced that creativity is key. We serve a creative and creating God. We honor the image of God in us when we cultivate, develop, refine, and share our creativity. We honor the image of God in those around us when we encourage them to do likewise.

When I began my studies at Andrews University in 2017, I was given an invaluable creative opportunity. I became a member and co-founder of Watchmen Acapella, a six-man singing group comprised of students from Zambia, Zimbabwe,



Lionel Kanyowa (Blacktixions Studio)



▲ *The Watchmen performing at the North American Division Adventist Ministries Convention in 2023.*

the Cayman Islands, the United Kingdom and the United States. We found our name in Ezekiel 3:17: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from me” (NKJV).

Singing with Watchmen stretches my creativity in so many ways. When I became manager of the group, the door was opened for me to use what I had learned in all my studies—religion, theology, psychology, business, and administration—and combine this learning with my creative passion, music.

As I continued to grow as an artist, I came to see that the business of music could help to serve more than just Watchmen and our audiences. God-fearing, creative mentors, including my university president, Dr. Andrea Luxton, Provost Christon Arthur, and music mentor, Professor Charles Reid, convinced me that combining Christian commitment with musical talent, business and organizational expertise, and creative partnerships could benefit international students by helping them receive education, internships, and partnerships. These opportunities in turn would enable international students to reach their full potential and

inspire future generations to do the same. To this end, we established the Watchmen Legacy Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization that aims to “empower students through sustainable scholarships and career advancement opportunities” by mitigating “social inequalities that impede students’ access to quality education and career advancement.”

Today, as I look back at my own schooling, I am humbled by how blessed and fortunate I’ve been. In a sense, my journey has been like a group project. It was enriched by the creativity and vision of so many—donors, professors, administrators, and community members alike. They didn’t just teach me how to read and write. They showed me how to think differently, to challenge the status quo, and to look for innovative solutions. This gift—the freedom to be creative—is priceless. It’s a legacy of learning I’m passionate about passing on. ■

Abel Siamubi is a music philanthropist, Hope Channel marketing production assistant, and co-founder of Watchmen Acapella.