

Gifted by God
Spirit inspired to create
I collaborate

Darden Smith's conversation on Spirituality and Creativity was inspiring. He reflected on his growing up at St. Paul's in Brenham. He shared that a great spiritual person from another faith reminded him that he would always be a "Christian from Texas." He spoke of God's graciousness and the idea that being spiritual is acting in a faithful way. His example was a person who was being hateful to a stranger, while on the other side, a person was treating the stranger with kindness. The second person is the spiritual one.

I found most powerful his belief that God does not "use him." The word "uses" can have negative connotations. Things we use are often things we throw away. It can mean that we take advantage of someone. "He used me up and discarded me," might be the words of someone who had given her love only to be thrown away like garbage. The person never intended to return that love; he just wanted what he could get before moving on to the next victim. Some people see the world for us to "use as we please" no matter what the results of our usage are. The world is disposable.

The idea of using someone can also mean manipulation. "She used me to advance her career." I've known spouses who were used to put their spouse through grad school, only to be divorced once the degree was in hand. Others have been used by companies until their salary gets too high, and they are replaced with younger, less expensive employees.

Instead of being "used by God", Darden spoke of collaborating with God. God has gifted him with the ability to write songs. When he writes a song, he's collaborating with God to create beauty and wonder in God's world. He sees God's creative power as still at work in the world, and he feels that God has called him to be partner in that creative power. He creates songs which bring hope, joy, sadness and world vision to the rest of us.

I love the image. I think we are all called to collaborate with God to bring God's vision of love and beauty to the world. I believe that when God called us to care for the earth, God called us to collaborate with God's creative power. I feel that whatever vocation we have, we are called to collaborate with God by using that vocation to create the world God intends.

We all create something. The person being hateful to the stranger is creating a world counter to God's vision. The person lifting up the stranger is collaborating with God to create the world God intends. A person exploiting others to gain wealth is creating a world counter to God's world. A wealthy person helping others in need is collaborating with God to create the world God envisions. A person who holds a grudge is creating a world counter to God's vision; a person who forgives others is collaborating with God to create the world God intends.

We all create something. Collaborating with God to create the world that God has in mind is truly spiritual, holy work.

Pastor Parnell