REVIEW: *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* by Makoto Fujimura

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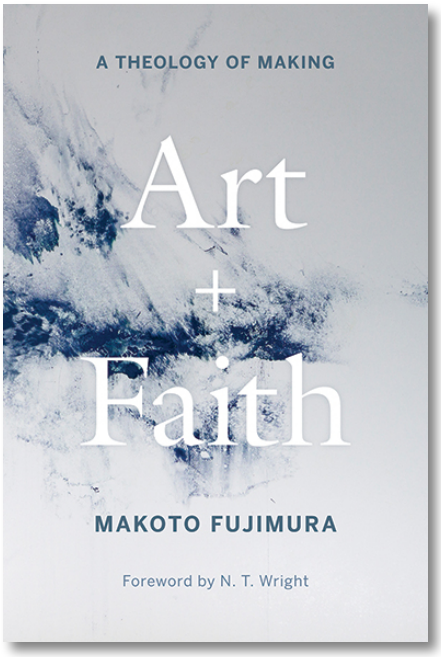

"We are *Imago Dei,* created to be creative, and we are by nature creative makers" (14). In his excellent work, *Art and Faith*, Makoto Fujimura invites the reader into a theological and creative journey into the arts, faith, creativity, and its intimate tie to the God who is making all things new: "Our creative intuition, fused with the work of the Spirit of God, can become the deepest seat of knowledge, out of which a theology of the New Creation can flow" (26). Fujimura makes the case that, set within the context of God's work of New Creation in Jesus Christ, the exercise of creativity is a deeply theological and spiritual exercise.

The first several chapters develop and build on this theological foundation of New Creation. Fujimura asserts that a theological understanding of New Creation pushes back against what he sees as a common misconception in Christian theology. He expresses concern that much Christian preaching and teaching focuses on God's fixing what is broken, what he terms "plumbing theology" (30), but misses the greater picture, that God is making all things new. The arts, imagination, and creativity (what Fujimura terms "making") offer not only a window into the New Creation but are themselves tangible representations of the New Creation breaking into the present.

Fujimura writes from a deep place of authenticity as an artist. His art and theology are woven together throughout the book, each informing the other. For example, in the fourth chapter, he draws extensively from the Japanese art of Kintsugi to illustrate the

"new newness" and the creative way in which God restores the brokenness of the world: "Kintsugi bowls are treasured as objects that surpass their original useful purpose and move into a realm of beauty…Thus, our brokenness, in light of the wounds of Christ…can also mean that through making, by honoring the brokenness, the broken shapes can somehow be a necessary component of the New World to come" (45-46).

In another poignant example, the final chapters of the book encompass an extended development of John 11-12, including the story of Lazarus and the tears of Christ (John 11:35). Flowing through this discussion is the "Japanese concept of wabi-sabi [which] sees beauty as rooted in what is passing, and even what is broken, as in Kintsugi" (103). Christ's tears, demonstrated in John 11 and shown fully through his suffering on the cross, "[carry] over from the old creation to the New" (103), and therefore, as a Kintsugi artist might see value in an old wallet (103), Christ values our own humanity, struggles and suffering, which carries a window into the New, "who we will become" (103).

Fujimura makes a compelling case that art and creativity should have a prominent place in the life and theology of the Christian community, as Fujimura says: "Theology of Making will necessarily place art as a good gift of the Creator God, the *Semper Creator*, who continues to create into the New Creation" (149). As people who participate in God's mission and work of New Creation, creativity, imagination, and art are integral to the journey of faith. What if the Christian community did more to affirm, celebrate, and develop these gifts within the body of Christ, and to communicate their importance in its preaching, teaching, and mission? This book invites us to deeply reflect on this question.

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