

Invent Shine

Tom Cartwright's mind bursts with creative ideas and innovations. But early on, he learned the value of not just inventing products but also how to bring them to market. That's where his daughter, Allison Cartwright, comes in with her practical mindset. Today they make up the Invent Shine team and have had significant success bringing new and even revolutionary products to market.

Before Allison was even old enough to be in the business, Tom started his own self-employed businesses manufacturing industrial and commercial fans in the '70s. He then expanded his business overseas by working in the manufactured housing industry in the '80s.

"I developed a lot of different products for the industry—everything from the tires on the trailers to the faucets and the lighting—so that's why there's such a diversification in product categories," he says. "But then as I developed the ideas God gave me in different areas, we became successful. A lot of our products revolutionized the industries we were in, meaning that they became a new approach or a completely new product."

Home Depot sold Tom's Antigua botanical ceiling fan, which was an example of how God reveals product ideas to him.

"I believe that God showed me the Philodendron blade while I was sitting on my porch," Tom says. "I sketched it. I sent it to a woodworking factory in China I knew, and made a sample and brought it back and presented it to Home Depot. They went bananas over it, and the merchandise people loved it. But the real proof was when it went into the market and flew off their store shelves. It just moved. It was definitely a timing issue. The market and the appeal for that particular style of home decor in a ceiling fan was ready and waiting—it was a God

timing issue. It broke industry sales records for Home Depot and even the ceiling fan industry. That one fan sold over \$160 million through Home Depot. That design is still being sold today.

The Cartwrights worked in the medical and pharmaceutical fields as well.

“Another product we developed was a bathing system for patients in hospitals called Wash and Care,” Tom says. “It was to reduce cross-contamination.”

Tom’s company had the product manufactured, licensed the system to Tyco and eventually sold them the rights.

“That was a national product and had to be developed with a formulation following pharmaceutical protocol,” Tom says. “That was quite intense.”

In college, Tom had a job installing pool tables. Later he developed “the ultimate slate pool table.”

“Sears started off with a \$2 million order right away,” Tom says. Sears at that time, was the largest game table seller in the world. Unfortunately, Sears declined and caused sales of that product to dwindle.

Over the years, Tom has learned the hard way how important it is to secure the intellectual property rights when developing a new product. One hard lesson he learned in the early '80s was with his first big invention, a modular whole house fan.

“Before air conditioning in Florida and other hot climates, they used attic fans to cool their homes,” Tom says. “You need a large fan to really move the volume of air in the house, but you couldn’t get a large fan in an attic with a low-pitched roof. I cut it into four sections and made it into a modular fan. Now people were able to get a big fan up in an attic. A year later, Emerson Electric came out with a similar fan and

sold it to W.W. Granger, and it sold millions of dollars. So, then I realized intellectual property is very important.”

Today the Cartwrights want to help Christians through their Invent Shine program () who want to bring their inventions and innovations to market the right way, to be a blessing, not a curse. The Cartwrights have made it their mission “to encourage and equip people to discover, develop and fulfill their divine purpose with their God-inspired ideas.”

Emulating our Creator God

Tom believes that in creating new products, he is doing what God does.

“As a good father, He wants to teach us and grow us up into being a creator like He is,” Tom says. “When you look at Jesus, you see a man who was always exercising His creative powers, turning water into wine, feeding thousands from a little boy’s lunchbox and creating the things God told Him to create.”

Tom’s trust in God has grown through the invention process over the years.

“My faith has been built through the things God has called me to do because He has always been faithful to provide everything needed on my invention journeys,” Tom says. “It’s that same old saying, ‘Where God guides, He provides.’ He always asks us to do something that may seem a little out of the ordinary or stretch us in a new way. He said to Abraham, ‘Leave your country!’; ‘Noah, build an ark!’; to the man with the withered hand, Jesus said, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ We want people to stretch out their hand when they hear God calling them. We want people to look at their inspired ideas and know that God is directing them to do something with it.”

Tom says the invention path is “for those who have creative ideas and want to know what can come of what they believe the

Lord has inspired them with.”

The Cartwrights understand that people may be fearful of taking their ideas to market, so they want to get past that fear of failure and “step out of their boat of uncertainty,” Tom says.

The Invent Shine programs give practical advice and direction but also covering, “a way that has been provided by God through us to safely and securely evaluate their ideas,” he says.

This covering is critical so people don’t waste their money and become poor stewards in the process.

“People go out randomly, and they’ll pick this patent attorney or they’ll go to this manufacturer, and it’s heartbreaking to see the amount of money they end up wasting, and they also get things in the wrong order,” Tom says, noting the average inventor spends approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000, with usually little to show for it.

Tom and Allison also want to “pull together a community of Christian professionals that are going to support the people who have ideas and want to develop them into products.” They want to create a network with these vendors who can provide trustworthy and reliable services.

Tom calls on the church to encourage the kind of program he and Allison have put together to assist their fellow believers who want to bring products to the market.

“There have been programs in the church for marriages, addiction help, fundraisers and businesses but nothing we know of that specifically develops the creative ideas inside our new God-given nature.

“Why wouldn’t God ordain a ministry to stir up that gift in those people He is directly speaking to today and cause them

to know how to create the things He wants to manifest in the natural world that will further His kingdom purposes and bring us to maturity?"

Most of all, the Invent Shine programs draw people closer to God to listen to what He is saying to them and "get His confirmation before stepping out of their boat," Tom says. "That's a biblical principle. Didn't Peter say, 'Lord, bid me to come before he stepped out of the boat'? All of us need to know that God is calling us and directing us before we engage our lives in any pursuit."

Along with coaching, the Invent Shine programs include:

Empowering Ideas, a free e-book that explains how Tom got started on his invention journey and provides encouragement that God will also lead and guide you.

The Flight Plan, an overview of the five stages of the invention process, including intellectual property design and development, manufacturing, sales and marketing and the finance aspect.

The Launch Pay Analysis, a self-evaluation course with eight stages to help you determine if your idea is "Go or No Go" for launch into the market. Some of the stages include a market analysis, cost analysis and the God Factor.

The Cartwrights feel strongly that God brought them to the point where they can share what they've learned.

"That's why we've been through all these hills and valleys, to have this knowledge so that we can help and equip others," Tom says.

And Tom and his daughter, Allison, the eldest of eight, do make a great team.

"God knew what I needed, and that's why He brought Allison along," Tom says. "I've had such compliments. When we were

filling out our vendor paperwork for Sears, over 50 pages, they came back to me and said, of all the companies that we've worked with, Allison did the best job of filling that out. She's very detailed, and anybody who is working in business, they can appreciate the real value of having somebody detailed. She's really been the anchor there to help and made it possible for us to succeed."

As for Tom, Allison describes him as "the visionary" who sees the big picture.

"He can see a product or an idea, and God just reveals to him all the potential, all the possibilities," she says. "With pricing, many times I've sat down with him, and I'm like, 'OK, we need to discuss the price of this and the price of that because I need to have the exact figures in the calculations.' He's like, 'Oh, it'll be around \$500.'" And after we do all the calculating, guess what? It comes down to \$499 99 or so. He really just has this vision, particularly in this area."

Prospering in His Kingdom

When God leads through the invention process, there is no need to fear.

"A lot of people are afraid of failing," Tom says. "But you know, when God is leading us, even our failures are beauty for ashes. We never end up empty or in a failed position. He's always moving us higher through every experience. And I think removing that fear of failure is part of what Invent Shine does too. It helps people to go, 'OK, I've got an idea. I don't have to be so afraid of stepping out here because this isn't going to cost me a lot of money. I'm going to be able to find out if this God-inspired idea is something He wants me to pursue. I think that's what we're trying to do, to get people to led by the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty. So there's got to be this freedom from fear to be able to step out and explore those ideas, and that

brings about boldness.”

Tom has seen many of his ideas become successful products as he followed the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“When we take time to hear God, He shows us,” he says. “I have so many testimonies of God revealing the practical steps, and that’s what I want inventors to know. You’re going to find open doors, you’re going to find people who will give you formulas, you’ll find favor with manufacturers, you’ll find designers who are going to take your idea and design something that’s beautiful. You are contributing to it, of course, but you will find the help along the way. God said He’s our present help in time of need. When you get on the invention pathway, you have needs at every step, and as you put these needs before God and ask for His help, as He opens the doors and provides these things, you’re going to go, ‘Oh my, there’s a God who is really interested in my every detail.’”

The Cartwrights have found God is on their team, and they want to show others God favors them too—for a kingdom purpose.

“We believe God gives great ideas to His people because He wants them to prosper and promote His kingdom purposes,” Tom says. “We believe what the Bible declares, that the wealth of the wicked is laid up for the righteous. God is giving His people inspired ideas that can help bring in this harvest, and more importantly, use those ideas to build their faith by exercising it on the invention journey He’s called them to navigate with His direction.”

Allison emphasizes that Invent Shine wants to help keep inventors from being taken advantage of, and help to save them time and money.

“This is our calling,” Allison says. “We both went to Bible school; we both have a bachelor’s degree in ministry. And so we see that in these end days, God wants to raise up His kingdom, raise up His people. We want to encourage and inspire

people to figure out if they want to step out with their idea and know what's involved in this process, because it's exciting, and it may seem a little overwhelming for some people.

"We're here to say, 'You can do it.' We've started with ideas. We've started with nothing. And God has opened door after door and made a way. And that's exciting."

Christine D. Johnson is editor of 2020 Vision. Share your thoughts on this issue with her at @.