STORY  Daniel Dama, pictured above, draws on his lifelong love for music and the arts to creatively share his faith with others across West Africa  p.28

THEOLOGY  This issue looks theologically at worship and art with a collection of articles curated by the Brehm Center’s Todd Johnson  p.42

VOICE  Guided steps lead readers through the Prayer of Examen and a diversity of voices reflect on discernment  p.76
**Fire Mercy, 2007, by Lance Kagey and Tom Llewellyn.** Lance Kagey was the featured Artist in Residence at Fuller Northwest for 2017–2018. "His work has enlivened the walls of our campus in thought-provoking ways," says Shannon Sigler, executive director of Brehm Cascadia, who has been instrumental in developing the Artist in Residence program. "Because we believe that discipleship of the eyes is important for those preparing for ministry, each year the campus hosts an artist to share his or her work and to provide compelling art for our seminary community to engage. Our campus’s Artist in Residence Program was started in 2014 by Martín Jiminez."

The poster here, and others throughout the magazine, are part of a guerilla arts project, Beautiful Angle, created by Kagey and Llewellyn as a way of engaging the Seattle community. Working on a 1960s-era hand-crank printing press, they create a new poster every month using wood and lead type with hand-carved images, and hang them on telephone poles and buildings throughout Seattle with staples and wheat paste. Says Kagey, "We know people will see them there. We’re just as likely to talk about good pizza as we are to talk about the good news. We’ve begun a dialogue with the city we love." See more of their posters on pp. 4, 74–75, and 98–99.

**LIKE SMOKE, ABOUT THE FIRST TIME MERCY FELL DOWN LIKE ASHES UPON YOUR HEAD.**

**TELL ME A STORY AROUND A SMALL, NEAT FIRE, ABOUT THE FIRST TIME YOUR SOUL ROSE UPWARD,**
“The senses are our bridges to the world. Human skin is porous; the world flows through you,” says John O’Donohue in his book Anam Cara. If the theology section of this issue reveals anything, it is how the expression of worship and art is embodied, and that this embodiment affects both what we absorb as the world flows through and what we release back into it. If astronomer Carl Sagan and songwriter Joni Mitchell are correct—“we are a Stardust, we are a billion-year-old carbon”—not only the world flows in and out like breath, but an eternal cosmos, too. If the imagination can stretch that far, is it so great a leap that we, first enlivened by the breath of God in Eden, still exhale that breath back into the world? Might our service be the simple act of breathing out the presence of God in a thousand places?

This territory is not new to artists or worship leaders—or those called to intercessory prayer. I have referred before to this artist as intercessor, bridging the gap between suffering and hope (Rom 5:3–5) with one foot planted firmly in each. Why? No one in their right mind would remain in such tension by choice, yet some artists do so to become a bridge themselves, so that others might cross over. “There is a kind of consciousness,” confirms Christian Wiman in his book My Bright Abyss, “that involves allowing the world to stream through you rather than you always reaching out to take hold of it. . . . People, occasionally, can be such people in a world of catastrophic change and rage fatigue? . . ."
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When I was a student at Fuller many years ago, a friend and fellow student took me one day on a tour of five California missions. On the broad level, we could see that these complex, even controversial expressions of California history held a great deal in common. What my friend enabled me to see, however, was that beyond the superficial similarities were subtle and profound differences that reflected the distinct story of each tribe and location. The gospel was similar and different in each place. It was a lesson in paying attention.

Paying Attention

From Mark Labberton, President
scientists, and mathematicians, must have artists. And we also must have and impotence, our beauty and horror. We show us we are human and depict our agency in inaccessible, about subtleties and voids. This attention to the visible and invisible. Their what we perceive. Our artists pay obsessive thought and emotion that refract and embody and language. These are the effluences of us without music, movement, visuals arts, (Banksy)
When my fellow alum Andre Henry (MAT ‘16) asked online if any white male friend would be willing to join him on his cross-country drive to move from Los Angeles to Orlando, Florida, I said yes. “It’s more likely we’ll be treated differently together than either of us will be treated alone,” he said. When I asked him if I could help with anything before we left, Andre asked me to pick up a “baby on board” sticker for his car. As an African American, he said, “we’re pulled over all the time, but we’ve learned this sticker or even empty baby seats help humanize us.”

We’ve learned. I winced thinking of how that knowledge came to be, how it was passed around like a rule of thumb—a technique I’ve never had to use. “I haven’t had to think that much about how I’m perceived in the world—that seems like quite a mental load to me,” I said. “Yeah, that’s called racial stress, but you just get used to it, you know?” Andre said.

It was the first conversation of dozens, beginning the gift of traveling with Andre: a weeklong chance to see up close what it’s like to walk through the world in his skin. “It’s hard to deny the different experiences we’re having when they’re happening so closely together,” he told me. Sure, we discussed race and theology and politics—we’re seminarians, after all—but the real education came when we were treated differently in gas stations and fast food restaurants, when Andre’s anxiety over a cop driving by would spill over into my seat, and even when we compared the music of our childhood (listen to the difference between Stevie Wonder and James Taylor, and you’ll know why Andre is the better dancer between the two of us!).

What might be an intimidating conversation on the fraught topic of racism anywhere else was softened by our friendship and those long bright hours in a dusty Kia, the road thrumming beneath us. “I don’t get to take a break from this,” he told me one afternoon, as we pulled away from a gas station where he was followed by the security guard. “I was born into a world where my skin has a certain meaning socially, and I have no choice in that matter. I can’t just not be Black,” he said. “Like you can’t change the perception of those 30 people in that all-white gas station,” I said. “Exactly, and that’s the thing people miss. It’s not just about how you identify yourself, right? There’s also something about being identified.” And that security guard identified my friend as a threat, I think to myself, staring at my own white hands on the steering wheel.

Traveling from family to Fuller staff and alumni and their own networks of friends along the way, we brought these conversations with us, grateful for the hospitality that could contain the stories we carried. “The cloud of witnesses isn’t just people who’ve passed—it’s those of us who are living, too,” Andre said after our first day. “We’re part of that cloud of witnesses, and I feel like we’re experiencing the kind of hospitality that God would want us to practice.” I still think about that trip and the hospitality that made it possible, how for one week that cloud carried us across the country—and how it still carries us now.
MONDAY
When we arrived in Tempe, Arizona, our first night, Tim and Kate Holand ushered us to a warm meal waiting on the dining room table. We were online friends first, and I quickly learned in passing that Tim wasn’t an alum as I’d thought—but an “honorary Mouwist” and close friend to a number of PhD students who had studied under the president emeritus. Naturally, as a result, our dinner conversation on racism and politics was one of “convicted civility,” and it easily drifted into the living room, only interrupted by the joyful slobber of their Boston Terrier Gus (short for Augustine, of course). When we left the next morning, Andre told me, “It’s not just that we are welcome here, but our whole story is welcome here. We can bring the exact experience we’re taking across the country, and it’s welcome in their home,” he said. As we were packing breakfast for their kids, she grabbed extra baggies of Cheerios for us, raised her hands and said, “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and grant you peace.”

MICHAEAL WRIGHT (MAT ’16) is an art director at BrandonJHook.com.

TUESDAY
We had no place to stay in Albuquerque, but thanks to Will Stoller-Lee, director of Fuller Colorado, we connected with Casey Church (DMris ’13), who knew indigenous families in the area. After texting back and forth in the afternoon, we reached out to the Fuller community on social media for other hosts, we could feel that same welcome spilling out before us.

THURSDAY
On the way to Nashville we turned our car conversations into a live video feed, inviting the wider Fuller community to reflect with us as we discussed our different experiences in gas stations along the way, and how conversations about race shifted when we approached them through close proximity and friendship. As comments came in from students and alumni from around the nation, it was easy to sense that larger community beyond the edges of our single trip.

On Tuesday, Andre and I were having conversations on a local church. “It’s a question that can only come from humility and a desire to know the beloved community—that’s what I experienced all along our trip, with each opened door and each set table. Nicole took us to a local Cuban restaurant later that night. I looked around and thought of all the lives we witnessed through the week, imagining them around a single table. I took another bit of plantains and listened, their voices drifting into the humid air.”

BRANDON HOOK (MAT ’16) is an art director at Calvin in Pasadena, California. Find more of his work at brandonjhook.com.
Combining determination with a creative spirit, Meghan Easley helps new ventures do “extreme good” in their work.
Meghan Easley (Mat ’16) has a memory from her elementary school days. She had just come home from school, and her father asked for her backpack. Taking out her pencil case, he began to tape a bunch of pencils together—and then gleefully declared, “I think I have it!” Meghan was puzzled. “You have what, Dad?” He explained that it was a prototype for a portable oxygen tank: one to replace the 60-pound albatrosses that at the time kept the infirm and elderly immobile. Dissatisfied with seeing such individuals having to choose between respiration or mobility, Meghan’s dad had just designed a solution. Eventually his pencil prototype went to market to become a mainstay of home healthcare, an industry he has remained trapped. “It seemed to me that the program equipped you wasn’t the right path after all, Meghan felt stagnant and cumbersome to her. Starting to sense that youth ministry was designed to help for-profit and nonprofit leaders bring was an experience characterized by creativity rather than overt spirituality. If USC was a place where people asked “why” often—the “little why” that make good design possible—Fuller was the space where Meghan enjoyed the affirmation and exploration of the “greater whys.” “At USC, there were very few Christians in my cohort of 50,” she says, “and often the case studies we looked at on poor social entrepreneurship highlighted Christian organizations. But it wasn’t a hostile environment. My faith was pruned there, and I think it grew. I saw my colleagues struggle with the contours of social good outside of a Christian framework. And where they couldn’t root the work in the worldview that I held, my community at Fuller helped me to do so.” Moreover, her theological training helped her understand social entrepreneurship as not just simple renewal or social uplift, but as one of many extensions of God’s grace and redemption.

Meghan was sold on the mission. In fact, bringing her dad’s innovative spirit to the table, it felt like her dual degrees had been her own prototype of preparation for this kind of work. “Praxis was truly the first place where I met investors and philanthropists who weren’t just looking for
the kudos that come with responsible social responsibility, like so many are today,” she says. “They were—and are—focused on extreme good.”

Convinced this was the right environment for her, Meghan joined the Praxis team and moved to New York City. She now works in their Accelerator program, and she is quick to clarify that her work is more than just introducing founders to a community of investors and philanthropists. “It’s true that many come to us in their growth phase looking for philanthropists or funders. But after becoming a part of our community, they walk away with a reimagined sense of leadership,” she stresses. “They no longer feel the need to compartmentalize or ‘postpone’ their faith.” This type of spiritual formation seems to have real value: Praxis “alumni” ventures are staggeringly successful, with a 92 percent survival rate.

Perhaps most significantly, they are making a tangible impact on people across the globe. Take, for example, two ventures that are part of Praxis’s network: New Story, a nonprofit created to address homelessness through affordable housing, and ICON, a construction technologies company created to revolutionize homebuilding. Because of their affiliation with Praxis, they have now joined forces to build affordable homes through 3D printing. In less than 24 hours, they can construct an entire home for a family in need for a mere $4,000. The prototype debuted at the 2018 SXSW Conference in Austin, Texas, and generated significant media attention. In 2019, New Story and ICON will build communities in several developing countries, utilizing local materials and labor and improving as they go through community engagement and feedback. Just as important is that they are not looking to monopolize the market. Their technology will be open source, allowing other organizations and government agencies to multiply the impact. The end result: more children of God living in safe conditions, freed from the exhaustion and fear of life in survival mode.

It’s quite possible to imagine Meghan herself as one of these Praxis alumni in the future. “We talk frequently about our own ‘cherished topic,’ the space where there is possibility for redemptive entrepreneurship but none yet present,” she explains. “I care a lot about sustainable food systems, maybe because my mother was a nurse and taught me to appreciate the significance of nutrition for healthy living. The need became clear to me when I was attending USC—a school that caters to the appetites of privileged students, yet right outside campus are poor neighborhoods with very few fresh food grocers. So perhaps I will focus on this challenge.

“I know that I can’t settle for the mindset that this system will always be broken,” Meghan insists. “I can’t accept that food deserts will always exist. That’s fatalism, not faith in the kingdom at hand. ‘No’ doesn’t always have to be the answer. We can fix these things.”

Such determination brings to mind that memory of Meghan’s father and his pencil case prototype: it was his natural expression of the creative impulse God has placed in each of us. Like her father, Meghan is committed to being the hands and feet of Christ in the world as he “makes all things new.”

“I’m not simply talking about ‘how to be a Christian at my job.’ I mean that beyond our moral influence in the marketplace, we should also channel our energy to make the world more just, more whole, more beautiful. Why wouldn’t we want to do that?”

Katherine Lee (MAT ’12) is the director of development for foundations in Fuller’s Office of Development.

Brandon Hook (MAT ’16) is an art director at Caltech in Pasadena, California. Find more of his work at brandonhook.com.
Her face reflecting the digital glow, a teenager studies a projection of an oil painting by Canadian artist Tim Okamura called Courage 3.0. The teen's eyes flicker over the image of a young Black woman clad in a man's undershirt, coming to rest on the bundle cradled in the woman's arms, a baby concealed by the lush folds of a blanket. Seated in a classical portrait pose in front of a graffiti-covered wall and crowned with a halo, the mother holds her chin high as her gaze points toward a distant horizon. The teenager, a young mother herself, finally describes what she sees: "To me, the way she's looking, I see that the future is in her head."

"Motherhood is so much more than just a physical relationship between a parent and child," Fuller doctoral student Joyce del Rosario says. She sees something mystical in the bond that witnesses to the nature of God, especially in untraditional kinds of mothers and unique depictions of them.

From Seattle, Washington, Joyce was raised in a bustling Methodist home surrounded by her extended Filipino family. "Growing up, I had random people in my home all the time," Joyce remembers, recounting stories of Filipino aunties and distant cousins, everyone sharing responsibilities: men and women, across generations and blood ties. Joyce's family was always growing and changing shape, giving her broad definitions of hospitality and community.

During her nine years on staff with Young Life, Joyce began to think about starting a family of her own as a foster parent. "Even if I was only able to house a child for a couple of weeks," she felt, "those would be two weeks that child would be safe and warm and loved." Though Joyce didn't become a mother in this exact way, she began spending her weekends volunteering at a residential home for teen moms in the Bay Area of Northern California. There, she became captivated by the stories of the young women under her care.

To Joyce, these young women's likes and dislikes, their family and immigration histories, their schooling, even their relationships to local and national governments were much more than mere details about their backgrounds or factors that may have contributed to their young motherhood. These were precious aspects of these women's identities—and of their children's identities—that Joyce saw as essential to understand and honor if she was going to minister to them well.

Some, but not all, of the young women had been virtually abandoned by their families and their partners. From varied socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities, they were in high school or working their way through their pregnancies, growing bellies tucked into the teenage uniforms of hooded sweatshirts or sundresses from the mall. No matter their circumstances, Joyce helped these young moms-to-be pack their hospital bags and prep their birth plans, ready to rush to the maternity ward at any hour of the day or night.

Joyce became the director of that home, a position she held for four years. Much more than the two weeks at a time she initially imagined spending as a foster mom, "I didn't realize God would give me five years of foster parenting and grandparenting with I don't even know how many families!" There were so many different kinds of motherhood, Joyce found, her own experience of fostering through leadership not...
least among them.

When Joyce decided to pursue doctoral work in Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies, she transitioned out of her work with the teen mom home to move to Pasadena. Yet those young moms she cared for so deeply, along with the Filipino aunts and so many others who influenced her own upbringing, stayed in the back of her mind. She progressed through her coursework with only a general idea of her research interests until one day, in a missiology seminar discussion, she became passionate about the idea that Protestants need to broaden their conception of and ideas about Jesus’ mother, Mary—and that this could have powerful implications for ministry. David Scott, Joyce’s advisor, saw the light bulb go on for her.

“That’s your dissertation topic,” he told her—and she agreed. Recalling the insights her teen moms had about their responsibilities to their children and their position in the world, she wondered about the connection between the narratives of young moms, often the intended recipients of Christian outreach, and the unmarried, teenaged Mary, who was God’s own vehicle of outreach to all humanity. “We forget that Jesus first came to a teenage girl who was socially, economically, and even legally vulnerable. God chose to enter into community with Mary first,” Joyce says.

At her advisor’s encouragement, Joyce revisited her teen moms and others in the Bay Area to probe their responses to images—icons, many of them quite nontraditional—of the holy family. Indeed, images of Mary had the potential, Joyce found in her research, to evoke teenage reflection on more than just maternity, inspiring questions about culture and romance, the past and the future.

Shown an orthodox icon depicting Mary with large, lashless eyes set in a long face and with covered hair—was that a knit beanie tucked under the old-fashioned robe?—teenaged moms wondered about this mother’s apparent lack of femininity, giggling about the “dad way” she held baby Jesus. And speaking of dads, where was Joseph? Not all teen moms are single, but Mary often seemed to be.

Responding to a traditional portrait of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a Mexican American mother recalled a shift in the way she saw Jesus illustrated when she became a Christian and began attending a nondenominational church, where instead of having golden brown skin, Jesus was often decidedly white. But this painting of the Virgin draped in the star-studded emerald green traditional in Mexican Catholic imagery, radiating light with a whole-body halo, reminded her of the holy families of her childhood with flowing dark hair and bedecked in rich textiles.

And contemporary paintings like Courage 3.0 both illustrated the teens’ upbringings and spoke prophetically to their hoped-for futures. One young woman saw the way her own parents raised her to envision a future outside of their impoverished neighborhood, as well as the hope she had for her own child: “They would always take us to places where they knew it was not typical for people who live in a poor city to be,” the teen recalled. In Okamura’s painting, she felt, “it just looks like they’re going places with the confidence she has. That background has nothing to do with her life, even though she lives there.”

Joyce’s research questions elicited honest, confessional responses through visuals alone, responses about what it means to reimagine one’s self as a parent in the context of high school, or without a partner, or without a home—what it means to venture on a new path, perhaps alone, brimming with new love and still unsure of what might come. She works toward a holistic Protestant vision of Mary, bringing that to bear on ministry.
to teenage mothers. What might happen, Joyce wonders, if churches remember Mary in their ministries to young mothers with unplanned pregnancies? How many more conceptions of the holy family might we imagine, helped both by real-life stories of today’s teen moms and by rich, diverse imagery of the many different kinds of motherhood?

“Context matters,” Joyce says of working toward truly compassionate ministry to the unique needs of young mothers. Using what she’s discovered in the teens’ connections to the paintings, she wants to foster ministries to both privileged church communities and the neighborhoods they seek to serve. Through images like Okamura’s, Joyce encourages congregations to creatively handle the tension of welcoming new life and family bonds that might seem out of place. And through such images, those privileged church communities might come to see a Mary that’s quite different from the white young woman so many picture her to be: she might be any ethnicity, and she might just be wearing a beanie under that robe.

The young moms Joyce interviewed recreate versions of the holy birth narrative independent of the biblical text and true to life—and true, Joyce says, to God’s redemptive vision accomplished through an unmarried mother. They just needed images they could identify with and aspire to, ones that illustrate the best of what they see in themselves and their babies: “strong, resolute, and fearless of what the present and future holds,” according to Joyce. As one of the young moms said: motherhood is holy, and “a hopeful picture.”

RACHEL PAPROCKI (MAT ’14) is the manager of Fuller’s Writing Center. LINDSEY SHEETS is a video editor and colorist for FULLER studio.
Drawing on his lifelong love for music, Daniel Dama uses the arts to share his faith with others across West Africa.

Written by CARLA SANDERS
Photographed by NATE HARRISON
Daniel Dama is intensely committed to his mission: sharing the gospel across West Africa not just in words, but through the music he so deeply loves. “I want to save my people,” the Fuller PhD student says with passion—and, as a missionary with an organization called the Joint Christian Ministry, that means traveling throughout 15 countries, from Chad to Senegal, helping others know the joy he’s found in Christianity. It can be a tricky, often dangerous business, as just getting from place to place in a region that’s both arid and tropical, desert and jungle offers distinct challenges.

“Sometimes we have to book public transportation,” he says, “which means that in a small car meant for four people, they’ll put, like, 15. Sometimes the driver cannot even reach the pedals. Someone else—a passenger—has to press them. If the car breaks down, it will take four to five hours to get it fixed. If you’re on a bus, someone might give you a goat to hold. Sometimes we have to take a boat on a river, traveling hundreds of miles. Then, when we jump from the boat, we have to walk about 20 miles in the jungle. Sometimes you find poisonous snakes on the road. The mosquitoes are everywhere.”

“It’s very interesting,” he says with a smile, “to be a missionary in Africa.”

For this married father of four with a gracious, engaging personality, the path has been winding and littered with obstacles from his early days. Dama, as he is known to everyone, spent his childhood in Goro village in northern Benin, a small, close-knit community where his grandfather was chief. He is a member of the Fulani tribe, one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, numbering upwards of 25 million people. Because of his paternal lineage as a “noble,” he was expected to eventually follow in his grandfather’s footsteps.

Dama, however, had other ideas. He wanted to become a musician—part of a different caste in his region’s social hierarchy. “That caste includes goldsmiths, praise singers, musicians, cobbler, weavers,” he explains. “All are culturally at the service of the nobles, which my family was. He is a member of the Fulani tribe, one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, numbering upwards of 25 million people. Because of his paternal lineage as a “noble,” he was expected to eventually follow in his grandfather’s footsteps.”

Dama began composing his own indigenous songs, and experimented with making bamboo flutes and small, guitar-like instruments. None of this was good news to his family. “My mother rebuked me terribly, saying, ‘Don’t be a curse for our lineage and family!’ My uncles and aunts likewise menaced me. All of that intimidated me beyond description. As a result,” he confesses, “I abandoned making music and accompanying praise singers”—heartbreaking as that was for him.

His love for music wasn’t the only way the young Dama butted heads with his elders. Another point of contention was his first name: Daniel. After his birth, American missionaries in Goro village asked for permission to name the new baby boy—and, surprisingly, his grandfather granted it. Throughout his childhood, young Dama despised his name because it was so foreign and unusual. “I was very angry because I was the only boy with this name!” says Dama. “For years, I kept asking my grandfather to change my name, but he told me to keep it.”

Raised in the Islamic faith, Dama came to Christianity in his late teens, inspired by a man who’d been traveling to his village on a rickety old bicycle for 25 years sharing his Christian faith. Dama went on to earn a diploma in Theology and Religious Education from Baptist Theological Seminary in Nigeria, and—now feeling the freedom, away from home, to renew his interest in song—followed it with a bachelor’s degree in music. “Like Amos, I heard the call of God,” Dama recounts, “and I felt deep inside me that I had a message to take to my people via music.”

He further equipped himself to do just that by coming to Fuller, in Pasadena, for an MA in Intercultural Studies—an experience that expanded his perspective. “At Fuller, students from all nations filled the classrooms, and we learned from each other and shared experiences,” he says with enthusiasm. “We learned about the power of listening and how to talk with people of other faiths. People have stories to share and things to say, if we will only create space for them. I discovered that talking about art and culture can be one way to start conversations and find common ground.”

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When he finished his master’s degree in 2014, Dama took that knowledge back to West Africa—and founded the Fulani Christian Festival of Art and Culture, a three-day event that’s been held every year since. As he talks about it, he opens a video on his phone of a previous year’s festival. Men, women, and children crowd together on the ground in a covered area, sitting row upon row, waving, swaying, and singing along with the music. Woven cloth and leather hats and other items sold by festival crafters adorn them. On stage, performers sing, drum, and strum songs of praise. Among them is the tall, commanding presence of Dama, who leads the music, sings, and often plays drums or the hoddu, a small stringed instrument. He gieefully taps the small phone screen with his long, elegant fingers and points to the children sitting cross-legged on the floor in front. “Look at the children, look at them!” he says. “I love to see the children—so happy, so involved.”

About two thousand people came from all over West Africa for that first festival—“even non-Christians sent their youth and children,” he notes. This delights Dama, because this was his hope for the festival: that it would, in a region where young people are sometimes recruited by radical groups, draw them into a different kind of life. Though certainly not true of most Muslims, Dama says, “there are extremists who say to Fulani youth, ‘Fight the West—fight the infidels.’ But at the festival, we are teaching them not hate but love. Art and culture are a common ground for everyone.”

The Fulani festival has been so well received that Dama was asked by the Minister of Culture to be an official cultural advisor, helping to oversee similar events for a wide swath of West Africa. He turned down the offer, wanting to devote himself fully to the missionary work that leads him all over West Africa—whether that’s crammed in a car, carrying a goat on his lap, or dodging snakes in the road—connecting with those of other faiths and cultures through both word and song. He carries with him music CDs, cassettes, and hymnals on his journeys, giving them out with Bibles, recorded sermons, and literature, all in the Fulani language.

“My people are hungry for something, but they don’t know what,” Dama says, and it’s his mission to help feed that hunger with his faith. To his great joy, he now has support from his family, too. Dama’s parents both became Christians, as did many other relatives—the same people who couldn’t understand his call to be a praise singer so many years before. “Today, my mother, aunts, and uncles sing the songs and dance to the music I make for the glory of God, who endowed me with this exceptional gift,” says Dama with delight.

What’s more, Dama now sees that first name he was given as one of the many blessings of his life. “Today, I am still Daniel, and am profoundly grateful for the name I carry. Because, like him, I am a warrior, and my weapon is the word of God. My name was very prophetic!”

When he finished his master’s degree in 2014, Dama took that knowledge back to West Africa—and founded the Fulani Christian Festival of Art and Culture, a three-day event that’s been held every year since. As he talks about it, he opens a video on his phone of a previous year’s festival. Men, women, and children crowd together on the ground in a covered area, sitting row upon row, waving, swaying, and singing along with the music. Woven cloth and leather hats and other items sold by festival crafters adorn them. On stage, performers sing, drum, and strum songs of praise. Among them is the tall, commanding presence of Dama, who leads the music, sings, and often plays drums or the hoddu, a small stringed instrument. He gieefully taps the small phone screen with his long, elegant fingers and points to the children sitting cross-legged on the floor in front. “Look at the children, look at them!” he says. “I love to see the children—so happy, so involved.”

About two thousand people came from all over West Africa for that first festival—“even non-Christians sent their youth and children,” he notes. This delights Dama, because this was his hope for the festival: that it would, in a region where young people are sometimes recruited by radical groups, draw them into a different kind of life. Though certainly not true of most Muslims, Dama says, “there are extremists who say to Fulani youth, ‘Fight the West—fight the infidels.’ But at the festival, we are teaching them not hate but love. Art and culture are a common ground for everyone.”

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AN ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY

Longtime professor Al Dueck merges his interest in pottery with theology and psychology as a way of connecting head and heart.

Written by MICHAEL WRIGHT
Photographed by NATE HARRISON
When Al Duck was first interviewed for a faculty position in Fuller's School of Psychology, he brought his own handmade pottery to the Geneva Room for his theological examination. “It was one of my best bowls,” he remembers. “I placed it in front of me on the table and never made mention of it.” The faculty asked him about abstinence theory, his Mennonite background, and more, and when the questioning was done, he picked up the bowl and started to walk out. “But Al—what about the pot?” a professor called out from the back of the room. He responded, “That’s how I integrate theology and psychology.”

Al grins as he recounts the story in his corner office some 20 years later, books and more of his own pottery lining the walls, the windows cracking as they cool from the direct sunlight. In one framed picture near his desk, his grandson’s hands rest on Al’s while he shapes clay on a potter’s wheel. “Art has everything to do with how you bring together spirituality and psychology,” he says. “It’s integration with an artistic sensibility.” After teaching for decades at the seminary, he’s demonstrated to Fuller over and over what that sensibility might look like.

When Al was installed in 1999 as the first Evelyn and Frank Freed Professor of the Integration of Psychology and Theology, he applied an artistic sensibility to his installation. Rather than only offering a lecture, he hosted an evening of music and poetry the night before in the Pasadena Mennonite Church. An accomplished cellist and pianist performed, the Mennonite poet Jean Janzen read from her work, and donor Evelyn Freed and ethics professor Glen Stassen both presented reflections on integration: “That was very exciting; all of these people were trying to do integration from their convictions in their own contexts,” Al remembers. At the installation service the next day, he lectured on the language of psychology and theology, framed by the tower of Babel, Pentecost, and “The Language of Fire,” a poem by Janzen commissioned for the day: “Now let our tongues, like leaves, fall from their careful hold, / our fists release, trusting the tree which bore us / Christ in our roots and crown, / Spirit wind loosening, . . .” Word began to spread around campus about the professor who used pottery to teach about psychology and theology. In one chapel service, Al gave malleable clay to half the audience and dried clay to the other half to preach about the Incarnation and being open to the Spirit. He ended every “Introduction to Integration” course by bringing his potter’s wheel to class, giving each student a small piece of clay to mold in their hands as he worked on the wheel, offering a class-long meditation on the importance of centering, intuition, and faith. “Now let our tongues, like leaves, fall from their careful hold, / our fists release, trusting the tree which bore us / Christ in our roots and crown, / Spirit wind loosening, . . .”

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For Al, pottery was more than just a classroom illustration—it had become a therapeutic practice for himself decades earlier. “After several years in academia, I was living too much in my head,” he remembers. “I knew that emotionally I was missing important cues in my work as a therapist. Starting my own personal therapy was a process of softening, of moving from head to heart.” Soon after
beginning his own therapy, he discovered shaping clay on a
wheel as a way to reconnect his mind to his body.
Over time Al began looking not only to pottery, but
to the arts in general as pedagogical tools to share with
others and offer a valuable space for reflection. Now, from
the classroom to the therapy office, he offers students
and clients alike poetry by Wendell Berry or Mary Oliver,
paintings by Marc Rothko or Chagall, and books like My
Name is Asher Lev and Madeleine L'Engle's Walking on
Water: Reflections on Faith and Art to help them connect
their intellect to their bodies and relationships.
Storytelling, he believes, is essential. “In novels, I'm always seeking out
glimpses of redemption. There's also an implicit ethic on
how to live one's life,” he says. “Novels give me a concrete
and imaginative display of human nature. We need a point
of commonality between faith and healing, and I believe
that stories are one such point of contact.”
Al is most energized when this artistic sensibility blends
with his deep commitment as a Mennonite to justice and
elevating marginalized voices. More than just engaging art
and culture for himself, Al has traveled around the world
empowering indigenous communities who seek to rediscover
the values of their own art and culture. He's taken students
to Guadalajara and Mexico City to study state violence and
the paintings of Diego Rivera. He coauthored a book with
Gladys Mwiti on African indigenous Christian counseling
and emboldening African readers to use their proverbs and
stories in their own therapeutic practices. On one trip to
Nairobi, an African therapist approached Al after Gladys’s
lecture and said, eyes brimming with tears, “Is Gladys really
telling us that it is okay for us to use our ancient proverbs in
therapy? We were always told that as Christians we needed
to leave behind our past.” Al answered with an impassioned
yes. “An indigenous spirituality of psychology requires us
to decolonize our understanding of culture—which we
often assume is like Christendom,” he says. “We have to
decolonize power constantly, not give it its desired rule.
I want people like that therapist to discover they have a
heritage of their own.”
More recently, through a generous grant given to Fuller's
China Initiative, Al has traveled throughout China to dialogue
with scholars about psychology, religion, and developing
uniquely Chinese therapeutic models. “It's not just us
lecturing—it really is an exchange. We have real dialogue,”
he says. “That's always my hope.” In one case, Al took
Chinese American students on a trip, and he was energized
to watch as the students discovered their own cultural
background. “To hear them speak in their own voice gives
me incredible joy. It brings tears to my eyes every time.”
Working on a wheel, a potter cannot force how the clay
takes shape. Molding the clay takes intuition and stillness.
“It's a long process of learning, but there's an incredible
moment when under your hands the clay is centered, still
and turning,” Al says. “T. S. Eliot would have called this the
'the still point of the turning world.'” Without this essential
step, the clay will wobble in the potter's hands or even lose
balance and collapse on the wheel. “My bowls remind me
of a communion chalice: there's a cup, and then it flares
out at the top,” he reflects. “There's a hollowing out and an
openness to transcendence.” He gestures beyond the bowls
and toward the sky, standing in the middle of his office with
two open hands. —

MICHAEL WRIGHT (MAT ’12) is editor for FULLER
magazine and studio. NATE HARRISON is the senior photographer and
director of photography at FULLER studio. Find more
of his work at NateCHarrison.com.
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Our work focuses on the intersection of theological investigation, engaging the cultural shifts in the world around us, and studying worship with the intention of providing resources for its planning, leading, and execution—however traditional, however innovative. In that spirit, this theology of FULLER magazine explores worship and art in the 21st century, considering a sample of theological themes that have emerged for our research study on worship and the arts across Fuller’s three schools.

In the essays that follow, you will find explorations of a biblical touchstone for the use and understanding of art in ministry and for guiding artists of faith, the relationship between symbolic competence in and out of church, and the importance of having an awareness of current cultural trends. Other essays will explore the power of cross-cultural communication and community building through art in a world where the distance between local and global is becoming reduced, as well as the emotional and spiritual impact of practices and symbols on the faithful at worship. Finally comes a word of challenge for all to take an active role in creating and caring for the cultures we inhabit.

Ultimately, we hope to resource and inspire thoughtful, appropriate strategies for living one’s faith in this new age amidst all its challenges and possibilities.

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After the turn of the century, Eddie Gibbs, Fuller’s McGavran Professor Emeritus of Church Growth, declared that the 20th century was the era of the orator, but that the current century would be the era of the artist. Even before Dr. Gibbs made his proclamation, the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts was a part of Fuller. Its existence acknowledges a shift in our culture and world away from the dominance of words and texts to the preponderance of nonverbals. We daily encounter the world of symbols and art, from the logos that identify brands to the images, sounds, and poetic words we encounter in the media, in our homes, and in our churches. One needs only to review the changes in Protestant worship over the past 50 years to see how much nonverbals have increased in our worship services in both quantity and importance. Given Gibbs’s assessment, if Fuller did not have a Brehm Center, we would have to create one.

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Sometimes it is the most ordinary things that evoke the most extra-ordinary responses. This is the case with things we do or encounter regularly because they become such an intimate part of our lives. When they change, or when their interpretation changes or is called into question, we often experience enough discomfort to respond—often with great emotional heft. Such is the case with kneeling.

KNEELING: POSTURE AND PIETY

First Lutheran is a thriving church in the center of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The vitality of this historic church is evident in the robust attendance it draws at three weekend services. So robust, in fact, that it is undertaking a renovation of its worship space to better accommodate the congregation and its services. First Lutheran’s worship runs the spectrum from a Saturday night service accompanied primarily by piano, to a more formal organ and choir service early Sunday morning, to a service led by a worship band later Sunday morning. Its existing space accommodates the most traditional second service well, but less well the first and third, given the arrangement of the chancel and seating. Further, because of its central location, it is often the host of civic gatherings such as high school and college choir concerts; the congregation hopes to continue to accommodate such events in its new space. Its existing space accommodates the most traditional second service well, but less well the first and third, given the arrangement of the chancel and seating. Further, because of its central location, it is often the host of civic gatherings such as high school and college choir concerts; the congregation hopes to accommodate such events in its new space. Being a growing church with a broad worship bandwidth requires a space that can accommodate the entirety of that bandwidth well—and then some, in this case.

Surprisingly, it is the core of First Lutheran’s worship, not its breadth, that created the most interesting challenge for their renovation plans. Although their services vary in music style and expression, they are all standard “Word and Table” services—that is, each service gathers the people together to hear the Word of God read and preached, and then invites them to communion at the table. In this church, people are invited forward to receive the bread and cup of the Lord’s Supper by kneeling at a rail around the table. Their renovation raised the question of whether it might be more expedient to offer the communion elements to the communicants standing, because serving can take quite a bit of time with each recipient kneeling. Maybe they should not use a communion rail in their new space? This raised the question, “What does it mean to kneel?”

Answering that question is a challenge. Kneeling is a ritual gesture that is a symbol, not a sign. A sign would have only one meaning or referent. A stop sign on the street or road means “stop.” A symbol has more than one meaning or referent. If you put a stop sign in a frame and hang it in an art gallery it could mean many things, leaving it open to multiple interpretations—and no one single interpretation might be more correct than another.

Kneeling at communion has a history. Kneeling has long been a posture of humility and contrition, often used when offering prayers of confession or as a sign of respect in Judaism. The Lord’s Supper was in its earliest expressions a meal concluding with the sharing of a common cup and bread as a sign of unity in Christ (1 Cor 10:16). In this case people probably received it reclining at the table, as was the customary posture of dining then. Over time, the practice of gathering for an evening meal shifted to gathering for a morning service for the reading and preaching of Scripture, followed by the reception of the cup and the bread alone as a fossil of an earlier meal. In this case, people most likely received it standing after they
Given the time created to give art and theology exercises a whole-body intellectual formation, many students in Fuller’s Capstone Theology and Art course explore, expand, or improve areas that, in their estimation, Christian theology has tended to satisfactorily engage. Hence, their thesis projects fall in line with philosophically considered questions. An inquiry that “creative attention means really giving our attention to what does not exist.” These students’ imaginative and physical negotiations subsequently yield a better sense of God, others, and self. For this reason, I have found that the paired investigations of art and theology can lead to theological and creative understandings, so forming in the following ways.

WHOLE-BODY INTELLIGENCE

Pairing the investigation of art and theology exercises a whole-body intelligence that includes the somatic and affective realm. Because of the concrete nature of art making, these thesis projects fill a void left by disconnected practices of the Christian faith. These nascent theologies ask, why do believers profess one thing but do the opposite or nothing at all? Why is theology often abstract in the face of interpersonal experiences of human circumstances or experiences? Ethical James McClendon Jr. and phenomenological theologians like Charles Taylor, Christians have falsely believed that ethics has nothing to do with “our bodies, their environment, our mutual needs, our delights and horrors, our organic selfhood.”

By contrast, Capstone student Maria Fee-Saunders’s project employs these features as a means to theologically investigate the virtues of the historical church. Drawing on her theater training, she led a band of committed seminarians through devised theater and performance-based exercises. Over a period of six months, the community-building program also produced a vocabulary of movements, vocal phrases, and imaged narrations that culminated in a choreographed performance piece entitled Rehearsing the Virtues of God: A Story of Faith and Fortitude. The project included the direction of Matthew Crawford, who argues that “real knowledge arises through confrontation with real things.” Through Faucker-Saunders’s thesis, the Christian practice of regular gathering together to confront “real things” was broadened to include external play as a means to connect to inner life."

PROFOUND ANALYSIS

Theological and creative exploration not only accesses the somatic realm but also applies a more thorough approach whereby praxis informs theology and vice versa. This is one of the modalities of Hispanic/Latinx theology that links theological analysis and praxis as a means to connect to inner and outer life."

BRIDGING THE SACRED AND SECULAR

The integrative qualities of the Capstone thesis project also endeavor to bridge the theological and praxis realms. Kim argues that “real knowledge arises through confrontation with real things.” Through Faucker-Saunders’s thesis, the Christian practice of regular gathering together to confront “real things” was broadened to include external play as a means to connect to inner life."

The project of theologian Kim, who used the visual motif of the braid to deal with issues of alienation, race, and cultural diversity, the project consisted of two parts. In the first stage, Kim directed a series of creative workshops to explore these concerns through conversations with teams of three held in conjunction with their choreographed entwining of long strands of fabric. The array of fabric, choices by color and pattern alluded to the possibility of differences tightly woven together as a unified entity. Developed for various ages, the sessions took place at conferences, Christian gath- erings, and schools. For the second stage, all of the braided chords were collected to create an installation piece entitled Remem-bearing as Refugees. After its initial display in a church, it was exhibited in multiple secular and Christian contexts.

The Capstone Theology and Art course provides an avenue for exploring the ways in which a more thorough approach whereby praxis informs theology and vice versa. This is one of the modalities of Hispanic/Latinx theology that links theological analysis and praxis as a means to connect to inner and outer life.

The, the development and the formal qualities of the art will inform maker and viewer in relevant and revelatory ways of the act of faith and the truth of its meaning. This kind of exploration ultimately leads to transformation.

Maria Fee, a PhD candidate at Fuller, is an artist with an MFA in Painting and MA in Theology. As an adjunct professor, she delves into theology and art through courses like Visual Arts and the Christian and Capstone Theology and Art.

Kneeling, however, can mean more than any of the above interpretations. It can mean to stand one’s ground. Could it really be a moment with God, and kneeling and reflecting for a moment at the altar for all that, for others, it might be a moment of intimate connection with the pastor who each week serves them the bread, creating a personal link with their spiritual guide and caring minister. For others it may not mean anything explicitly. It just feels right. That is because our bodies build routines throughout our lives and attend to the spiritual through them to the God we worship. To change that routine, for whatever very serious reason, will make a certain number of people feel like they are not celebrating communion anymore.

Kneeling as a symbol has great potential to effectively communicate many meanings at once. The art is open, that is why it can go over and over again. This makes kneeling a very effective ritual action, but also a potentially controversial one in Christ’s churches.
Robert R. King is professor of communication and ethnomusicology at Fuller. Her publications include *Pathways in Christian Music Communication: The Case of the Senators Côte d’Héroe, Music in the Life of the Jewish Church, and (un)Common Sounds: Songs of Peace and Reconciliation among Muslims and Christians*, with an accompanying documentary film. King has served as director of chapel and developed an innovative curriculum in Global Christian Worship and Witness (Ethnomusicology). Before joining the Fuller faculty, King was based in Nairobi, Kenya, and served with WorldVenture for 22 years. She has taught and held workshops in more than 20 nations.

I was driving to an evangelical church with my Israeli-born friend, Summer. It was a typical balmy Southern California evening. But the music wasn’t a typical service in that church that evening. Summer (whose given name is Samir) and I first met in a Middle Eastern music ensemble that brings together people originally from North Africa and the Middle East with others to enjoy the music of their Middle Eastern heritage. Like that group, this event would celebrate Middle Eastern music. As we entered the church, I found lightfooted laughter and joy with a diverse group, among them both Muslims and Christians, anticipating the evening’s concert.

The concert began with a West African *griot* from Senegal performing on the *kora*, a 21-string harp-lute. The concert proceeded with more Middle Eastern music, followed by an informative introduction. One of the church leaders explained how a number of local churches had been coming together to help Syrian refugee children get established in their local schools and find a place within the larger Southern California community.

To round off the musical evening, a long, established Jordanian immigrant of Palestin- ian descent came forward and began playing his oud. As a Christian, he sang, “Nelson, Nelson, Gabrioli” (Peace, peace, oh my Lord, peace)—a song that drew out a virtuoso longing and nostalgia for everyone in the room. Next, he sang “How Great Thou Art,” alternating between Arabic on the verses and English on the chorus, with the intention that everyone in the audience could participate at some point.

But then he launched into a well-known Arabic folk song, totally shifting the dynamics of the concert. The song evoked a nostalgia of better times and of being at home. Slowly and with growing momentum, the Middle Eastern newcomers moved to the front and started to line dance, men clasping hands and holding them high in the air with large smiles on their faces. Then the church members and the local community gingoily came forward, attempting to join in. Young women in their hijabz brought out their smart phones to capture the excitement. It was a spontaneous breaking down. Joy and delight abounded.

That night, an Arabic folkdance migrated along with the refugees into a local church half a world away from its origins and brought joy and hope to all involved. The church, located not far from where an Islamic terrorist attack had just taken place, not only sponsored a benefit concert that evening, they also fostered a peacebuilding event via music-making. What, then, are the dynamics behind the performing arts and peacebuilding?

Performing Arts and Peacebuilding

In today’s global era, when sounds of violence and conflict mute sounds of joy and delight in God-given life, “musicizing” and the performing arts are joining hands in innovative approaches to peacebuilding. This takes place through the building of healthy relationships, central to working toward peace. As John Paul Lederach argues, “Peacebuilding requires a vision of relationships.” He maintains that there must be a capacity to imagine “the canvas of mutual relationships and situate oneself as part of a historic and ever-growing ‘harmony’ or peacebuilding efforts will collapse. Enter the performing arts. They function as agents for building relationships. Not only do they foster moments of imagining mutual relationships, but they also have the potential to propel people into experiencing one another as human beings.
Significantly, Lederach observes the following:

The artistic five minutes, I have found rather consistently, when it is given space and acknowledged as something far beyond entertainment, accomplishes what most of politics has been unable to attain: it helps us return to our humanity, a transcendent journey that, like the moral imagination, can build a sense that we are, after all, a human community.

Building a sense of human community through the arts emerges out of a range of metaphors that allow people to rise above the actualities of their current life situations.

PERFORMING ARTS AND EMBODIED METAPHORS

In peacebuilding, the performing arts serve as embodied metaphors on multiple levels. Not only do they metaphorically speak into our inner lives creating spaces of imagination, but they also move us into experiencing and interacting with one another. The strength of the performing arts is just that: they are meant to be experienced, often moving people into deeper levels of communication. Thus, the arts contain the capacity to impact peoples and societies in ways that transform their relationships. Building a sense of community was one of the major outcomes from the concert that evening. More significantly for the church, the concert engendered an opportunity to practice Jesus’ command to love our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:27).

How was this accomplished? The performing arts fostered a unique mixture of metaphors and poetics. Each musical piece and associated activities generated metaphor upon metaphor, creating a web of symbols. The performance of song, for example, united the metaphors inherent in the lyrics, melody, harmony, the type of instruments used, and the inclusion of dance, plus appropriate clothing. This confluence of metaphors combined in exponential ways that resulted in an overarching embodied metaphor of human relationships.

The concept of “musicking,” which embraces all activities related to a concert, helps us further understand this aggregation of embodied metaphors. At the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, for example, serving Arabic coffee as global attendees enter the Moroccan concert hall functions as a gesture of hospitality. Going further into the auditorium, after finding one’s seat among a sea of peoples from around the world, the focus turns to the Al Kindi Ensemble with the Munshidins (whirling dervishes) from the Damascus Mosque standing next to the Tropos Byzantine Choir of Athens on the same stage. Here are two contrasting faiths, historically at odds with one another, sharing the same stage, creating an embodied metaphor of the possibilities of coexisting as neighbors. Such embodied metaphors point toward building healthy relationships among global neighbors. By coming together around a common cause, music and the performing arts open up social spaces where “relationships are built and interaction takes place.”

PERFORMING ARTS AND SOCIAL SPACES

Performing arts require social spaces, which become arenas for relating with one another. We know that “Performance is a rich and complex social affair wherein group meaning is processed and negotiated.” It is in the social interaction of a performance event that people experience and create new meanings and attitudes toward their global neighbors. These are spaces where peoples from totally different walks of life can come together. They foster safe spaces of relating and processing relationships, both good and bad, in public settings. When encounter and engagement with peoples of different groups are sensitively entered into, shifts in attitudes toward one another take place and an openness to attachment toward global neighbors is initiated. I call these social arenas “Musical Spaces of Relating.”

“Musical Spaces of Relating” foster negotiating relationships across a continuum of five different levels and stages. Relational attitudes and behaviors range from exclusion and enmity to willingly relating as neighbors. They include (1) enmity and exclusion toward people who are different, (2) encounter with others, (3) engage, (4) embrace, and (5) relating as neighbors. A brief analysis of the Syrian Benefit Concert described earlier demonstrates the dynamics of these five stages.
Stage 1: Identity and/or Esurion. Peoples of different nationalities who had not had any previous long-term contact, such as newly arrived Syrian refugees and a local Southern California community, now have the opportunity to come together around a music event.

Stage 2: Encounter. New neighbors are entering into the musical space and finding themselves encountering peoples of differing faiths, nationalities, and languages. The benefit concert provided a space to meet the needs of new onlookers while also providing an opportunity to share common interests and, above all, demonstrate a willingness to be together.

Stage 3: Engage. Musical performance became the main reason for coming together. Inviting West African and Middle Eastern performers to share their unique music was a sign of respect, and dignity. Relationships are initiated and allowed to thrive. The truth of Miroslav Volf’s admonition rings true: “We must not isolate ourselves from others but to engage them, indeed, to contribute to their flourishing, as we nurture our own identity and to attend to our own well-being.”

Learning about our neighbors, in this case through “musicking,” created pathways for relating as neighbors. Listening to them, and initiating dialogues that foster sustainable communities of peace—and loving them as ourselves.

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ENDNOTES


3. Christopher Small maintains that “music” is an action verb, while he calls “musicking.” Thus, “It is music to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance.” See his book Musicking: The Meanings of Performance and Listening (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 6.


5. Ibid., 125.

6. Ibid., 125.

7. The Festival of World Sacred Music is a nine-day event that takes place annually in Fez, Morocco, that brings together a global audience around music, religion, and dialogue. The examples cited here are from vignettes and interviews that were made during the 2008 event. For further information and this year’s program see https://www.fezowsm.org.


10. Ibid., 205-7.

11. Ibid., 205.


13. Fuller’s community is what you might call a diverse ecology. An ecosystem is comprised of the physical environment and the life that inhabits it. Chapel services at Fuller gather students, faculty, alumni, and staff—both residence and online—from various nationalities, languages, religious identities, social statuses, and theological and liturgical convictions. Leading worshipers to allow diverse musical variety to be an eco- logical imperative for Fuller’s chapel, the freedom that comes from not having one particular liturgical tradition to follow. This allows us to honor all traditions when it comes to prayers, postures, and the like. Fuller has the flexibility to do various things and mold them into a creative service of worship. As denominational allegiance among our students has faded in recent decades, we are able to collect from all traditions to create new meanings into those who gather for worship. The challenge, of course, is creating a balance that allows us all to participate in the service of worship in a way that allows all members of our community to be represented and respected.

14. Fuller has a great breadth of interfaith, intercultural and religious diversity, providing an opportunity for our neighbors to celebrate their unity in worship. Fuller’s chapel is able to do this because Fuller’s community, because sometimes such change is painful. In return, we pray the community we serve would be patient and gracious to us as we listen, learn, talk, and take risks, and sometimes fail, because “multi-everything” worship does not come with a formula. It takes humility, courage, and trust by both the worship leaders and the community to worship well. As in any ecology, there is a beautiful, delicate balance. We pray that our chapel might contribute in a small but integral way to the larger diversity of Christ’s church near and far.

Julie Tai is director of chapel, overseeing all aspects of Fuller’s weekly services.

Edwin Wilkinson is director of the Firebrick Institute of Music, which is part of the Brethren Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts.
THE CATASTROPHIC POETRY OF THE CROSS

Kutter Callaway

T he catastrophic

It’s the starting point for any theology worth its salt.

In fact, if Christian theology is unable to address these core traumas that haunt the contemporary cultural imagination, it might as well say nothing at all.

These were only a few of the thoughts running through my heart and mind one Sunday morning at church not too long ago. Our congregation was singing songs of worship like we always do, and as is often the case, my wife and I were standing with our daughters in the row just behind our good friend and her three young children.

Still, this Sunday was different than most. After enduring a battery of tests, radiation therapy, and a stem-cell transplant, my friend’s leukemia, which had been in remission for nearly two full years, had now returned. And no amount of singing would change that.

Of course, because of their age, neither their children nor ours were fully aware of what it all meant. So while they laughed and sang together and misbehaved as they did nearly every other Sunday morning, we mostly cried.

No. We wept.

Interestingly enough, our weeping didn’t stop us from singing, but it did color the music in a discernable way. Namely, instead of proclamation, the words we sang shifted into a form of divine interrogation:

And all the earth will shout your praise Our hearts will cry, these bones will sing

Wait a minute. That can’t be right, can it? Are we really supposed to take Jesus at his word here? There is of course no easy answer to this question, but Paul calls the cross a “scandal” for a reason (1 Cor 1:23), and it isn’t simply because the idea of God aban-

You cannot unbeliever who has a reason for his atheism and his decision not to believe a theologian too? Atheists who have something against both God and faith in God usually know very well whom and what they are rejecting, and have their reasons. Nietzsche’s book The Antichrist has a lot to teach us about true Christian-

It wasn’t “Great are you Lord!” It was “Are you great, Lord?” Our praises had become laments in their offering.

We weren’t the only group of Christians who had gathered together that day to sing songs to a God who seemed to be impotent, or indifferent, or just plain absent in the face of tragic circumstances. Rather, through music, poetic utterance, and corporate singing, we were bringing to speech what countless other women and men of faith were also voicing on that otherwise unremarkable Sunday morning. In concert with this great cloud of witnesses, we drew upon the power of metaphor and poetry to articulate a “groaning too deep for words” (Rom 8:26)—an elemental cry of desperation borne from an experience of the catastrophic, aimed directly at the Divine.

A strikingly similar cry of lament crossed the lips of Jesus himself while hanging on the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:33; Ps 22:24). Jesus was quoting Psalm 22, but surely he was thinking this very thought: it was articulating in poetical form the central trauma around which the entire theological project of the divine abandonment. On the cross, the Father really does forsake the Son. Somehow, and in some way, God apostatizes against God’s self.

The only problem is that we need a new set of lenses to see it, much less come to grips with its many implications.

So we have embarked on a quest to find new conversation partners for theology. Along the way, we have focused very little energy on the “New Atheists”—that small group of outspoken atheists whose faith in scientism and staunch commitment to diatheological dialogue would rival that of any religious fundamentalist. Instead, we’ve been far more energized by what Simon Critchley (himself an atheist) has called the “faith of the faithless” and what Alain de Botton (also an atheist) describes as “Religion for Atheists.”

Given our broader interests in the theological significance of art, aesthetics, and popular culture, the working title for our project is “The Aesthetics of A/theism.”

The primary aim of this project is to demonstrate what it looks like to engage in a robust, mutually enriching conversation with atheist artists and contemporary cultural artifacts, not simply because they offer us a concrete point of departure for theological reflection, but also because there is something about art and aesthetic experience that is integral to the entire atheological enterprise. Which brings us back to Jesus’ cry on the cross.

As Jesus’ death by crucifixion demonstrates, the juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible ideas (e.g., God forsaking God) is often too counterintuitive, too radical, too challenging for our staid sensibilities. It’s partly why people almost always misunderstand what Jesus is saying, especially religious folks. His final words of apostasy are no different. In spite of the fact that he is quoting well-known Scripture, it seems that no one within our faith has any idea what Jesus is talking about: “He must be calling for Elijah. Yes, let’s see if Elijah comes to rescue him!” (Mark 15:34–36) But I may also be why, for everyone who was not a firsthand witness to these events, the only appropriate response to the death of God was, is, and continues to be, art, music, image, and narrative. Indeed, there has been no shortage of artworks focused on the crucifixion, whether historically speaking or in our post-esthetic context. And it is likely there because really no other (or other) mode by which human beings capture, express, and otherwise explore such a profound incongruity than in and through these poetic means.

In other words, both the death of God and the divine apostasy it entails exposes the limits of any theology that exclusively employs syllogistic reasoning or deductive logic. Approaching Jesus’ cry on the cross in this way is like attempting to determine how much a piece of music weighs. It’s a category mistake. Along similar lines, to suggest that, in crucifixion, God became an atheist—yes, given our broader interests in the theological significance of art, aesthetics, and popular culture, the working title for our project is “The Aesthetics of A/theism.”

The primary aim of this project is to demonstrate what it looks like to engage in a robust, mutually enriching conversation with atheist artists and contemporary cultural artifacts, not simply because they offer us a concrete point of departure for theological reflection, but also because there is something about art and aesthetic experience that is integral to the entire atheological enterprise. Which brings us back to Jesus’ cry on the cross.

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When the world shook and the sun was wiped out of heaven, it was not at the crucifixion, but at the cry from the cross: the cry which confused that God was forsaken
FORMING ARTISTS, STRENGTHENING CHURCHES

Shannon Sigler

Sounds of an electric guitar loud and distorted, emanate from a broken-down sauna building in the woods next to the Wenatchee River. Hardy a suitable recording studio, it smells like cedar and sweat. Suddenly I knock on the door, but John doesn’t hear me. He keeps grinning on the guitar, and I realize that my knock made the record. The river noise is in there, too.

I’ve learned a lot from John since he was promoting his new solo album—among a host of other things. John was shaped by the sauna. John was shaped by the story of God—and equip our churches to do the same in the midst of a cynical and individualistic culture. Each evening during the retreat, our cohort participated in the ancient ecclesial rhythms of Gathering, Word, Response, and Sending, using the lectionary as the source of our Scripture readings. This simple liturgy around our table together—artists and pastors from diverse congregations that included church, Nondenominational, Evangelical Covenant, and Free Method- olist. Not surprisingly, most of our artists—and some of our pastors—had never encountered these rhythms or the lectionary. Slowly, over the course of the two weeks, our artists identified ways to live into our liturgy. Our musicians rewrote hymns; visual artists brought natural objects in from the outside for reflection; an author recast Psalm 23 through multiple creative lenses. Magical things began to happen. The lectionary texts and liturgical patterns of Christian worship gave the artists a space to play, to innovate, and to embody. They began inviting us—propping us into—the story of God. Artists began to shape our worship in revivifying ways.

John approached me after our first worship time together and asked if he could have a copy of our liturgy. He had struggled to find a similar resource among the many—and most had likely never heard the story of God.

Liturgical patterns of worship have become a place where humans can ask hard questions. Worship becomes a place for both deep joy and expansive comfort. We are allowed to be transformed by the cross of God as we experi- ence our personal stories being engulfed by God’s story. The church needs artists, and artists need the church. And some- times they need a run-down sauna by the Wenatchee River.

For the New Atheists—a railing against the god-forsak- eness of the world. We joined our sister in song on that day for the same reason that Jesus chose poetry rather than prose for his expression of “madness and fears or distracted us from the unanswered questions that continued to plague us, but because speaking in propositional terms would have been a category mistake. It would have been offensive, possibly even heretical. In any other context, our words would have been words of praise, but in this context, they became a form of “protest atheism”—a railing against the god-forsaking-ness of the world. We joined our sister in song on that day for the same reason that Jesus chose poetry rather than prose for his expression of “madness and fears or distracted us from the unanswered questions that continued to plague us, but because speaking in propositional terms would have been a category mistake. It would have been offensive, possibly even heretical. 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In 2016 he produced a short film on arts, from Thailand to South Africa. An Anglican priest, he has lectured widely on the arts and the Church: A Conversation with the Beauty of the Church: Casting a Vision for the Arts. W. David O. Taylor is also editor of The Theater of God’s Glory: The Psalms and the Life of Faith. He is also editor of For the Beauty of the Church: Casting a Vision for the Arts and the Church: A Conversation between the Two Worlds. An Anglican priest, he has lectured widely on the arts, from Thailand to South Africa. In 2016 he produced a short film on the arts with Bono and Eugene Peterson, available to view on Fuller.edu/Studio.

These options, attractive as they may be, ignore possibly the most obvious and central point: the Psalter. The Psalter commends itself to us for many reasons. It has functioned for 2,000 years as the church’s liturgy and songbook, it represents one of the most influential books in the New Testament, and it is Jesus’ most quoted book. But I commend the Psalter because it is here that we observe how a community practice art in faithfulness to God for the sake of the world that God so loves. The following, then, are five features that characterize the Psalter’s practice of art making and the power of such art in the life of God’s people throughout the ages. First, the psalms are poetry, This is perhaps to state the obvious, but the obvious often needs stating. In the psalms it is through poetry—and not despite poetry or beyond poetry—that faithful worship occurs. This begins the question: How does poetry mean? A fully satisfying answer lies beyond the scope of this essay. A preliminary response could be drawn from the work of the English professor Laurence Perrine and the Hebrew scholar Robert Alter.1 Together their works suggest that poetry communicates in ways that say more and say it more intensively, more densely, and more musically than does ordinary language. Hebrew poetry does this through similes, elipses, rhythm, hyperbole, assonance, and parallelism. These are the ways that a poem means a thing in the psalms. Consider the beginning of Psalm 8, for example:

O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! . . . When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained. . . . (Psalm 8:1,3)

“Your name” and “your heavens” sound almost the same in Hebrew. In Hebrew, the sound of those words shows us how the heavens, with its stars, moon, and sun, spell out the name of the Lord, an intimate, personal presence. We would fail to catch this nuance if we did not attend to the way in which poetry works. That is good for us today? In the Hebrew mind, prose is not seen as a more faithful way than poetry to get to the truth—of God, of humans, of the world. They’re both capable of doing so, but they do so in their own distinctive ways. By implication this means that art is a no less reliable or appropriate means of communication than discursive, prose, or proposition—al forms of expression. Second, the psalms traffic in metaphorically rich language. A metaphor is a figure of speech whereby we speak of one thing in terms of another. In the psalms, the knowledge of God is not to be discerned on the other side of metaphor; it is discerned through the metaphor. Take “the Lord is my shepherd,” for example. The Lord is not of course an actual shepherd by profession, like a Tunisian goatherd. Nor is the point simply to say that the Lord generically cares for his people. The metaphor of shepherd involves much more than that. As Old Testament professor John Goldingay reminds us, the image of a shepherd in Israel was not a gentle one. Shepherds were rough characters who at times had to become ruthless killers to defend their flocks.8 The metaphor of shepherd evoked memories of Moses. It evoked associations with Israel’s exodus. It evoked an image of wildernesses where sources of water were scarce and wild animals endangered the safety of sheep. It evoked non—cozy pictures of great kings, as sovereign lords, who treated the people as vassals. Evoking all these images, the metaphor of the Lord as Shepherd involves a surplus of meaning. Yahweh shepherds his people with a “fierce tenderness,” as Martin Luther once put it. If metaphor is one of the defining characteristics of the arts, as plenty of philosophers suggest, then with the Psalter on our side we can say that the arts remain central to the work of Christ in the world. The arts open up the world of metaphor and symbol that engages our imaginations about a God beyond our full comprehension, while nonetheless offering us the true knowledge of that God. Third, in the psalms the sensory is a way through to the knowledge of God. As I write in my book The Theater of God’s Glory, the arts engender a way to grasp the world through our physical senses, give us a feel for things that we might not be able otherwise to articulate, and enable us to perceive what, at first glance, may seem improbable or even impossible. The psalms invite the reader to immerse herself in richly sensory
we could dramatically recite Psalm 147 and find ourselves saying, “In ah, yes, I see now God; or, more kinesthetically persuasive, just our minds. The arts, accordingly, invite despite it. This is true, I suggest, for all the Fourth, the psalms operate within “the territory: of smelling, tasting, feeling, seeing, hearing. If we wish to know how a psalm means, then, we need to say it or sing it out loud. We cannot simply read it silently. A psalm’s meaning occurs through sensory means, in this case through its musicality—which is of course what all poets might tell you, including Miss Honey from Roald Dahl’s story Matilda: “There was a moment of silence, and Matilda, who had never before heard great romantic poetry spoken aloud, was profoundly moved. “It’s like music,” she whispered. “It is music,” Miss Honey said.”

The point is this. We could write a theology book about injustice—and we need such books. But it is in the singing of Psalm 7 that we grasp injustice. We could preach a sermon about the loss of a friend, and Lord knows we need those sermons. But when we read Psalm 88 responsively, we know it from the inside. We say, yes, it’s just as intensely painful and tragically sad as that. We could talk about the majestic, highly exalted character of God; or, more kinesthetically persuasive, we could dramatically recite Psalm 147 and find ourselves saying, oh, yes, I see now. In all these ways meaning comes through the sensory aspects of the poem, not beyond or despite it. This is true, I suggest, for all the arts. Knowledge involves our entire self, not just our minds. The arts, accordingly, invite our whole selves to know and love God.

Fourth, the psalms operate within “the tradition of David.” That tradition includes both the individual poet and the community. There are three kinds of poets that we find in the Psalter: (1) those who are named and known, (2) those who are unnamed and unknown, and (3) those who are unnamed but known by the guild to which they belong. In the Psalter we have poems by David and in the spirit of David. We have poems by the guild of temple musicians: the Korahites, for instance. We also have poems by individuals who remain anonymous. Whether known or unknown, the poets whom we find in the psalms give voice both to their own concerns and to the concerns of the community. It is not one or the other. It is both. The heartbreaks of moms and dads, the hopes of young and old, the fears of the working class and the anxieties of the ruling class, the little people and the famous people, the artist and the non-artist—everybody somehow, somewhere gets a voice.

This is true for artists today, in particular for artists of faith. Though contemporary works of art will not have the authority of Holy Scripture, many believing artists today feel inspired by God to use their gifts to both speak to and speak for the church. Some of those works, like the poetry of Venantius Fortunatus, the stories of Dante Alighieri, and the songs of Mahalia Jackson, speak to God’s people at that time and across the ages.

Fifth, not every psalm is a masterpiece. This is great news. We will never know how many poems failed to make it into the final edited volume of the Psalter. But perhaps we could guess by comparison to Charles Wesley. As scholars reckon it, the younger Wesley brother composed approximately 3,000 poems over the course of his lifetime. The number of his hymns that are included in the official United Methodist Hymnal is, however, a surprisingly modest number (52). That’s 0.5% of his songs that see the light of day. Not every poem that Wesley wrote sees the light of day in a public capacity. Not every poem of his is a masterpiece, either. This is true, I suggest, for the Psalter as well.

Psalm 70 may be one of the most carefully crafted poems in the Psalter, for instance, and exceptionally sincere, but this psalm of lament lacks the agony of Psalm 12 or the pathos of Psalm 22. But there it is a decent poem alongside great ones. And this too is good news for artists today. There is a place for all sorts of art in our lives: some of it passable, some of it great, some of it in between. Some of the work will become renowned. Some of it will be known only to the artist. But in the economy of God, all such artists matter, all such art needs to be made.

These, then, are five characteristics of a community practice of art as we witness it in the psalms.

THE PSALTER AS AN ANALOGUE FOR FAITHFUL ARTISTRY TODAY

There are two things that we will not get in the Psalter. We will not get a single key idea about art and faith that, in turn, magically translates into the biblical charter for artists of faith today. Nor will we get a blueprint for faithful artistry that absolves us of the hard work of discernment. What we will get, I suggest, is something much better: a vision of a community of artists, of all kinds, in all times and places, who over a long period of time make art for God’s sake and for the sake of the world. These artists give expression to things that matter deeply to them, but they also give expression to the deepest concerns of the community at large. They do so in poetically rich, aesthetically intensive, and contextually meaningful ways. They do so in ways that both comfort and disturb, in faithfulness to the Word of God. If a biblical vision for the calling of artists is on offer, then, I can think of few better places to discover that vision than the book of Psalms.

ENDNOTES
HIP HOP HERMENEUTIC

Dwight Radcliff

When you read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing King Nebuchadnezzar’s order, what do you imagine? As you seek to interpret and engage the pages of Daniel’s third chapter, what are the things that stand out? Do you notice that this corrupted idol worship is attached to a musical presentation? Do you reflect on the age of these young men or their status as minorities and political prisoners? Can you visualize the streets leading to Babylon, where the idol was erected? How does this play back in the DVR of your mind?

There is a generation of African American preachers who are utilizing their own cultural experience and formation to reflect on the pages of Scripture in a unique way. Their hermeneutic is a refreshing new expression birthed in cultural formation. At the same time, however, it is a continuation of the theological enterprise of critical interpretation begun by early African American believers.

Studying this enterprise begins by affirming that all humans are cultural beings and that culture is essential to human life. Some scholars have written on the impact of culture—popular culture or various aspects of culture—on the church and believers. Very little, however, has been written about the specific impact of culture on African American churches and preachers. The African American preachers and pastors refer to here have grown up with one of the most powerful cultural phenomena in recent history: Hip Hop culture. Hip Hop was part of the background, if not the foreground, of their formation. Research into how Hip Hop culture has been formed for African American preachers who engage it is revealing.

Those engaged in this research report that Hip Hop allowed many of them to see the realities of their own neighborhoods and families in the mainstream for the first time. It was a validating and liberating experience to see and hear someone describe, poetically and prophetically, the existential plight of their daily reality. Some have even expressed their introduction, or “coming,” to Hip Hop in salvific and spiritual terms. For them, this cultural expression of urban minority life was second only to the liberation of salvation found in Jesus. Hip Hop culture was not something to be shunned for the sake of being a good Christian. It was, on the contrary, part of their culture and an expression of their reality. It is important to note that, in its genesis, Hip Hop was an expression of prophetic defiance against the systematic oppression of African Americans and Afro-Caribbean immigrants, who found themselves dehumanized and subject in many, often dehumanizing, systemic ways.

Hip Hop allowed many to see the faces of those who are present in the pages of the Bible. It was a means of corralled into underserved and oppressed conditions. In black culture, the faces of those present in the pages of the Bible are many. It is not an option or an additional feature. It is part of the very hermeneutic they bring to the text.

ENDNOTES
6. Henry Mitchell explains that the strength of Black Christianity is due to “independent clandestine meetings which adapted their African Traditional Religion (very close to that of the Old Testament) into a profoundly creative and authentically-Christian faith.” See H. H. Mitchell, Black Preaching (New York: Lippincott, 1912).
9. Ibid., p. 25.
12. Cleophus LaRue describes this meeting that occurred in Black preaching as follows: “To put at the heart of Black preaching, one has to understand the interconnectedness between scriptural texts and African American life experiences.” See C. J. LaRue, The Heart of Black Preaching (Subversive, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000).
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMBODIMENT IN WORSHIP

Alexis D. Abernethy

In his book *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, Edward Muir describes the shift that took place with the invention of the printing press and its effects on the Protestant churches that arose out of the Reformation. Muir describes a division between the lower body, with its passions and feelings it contains, and the intellect and objectivity of the upper body, privileging the upper over the lower. For most Protestant churches this resulted in word-centered worship services, with most actions in worship involving speaking or singing—if not listening to words. Since then, Protestants of all stripes have expanded their worship repertoire but in some ways still privilege words above all else. Yet we enter worship as embodied creatures. How does this fact shape our experience and understanding of worship?

My students, colleagues, and I study the psychology of worship. One of the questions we pursue psychologically is this: “What factors contribute to spiritual transformation in worship?” Several mechanisms have been used to explain emotional responses to music from a psychological perspective, including cognitive appraisal, rhythmic entrainment, visual imagery, and emotional contagion.” In our first psychophysiological study of worship, we hypothesized that emotion would be associated with transformational experiences for parishioners. While emotion played a role, our participants also noted the role of cognitive dimensions. People identified key cognitive insights that were important for this process of transformation. Although those results pointed to unity of upper and lower body in our experience of worship, they raised further questions. During praise and worship in corporate worship services, there are moments that many parishioners experience as powerful, anointed, and convicting. What facilitates these experiences? Does the worship song leader’s spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and bodily engagement influence parishioners’ spiritual experience in those moments? There are worship song leaders whose ministry leadership reflects a life in God. This is related not only to a sense of God’s presence in the moment, but also to a sense of their connection to and journey with God as it pertains to the song they are ministering. The next step in our research sought to explore the concept of embodiment as one way of understanding this multidimensional process of engagement and exploring God’s incarnational presence.

PERSPECTIVES ON WORSHIP

H. Wayne Johnson emphasizes the importance of a revelatory focus in corporate worship. He referred to this focus as the “deep structure of worship” and outlined four key dimensions:

1. We see the priority and precedence of God’s self-revelation and redemptive work. We see the need for God’s people to attend and remember that revelation. We see that it is God’s character and redemptive work that elicit worship. Finally, we see that love and obedience are appropriate responses to God’s character and actions.

2. The focus of worship needs to center on who God is and what God has done. The attention of people should be directed toward God and his presence rather than the personality, charisma, or even musical skill of the worship leader. The response to worship should include a deepened obedience to and love of God.

Debra Dean Murphy highlights the complex cognitive, emotional, bodily, and spiritual process involved in worship as she notes the following:

- The “knowledge” imparted in worship is a knowledge that can be known only in the doing of it. It is, at heart, bodily and performative. We are habituated to and in the knowledge of the Christian faith by the ritual performance that is worship, so that a deep unity between doctrine and practice is taken for granted.

- Worship is not simply cognitive; rather, it is a performative religious process that includes our hearts, minds, and bodies. Ritual fosters this deep unity between doctrinal beliefs and embodied practice. Worship, in other words, is seen as the actions and experiences of the entire person.

PERSPECTIVES ON EMBODIMENT

One of the most universal embodied modes of worship is singing. Embracing a broad perspective on the role of embodiment in music, John Blacking notes that “music is a synthesis of cognitive processes which are present in culture and in the human body: the forms it takes, and the effects it has on people, are generated by the social experiences of human bodies in different cultural environments.” This perspective underscores the importance of not only an integrated bodily and cognitive process, but also the cultural context. Noteworthy here is both the universality of embodiment—that every culture’s music assumes embodiment—and its particularity: that every culture understands, values, and executes embodiment somewhat differently.

Yet embodiment has even further levels of complexity, as again illustrated through music and described by Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones:

We thereby recognize the roles played by (1) the person or people producing the sound, (2) the person or people hearing the produced sound, and (3) the acoustic and social contexts in which production and hearing occur. The “meaning” of any vocal sound, then, must be understood as co-constituted by performative as well as semantic/structural features.

They argue that vocal meaning arises from “an intersubjective acoustic space” and any effort to articulate it must include a reconstruction of this context. Understanding musical expression in worship would therefore include understanding the producers of the sound, the listeners, and their social context. For worship leadership, this would include the song leader and his or her process of preparation: the social and, specifically, spiritual context of song production. Patrik Juslin describes these qualities as going beyond the performance and considering “the nature of the person behind the performance.”
Music perception is associated with embodied movements—e.g., breathing and rhythmic gait. Patrick Shove and Bruno Rapp have noted, for example, that “the listener does not merely hear the sound of a galloping horse or bowing violinist; rather, the listener hears a horse galloping and a violinist bowing.” Further, recent neuropsychological studies emphasize the role of body motion in music production and performance. Such movement would be easily perceived in response to music such as jazz or contemporary Black gospel music, but it is perceived as well in music that evokes less perceivable bodily movements. Perceived rhythm is viewed as an imagined motion even in the absence of musculoskeletal movement. Consequently, says Raymond Gibbs, “musical perception involves an understanding of bodily motion—that is, a kind of empathetic embodiment.” Even something we do so regularly as listening to music opens bodily motion—that is, a kind of empathetic embodiment. Cognitive and social psychology are making listener hears a horse galloping and a violinist bowing.” Further, recent neuropsychological studies emphasize the role of body motion in music production and performance. Such movement would be easily perceived in response to music such as jazz or contemporary Black gospel music, but it is perceived as well in music that evokes less perceivable bodily movements. Perceived rhythm is viewed as an imagined motion even in the absence of musculoskeletal movement. Consequently, says Raymond Gibbs, “musical perception involves an understanding of bodily motion—that is, a kind of empathetic embodiment.” Even something we do so regularly as listening to music opens bodily motion—that is, a kind of empathetic embodiment. Cognitive and social psychology are making.

Margaret Wilson differentiates “online” and “offline” embodiment.14 and Paula Niedenthal and her associates elaborate this further:

A traditional view of preaching, expressed by Karl Barth, is that the preacher is a herald who speaks God’s words. The person and preacher’s relationship to the words are unimportant. In contrast, Ruthanna Hooke argues that revelation does not occur in this way.22 She notes that “the voice of God does not come to us in a way that is removed from our historical, embodied existence. . . . In Jesus Christ, God reveals Godself not by bypassing humanity but by inhabiting humanity, the historical and embodied humanity of Jesus Christ. . . . God is most revealed in preaching not when the preacher strives to become invisible, but rather when she is most present in her particular, embodied humanity, in the room, meeting the text.”24

IMPLICATIONS FOR WORSHIP

Applying this categorization of embodiment to worship, the worship leader then must have an online experience of embodiment with their music. This might be a preparation process during which the song leader spends intentional time with the Lord meditating on the biblical meaning of the song. The worship leader would engage with the material and apply it to her life and social context. During worship, the song leader would seek to create an experiential space that connects with the song. Throughout the process, offline embodiment helps prepare the worship leader to minister and aids the process. There may be additional features of online embodiment. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the song leader recreates the experience in her mind and body and also creates anew in partnership with the congregation. Online and offline embodiment both occur.

CONCLUSION

This provides an invaluable reminder that as Christians, our central desire should be a life that seeks to glorify God: that we would be students and followers of His Word and that the Holy Spirit would lead, guide, and empower us. The aim of worship is to glorify God, but as Don Salzera reminds us, this is culturally embodied and embedded: we bring our whole lives to worship.28 I am thankful that we serve a God who views us holistically and helps us in our desire to worship him in spirit and in truth.

ENDNOTES


17. Ibid., 16.


27. Ibid., 16.

CULTURE CARE: AN ASSUMPTION OF ABUNDANCE

Makoto Fujimura

Silence and Beauty include numerous conferences, universities, Washington, and the Tikotin Museum at Waterfall Mansion Gallery in New York. He received the American Council on the Arts “Award in 2014. His work in 2009, he received the American Council on the Arts from 2003 to 2009, he was appointed to the National Endowment for the Arts” award in 2014. His work in 2009, he received the American Council on the Arts from 2003 to 2009, he was appointed to the National Endowment for the Arts. He is a world-renowned painter, writer, and culture shaper. A presidential appointee to the National Council on the Arts from 2003 to 2009, he received the American Academic of Religion’s “Religion and the Arts” award in 2014. His work has been exhibited at galleries around the world, with recent major exhibits at Waterfall Mansion Gallery in New York, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, and the Tikotin Museum in Israel. Fujimura has lectured at numerous conferences, universities, and museums; books he has authored include Culture Care, Reflections, and Silence and Beauty.

It’s solving a problem, any problem, you must start with the universe.” This oft-repeated quote from Bill Brehm—who, with his wife, Dee, gave the major gift that allowed the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts to exist—involves an abundance that seems increasingly rare in our fearful world.

The philosopher of “Culture Care” assures, with Bill Brehm, a world of abundance. Culture wars begin when the notion of scarcity prevails. Common sense seems to indicate a Darwinian model of a zero-sum game of survival. But could there be an alternative? Do we dare even to ask that question?

It’s no just benefactors and those with abundant resources who live with the perspective of the universe. Surprisingly, it is most often artists who live in the assumption of abundance, despite what the world tells them. They have to. In order to create anything, one has to assume that we are not just “fixing” the universe and “righting it back”; instead, we are creating a new universe.

In Isak Dinesen’s story Babette’s Feast, Babette, a haggard 17th-century refugee exiled to a fjord in Norway, assumes abundance despite the darkness and obvious scarcity that envelopes her. “A great artist is never poor,” she emphatically states. Michelle Hurst, who played Babette in a recent off-Broadway production, pro-nounced the line with a stare of stubborn confidence earned not from winning the world, but by losing it; not out of fear-diluted resolve, but with extravagant generosity. Michelle, as the first African American actor to be cast in the role of Babette, would know something about that decision to choose abundance, to assume that grace is indeed infinite—that we can still choose to speak against our fears despite the world of scarcity we experience every day.

Artists fight against that fear: “A great artist is never poor.” That’s why artists, possessing this invisible capital, are first to be targeted when dictators take over; they know how powerful this belief in abundance can be to free the captive. Smart despotic leaders like Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605–564 BC) knew that it was better to bring the artisans into exile first, as he valued their contribution to society (see Jeremiah 29). Artists and artisans of all faiths bring the aroma of abundance into any world, even a world of exile. It is in causing beauty that we find the antidote to our fears and state control; it is in the theater of humor that we find resilience. It is in music and dance that we survive our Holocausets.

“Culture Care” is my cultural translation of Paul’s exhortation in Galatians 5:6 for us to live a “Spirit-filled life.” “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such love there is no law.” What kind of culture would be “filled with the Spirit,” and what qualities would that culture manifest?

When I pondered that question, it became evident to me that the world we live in—world, even more critically for us, our-church culture—do not often exhibit these qualities, but instead seem driven by fear: to chose to restrictiveness of the fear of being co-opted and co-opting their creativity. Such a process begins with epistemic healing. What is a colonized culture to heal from? The answer is the colonial wound: in the words of Walter Mignolo, “the feeling of inferiority imposed on human beings who do not fit the predetermined model in Euro-American narratives.”

Culture care in the context of the Global South, then, may be imagined as the restoration of beauty as a seed of “imagination into the ecosystem of culture”... a well-nurtured culture becoming an environment in which people and creativity thrives” may well mean a strategic undoing of Westernized visions of culture that limit non-Western humaN beauty and co-opt their creativity. Such a process begins with epistemic healing. What is a colonized culture to heal from? The answer is the colonial wound: in the words of Walter Mignolo, “the feeling of inferiority imposed on human beings who do not fit the predetermined model in Euro-American narratives.”

Culture care in the context of the Global South, then, may be imagined as the restoration of the image Dei in the erasures of coloniality—and the propagation of an ecology of ancestral and contemporary knowledges coexisting as embodied beauty, goodness, truth and beauty in stories, artifacts, and independent cultural histories for centuries acquired by the logic of Western late-capitalism.

Andy Crouch, Author, Speaker, and Fuller Trustee

The most influential “culture care” text ever written is Deuteronomy 6:4–9, known by its first Hebrew words as the Shema Israel:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Keep those words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fit them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Here we find all the essential elements of enduring culture: artifacts and patterns of life, external discussion and internal reflection, personal commitment and multigenerational transmission. The people of Israel, now dispersed throughout the world, “keep these words” to this day, and because Jesus of Nazareth underscored the importance of the Shema—adding the command to love the Lord with all our minds—“as well—it is not just Jews, but Christian believers as well, who see this as the greatest commandment.

This text, as taught by Jesus, also gives us the best compact definition I know of what it is to be a human person. A person is a complex interrelation of heart, soul, mind, and strength, designed for love. We combine heart (not just emotion but the capacity for emotion), soul (the capacity for depth or fullness of self), mind (the capacity for cognition and reflection), and strength (the capacity for embodied action). This heart-soul-mind-strength reality of personhood is at its best when it is oriented toward loving God and, as Jesus emphasizes, loving neighbor. To care for culture, then, is to care for these cultural patterns, artifacts, and institutions that most fully allow human persons to express their love for God and neighbor.

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Makoto Fujimura’s concept of culture care as the “restoration of beauty as a seed of imagination into the ecosystem of culture”... a well-nurtured culture becoming an environment in which people and creativity thrive” may well mean a strategic undoing of Westernized visions of culture that limit non-Western humaN beauty and co-opt their creativity. Such a process begins with epistemic healing. What is a colonized culture to heal from? The answer is the colonial wound: in the words of Walter Mignolo, “the feeling of inferiority imposed on human beings who do not fit the predetermined model in Euro-American narratives.”

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- Oscar Garcia Johnson, Assistant Professor for Centro Latino and Associate Professor of Theology and Latino Studies

- Oscar Garcia Johnson, Author and Center Latino and Associate Professor of Theology and Latino Studies
I'm here.

SO WHAT AM I DOING?

WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

I mean.

Lance Kagey and Tom Llewellyn. This poster was created for a classroom workshop at Tacoma's Lincoln High School for principal Patrick Erwin and printmaking teacher Heather Conklin. Find more posters by Kagey and Llewellyn on pp. 2–3, 4–5, 11, and 98–99.
The Prayer of Examen is a spiritual practice of reviewing the day to retune ourselves to the sacred in ordinary life. Usually lasting 15–20 minutes and done in the evening, the prayer prompts us to remember God’s presence, express gratitude, reflect on the day, and prepare for the day to come. The following pages use contemplative imagery captured from daily life with our coworkers to show how the prayer’s application is both organic and accessible. We encourage you to read slowly and prayerfully, using the pages as an opportunity to practice this ancient prayer in your own life. Find more about the prayer online at Fuller.edu/Studio/PrayerofExamen.
Stop, breathe deeply, and know that you are in God’s presence. God has been with you since the beginning of your day, in every detail. As you prepare to look back on your day, ask the Holy Spirit to shine the light that will clear your vision—so you might see what God wants you to see.

“Where could I go to get away from your spirit? Where could I go to escape your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there. If I went down to the grave, you would be there too.” Psalm 139:7–8
I will thank you, Lord, with all my heart; I will talk about all your wonderful acts. I will celebrate and rejoice in you; I will sing praises to your name, Most High.” Psalm 9:1–2

Every moment in your day is a gift from God. Be thankful for all of it, even the smallest things: a patch of blue sky, the music in your headphones, a smile from a stranger. Allow gratitude to draw you into the fullness of your life.

“Twill thank you, Lord, with all my heart. I will talk about all your wonderful acts. I will celebrate and rejoice in you. I will sing praises to your name, Most High.” Psalm 9:1–2
Lord, you have examined me. You know me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up. Even from far away you comprehend my plans. You study my traveling and resting. You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways.” Psalm 139:1–3

Think back over your day. Who you were with, where you went, what you did—however ordinary those things might be. Recall the sights, sounds, smells, conversations,思想s, and feelings you experienced. What interested you? What discouraged you? Give your attention to those moments, and offer them to God.

REVIEW THE DAY
"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit." Psalm 51:10–12

As you consider your day, reflect honestly on the moments you felt out of tune with God—what you said, a missed opportunity, some way you wish you had acted differently. For what do you need forgiveness? Do you need to make things right with someone else? Look at your shortcomings, and allow God to heal them.
“I raise my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. The Lord will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming—from now until forever from now.” Psalm 121:1-2, 8

As you end your day, look to tomorrow. What are you expecting to happen? What are you looking forward to, and what concerns you? Ask for God’s help in the future. To open your eyes, your ears, and your heart to see where God is working. Remember that God will again be present in all things, large and small, guiding you toward fullness in your life.

5 LOOK TOWARD THE DAY TO COME
If we will not balance knowing with an open-ended not-knowing, nothing new seems to happen. We have to be trained to do it. The only two things strong enough to accomplish this training in us is suffering and prayer—the two golden paths that lead us to a different shape of meaning, a different sized universe, a different set of securities and goals for our lives. And always toward a different, more grounded, deeper understanding of the risen Christ.

Voice on Discernment

Mary Ellen Azada, executive director of Fuller Careers and Personal Development, reflecting on the road to Emmaus, suffering, and discernment. Listen to her whole sermon on the FULLER sermons podcast. From mission work to unexpected illness and vocational changes, the following voices reflect on discerning God’s will in the midst of complex lives—one step at a time.

Standing above the city with their arms outstretched, Emily (MACC ’09) and David Romero pray for the city of Tegucigalpa, in Honduras, and for discernment as they minister to the children of the city. Learn more of their story on FULLER studio’s short film “Journey to Jubilee,” available on Fuller.edu/Studio.

Lord, bless our community richly and abundantly
Bless our city, Lord
Bless all the ministries that are part of the body of Christ
so that the growth may be visible and palpable in our city
and so that our community may experience
the transformative change that comes from you, Lord.
Almighty God, we come to this place.
We come before your presence, Father.
As we see the city from this mountain, we want to ask you—extend your hand of blessing and mercy.
And as you extend your hand of blessing and mercy,
allow our rulers to see with clarity, Lord, that you are calling them,
and that you work that they may have the opportunity to receive blessing from you
and the ability to clearly discern between good and evil.
TOD BOLSINGER: “We both connect on the notion of building your way forward. We have to put things into practice, but also attend our way forward. We have to listen as we go. As Christian leaders, how do we cultivate the discernment that can help us decide on the way forward in our lives? What does it mean to work hard as unto the Lord as opposed to our flesh, and how do we hear the voice of the Spirit while we’re building?”

DAVE EVANS: “An overwhelming number of Christians are looking for the will of God that looks like blue lines on an AAA map—this is the way to go; there is one preferred answer to my life. And I don’t think that’s what the Scriptures mean, particularly the Sermon on the Mount. If we reframe this so that the will of God is to live into the way of Jesus, which will include accommodations for failure and mistakes and what have you, we keep growing . . . what’s the next invitation of the Spirit where I am not where I should have been? Rather than discerning the right answer, I’m trying to discern the presence of the reality of God in this moment.”

And God, who protects us so graciously, invites us back into his quiver, where we can realize it is not by our own competencies or might alone that we are able to participate in whatever God is doing in and for the world.”

“ACCORDING TO YOUR COMPASSION, BLOT OUT MY TRANSgressions.”

“Mercy, lovingkindness, unfailing love, boundless. Now what’s the context here? David knew what he had done and knew what he had done was wrong, but the prophet Nathan had to come along to really put his business out into the street. This was hidden. God sent Nathan to really lay it out. Some of our sins are in plain view, but with other dimensions of our sins, we really need help to see the magnitude of them. Do you have someone in your life like the prophet Nathan who will tell you the truth about yourself?”

“As we serve as God’s leaders, we need to have people who can tell us the truth about who we are, what we’re doing, what we’re thinking, and what we’re capable of.”

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Author and professor Dave Evans and Tod Bolsinger, vice president and chief of leadership formation, discuss discernment and failure during Fuller’s annual New Year’s event on December 31, 2017. Explore more from Dave Evans, including discussions about vocation, in an interview on Mark Labberton’s Conversing podcast and more on Fuller.edu/studio.

Eun Ah Cho, assistant professor of intercultural leadership, preaches from Isaiah 49, reflecting on impatience in ministry, stories of perseverance, and learning to endure in joy and humility within the “quiver” of God. Listen to her sermon on the FULLER sermons podcast.

Alexis Abernethy, associate provost for faculty inclusion and equity and professor of psychology, preaches on Psalm 51 and the struggle to discern our own failings. Listen to this sermon on the FULLER sermons podcast.

Author and professor Dave Evans and Tod Bolsinger, vice president and chief of leadership formation, discuss discernment and failure during Fuller’s annual New Year’s event on December 31, 2017. Explore more from Dave Evans, including discussions about vocation, in an interview on Mark Labberton’s Conversing podcast and more on Fuller.edu/studio.
“The vision need not be clear, and I dare say the vision will not be clear. All that we need to know is the next step. This is where we are called to be obedient to the vision. Indeed it is only in that next step, and the step after that, and then in the one after that that we can be obedient. But beyond the dimness of our vision, beyond our perplexity or exhilaration, beyond our doubts, our dreams, our study—out there somewhere in the future, the God who called Paul to Macedonia and Peter to Caesarea is calling us all to meet the Lydias of our time, to meet Cornelius, to meet God—yes, to meet God in Lydia and Cornelius. So be it, amen.”

“Awareness means pain—because we’re becoming aware of a lot of things that we as human beings don’t always want to be aware of. So healthy awareness as one matures is first of all an awareness of my own brokenness, my own limitations, my own separateness from God, my own need to reconnect. To the extent that one can start with ‘I’m incom- plete, and there’s a greater plan. I can’t get there on my own, I can’t get there without being in relationship with other people or with God,’ that is the beginning of wisdom. That is the beginning of awareness that I’m not my own god, that I need help.”

“The thing about our lives is we stare into an unknown future, and we walk forward, and this is part I think of trying to make sense of things. It gets really complicated when you try to figure out what counts as God’s favor, what counts as a sign? When I make determinations about what God hopes for me, and I make them based on God’s character, I’m on solid ground. But if I look at my life and say what did I deserve and was this because of faithfulness, I find that’s probably either narcissism or a very impractical kind of hope.”

“We have to be able to listen to God, but I also think we have to learn to really listen to our own hearts and what’s happening within us. Otherwise, what we think is God might be us. So there’s discernment of learning to listen to God, to our family, to each other; I often think of that as attentiveness. Attentiveness is the opposite of distraction. So in the history of Christian spirituality, there’s a lot that’s written about being attentive, being attentive to God. A lot of times we think of being attentive as something we do when we’re quiet. We’re listening to God, so we have to be in this quiet room or on a retreat. But here the context makes such a difference again. For me, it’s also learning to listen in the midst of the city.”

“The vision need not be clear, and I dare say the vision will not be clear. All that we need to know is the next step. This is where we are called to be obedient to the vision. Indeed it is only in that next step, and the step after that, and then in the one after that that we can be obedient. But beyond the dimness of our vision, beyond our perplexity or exhilaration, beyond our doubts, our dreams, our study—out there somewhere in the future, the God who called Paul to Macedonia and Peter to Caesarea is calling us all to meet the Lydias of our time, to meet Cornelius, to meet God—yes, to meet God in Lydia and Cornelius. So be it, amen.”

“I’m not my own god, that I need help.”

“To listen is prayer that people discern and align themselves to what God is up to.”

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“Learning to listen in the midst of the city.”
Recent Faculty Books


LET THE BUILDINGS SPEAK

My name is Asher Hammer, and Misquoyo Yoon Hammers’s my mom. For those of you Pasadena people, I live just across the freeway from Fuller, across the street from the Mexican supermarket, Vallarta. That being said, Fuller is just a hop, skip and a jump from my house, and ever since Mom and Dad started letting me walk places (this is before I got my bike) I would spend my summer days walking down to Fuller. I would always bring a little allowance money, and we’d cut a secondary quick stop by the Pasadena Public Library I would often buy a juice…”

Asher, then, read our magazine on “disruption” and was inspired to share his memories about the Pasadena campus. Later, he handed an essay to his mother Miyoung Yoon Hammers, chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Therapy. He submitted it without asking, she says with a laugh, because he didn’t want her to stop him. “It’s need—s and said,” she says, “I saw what the campus has meant to my kids.” Thank you, Asher. Read his full story and share your own at Fuller.edu/Building.
talking to a stranger, and ended their conversation in prayer—how often do you get that call?”

“It’s like phone chaplaincy; you could feel the gravity of those prayers,” Kaitlin says, looking at the post-it notes in her hand. “To think that our students picked up the phone, started psychology on long-distance counseling techniques. “It was in my colleagues’ presence that I learned how to pray again,” Jarrod Phipps [MDiv ’17] remembers. “Each shift I would, they’d prayed, the post-it would move, reminding the students to continue praying long after the phone call was over. Sensing the ministry opportunity, the callers even worked with a

With each call, students would write down requests—anxiety about moves and pastoral work, weddings and divorces, children’s futures and the loss of loved ones—and once

lengthy conversation, laughing at the goodness of God to connect us in such an incredible way.”

[MDiv ’18] told a pastor on the phone that he was from Zimbabwe, the man hurriedly exclaimed he was housing someone from that very country as a guest. “He handed over the phone

“Every call was like listening to a firsthand account of how God had been working through the generations of Fuller’s ministry,” Pramil Aruldoss [MAICS ’14] recalls. After Ken Chikonzo track of those prayer requests.

For years, student callers had been praying in that hidden room with alumni and donors from around the world. “Many of the Call Center employees were international students,” Kaitlin says, “so the room was crammed with men and women—professors, bankers, and pastors in their home countries—who would call with the same passion they had fundraising for their own ministries overseas.” At each station, Call Center employees would not only raise money on behalf of the seminary, but also pray for the phone for those they were calling and keep track of those prayer requests.

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The wall above the prayer requests was covered with the Lord’s Prayer and other prayers. Kaitlin recalls coming in for the Holiday Season to get the room ready for use by the new team of people, a blast of vibrant colors on the back wall caught her eye. “On the left a sign said ‘prayer requests,’ and on the right it said ‘prayed for,’” she remembers. “The whole wall under that section was covered with post-it notes with handwritten prayer requests.”

BENEDICTION: Acts that Speak the Good Word

Narrow cutouts line the edges of Fuller’s Call Center when student callers raise funds—unremarkable in appearance, windowless, and lit by fluorescent lights. When Director of Annual Giving Katlin Schluter visited the office to get it ready for use by a new team of people in the fall, a blast of vibrant colors on the back wall caught her eye. “On the left a sign said ‘prayer requests,’ and on the right it said ‘prayed for,’” she remembers. “The whole wall under that section was covered with post-it notes with handwritten prayer requests.”

She had come to clean and, instead, discovered a global ministry.
INSIDE THIS CITY IS A HUMAN. INSIDE THIS HUMAN IS A HOLE. INSIDE THIS HOLE IS A CRAVING. INSIDE THIS CRAVING IS LOVE TRYING TO OCCUR.
After graduating with a master’s degree in 2014, Daniel Dama (p. 28) started the Fulani Christian Festival of Art and Culture back in West Africa. That confirmed his commitment to “peacebuilding through music,” he says, prompting his return to Fuller to do doctoral work. Stories like Dama’s connect our worldwide community, and even when he leaves Pasadena again, Fuller will go with him wherever he goes. In a season of preparing to move our main campus from Pasadena to Pomona, it’s heartening to remember that successful transplants of Fuller Seminary have happened as many times as we have graduated students: some 43,000 times Fuller has been uprooted and replanted, widening the global reach of leaders formed for Christian vocations around the world.