STORY Rick Reynolds, pictured above, sees himself and the image of God in those experiencing poverty and homelessness in Seattle p. 18

THEOLOGY This issue explores the theological realities of “suffering with” through a collection of articles curated by Cynthia Eriksson p. 34

VOICE The Fuller community reflects on the topics of race and inclusion, vocation, and embodied learning in a digital world p. 74
From the Very Beginning
the Word Was with God.

Dao Zi, artist, poet, and critic, says of his work, “Ink painting is the art of transforming blood into ink: the most unselfish love manifested, the most unworthy person redeemed, with world outlook renewed. Ink painting is no longer ink but new life.”

Dao Zi was one of eleven Chinese Christian artists, from both mainland China and the USA, hosted by Fuller’s China Initiative on April 25-27, 2019. A symposium was held in which the artists shared their spiritual journeys in words and visual art. Their works were exhibited on campus through June 15.

See more of Dao Zi’s work on pp. 11 and 98–99.
I don’t want to do a deep dive on suffering, Associate Professor of Psychology and PsyD Program Chair Cynthia Eriksson told the FULLER studio editorial advisory board last year. She preferred to focus on what it means to “suffer with,” she clarified, rather than delving into what it means to suffer alone.

So began an investigation—for her and her colleagues who have graced us with their writings in this issue’s theology section—on what it means to accompany those who suffer. Familiar territory to Dr. Eriksson, who specializes in, among other things, posttraumatic stress disorder. “In the deep work of trauma recovery,” she once wrote, “understanding the human response to tragedy and grief is especially important. This knowledge orients us to a position of grace as we work to create places of safety, rituals of grief and connection, and opportunities to connect for trauma survivors. Walking with others through trauma, attending to our own trauma survivors. Walking with others and our own trauma, engaging in God’s healing work can certainly grow us in mutual transformation.”

There are several stories in this issue, too, as with every issue of FULLER magazine, of those who have given their lives to work with the suffering and found their lives enriched for it. Every cup of suffering is full, I have heard it said, acknowledging that pain is not only universal but a basis for such Christlike empathy. In an era when suffering is, for some, a strangely motivated competition, “suffering with” breaks the trends of individualism and inches us toward communal life and the transformation Dr. Eriksson writes about.

Mutual transformation is the goal here at Fuller—part of our ethos as well as an element that defines our aspirations, especially in the era of disruption that we are facing.* Our choosing to “suffer with” connects us deeply with the incarnation, reverberating the love of a God who chose to become human—God with us so that we would not be alone in the sometimes dark journey toward hope.

To Suffer Together that We May Be Transformed Together

*In this issue we introduce a new department on the “Future of Fuller” (page 92) where we will share updates on changes surrounding Fuller’s move and in our educational business model. Visit Fuller.edu/Future for in-depth coverage starting with the historic announcement of our move to the city of Pomona. We’ve also created an online space to document and explain our ongoing efforts toward greater diversity, inclusion, and equity—find that at Fuller.edu/Inclusion.
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Some of the most profound dimensions of being human revolve around our experiences of suffering. We all suffer. No one lives without suffering. Our experiences may vary greatly: the degree or intensity of the difficulties, our internal or external capacities for sensitivity and endurance, the resilience and empathy of our family and community will all make enormous differences. At the very least, however, we know that nearly everyone does better in suffering if we have someone “suffering with” us—if we have compassion.

When the Apostle Paul reflects with an unguarded candor on his own suffering in the opening of his second letter to the Corinthian church, he is doing far more than just describing his afflictions. He is theo-
gizing with and pastoring the Corinthians, who face their own suffering. All of his afflictions, and theirs, are caught up in the suffering with love of God who has suffered to comfort us, and who, in turn, calls us to comfort others in their pain.

We are not only those who “weep with those who weep,” of course. We also “rejoice with those who rejoice.” But it is definitely meant to be both. While all suffer, suffering does not automatically breed a readiness to suffer with others. This is where Paul lifts up the suffering of Jesus as the precur-
ser that has touched the lives of all those in Corinth. We are to be motivated and enabled to suffer with others not just because we also suffer, but primarily because who we are in Christ know One who suffered with us and gave us a reason to suffer with others in our dolor.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

2 Corintios 1:3–5

por el mismo Cristo nuestra consolación. aflicciones de Cristo, así abunda también solación con que nosotros somos consolados cualquier tribulación, por medio de la con-
también nosotros consolar a los que están en nuestras tribulaciones, para que podamos con el grado o intensidad de las dificultades, nuestras capacidades internas o externas de sensibilidad y perseverancia, la resistencia y empatía de nuestra familia, comunidad harán la gran diferencia. Al menos, sabemos que casi toda persona supera mejor el sufrimiento si tenemos a alguien “suffering con” nosotros—si tenemos compasión.

Cuando el Apóstol Pablo reflexiona con candor abierto sobre su propio sufrimiento en la apertura de su segunda carta a la iglesia de Corinto, está más que describiendo sus aflicciones. Él está teologizando y pastore-
ando a los corintios, quienes enfrentan su propio sufrimiento. Todas sus aflicciones, las de ellas y ellos, se ven enredadas dentro del sufrimiento con amor de Dios quien ha sufrido para consolarlos, y quien, además, nos llama a consolar a otros en su dolor.

Por supuesto que no somos solamente aquellos quienes “lloran con los que lloran”. También nos “rejociamos con quienes se regocijan.” Pero definitamente deben ser ambas cosas. Aunque todos sufran, el su-
frimiento no nos dispone automáticamente a sufrir con otros. Es aquí en donde Pablo eleva el sufrimiento de Jesús como precursor de quien ha tocado la vida de todos y todas en Corinto. Debemos estar motivados y ca-
pacitados para sufrir con los demás no sólo porque nosotros y nuestros sufrimientos, pero primordialmente porque nosotros quienes estamos en Cristo conocemos a Aquel quien sufrió con nosotros y nos dio consolación. Esta es la tierra donde explicamos y fortalecemos la compasión cristiana.

Las personas me preguntan extraño ser pastor. Yo entiendo la pregunta, pero esta presunme la diferencia más que similitud entre ser presidente y ser pastor. Yo creo
함께할 특권을 갖습니다. 그럴 때마다 예수님의 함께 고난받으시는 사랑이 고난 가운데 있는 저를 품어주시고 제마음을 열어주셨고 연민의 마음이 커지게 하셨습니다. 분명이것은 저의 직책이나 역할 때문이 아니라, 적나라한 저의 궁핍함을 예수님께서 따뜻한 치유의 사랑으로 감싸주시기 때문일 것입니다.

세상을 둘러보면 어디든 고난이 없는 곳이 없습니다. 14세기 유럽을 전염병이 휩쓸었을 때, 남달리 도시 안에 남아서 죽어가는 병자를 돌보았던 사람들 중에 그리스도인이 유독 많았다고 합니다. 이는 자비와 긍휼이 풍성하신 하나님을 아는 데서 비롯된 본능적인 반응입니다. 역사 가운데 교회가 이런 평판을 얻는 곳이라면 어디에서든 복음이 진리임이 입증되었습니다. 반대로 우리가 그런 사랑을 보여주지 못하거나, 심한 경우 정 반대의 평판을 얻을 때, 당연하게도 사람들은 우리가 전하는 복음을 거부합니다.

예수님을 따르는 사람이라면 누구나 질문해야 합니다. 우리가 고난 가운데 있을 때 하나님은 우리를 사랑하셨는가? 만약 그러하다면, 우리의 소명은 고난 받는 이 세상과 함께 고난 받는 것입니다. 하나님의 백성이라면 그 소명을 품어야 하고 그것을 실체화시킬 수 있어야 합니다. 그렇지 않다면 우리에게 복된 소식이란 없습니다.
A Hug
AND
a Coke

Flight attendant Kristalyn Simler finds that small acts of hospitality can have a significant impact.

Written by JOY NETANYA THOMPSON
Photographed by NATE HARRISON
Kristalyn’s ministry of encouragement in the small things extends just as much to the passengers on her flights. From the Midwest to the South, the East Coast to Hawaii and Alaska, the routes she flies offer opportunities to interact with people from all different cultures within and outside of the United States. A graduate of Fuller’s MA in Global Leadership program, she credits her cross-cultural communication courses for preparing her for this part of the job. “It was very applicable to what I now do on a daily basis,” she says. She also found the broad program to validate all of her natural gifts, like a passion for social justice and loving people from different cultures. “The reason I got a degree in global leadership,” she explains, “is because I’ve always had a heart for the whole world.”

As she describes her job, it’s clear that Kristalyn finds real joy in truly seeing others—paying attention to what makes them unique or what burdens they might be carrying. Even though working on a flight can be extremely fast-paced, “I take the time to look at people,” Kristalyn says. Handing out beverages, she tries to make eye contact with passengers who seem down, or give an extra cookie to a person she senses might sometimes be overlooked. From the Spanish-speaking grandma traveling alone to the moody teenager on a family vacation, Kristalyn tries to connect with whoever ends up on her flight. “I just want to let people know that I see them.”

Sometimes, seeing her passengers means handing out Kleenex, other times it’s laughing at their jokes. She references Romans 12, where Paul writes about rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn. Kristalyn remembers one flight that affected her deeply early in her flight attendant career, traveling a route the airline calls “the milk run” because it stops at

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As Kristalyn approached her 40th birthday, she started to feel that her time at Young Life International, where she’d worked for 13 years, was done. While she wholeheartedly supported Young Life’s mission to “reach the furthest kid out,” she sensed the need to expand her ministry. She’d heard someone say, “How can you love the world that God loves if you haven’t seen the world?” and it sparked something in her. “I just knew in my heart that I wanted more people to know who Jesus is,” she says.

With these feelings stirring, Kristalyn returned home from a work trip to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and saw a sign advertising that Alaska Airlines was hiring flight attendants. She’d never considered working for an airline, but the moment seemed God-inspired—and she decided to go for it. “I literally saw a sign and never would have thought about it otherwise,” she says. For such a dramatic career change, Kristalyn didn’t experience shocked reactions from friends and family; rather, everyone from her husband to her friends expressed confidence in her choice. “You’re perfect for it,” they told her. “Growing up,” says Kristalyn, “my mom used to say she should have named me Kristalyn GO instead of Kristalyn Jo! I always loved going places; I love people and people watching.” She has a track record of making unconventional and sometimes adventurous life choices, from living in Costa Rica for several years with her husband and having her first child there, to deciding to adopt a second child. While working for Young Life International, she almost never said no to a work trip. Becoming a flight attendant at age 40 made sense to her and her community and, four years later, she hasn’t regretted it. True to her spirited nature, Kristalyn boldly ventured into her new vocation, where her ministry is just as intentional as it was while working for Young Life. “The ministry part comes in the jump seat, sitting and talking with other flight attendants,” she says. “Everyone is going through a lot and you never realize it.” Well, you never realize it unless you ask how they are doing, as Kristalyn so compassionately does. Instead of picking up a book or making small talk about flying schedules, she makes a point to ask how their day went before getting to the airport, or if anything had happened the day before. That’s when the stories pour out: one recently divorced coworker quietly shares the ups and downs of securing child care, while another confides that he had just helped his aging father move into an assisted living facility.

Never knowing what will come up, Kristalyn employs her adaptable temperament in these conversations, ready to bend and flex and offer her own steady smile. “People have commented on how peaceful I am,” she says. For her, ministry is simply “loving people where they are—at literally in the jump seat, but also their place in life.” She rarely flies with the same coworkers twice, but she’ll often follow up on meaningful conversations with a little note in their office mailbox, offering encouragement or saying that she’d prayed for them.

Kristalyn’s ministry of encouragement in the small things extends just as much to the passengers on her flights. From the Midwest to the South, the East Coast to Hawaii and Alaska, the routes she flies offer opportunities to interact with people from all different cultures within and outside of the United States. A graduate of Fuller’s MA in Global Leadership program, she credits her cross-cultural communication courses for preparing her for this part of the job. “It was very applicable to what I now do on a daily basis,” she says. She also found the broad program to validate all of her natural gifts, like a passion for social justice and loving people from different cultures. “The reason I got a degree in global leadership,” she explains, “is because I’ve always had a heart for the whole world.”

As she describes her job, it’s clear that Kristalyn finds real joy in truly seeing others—paying attention to what makes them unique or what burdens they might be carrying. Even though working on a flight can be extremely fast-paced, “I take the time to look at people,” Kristalyn says. Handing out beverages, she tries to make eye contact with passengers who seem down, or give an extra cookie to a person she senses might sometimes be overlooked. From the Spanish-speaking grandma traveling alone to the moody teenager on a family vacation, Kristalyn tries to connect with whoever ends up on her flight. “I just want to let people know that I see them.”

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Kristalyn remembers one flight that affected her deeply early in her flight attendant career, traveling a route the airline calls “the milk run” because it stops at...
many remote Alaskan villages along the way to its final destination. This particular milk run took place shortly after a small sightseeing plane crashed in Alaska, and Kristalyn’s flight was full of passengers whose loved ones had died in the crash. “It wasn’t a direct flight for any of those people to get out and go directly home, so we had to go three more little stops on this milk run,” she says. She still gets choked up thinking about it—remembering one woman who’d been celebrating her wedding anniversary and lost her husband in the crash; another who had been on a trip with her grown children and husband was now flying home alone. Kristalyn walked the aisles, offering tissues and a listening ear. “I was hugging passengers,” she recalls, clearly moved by the experience. “I was like, ‘I don’t know you and I’ll never see you again, but you’re in the depths of despair, so I can at least give you a hug and a Coke.’”

Another memorable time had Kristalyn rejoicing with those who rejoiced on a plane chartered by a cannery based in Alaska. The flight was full of mostly men heading up for a short but brutal season of hard work. “Many didn’t know English fluently and I wondered if they fully knew what they were getting themselves into,” Kristalyn recalls. On such charter flights, the canneries work with the airline to provide certain food and beverage selections for the passengers, and sometimes they don’t provide anything at all. But this one time, the flight had been catered incorrectly, and Kristalyn was able to provide her passengers with the finest she had to offer from the first-class galley—which she served to them on elegant plates with real silverware. “At first everyone declined my offer, thinking they had to pay,” she says, “but once they understood they didn’t have to, I just filed their trays and laid it before them.”

As they began to eat, she watched as many sat a little bit taller, Kristalyn remembers. “Even now as I recall that trip, it brings a big smile to my face and makes my heart crunch a little bit,” she shares. “They were thankful, gracious, surprised, and joyful. It was a gift to give the unexpected to people who weren’t expecting anything.”

It’s that same attitude that has allowed Kristalyn to have a fulfilling ministry in an unconventional career as a flight attendant. She brings to each flight a similar posture: thankful, gracious, joyful—not expecting anything, but treating each person, each experience, as a gift.

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NATE HARRISON is the senior photographer and director of photography at FULLER studio. Find more of his work at NateHarrison.com.
Rick Reynolds shares how in choosing to look at—and not past—the poor, he’s seen himself and the image of God

“W e d o n’t think of ourselves as being garbage generators,” Rick Reynolds (MAT ‘85) chuckles while explaining the work he stumbled into at Seattle’s Operation Nightwatch. “We got somebody hauling it off for us, whereas people sleeping outside don’t have that luxury.” His work has required him to look deeply at those who are often invisible to mainstream society, which he says has been a transformative experience.

Operation Nightwatch is a faith-based compassion ministry that seeks to reduce the impact of poverty and homelessness. Before joining the organization 25 years ago, Rick was attending Seattle Pacific University, training to become a school teacher. However, after one quarter of student teaching, he decided to drop out of the university’s School of Education. “It was my senior year; I only had two quarters to finish up, and after one quarter of teaching, I hated it,” he explains. “I have nothing but the highest respect for people who can manage a classroom. The problem was that I had a high tolerance of chaos, and that doesn’t work in a classroom.”

Afterward, Rick’s vocational path led from Seattle Pacific to Fuller’s Seattle campus.

During his first quarter in seminary, Rick seemed to find his calling with Operation Nightwatch. Although he was not yet ordained, he bought a clerical collar to wear while passing out pizzas to Seattle’s poor as a volunteer with the organization. “Nightwatch said if you’re on an ordination track, which I was, they didn’t have any qualms about letting you wear the collar,” he explains. Ten years later, Rick became the organization’s executive director.

To combat homelessness, Operation Nightwatch provides some basic survival services, including a dispatch center that feeds and provides access to shelter for about 120 to 140 single adults. They also have an apartment building for 24 formerly homeless seniors. “It’s very simple housing, kind of dormitory-style,” Rick explains. “But it’s a permanent rental, so people have a bed, a dresser, a refrigerator, a place to call home, and a community around them, which is really great.” He says that these basic survival services are essential for people experiencing homelessness to get stable. Otherwise, “they tend to go from being a one-time homeless person to being periodically homeless, because they have these recurring problems, to being somebody who’s stuck on the street.”

Twenty-five years into doing this work, Rick says he has seen significant changes in the relationship between the city and its homeless population. He remembers that years ago it didn’t take long for people to move from a shelter into some kind of permanent housing. “But as the downtown and closed-in neighborhoods have become gentrified, a lot of people have been priced out,” he says. “And so that’s when despair settles in, hopelessness and then drugs and alcohol become more of an issue, and mental health issues start to surface. It’s pretty heartbreaking, really.”

Rick speaks of the divide between the city’s homeless and mainstream people as “sadly ironic.” He tells a story to illustrate that those with homes are not so different from the homeless: “The newspaper covered how an area of town was being cleared out by the authorities, and likely needed to be. The mayor was proudly showing off the mess that had been left behind by ‘filthy homeless people’ on the little greenbelt area,” he recalls. “But buried on another page was an article about a 10 million gallon sewer overflow into Lake Washington that barely ruffled anybody’s feathers at the time. Ten million gallons of sewage from people...
living in houses dumped into a local lake, but we’re going to focus on the half ton of garbage that homeless people left behind, because they are forced to sleep outside and don’t have anything to do with their cars and bottles and effluent.” He says he wishes people could see that “human beings are human beings, and everybody’s worthy of dignity and respect. They all have the stamp of God on them.”

The problem, Rick suggests, is that cultural lenses of prejudice often make it difficult for us to recognize the image of God in the poor. “They’re all created in the image of God, and that’s the thing: I want people to look, and not just look past.”

Working with the poor has required Rick to truly look at the poor and to confront his own prejudices. His first year on the job with Operation Nightwatch, he had a memorable exchange with a man named Ronnie. To Rick, Ronnie fit all of the stereotypes that many assign to the homeless: “He was loud, obnoxious, drank, heard things that nobody else could hear, and was getting barred from one shelter after another.” One night, while standing in front of the shelter with his homeless friends, Ronnie asked, “Pastor Rick, ain’t I beautiful?” Telling the story, Rick pauses for a second. “He’s looking at me with this big crooked grin on his face,” he recalls. “I said, ‘Ronnie, you’re beautiful’; I’d come up next to him to try to do an old seminary buddy hug. And he throws his arms around me. He’s hunched down. He’s six inches taller than me. His cheek is pressed up against my cheek. Pulls back, kisses me on the cheek, and off he goes to shelter, into the night.”

He admits that he was initially “self-congratulatory” about that exchange with Ronnie. However, upon later reflection, he had an epiphany: “Sometimes I’m the ‘Ronnie.’ I’m the one who doesn’t smell so great, I’m the one who doesn’t act right. You know? That homeless guy has got every bit of God’s grace on him that you have.”

Rick suggests that if we are intentional about looking at the poor, we’ll also have our prejudices challenged, much like his were with Ronnie. “We have these assumptions about people standing on street corners. Panhandlers are who we see,” he says. “But if you just keep your eyes open, you’re going to see homeless people that go to work every day, and homeless people that are doing the best job they can to stay out of trouble, and are peaceable, funny, intelligent, talented people.”

Sometimes Rick has run into a homeless person he knows through Operation Nightwatch at their workplace. “They’re horrified that I’m going to out them, because there’s such a stigma attached to being homeless that nobody wants to let anybody know, and they don’t want their families to know,” he says. “Some of them have families out of town; they’d be mortified if they found out a loved one was homeless.”

After two and half decades, Rick still understands the temptation many of us have to look past the poor. “There’s an awkwardness when you encounter somebody who’s maybe panhandling or sitting around. And we all kind of do that little dance around them, and we don’t want to look too closely,” he says, recalling how he recently tried to avoid eye contact with someone panhandling at a stoplight. That awkwardness only intensified when he saw that the panhandling man was someone he knew. “I’m still trying to overcome that avoidance. It’s something that everybody needs to get over.”

If we can manage to get over that, Rick says, he hopes that people can graduate from “the acknowledgment of the poor to basic humane treatment.” He suggests keeping an extra bottle of water in your car to pass out, or a soft granola bar—“because a lot of these guys can’t chew very well; they don’t have good teeth.” And then, he continues, “maybe moving beyond charity to advocacy: speaking up when they’re making it illegal to sleep in your car, or banning sidewalk loitering.”

He believes in the power of looking at—and not past—the poor to gradually transform us, because he continues to experience that transformation himself. It’s why, he says, 25 years later, he’s still excited about his work with Operation Nightwatch. Rick dreams that, perhaps, a commitment on the part of everyday people to refuse to look past the poor could lead to a world without tent cities. “I don’t know what the way forward is,” he says. “I don’t know how it’s going to happen, but I believe that God’s future for us is that there’s equity and social justice and care for all human beings.”

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NATE HARRISON is the senior photographer and director of photography at FULLER studio. Find more of his work at NateCHarrison.com.
Naomi McSwain uses education as a life-saving alternative to violence. Memories to the lost next to the college pennants his mother, is displayed next to too many others. The drive-by shooting—a gang initiation—in 1989. He was 35. Well loved, he was seen by family and friends as just another statistic. But arriving at youth center work wasn’t a straightforward path for Naomi. While she was involved in the center at its founding, she left to pursue a career in journalism—reporting, for years, on the violence that plagued the LA area, including the civil unrest in 1992 over the Rodney King beating. “I was at Florence and Normandie that night,” she says. She’d lived minutes away.

Later, she left South LA to cover gang violence in Pasadena. She wrote on killing after killing, churning out stories until it burned her out. She felt her stories offered no solutions—the rapid nature of the news cycle didn’t grant her the space or time—and they even exacerbated the problems of violence by sharing information that gangs ended up using to retaliate. She remembers helplessly holding the mother of a victim, a woman she was meant to interview, as the woman wept in her arms. “I never picked up my notebook,” Naomi says of that moment. The trauma of her work eventually led to an emotional breakdown, and her editors told her to take a month off. She spent the time in therapy, then in prayer.

“I told God I wanted to use my skills to help, instead of writing all these stories that weren’t going anywhere,” she says. She quit her job and, soon after, decided to further her education. “To learn more about children and children’s programming,” she says, “that’s how I ended up at Fuller.” It was the inaugural year of the Children at Risk program in the School of Intercultural Studies. “It gave me exactly what I was wanting to do as a reporter,” Naomi says. “To think more critically about the problems and develop solutions.”

After her studies, she felt pulled back to youth center work and set her sights on multiple nonprofit organizations. She didn’t consider a return to the Al Wooten Center, merely because of how far it was from her home. But, in the midst of her search, she received a call from her aunt. The center’s executive director was leaving, and they needed somebody for the interim. “It was the perfect opportunity,” Naomi says. “I knew everything about the center from my childhood.”

As executive director, Naomi found that the center’s comprehensive after-school and college prep programs the nonprofit offers. Their CollegeTrek and Summer Fun Camp activities are all based on California’s subject requirements for high school graduation and university admissions. Along with homework assistance and tutoring, the center offers world languages and culture, performing and visual arts, and SAT prep workshops. Summer classes have featured aerospace engineering and computer animation with curricula, materials, and instructors provided by NASA and Disney. Over 350 kids, from all over the South LA area, are helped by one or another of their programs annually.

Naomi knows the center is involved in crucial, life-changing work. But she has her own personal ties to the center, too. Alton Wooten Jr., for whom the center is named, was her cousin, killed at random in a drive-by shooting—a gang initiation—in 1989. He was 35. Well loved, he was seen by family and friends as “everybody’s big brother.” The center was born out of his family’s determination to establish something in his life. Naomi says, “We couldn’t let him be just another statistic.”

The late Myrtle Faye Rumph—Al’s mother and Naomi’s aunt—founded the Wooten Center in 1990. To affirm the center’s purpose, hanging in one hallway are quilts made up of panels honoring community members who lost their lives to violence. Al’s panel, made by his mother, is displayed next to too many others. The memonals to the lost next to the college pennants on the walls speak the heart of the center’s mission: education as a life-saving alternative to violence. Naomi herself faced the choice between these diverging paths. In high school she was involved in gangs, selling drugs and running from gunfire. But a combination of her mom pushing her to church and time spent at a local youth center proved a turning point. The church helped change her heart. The center helped her turn straight Fs into straight As, leading to an education that saved her from what would have been a very different life. Of the Wooten Center’s rigorous college prep system and robust educational bent, Naomi explains, “We’re doing the kind of program I needed.”

A PLACE TO GO FOR SOMETHING TO DO

At the Wooten Center in South Los Angeles, Naomi McSwain uses education to help young people thrive

Written by JEROME BLANCO
Photographed by LINDSEY SHEETS
Naomi reflects. “I thought I’d be here for two or three months. I’ve now been here since 2010.”

Naomi has put everything she’s learned into practice. The solutions she craved and wrote about extensively at Fuller came to life in the center’s work. Her graduate thesis, “A Missional Approach to Gang Prevention in Los Angeles,” serves as a framework for much of what the center does. Naomi credits her studies for teaching her the importance of contextualization, which has defined how the center serves its students. “How do you contextualize? Learning about the kids, seeing what they want, and then basing your programs on that,” she says.

“We preach the concept of homework and studies,” she explains. “After the homework is done, it’s time to study!” Study, at the center, means working on individual challenges and sharpening weak areas, or delving into research on whatever subject interests the student. “It’s college prep,” Naomi says. “Learn how to research, to study, to be disciplined.”

The practice has taught kids to use a critical and constructive lens to view their world—to identify problems and create solutions. “A problem the kids identified was junk food,” Naomi says. “Too much McDonald’s, too much Jack in the Box. Their solution was a community garden!” Now they grow lettuce, tomatoes, and kale, right by the basketball courts at the back.

Everything the center does in its after-school program is project based. Instead of math or science lectures, the kids have math and science labs—time to learn through practice. “The kids love it,” Naomi says. She glows while recalling their kids’ success stories. She remembers Juan, who came to the center as a nine-year-old, pants sagging low. “He’d tell everybody, ‘All of my friends are O.G.s’”—shorthand for original gangsters—“and that was all he knew,” she says. “We had to show him something else.” Juan came to the program regularly, and Naomi laughs as she describes the moment he walked into their job fair, years after his first day, transformed: in a tie, vest, and belt, his shirt tucked in. “He’s doing well now,” she says. “He graduated last year.”

Naomi is ready and willing to deal with the more challenging kids too. She thinks of Debra, saying, “she reminds me of the old me—loud, boisterous, obnoxious, rude, belligerent.” Debra did everything she could to get herself kicked out. But it takes “baby steps” to get to...
change, Naomi says. After months of resistance, Debra agreed to fill out a college plan, smiling about the idea of college after the center took her on a tour of UCLA. “I’m always fine with the rambunctious ones,” Naomi says. “I love to talk to those kids because I was that kid.” In her office, she keeps pictures of herself from her gang years. “That’s not you, Miss Naomi!” kids say. But she assures them she’s that girl. “Then I show them my degrees. I say, guess what? You can change too.” Even with the ups and downs, she says, “I can’t think of a kid here—and I hope it never happens—that went bad, or went the other way. They always improve. Of course they’re going to improve if you’re nurturing them. Between education and showing them opportunities, that will change their life. If that’s not ministry, I don’t know what is.”

She remembers a young man she interviewed when she was still a journalist: a gang member who’d survived being shot by an AK-47. “What are your goals and dreams?” she asked him. “I want to be a truck driver,” he told her. “so I can drive far away from here.” “A place to go for something to do,” Naomi says, capturing the spirit of what the center offers kids like this young man, who said he’d joined a gang because he had nothing else to do. “If he’d been in an after-school program,” she says, “maybe he never would’ve gotten into a gang or been shot.” Instead of violence, she says, “We have to give them something else.” Through the Al Wooten Center, Naomi strives to offer that something else day by day. “This is mission work in South Los Angeles,” she says. “It’s saving lives.”

“I’M ALWAYS FINE WITH THE RAMBU NTIOUS ONES. I LOVE TO TALK TO THOSE KIDS BECAUSE I WAS THAT KID.”

+ Learn more about the Wooten Center at www.wootencenter.org/supporters/.
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It all started with the runaways, the kids who ended up on the decidedly unglamorous streets of Hollywood in the late sixties. Jim Oraker (PhD ’70) was training lay counselors at First Presbyterian Church to serve in a coffeehouse ministry called the Salt Company, and in the “crash houses” that offered teenagers and young adults a brief respite from a broken life. “I kept being drawn to the street,” he says, “I wasn’t drawn to the pulpit, but I was drawn to the people.” He saw the possibility within these at-risk adolescents and, he says, “I got hooked.”

He trained the church workers to listen to young people, to be empathetic, warm, and genuine. “I saw the importance of that,” Jim says, “and I said, ‘That’s what I want to do.’” He dreamed of creating a live-in setting where young people could experience the healing power of Christian community. After receiving his MDiv and then a PhD in clinical psychology from Fuller, he had his chance to make his dream a reality. In 1972, Jim joined his friend George Sheffer III and his father, George Sheffer Jr., when they founded the Dale House Project, a residential treatment center for troubled young people, in Colorado Springs. Jim served as the training director, and today, as an “almost retired” psychologist, he still serves on the project’s board of directors. “I think we’ve all been amazed at how effective it’s been,” Jim says, “and it’s still going strong.”

Dale House, which received its initial funding from a Lilly Foundation grant, began under the auspices of Young Life, the parachurch ministry where Jim had been on staff as an undergraduate. It is now a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, named for the
downtown street where the facilities are located. “We didn’t want any fancy psychological names,” Jim says. “All of our kids have grown up in such a way where neglect, abuse, and trauma have just been a part of their lives,” says Ted Woodard, executive director of Dale House. “Year after year after year, and kid after kid after kid, it’s just unbelievable the stories of what our kids have suffered, what they’ve been through, what they’ve really had to do to survive.” He notes that although they have been victims, they also have had victims. “Our kids have committed so many crimes,” he says. “Every kid that’s here at this particular point in time is either here for assault, burglary, or robbery.” It’s normal for the Dale House residents to have grand theft auto, carjacking, home burglaries, or shootings on their records, says Ted.

They stay, on average, from five to ten months. During that time, some complete a GED or take classes at the local high school, community college, or vocational school. Others work at off-site jobs, or in the Dale House urban garden. They develop skills in banking, budgeting, grocery shopping, and cooking. Just as important, the residents build relationships with their peers and with the live-in staff.

“Relationship is the key to intervention—that’s the psychology word—for young people who are lost,” Jim says. “It has a pretty solid theological basis, but also a psychological basis.”

This model uses an integrative approach drawn from Jim’s studies at Fuller, influenced by family systems theory, Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book Life Together, and what Jim describes as a “theology of a second chance.” Dale House offers a form of community that the young people may never have experienced. “On a daily basis, they’ll see trust. They’ll see compassion,” he says. And they’ll also experience accountability. When a problem arises, the staff will lovingly say, “We need to talk about this.”

Ted, the executive director, tells the story of a young man whose relapse into drug use meant he had to leave Dale House. When Ted and another staff member picked the young man up at his workplace to take him back to jail, they allowed him to explain the situation to his boss, giving him the dignity of leaving his job well—something he had never done before. After finishing his jail time, he returned to Dale House, and left with his court-ordered restitution paid, $2,000 saved, and his relationship with his mom restored.

This same ethos of communal accountability infuses the way the Dale House staff and the board operate. “We have times of training, times of sharing, and times
for confronting,” Jim says. “In the tough times, we try to handle it as a family.”

The staff, known as primary care workers, are recent college graduates who serve for a year as they prepare for careers in such fields as chaplaincy, social work, and education. Many have gone on to study at Fuller through a partnership arrangement with the seminary: “What I wanted to do was train counselors who would live in this setting and become role models,” Jim says, “but also who were clinically trained and theologically sound. What I really enjoy is the people who come and are being trained by us to go out and do likewise.”

The staff work with referring agencies, teachers, probation officers, and court-appointed guardians. But they are also responsible for leading devotionals, speaking at the Sunday “family night,” and modeling Christlike behavior. “We’re talking about incarnational ministry,” Jim explains. “We use it in action, not only in theological language.”

That ministry also involves caring for the staff, who can feel overwhelmed by the stress of dealing with behavioral challenges, and the long shifts required for supervising their assigned residents 24 hours a day. If they need extra time off or counseling, they get it, Jim says.

Initially, Dale House dealt mostly with drug issues, but as the culture has changed, the severity of the problems has increased dramatically. A few years ago, shots were fired into the facility in a drive-by incident. The executive director eventually learned the identity of the shooter, and reached out to him while he was in custody. “It’s gone from light street work to very serious social work” involving young people coming out of incarceration, Jim says. Some have been involved with gangs. Most are referred by the Department of Human Services and the Division of Youth Services, which provides for the care of youths committed by the courts. But the intense issues they bring haven’t diminished his empathy for them.

The problems of abuse, neglect, and trauma aren’t new. “It’s always been difficult for some kids growing up,” Jim says. But now, “from junior high on up, it has become much more pressure packed.” Technology often exacerbates the problems. Kids who lack strong family support become attracted to unhealthy relationships, as they always have. Now, Jim notes, computers and smartphones have given young people easy access to a dark and destructive side of the culture, including increasingly violent content. Bullying, both online and in person, has intensified. “It’s pretty difficult for kids to even believe they’re likeable,” Jim says. But the Dale House team has a different perception: “We see them as young people who were given to us by God.”

The concept of relational healing has informed other aspects of Jim’s work and personal life. He developed and served as cochair of the Colorado Psychological Association’s Colleague Assistance Program (CAP), designed to support psychologists in distress as the result of personal, financial, or professional problems, such as a client filing a complaint with the state licensing board. He also chaired the American Psychological Association’s Advisory Committee on Colleague Assistance. Even in that context, he focused on providing good relational care as well as good advice. He described the beginning of the consultation process in a 2007 interview with the APA Monitor on Psychology: “Oftentimes, we’ll meet in a coffee shop and just start talking. The first interview is to kind of quell their fears and assure them we have people who will stick with them,” he says.

He and his wife have belonged to one small group or another since their days in Pasadena, and he’s a big supporter of the small group model that many churches have adopted to encourage members to care for one another. He also meets with six of his former Fuller classmates every July in Southern California. They began calling themselves “the bucket boys” after one of them described the annual reunions as one of his “bucket list” items.

Jim’s heart, though, still reserves a special place for lost and discarded young people, just as it did more than four decades ago. There have been success stories, like the Dale House alumnus who became a successful businessman, and now hosts a barbecue for the staff and residents each year. But, Jim adds, “There have also been losses.”

One of his great joys is to see individual lives transformed as the community bears witness to the healing power of the gospel. Such change, he says, “is the movement of the Spirit.”

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Dejando de alejarnos y comenzando a sufrir con los demás

por Cynthia Eriksson

Todos estamos llamados a estar presentes en el sufrimiento. Pre-
compañerismo de triunfo, mientras que es más difícil tragar un testimonio de dolor, sólo después de que haya llegado el rescate. Valoramos el testimonio de triunfo, pero es más difícil echar a un lado un testimonio de negación, confusión, pérdida, decepción e odio hacia Dios.

El sufrimiento con los demás tiene muchas posturas. Puede ser un compromiso de hacer el viaje junto. Jude Tiersma Watson y Chris Albisurez describen el don de la transmutación mutua que fue posible por el invencible intercambio de historias dolorosas y de trauma. Mary Glenn describe sobre el deseo único de caminar con quienes experimentan el dolor del suicidio.

El sufrimiento con los demás también puede ser un liderazgo honesto que modelo el dolor y la incertidumbre. Como Eun Ah Cho nos dice, no servimos a nuestra comunidad ni a Cristo cuando mantenemos a otros alejados de nuestro sufrimiento.

Sarah Ashley Hill describe la importancia de mostrar el desorde-
nado viaje del dolor, en particular para los líderes en lugares donde el trauma está incrustado en la vida diaria. Ed Willmington, a su vez, nos llama a sufrir con aquellos que están sufriendo por el bien del evangelio.

¿Cómo caminamos en presencia de verdadera alegría y verdadero dolor? Daniel Lee nos recuerda que debemos sufrir abiertamente con Dios, con lamento e imprecación. Alexa Salvatierra examina la visión latinoaamericana del sufrimiento, ofreciendo una per-
spectiva del sufrimiento redentor que conduce a la liberación. Nos anima a considerar la disciplina de hacer espacio para la obra transformadora de Cristo en nuestras vidas propias, incluso cuando abrimos nuestros corazones para sostener, sentirl y digerir el dolor de los demás.

La esperanza. Es en el vivir y el sufrir con los demás con que se crean, "sabemos que el sufrimiento produce paciencia, y la paciencia produce carácter, y el carácter produce esperanza" (Rom 5:3-4).

La esperanza no se retira. ¡Permánese!
SUFFERING WITH: A TENDER JOURNEY OF MUTUALITY IN SUFFERING, COMFORT, AND JOY

Cynthia Eriksson

We tend to “tenderly.” That was the prompting I felt from God as I prayed for the untimely time for guidance on how to write this article. I heard it in my heart: “Tenderly.”

Friends, this is a challenging journey.

The call to “suffer with” in the role of pastor, therapist, counselor, or chaplain—ones that holds great joy and great sorrow. You have seen the best and the worst of people.

You can’t unsee the stories that you have heard. You cannot un-know the types of evil and abuse that have been perpetrated on people dear to you. You cannot un-see the images of destruction, violence, or mutilation that have been in your gaze. You hold the reality of human life and human pain in your heart.

Depending upon your cultural and social location, the reality of evil and pain may be a challenge in different ways. If you have lived in relative privilege (as I have), you may have insulated yourself from an awareness of vulnerability or threat. Hearing the stories and seeing the pain dismantles that defense. If you are part of a community facing ongoing violence, attending to the needs of your people is a daily task. Taking the time to consider your own pain, or the cumulative impact of so many stories may feel impossible. Navigating the space of suffering and trauma as a Christian leader in your community—shepherding and teaching, counseling and comforting, celebrating and praising—can be exhausting.

Our theologies may even contribute to the vulnerability with which we approach suffering. In the human desire to avoid pain, we may create theologies that suggest that God does not want us to feel pain. How did my Protestant, white, middle-class church upbringing teach me that God wanted me to feel good? When did suffering and pain become something that indicated a lack of God’s presence—or a lack of God’s strength?

The reality is that being human brings suffering. Caring for one’s fellow humans is painful.

THE COST OF SUFFERING WITH

Henri Nouwen challenges readers to count that cost in his small but powerful book Cen: You Drink the Cup. 1 When James and John, the sons of Zebedee, pressed Jesus with their desire for a position of privilege and attention, Jesus asks them, “Can you drink the cup?” (Matt 20:22). Nouwen writes, “Jesus is the cup of sorrow, not just his own sorrow, but the sorrow of the whole human race. It is a cup filled with physical, mental, and spiritual anguish.” Nouwen invites the reader to reflect on the actions this question implies: “hungering, thirsting, and drinking the cup in its fullness of joy and suffering. This is not only the suffering that we ourselves face, this is the capacity to drink the suffering of others—to suffer with.

“Drinking the cup” in ministry brings us face to face with stories of unexpected tragedy, human betrayal, abuse, and evil. Hearing the details and caring for the story-tellers makes the cup of sorrow personal and deeply painful. Psychologists have noted the extent of foundational health, and we start to tell ourselves stories about the need for protection, control, or distance.

Physically, our bodies respond to the sense of threat. Our sleep can be disrupted with night-mares, or we can find ourselves easily irritated and jumpy. We may feel especially evoked or worn out. We might also notice that we avoid people, places, or things that remind us of the tragedies. Ultimately, we might try to avoid the feelings by disconnecting from others or numbing out with overwork, food, the internet, or other substances. Trauma specialists have identified this phenomenon as “indirect trauma,” “vicarious trauma,” or “secondary traumatic stress.”

Suffering with can break your heart.

THE SKILLS OF SUFFERING WITH

It is tempting to create a type of wall around our hearts that allows us to hear the story but not feel the feeling. If caring about someone else’s life is what opens us up to this pain and vulnerability, then perhaps finding a way to listen—but not to care—is the antithesis?

The divine answer to that question is, “No!” Just as Jesus “moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:11, The Message), we are called to “move in” towards the pain. Further, connecting deeply with someone in the midst of suffering can actually become a means of protection against vicarious traumatization.

Trauma clinicians and researchers suggest that the openness to feeling pain is an important part of working through vicarious trauma. Many of us who have written about resilience have emphasized the things that counselors or pastors can do outside of work time. Good self-care practices, such as healthy eating and exercise habits, and supportive supervisory and peer relationships are an essential part of reducing burnout at work. 2 This foundational health is important, as there is evidence that experiencing burnout can make us even more at risk of developing secondary or vicarious trauma symptoms. However, in addition to these life balance and health choices, there are important emotional and cognitive skills that contribute to resilience in drawing toward connection with others.

Brian Miller and Ginny Sprang call moving toward the pain a “radical empathy,” which is a genuine empathy that draws us to engage again and again, not as a safe haven but as the surface. 3 The skill needed in this moment is attention to our own feelings as we are processing “victims’ pain.” The skill needed is to “move in” rather than to disconnect and stay at the surface. 4 The skill needed in this moment is attention to our own feelings as we are processing “victims’ pain.” The skill needed is to “move in” rather than to disconnect and stay at the surface. 4

To combat rumination, we need to first pay attention and acknowledge when this is happening. Recognize that thinking again and again about a situation is not the same as problem solving/ruminating actually reduces our ability to problem solve. Then, a key step in moving the ruminative process to move from passive to active. Capture those wondering thoughts and shift them to active and specific thoughts. What can you do in that moment? It may be an act of advocacy or providing resources. Or, it may be an intentional choice to properly fill the situation.
As you reflect on the skills and resources you have discovered to call the call of suffering with, ask yourself those questions: 

- What rhythms of rest and work have you found to sustain yourself?
- What spiritual practices have you adopted to root your very self into the foundation of Christ’s love?
- What friends and colleagues have opened their hearts and ears to your cries of lament and doubt?
- What resources have you discovered that name the pain in language that helps you know you are not crazy?
- What habits do you have to draw you out of rumination?
- Now ask yourself, am I practicing these?

These are not simply questions; they are lifelines.

THE JOY OF SUFFERING WITH

The extraordinary promise in answering the call to “drink the cup” is that it is a cup of both suffering and joy. That is the paradox: in feeling the pain, joining the suffering, or “drinking the cup,” we find comfort and joy. Nouwen writes, 

In the midst of the sorrows is consolation, in the midst of the darkness is light, in the midst of the despair is hope, in the midst of Babylon is a glimpse of Jerusalem, and in the midst of the army of demons is the consoling angel. The cup of sorrows, inconceivable as it seems, is also the cup of joy. Only when we discover this in our own life can we consider drinking it.14

The intermingling of suffering and joy is cultivated in the opportunity for mutual comfort and healing. As Paul writes to the Corinthians, 

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.15

The extraordinary promise in answering the call to “drink the cup” is that it is a cup of comfort as though it meant “comforting of the joyful, comforting of the suffering.” The cup of sorrow, inconceivable as it seems, is also the cup of joy. Only when we discover this in our own life can we consider drinking it.14

ENDNOTES


3. Ibid., 35.

4. J. Herman, Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror (New York: BasicBooks, 1992), 140.


11. Ibid., 153.

12. Ibid., 157.

13. Ibid.

14. Nouwen, Can You Drink the Cup, 43.


16. On October 30, 2018, at the Fuller School of Psychology Panel on Black Psychology, Thema Bryant Davis noted the ways that White Western psychology focuses on coping with symptoms of trauma, rather than creating change. See also T. Bryant Davis, Thriving in the Wake of Trauma: A Multicultural Guide (Grand Rapids, CT: Poiema, 2005).
RESPONDING TO SUICIDE WITH THE MINISTRY OF GOD’S PRESENCE

Mary Glenn, an educator, chaplain, and bridge builder, is an affiliate professor in urban studies at Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies and also teaches at other graduate schools. She has been a law enforcement chaplain since 2001, currently serving with the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office, and is a licensed chaplain trainer as well as an ordained pastor with over 20 years of experience. Glenn regularly leads urban immersion and downtown city walks in Los Angeles and is the co-president of Cities Together, a faith-based nonprofit organization that resources leaders as they seek God’s peace in their cities.

One of the student’s teachers stated, “There is nothing you can say that will convince me that it isn’t my fault. I missed the signs. I could have stopped it.” I felt the weight of those words and wanted to relieve this teacher of that sadness and guilt. Yet what someone feels in that moment is real—as real as it can get. I cannot talk someone out of feeling regret for what they could have done, but what I can do is listen with care, offer compassion, and help people understand the dynamics of suicide. My chaplain partner and I sat down and talked through the news of a young man’s death to his family. He had, tragically, jumped off the roof of the local movie theater’s parking structure. My chaplain partner and I arrived at the family home to deliver the news of their son’s death, they were distraught. As chaplains, we provided presence, care, and resources. Since neither I nor my chaplain partner spoke Cantonese, we connected them with the local Chinese funeral home. These “care-givers” helped them culturally process the death and accompanying issues such as shame and grief. There are different types of responses such as this one can give and roles we can play as care-givers, walking with others through their pain and loss.

Care-givers can provide space for the multitude of feelings that result from a suicide. When individuals commit suicide, the community may ask the “why” questions. Why? What did this happen? Why couldn’t I stop it? Why didn’t I see the signs?” As care-givers, we can remind people that suicide is one person’s decision. Family and friends may feel responsible and blame themselves, and at the same time feel that this person did not give them a chance to help.

Anger is part of the grief process and a normal reaction to suicide. There may have been signs of distress before the suicide; however, it is almost impossible to know exactly what a person is thinking unless they are fully open about those thoughts. One person’s suffering, sadness, and decisions have repercussions that reach deeply into the community. Neither the “what if” nor the “why” questions will bring the person back. It is important, however, that such person have the opportunity to be honest about their feelings stemming from the loss of their loved one and the decision that loved one made to die.

Everyone grieves differently. Grief can be shaped by one’s family of origin, experiences, culture, ethnicity, community, and personality. It is important to be sensitive to how others grieve, not comparing their process to one’s own. People need space and time to mourn. Funerals and other rituals help people share their grief and collectively remember their loved one. Yet the public nature of these services might be difficult and complicated in the case of a suicide, with the complexity of pain and uncertainty that loved ones may feel.

From Suicide Completion to Suicide Prevention

In the aftermath of death by suicide, friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors can be left confused and sad. We can help people work through their emotions by acknowledging what happened, asking about their feelings, and being open to hearing the variety of memories they might share with us of the person.

As we walk with people in the aftermath of suicide, they may long to return to the days of old, before their loss. We can encourage them to gradually move into their new normal and find ways to keep taking steps forward in the midst of their loss. Yet recovering from losing a loved one takes time, and there is no guarantee that the survivor will be stronger after this, nor that full healing will be the outcome.

A few years ago I responded as the police chaplain to the suicide of a popular, beloved, 16-year-old African American student. His mother had committed suicide five years before him. He was involved in sports and school clubs and was loved by both students and teachers. I led debriefs for teachers, students, friends, and family. The memorial service drew almost 1,000 people from the community. As chaplains responding to the crisis, we worked in partnership with school staff, parents, crisis counselors, and others. Three police chaplains, including myself, from two different agencies conducted his memorial. His death provided an opportunity for us to educate people about suicide prevention.

During the service, we spoke from John 12:23, “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” We handed out stalks of wheat and encouraged everyone present to live to their lives to the fullest. The memory of this young man now lives in us. We encouraged them to tell others that they care for them and to reach out to those who may feel hopeless.

When the seeds die, hope, life, and purpose can result. Grieving and remembering together is an important step in the healing process. Life can come from loss, and death and pain can be redeemed.

MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

Care-givers walk with others through their suffering and can provide safe places for them to be heard, known, and loved. In my early years, my grandmother played a key role in my life. No matter the pain in the world or in our family, she communicated safety and value through words, prayer, and presence, which I carry with me today as an adult. This ministry of presence—“being with”—is foundational to my role as a law enforcement chaplain. The love and presence of God are embodied as we spend time with the other person in their moment of crisis and time of suffering.

A ministry of presence can bring comfort and express care without words. This sacramental presence encompasses physical, emotional, and spiritual care. It is a revelation of Jesus’s care and compassion through listening and being with. During the baptism of Jesus, the Father speaks affirmation and value over the child. This ministry of presence operates with the same tenor of care and compassion. It is the compassionate presence of God that is the deepest and most abiding presence we know. It is what sustains us as we carry the weight of care and compassion without words.
Beloved Son, with him I am well pleased.”

A ministry of presence communicates the beloved value of God over each person no matter where they are in the faith journey. One of the most important things we can say and do to help someone feel safe and secure is to remind them of their core identity as God’s beloved son or daughter.

BE A VOICE OF HOPE
As we walk with individuals through their grief, we can speak of God’s hope and future in their lives as a first step in helping them work through pain. A ministry of presence gives space for their pain without promising that everything will be okay. From my training in suicide intervention, response, and prevention, here are a few examples of things we can say so that our ministry of presence brings hope rather than harm:

“I am so sorry that you are going through this. I am here with you now; you are not alone.”

Beloved Son, with him I am well pleased.”

Below are some guidelines that will help us as we walk with others who are grieving the loss of their loved one:

1. OFFER A MINISTRY OF PRESENCE. We can embody the peace and presence of God by being present with others, sitting with people in the midst of their pain, creating safe places for others.

2. DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK THE QUESTION, are you okay?

3. IT’S NOT OKAY, but it won’t always be this way. Cliches we use with others can bring more pain. The fact that this individual, alas in pain and took his or her life changes the loved one’s life forever. Yet things won’t always be this way. Eventually loved ones begin to rebuild life after loss.

4. RECOGNIZE GUILT, SHAME, AND ANGER. As we care for people, they may feel like they could have done something. Going down that road won’t bring them back. The person made a decision and took their own life. The emotions people feel are real, and we need to create healthy space for feelings such as guilt, shame, anger, and sadness to be expressed. Be aware that some cultures practice within an honor and shame construct.

5. HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF THE DEATH IMPRINT. When people see or experience something traumatic, the brain takes a picture of what has been seen or what can be imagined. That death imprint lingers. Smells, sights, and sounds might cause the memory and pain from that event to be recalled. Be patient and sensitive with others when this happens and prepare them for this experience.

6. WALK WITH THROUGH THE MULTI-FACETED REALITY OF GRIEF. This includes helping others assess their process in dealing with loss and death and engaging in self-care practices. Recommend articles and books on loss and grief.

7. AS A CARE PROVIDER, BE AWARE OF AND WALK THROUGH YOUR OWN GRIEF. Care-givers also need to process their grief and engage in self-care. Walking with others through their grief can result in compassion fatigue for the care-giver.

8. BEGIN BUILDING OR STRENGTHENING A PARTNERSHIP OF LOCAL CARE-GIVERS (e.g., mental health professionals, grief counselors) who can help alter tragedies like suicide. Working collaboratively requires ongoing communi- cation before the crisis. This partnership will provide support and care for care-giv- ers and those who have lost loved ones.

9. REMIND OTHERS THAT GOD IS WITH THEM. In the midst of the loss and pain, we must remember and remind those we are caring for that God is always with us. Psalm 31:7 says, “You are my hiding place; you shall preserve me from trouble; you shall surround me with songs of deliverance.”

10. SPEAK OF GOD’S HOPE! Even when hope is elusive, it is there and encourages others—and us—to see what is ahead.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Albert Y. Hsu, Grieving a Suicide: A Loved One’s Search for Comfort, Answers, and Hope
C. S. Lewis, A Grief Observed
New Hope Grief Support Community: www.newhopegrief.org
Jerry Sitter, A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss

This article is adapted with permission from a two-part series previously published on the FullerTheologicalSeminary blog “In the Aftermath of Suicide: Helping Communities Heal” and “In the Aftermath of Teen Suicide: Working Through Grief,” or visit the post “Ministry of Presence.” Find all at fullerlibraryinstute.org/articles.

ENDNOTES

3. In some cultures, identity to community and tradition can be valued above individual feelings. Anthropologist Ruth Benedict says that a gift culture, you know you are good or bad by what your conscience tells, but in a shame culture, you know you are good or bad by what your community says and whether it honors or scorns you. A guilt culture is driven by the individual, and a shame culture is driven by the community. See J. Fish, “Guilt and Shame,” Psychology Today blog post, September 20, 2010; www.psychologytoday.com.

SUGGESTED READING
Mary Glenn
Being aware of the risk factors and indicators for suicide can help us come alongside those who might consider taking their own lives. Potential risk factors include drug or alcohol abuse, isolation, family changes, a family history of suicide, experiences of loss, neglect, or abuse, incarceration, and exposure to trauma. Indicators to watch for in friends or loved ones are behavioral changes, feelings of hopelessness, a lack of value or purpose—and, most seriously, an expressed struggle with suicidal thoughts or development of a suicidal plan. If someone asks you to keep a secret about his or her contemplation of suicide, that is a promise you can neither make nor keep.

Here are some things we can do to help individuals dealing with depression and suicidal thoughts: be present, be calm and safe, actively listen, ask questions, don’t judge, accept their feelings, be compassionate, educate and remind, reframe, remind them of your care for them, reassure them that there is help, and develop a plan with them to get help (e.g., connect them with other resources; go with them to meet with a counselor). A person contemplating suicide may feel lost, overwhelmed, hurt, confused, alone, and disconnected. All people need help for attachment, affirmation, and a sense that their lives matter. Do not commit to walk with them and remind them they are not alone.

When faced with disappointment and rejection, feelings may deceive people into believing things are worse than they really are and may convince people that there is no hope. Suicide becomes a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Sometimes the best thing we can do—and perhaps the most consistent support we can offer—is to give people an anchor of hope as we wait.

RESOURCES
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org
Ask Suicide Screening Questions Toolkit: www.cdc.gov/sgen/ask-suicide/ ssg-toolkit-materials
Karen Mason, Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors (Shamrock Grives, L, InterVarsity Press, 2014)
고독한 고난의 우월감에서 더불어 고난의 접손함으로
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신약 성경 역시 그리스도를 위해 서로 시와 울고 웃으며 동역합니다. 앞에서나 뒤에서나 함께 기뻐하며 고난에 동참하는 하나님의 백성들이 각자 자신의 고난을 이겨나가고자 하는

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한의 교회

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HAN AND SAKIM

Most generally speaking, Han is a concept of suffering. It is a “deep sense of suffering that is usually accompanied by anger.”1 It is “unresolved emotions” that result from “psychosomatic, interpersonal, social, political, economic, and cultural oppression and repression.”2 It has long been interpreted as an example of internalized Korean history,3 “embedded down at the bottom of the unconscious”4 of its people. Such Han, built on suffering alone. Second, it is to encourage it to grow outwardly offensive. One of the most extreme examples can come in the form of retaliatory crime.

It is with those definitions and implications of Han that I proceed to ask the following question: Is Han a uniquely Korean concept and experience? Though many believe it to be, I would argue otherwise.

Han has been characterized as a collective emotion that runs in the blood of Koreans. It is a “deep sense of suffering” found in Korean art, thus using it to distinguish and define with its rich vocabulary. Such Han, built on suffering alone. It is a “deep sense of suffering” found in Korean art, thus using it to distinguish and define with its rich vocabulary. Such Han, built on suffering alone. Second, it is to encourage it to grow outwardly offensive. One of the most extreme examples can come in the form of retaliatory crime.

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Deeply marked by its history of persecution, the Korean church has undergone not only the exclusive belief in the cross and the suffering of Christ for redemption but also the inevitable losses from the own Christian life experience of suffering. The characteristic response of Korean Christians to suffering alone, apart from the body of Christ, the tendency of pride also increases, and with Christ, and suffering together with one another within the larger body of Christ. Suffering reveals who we really are. Inviting others to come and help us when we suffer, therefore, requires humility. Humility needs to be learned and it cannot be learned in isolation. For one to overcome hubris, he or she needs to be connected to others. For all, one cannot be humble when standing alone. We need another one to be humble and experience what it takes. To be humble takes courage, courage to become vulnerable and be seen as vulnerable. Similarly, trust needs to be learned and it cannot be learned in isolation. For one to overcome distrust, he or she needs to be in relationships. After all, one cannot know what trust is and what it takes when standing alone. The relational realities of the life of the people of God should be restored within the Korean church in both seasons of joy and suffering. They should be challenged and supported to “approach the throne of grace with confidence” so that they may find grace as they approach God who sees, hears, and suffers with us but also have another one. We not only have the Spirit who helps us in our weaknesses (Rom 8:28), but also have another one to carry our burdens (Gal 6:2) and help us find grace (Heb 4:16).

It is always heartbreaking to see leaders, though called to share God’s grace, manage to live a life in superficial relationships. They may teach others about suffering in Christ while dealing with unresolved questions and issues on their own. The Korean church model how God’s people in suffering together for Christ’s sake. More than anyone else, we see strong mutual relationships built between Paul and so many of his brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul did not work alone, rejoice alone, or suffer alone. Instead, he invited others to be part of what he was going through as he participated in Christ’s suffering. Humbly and truthfully. Paul urged his brothers and sisters in Christ to join him in his struggles (Rom 15:30).

We are God’s people called to a life of reciprocity. There are many “one another” commands found in the New Testament. We are commanded to love (John 13:34), receive (Rom 15:7), greet (1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 12:15; Ps 145:14), submit to (Eph 5:21–24), forbear (Eph 4:28–33), forgive (Eph 4:32; Col 3:12–13), and confess our sins to (1 John 1:9) one another. We are also called to build up (Rom 12:20–21; 2 Thess 3:13), teach (Col 3:28), exhort (Eph 4:29), correct (Eph 5:15), comfort (Rom 12:15), imitate (Rom 12:12), give (Rom 12:13), do good (Rom 12:15), and pray for one another (Rom 15:6). We are also commanded not to judge (Rom 14:1), speak evil of (Rom 14:11), murmur (Rom 15:19), and speak evil of (Rom 14:11), murmur against (Eph 5:14), hate and devour (Gal 5:21), provoke (Gal 5:21), stop (Gal 5:23), and forgive (Col 3:3) one another.

Towards a Life of Reciprocity in Humility In Scripture, we see the people of God in relationships in both times of joy and suffering. In the Old Testament, for instance, we see Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Joshua both rejoice and suffer together apart from the leadership. As a result, they were able to survive in the desert. Joshua and Eleazar also rejoice and suffer together as they conquer the land and distribute it among the tribes. Though for a relatively short time, Mordecai and Esther also rejoice and suffer together to preserve the Jewish people. Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua, and Zerubbabel, together, informally and formally, with both tears and laughter to rebuild the temple of God. Also, we see Nehemiah and Ezra rejoice and suffer together to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem.

The Korean church needs to restore humility and trust. In humility and trust, it needs to be helped in its own suffering. It needs to listen and respond to Jesus, who calls us “out of estrangement and into a redemptive relationship.” Korean Christians need to realize that we are not called to be solitary Christians in suffering. After all, it is impossible to come to Christ without coming into the fellowship of his body. We have not only the hearer who sees, hears, and suffers with us but also have another one. We not only have the Spirit who helps us in our weakness (Rom 8:28), but also have another one to carry our burdens (Gal 6:2) and help us find grace (Heb 4:16).

CONCLUSION The Korean church has been faithful in confessing suffering in rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26). However, under the influence of Han and Sakim, Korean Christians in general—and leaders in particular—seem to have become accustomed to suffering alone, isolated from the rest of the body of Christ due to their pride, reluctance to acknowledge their need, and lack of vulnerability. This may begin with good intentions of not wanting to burden others. However, it can grow to be a blinding spot that eventually leads to “priding suffering alone.” Voluntarily choosing to suffer alone may not necessarily begin with an intention to become self-centered or self-seeking. Nonetheless, if one continues to fail to concede the need to be helped, one can grow self-confident and self-glorying.

It is my earnest prayer that more and more Korean Christians and church leaders will move from taking pride in suffering alone toward humbly allowing others to suffer with them. Sincere hope is that the Korean church model how God’s people in suffering can help and be helped in vulnerability to find grace as they participate in Christ’s suffering in and for the world. 

ENDNOTES
2. Ibid., 197, 200–202.
I first moved into a vibrant yet struggling immigrant neighborhood in central Los Angeles in 1988, responding to an invitation to join God in a forgotten corner of LA. The neighborhood was then only known, if at all, through media images of gangs, drugs, and violence.

The sights, sounds, and smells of this new place—tao-trucks, vendors selling date or corn on the cob, and a courtyard where kids played together while moms laughed and chatted—drew me in. It was only as I lived here longer and began to put down roots that the stories of struggle and pain began to emerge—stories of personal and family pain, but also of the need to flee homelands where violence threatened the lives of children and adults. I had not known what to expect, and was surprised by my neighbors’ gracious welcome and, over time, the deep ways my own life and faith would be shaped and transformed through sharing life together in our neighborhood.

A few years into this journey, Roxana, one of the girls I was mentoring and who had her own life of struggle, introduced me to Chris Albisuarez. Recently arrived from Central America, having fled north when he feared for his life, Chris was lost, lonely, and desperate. He wandered the streets of LA on a skateboard, writing his name on walls or finding relief on the streets of LA; a lot of people were dying. So it was just a critical time for me to either leave or die on the streets. I thought that I found someone that I could trust and that would listen to me. I remember she would say, “Do you mind if I pray for you?” at the end, and it was kind of interesting and weird for me. I never had that happen in my life, but I think I felt it happen and I didn’t realize until now that it was God at work at that time in my life.

Jude: One of the things that was striking was how your posture actually changed. I remember meeting you at a Carl’s Jr. You were sitting there with us and between us in the sharing.

Chris: Right. There’s shame. You know when pain happens to you there’s a certain amount of shame and like nobody cares. I’d carried that for almost 20 years in my life and nobody had ever said, “Let’s talk about this.”

Jude: I felt really honored that someone would share their story with me. It also felt like a risk. Chris started getting in touch with his anger, completely understandable anger. Rage, really, about the things that happened to him. I remember asking God, “Did I just choose this man to visit him in prison for the rest of my life?” I remember feeling like I could have been killed in the streets, or he could have done something to someone and regretted it his whole life. He had that much rage.

It was never a question for me, but an awareness I lived with. . . . Now we can look back on those years: we talk about the past times and how we have the kids, but at that time it was hard.

Chris: It was; I remember talking into the honeymoon period. But I remember picking up a newspaper and reading about this young girl. I think she was three or four years old, in New York, and apparently her mother had put her in a closet and she died from starvation. And the article was very explicit on the things that she went through. I read it, and all of a sudden it hit me. A lot of that stuff happened to me when I was a kid. There were times where we didn’t eat for days. I was talking to my father about 10 years ago. I asked him how he felt about me. . . . I remember he would say, “I was an alcoholic at the time. We were hungry that evening when the earthquake happened in 1976, and both of my brothers died hungry.”

I began to wonder, “Where is God in all of this?” And so that threw me off. I got angry at God. I was just like, “Where were you when my grandmother tried to kill me?” She was a Christian for many years and I was confused. I lost my sense of love that day ‘cause it was just too traumatic. I’m not going to get into the details, but it was very, very hard. And so I remember that I went and questioned a lot of things about God and the goodness of the Cross and the Resurrection, everything.

You’re given this faith, like an egg, and it crumbles in the hardship of life. You’re brought up to think one way, and then it crumbles. And do you have it left? Do you have it? But you know, John and Jude were patient with me, and I asked John so many questions and he just said, “I don’t have the answers for that.”

It was a struggle and it’s still a struggle of faith, but I do believe that God is good. God is a merciful God, and he is in the suffering.

I came to see that suffering, our own and others’, is the cost of love. I had moved into a neighborhood as a neighbor; we were called to love our neighbors. I came to see that the call to love your neighbor is also a call to suffer together. When we love deeply, we

Chris Albisuarez immigrated to the United States from Guatemala as a teenager. His parents died in an earthquake. He is married to Roxy and be a key element in the healing of his pain. His reconciliation with God has led him on a long healing journey and he has lived and worked in the MacArthur neighborhood of central Los Angeles for almost 20 years. His neighborhood was then only known, if at all, through media images of gangs, drugs, and violence.

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THE HOLY, EXQUISITE MUTUALITY OF SHARING SUFFERING AND JOY WITH OTHERS

Jude Tierena Watson with Chris Albisuarez

We could not have imagined 25 years ago the deep sense of bonding and belonging we would come to share, the exquisite mutuality of the relationships among all of us, including me and Roxy. Chris and Roxy have now three beautiful children that call me Oma. But at that time, it felt like a great risk into a deep unknown, with no certain place where the journey would lead. Recently Chris and I reflected back on those years.

Jude: Meeting Chris led to a pretty big faith crisis. At the beginning, he was really grateful to God because God rescued him, but I would listen to Chris and go home and wrestle. I learned to pray in much deeper ways than I ever had. I grew up in an immigrant family, and we had our own issues as a Dutch immigrant family. But this changed over the years, but one thing has never changed in my life is on my father and mom in my life.

I had more of a resurrection theology, celebrating the new life that flows from the Resurrection, and less about Holy Week and the suffering of Good Friday. I had to grow deeper in understanding the birth of Jesus, that Jesus walked with us, he suffered for us, and then comes the power of the Resurrection. That entire narrative became much more a part of my life after I moved into the neighborhood.

Chris: At the beginning, it was like I just got to marry God and I went into the honeymoon period. But then I remember picking up a news magazine and reading about this young girl. I think she was three or four years old, in New York, and apparently her mother had put her in a closet and she died from starvation. And the article was very explicit on the things that she went through. I read it, and all of a sudden it hit me. A lot of that stuff happened to me when I was a kid. There were times where we didn’t eat for days. I was talking to my father about 10 years ago. I asked him how he felt about me. . . . I remember he would say, “I was an alcoholic at the time. We were hungry that evening when the earthquake happened in 1976, and both of my brothers died hungry.”

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THEOLOGY

Chris Albisuarez

Jude Tierena Watson

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We shared life and meals together. My while I was drowning in my struggle to. During this season, my comfort also came will suffer deeply as well. And the joys that was mentoring started asking if I believed will come are also deeper.

Suffering draws us closer to God. This is the mystery of Philippians 3:10, the fellowship of sharing in the suffering of Jesus. This fellowship of sharing in suffering goes beyond personal tragedy. When we allow ourselves to walk with others, this gives a face to larger systemic injustices that exist everywhere in our world.

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL PRACTICES FOR A LIVED THEOLOGY
While I was drowning in my struggle to see God and trust God’s goodness, several things sustained me. First was the community I was in, both my InnerChange team and my neighbors. I was not alone but on a journey with others. My team was gratefully a praying team, and we sought God together with and for our neighborhood. We shared life and meals together. My neighbors demonstrated for me that joy and sorrow mingle together in this world. Life is a struggle, but life is also to be celebrated, to lament the sorrows I encountered. These practices became my life line. We in InnerChange were also deepening in our spiritual practices at this time, so this was a communal journey of going deeper with God in the midst of ministry.

Through developing deeper formation practices, I came to see that understanding faith and suffering “out there” was not enough. I began to see my need for increased self-awareness. What did I bring to this context? How did my own culture and social location impact what I saw, how I interpreted reality, how I felt and acted? I had moved to a social location very different from my upbringing, but what did I bring with me? What cultural expectations did I carry? When John and I married in 1995, his differing lens as a middle-class expectation for control over our life brought with me the joys and the sorrows.

During this season, my comfort also came from the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus. I had begun to ponder the life of Mary and meditate on the Magnificat when the girls I was mentoring started asking if I believed in Mary. Before long I began to identify with Mary, who guarded many things in her heart, and whose heart had been pierced. Mary’s receptive posture and faith proclaimed in the Magnificat spoke to me and became my example.

My desperation led me to a spiritual director. Sister Ann guided me toward practices that helped me live in the posture of Mary, practices that sustained and grew my trust. I learned new rhythms that formed me more deeply—that gave me eyes to see God’s presence around me and the ability to lament the sorrows I encountered. These practices became my life line. We in InnerChange were also deepening in our spiritual practices at this time, so this was a communal journey of going deeper with God in the midst of ministry.

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Father Gregory Boyle refers to this as his movement from “savior” to “savor.” We might come into ministry with some illusions of being a savior, but we learn to savor the relationships, the sharing of life together. Exquisite mutuality comes from our own willingness not only to share the pain of others, but also to enter the vulnerability of our own pain being exposed. We do not suffer alone but as part of the diverse beauty of the body of Christ.

JUDE: We’ve been talking about the suffering and the hardships, but a theme in Chris’s and my relationship from the beginning has been joy. It’s not like we were looking for that to be the theme. Joy happens when you walk together and you aren’t alone, being able to share in life together, the joys and the sorrows.

CHRIS: And the sorrows.

JUDE: Chris’s life and Chris and Roxy’s impact on my Dutch American family has been profound. They’ve been a part of our family, and then John and I have been a part of their family. So, it’s gone beyond individual relationship and into our networks.

ENDNOTES
1. This phrase is borrowed from Father Gregory Boyle in Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 137.
2. This conversation is made up of selected sections from a recorded interview with Chris Albisurez, August 18, 2018.
Tengo un vívido recuerdo de mi infancia, hay los Ángeles, adornadas con imágenes verdaderamente sangrientas del sufrimiento de Cristo. En una imagen común, él mira hacia arriba mientras la sangre corre por su rostro. Otro muestra un sangrado anatómico del corazón bastante realista con varios orificios. Estas imágenes están conectadas en mi memoria a un desfile de Viernes Santo en la Ciudad de México, donde la figura de Cristo, que representa al sacrificio de Dios, está rodeada de imágenes que ignoran al Cristo sufriente, y una teología católica ortopática (imitando el sufrimiento de Cristo). La prevalencia de estas imágenes está arraigada en el dolorismo, una perspectiva teológica común en América Latina. La teología latinoamericana Nancy Bedford define al dolorismo como “la analgesia” a describir la visión que la fe y la esperanza pueden liberar. 1 La palabra “salvaje” evoca imágenes de dolorismo que encontré cuando era niña y que aún están generalizadas en muchas áreas de la vida y espiritualidad hispanas.

Puedo conocernos a Dios a través del sufrimiento, si esa dolorosa experiencia vivimos a Dios, sabrá la persona. La teología dolorista tiene connotaciones de curación y liberación, sin un énfasis particular en una en una expresión de la vida. ¿Podemos ver a Dios en la vida de sufrimiento para actuar como una iniciativa divina para resistir y enmascarar el movimiento del Espíritu Santo a una vida abundante para todos, con esa perspectiva, la iglesia no se ve tentada a asociar el sufrimiento con la falta del amor de Dios. En lugar de ello, pueden ser una oportunidad que debe llevarse con paciencia, sin que lo verá como un contexto en el que “las obras de Dios pueden mostrarse” Juan 9.3. Tal como Jesús aprovechó la oportunidad del sufrimiento para mostrar el poderoso amor de Dios, las iglesias latinoamericanas están utilizando la realidad de sufrimiento, particularmente en el clima del mensaje cristiano donde Dios es el que nos hace el punto. El término dolorismo hace distinción entre usos que resultan en autodominación y el sufrimiento que se convierte en una fuente de liberación y transformación social. 2

El pentecostalismo en América Latina ha sido igualmente culpable de reforzar una base teológica que justifica la sufrimiento para la vida y el trabajo. Aunque las iglesias pentecostalistas no han abrazado las formas católicas de dolor, a menudo han alentado a los miembros a aceptar el sufrimiento en el cielo y trascender al mundo a ver a Dios como un agente activo de shalom. Nancy Bedford, a mi profesor de teología, ha sugerido que el uso de la palabra “salvaje” para describir la vida de sufrimiento puede ser mal entendido, ya que no ha equilibrado para cambiar las circunstancias que causan su sufrimiento.

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¿DOLORISMO U ORTOPATOS? TELOGÍAS LATINOAMERICANAS DEL SUFRIMIENTO

Alteza Salvatierra

Alexia Conde-Frazier sugiere otro enfoque teológico a estas experiencias de sufrimiento. 3 La visión de Mary (familiarmente conocida como la Virgen) es una manera de ver y entender la existencia del mundo como un mundo en peligro. Como en las imágenes de dolorismo que encontré cuando era niña y que aún están generalizadas en muchas áreas de la vida y espiritualidad hispanas.

La teología dolorista se ha utilizado para justificar la participación en el sufrimiento, en particular en las comunidades hispanas. En muchas de estas obras de arte, en lugar de estar en una agonia obvia y sangrienta, Jesús está en una posición que hace que sea difícil saber si está cruzado, baignando en sangre con los brazos extendidos, el pueblo salvaje que aparece en las pinturas también se ve decapitado y olvidado, vistiendo sus ropas indígenas o la ropa típica de los campesinos. Mientras que las cruces dan el sufrimiento, ese sufrimiento está explícitamente relacionado con el movimiento de la gente por la justicia, mientras que los colores brillantes exudan esperanza y alegría. Estas imágenes contradicen marcadamente con las imágenes de dolorismo que encontré cuando era niña y que aún están generalizadas en muchas áreas de la vida y espiritualidad hispanas.

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DOLORISMO OR ORTOPATOS? LATE AMERICAN THEOLOGIES OF SUFFERING

Alteza Salvatierra

While orthopedics may be a relatively new theological term, it describes a lived spirituality that continues to thrive in certain places in Latin America. As an example, Alteza Salvatierra worked in San Antonio, Texas, for the Latin American Institute for Middle American Studies, with a focus on the images of dolorismo that I encountered when I was a child and that我还活在很多美洲西班牙人区。We can know God through suffering if in that painful experience we see God act to heal and liberate. The word “salvaje” has connotations of both healing and liberation, without particular stress on one at the expense of the other. The lived experience of suffering can act as a divine provocation to resist and to embody the Holy Spirit’s movement toward abundant life for all. With that perspective, the church will not be tempted to associate suffering with the holy, but rather will see it as a context in which the “works of God may be displayed” (John 9.3). As Jesus used the opportunity of suffering to display God’s powerful love, so Latin American churches are using the reality of suffering. 6

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THE Curses OF GOD’S PeopLe: DyNAMiCS OF A GENUINE COVENANTAL INTERACTION

After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, he said to Eliphaz from Teman, “I’m angry at you and your two friends because you haven’t spoken about me correctly as did my servant Job. So now, take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and pour an entirely burned offering for yourselves. My servant will pray for you, and I will act favorably by not making fools of you because you didn’t speak correctly, as did my servant Job.” (Job 42:7-8)

How exactly did Job speak correctly about God? Job does not stop at “the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!” (Job 1:21) after his catastrophic misfortunes. While Christians often reference and even sing about this almost superhuman act of worshipful surrender (consider the popular worship song “Blessed Be Your Name”), it simply is not how the story actually goes. Job literally spends the next 34 chapters accusing God of injustice, seeking to vindicate himself against God and his friends, who try to talk some sense into him (Job 3–37). Be Your Name”), it simply is not how the story actually goes. Job literally spends the next 34 chapters accusing God of injustice, seeking to vindicate himself against God and his friends, who try to talk some sense into him (Job 3–37). If this is the conclusion to be drawn, the above verses from the book’s epilogue identifying Job, rather than Job’s friends, as speaking correctly about God are confusing. To make sure that we do not miss this point, it is repeated twice in two verses. Even with the divine almighty, all-wise, all-just God and that kind of people who wrestle and come near enough to get to God’s face, even while knowing that God is the Almighty.

A GENUINE COVENANTAL INTERACTION

In the history of doctrine, we see how a pious theology that radically centers God, while true and right, can be misconstrued and lead to unintended consequences. Swiss reformed theologian Karl Barth, in his critique and break from the liberal theology of his professors, sought, in a different direction. What is the book of Job really about?

Job addresses himself to an Almighty God with whom he can argue, be angry, and be dis-appointed. Job’s Lord is a covenantal God, a God who both condescends to us and raises us up so that together we can have a covenantal relationship. On the other hand, Job’s friends believed that God was merely interested in our subservience. This is the heart of God’s judgment upon Job’s friends. Job knew God, while they misunderstood him.

This idea of God’s people getting up in God’s face, even while knowing that God is that story, a pursuit of genuine covenantal interaction. This relationship is at the heart of our God. That is why God judges his friends for misrepresenting who God is and what God desires from us.

Serving the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul is a God that we can talk back to. God wants a true covenantal partner and not just a compliant servant.

Barth did not stop there. He realized that divine revelation does not always have to ignore humanity at the expense of God. Either just as we cannot reduce God to an object, God does not desire to do that to us. God seeks a genuine interaction with us. Later on, Barth would begin to talk about the “humanity” of God, meaning that our God revealed in Christ is a God of humanity. “In Jesus Christ there is no isolation of humanity from God and of God from humanity,” he said, and this is a result of God’s free and sovereign decision. As Christians, we do not know a God of theism, an abstract deity beyond human interaction, but rather the covenantal God who has elected to be with humanity from all eternity, a God of humanity. Exploring this idea of a “genuine covenant interaction” in the Psalms. Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann argues that in the absence of lament and protest like Job, God is only surrounded by “yes-men and women” who end up living a faith of “denial, cover-up, and pretense.” If God is everything and we are nothing, we can only become a “false self” with a “bad faith that is based in fear and guilt and lived out as resentful, or the self-deceptive works of righteousness.” 5 Basically, we begin to lie to ourselves and ex-tremely profane thing while ignoring the turmoil and conflict within. Speaking “Chris-tianness” we overspiritualize and point to the need to only trust and obey, to rejoice and be thankful in all things. To cover up whatever anger, pain, or disappointment that we have with God, we talk of how God will redeem all things and how God’s ways are mysterious. That is the cost of not knowing that God is a God that we can talk back to. God wants a true covenantal partner and not just a complaisant servant.

REPRESSION, PSEUDOCOMMUNITY, AND XENOPHOBIA

As I mentioned, spiritualities that follow the Jesus model are the American Initiative before that, helping to develop many of Fuller’s American sources and programs. Daniel D. Lee has served in several roles in both New Jersey and Southern California. Lee is author of the book Double Particularity: Karl Barth, Contextuality, and American Theology.

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Daniel D. Lee is assistant provost for Fuller’s Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry. Since 2010, he has been the key force behind the Asian American innovation initiative at Fuller before that, helping to develop many of Fuller’s Asian American sources and programs. D. Daniel D. Lee has served in several roles in both New Jersey and Southern California. Lee is author of the book Double Particularity: Karl Barth, Contextuality, and Asian American Theology.
AASIAN AMERICAN WITNESS

As an Asian American theologian, I often wonder what it means to listen to God in our place. What are the common errors (and rare wisdom) that can be found in the story of Asian America? I have found this truth about the importance of talking back to God to be one of the most profound theological lessons critical of my presumptions on God. Many Asian Americans have a cultural heritage of honor and respect for our elders. In some cases this heritage is a great treasure, while in others it creates a suffocating oppression. Either way, the idea of expressing anger and disappointment to God sounded shocking to me. Also, given all the pressures to be a “model minority,” succeeding in a White normative world, Asian Americans can feel like they should be law-abiding overachievers—not a very good context for lament or protest. Precisely for these reasons, when the importance of talking back finally sunk in as truth, I realized what kind of a god God is. Discovering that God, I changed.

We often think that the theological contributions of a particular context are limited to those insights given to us by our cultures or situations. However, this is a shallow understanding. Often the greatest theological contributions of our context come from the struggle with our context. Because status, relationship, and honor can matter so much in certain Asian American contexts, I have found this gospel according to Job to be my testimony as an Asian American theologian. We must realize “the infinite qualitative difference” between God and us. Only then does God’s monumental act of covenant seeking begin to become amazing grace and good news.

The story of Job teaches us that doubt, protest, and lament are all integral to biblical faith, even when they seem counter to much of our spiritual intuition or cultural narrative. At times, God invites us to “faithful” challenge and dissent. Of course, we shouldn’t do this flippantly. However, when life makes no sense, it’s important to know that God is bigger than our anger, disappointment, and doubt. We can talk back to God in an authentically I and Thou fashion. Though initially confusing within my Asian American context, ultimately it is redemptive and God-honoring to discover, paraphrasing Luther, that “the curses of God’s people can sound more profound in God’s ears than their hallelujahs.”

ENDNOTES

1. Whatever Barth’s limitations in other areas, evangelical scholar Bernard Ramm notes that his contribution to denomantional theology must be acknowledged, especially given that fundamentalist and evangelical scholars of his time did not do so. See B. Ramm, The Evangelical Heritage: A Study in Historical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 111.
5. Brueggemann, 103–104.
9. The original quote attributed to Martin Luther, but made popular by Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s reference, is: “This curse of the godless man can sound more pleasant to God’s ears than the hallelujah of the pious.”
Edwin M. Willmington is the director of the Fred Bock Institute of the Brethren Center for Theology, Theology, and the Arts. In that capacity, he teaches courses related to music and worship, serves as mentor to students who lead the Fuller Seminary Chapel ministry, and developed a series of videos on worship leadership for the Fuller Leadership Platform. As Fuller’s Composer-in-Residence, he composed and conducted Reconciled in Christ, the music for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, held in Cape Town, South Africa. He also developed the Five Solas Project, a series of resources to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

COMPOSING A LAMENT FOR THE PERSECUTED: SUFFERING WITH THE SUFFERING CHURCH

Edwin M. Willmington

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:10)

Scott White, the global outreach pastor at Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena, became a willing and knowledgeable resource, synthesizing what I began to hear over and over in my study and conversations. He pointed out that many people who live in persecution often feel a sense of God’s call to remain in their difficult circumstances, but they have two messages they want other Christians to hear: “Please pray for us, and please don’t forget us.” However, I knew that, for the most part, we really don’t pray for them often, and we do forget them. The realities of persecution seem far away—usually observed as remote news stories. Besides that, persecution is not a popular topic that naturally arises in day-to-day conversation, or even inside the walls of our churches.

It is difficult for a comfortable church in the United States to imagine the magnitude of Christian persecution around the world or the risks and pain experienced by brothers and sisters in Christ. Consider these facts:

• 215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution in the countries on the World Watch List. This represents 1 in 22 Christians worldwide. 1

• North Korea is ranked No. 1 for the 17th consecutive year as the most dangerous country for Christians; however, Afghanistan is now a very close second.

• India has experienced a dramatic rise in persecution, moving from No. 13 in 2012 to No. 11 this year. Radical Hinduism and Indian nationalism are driving factors in the increasing levels of unrest and instability Christians face. 2

• During the World Watch List 2018 reporting period, 3,066 Christians were killed; 1,252 were abducted; 1,020 were raped or sexually harassed; and 793 churches were attacked.

The highest price for faith is paid by those who are martyred. While the statistical “rate of martyrdom” might appear low at 0.01 percent, when based on a calculation of 1.9 billion Christians worldwide, we come to the stark realization that this represents 15,900 lives per year—15,900 daughters, sons, mothers, fathers, wives, husbands. In the 21st century, there were 28 million documented cases of martyrdom. 3 Christian martyrdom is not a thing of the past. In a modern issue that should capture our present attention. And yet martyrdom is a small part of the bigger picture, the “staining tip of the iceberg that hides the dark bulk” of the story of the persecuted church. 4

Studying specific accounts of people who live or have lived in areas of Christian persecution helped me gain a deeper understanding of their daily realities. Without question, though, I was most impacted by personal conversations with the students and faculty at Fuller Seminary whose lives have been affected personally by persecution. Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies professor Eun Ah Cho’s grandfather was shot in his church in North Korea, after which the church was set on fire as family and others watched. Students Eric Sarver and Lilian Atha have personally experienced guns on their foreheads as their activities were questioned. 5 I cried as I heard Eric’s, “Please pray for us, and please don’t forget us.” As the weight of my understanding grew heavy, I wondered what I could do as a musician to raise awareness of the realities of persecution, which were becoming knit into my own experience of faith.

I wanted to somehow join the musical tradition of lament that streamed from ancient times to the present. In A Sacred Sorrow, 6 musician and author Michael Card filled an entire book with reminders that Job wept. David wept. Jeremiah wept, and Jesus wept, then asked, why shouldn’t we weep as well? Further, the fact that their weeping was “sanctioned in inclusion in our Holy Scriptures” is “a continuing and reliable witness that weeping has an honored place in the life of faith.” The biblical Psalms are a well-known musical repository of lament from which Christians have drawn to express sadness over many centuries. From the cross, Jesus chose to quote a portion of Psalm 22 in the greatest moment of sorrow history has known: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Weeping for grief, loss, pain, and injustice is a significant part of biblical literature and Christian faith.

Music has been a longstanding way of expressing lament. Classical composers such as Bach, Handel, and Monteverdi have used all utilized minor and modal tonalities, descending bass lines, and the pauses and pauses (forms that usually has a love, repeated line that etches deep into the ear of the listener) to express lament. Classical composer Samuel Barber, in his Adagio for Strings, became one of the most played forms of lament after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Some of these same composers, such as George Harrison, Taylor, and Ray Charles. The African American tradition has a full repertoire of songs of lament, from slave and civil rights songs to music for worship. After losing his wife, gospel songwriter Thomas Dorsey wrote “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” which became one of the most performed pieces of music at personal and national times of mourning.

After hearing that initial sermon about the persecuted church, I spent more than two years sitting with personal accounts of persecution and studying musical elements traditionally used in lament. What developed was the composition of a major work of music for choir, soloists, and orchestra, A Sacred Sorrow. Through it, I desired to raise awareness of the issues of Christian persecution, but it also became my way of suffering with those who suffer, weeping with those who weep. Composing it sometimes meant sitting in silence, other times bouncing frustration on the piano; still other times it meant miraculously skipping meals, sleepless nights, early mornings, and plenty of tears. It was both a wonderful and cathartic process of creation, trying to express in music what I was experiencing as I read, listened to, and absorbed the issues of Christian persecution.

In Composition, I provided space for Eun Ah, Eric, and Lilian to tell parts of their stories. The musical responses allowed for lamenting reflection on their stories, experiences, feelings, and stories. As I composed and conducted the work, I realized that it was a method of lament that etches deep into the ear of the listener to express lament. Classical composer Samuel Barber, in his Adagio for Strings, became one of the most played forms of lament after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Some of these same composers, such as George Harrison, Taylor, and Ray Charles. The African American tradition has a full repertoire of songs of lament, from slave and civil rights songs to music for worship. After losing his wife, gospel songwriter Thomas Dorsey wrote “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” which became one of the most performed pieces of music at personal and national times of mourning.

Our Christian faith teaches us of a coming day of victory based on our hope in Christ. Astoundingly, many who suffer persecution
Yet the cries heard in the psalms of lament find hope through their suffering, and often discover a strengthening of faith. In fact, persecution is not always viewed as a negative by those who suffer, with many seeing it as a part of their call to follow the mission of Christ. Tim Keller asserts that “suffering can strengthen our relationship to God as nothing else can.” This is supported by the fact that high rates of persecution tend to coincide with high rates of new conversions to Christianity. History has proven many times that outward persecution may be a positive catalyst for a latent church.

There is an inherent tension in grasping for hope in the face of suffering. In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul asks a series of questions that are relevant to today’s accounts of persecution.

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“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? We who did not spare our own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who, then, is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, he who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or sword? (Romans 8:31-35)

At its conclusion, Consolation for the Suffering provides a hymn that sends us into the reality of the persecuted and helps us to be people who will not lose sight of their request: “Please pray for us; please don’t forget us.”

God of justice, love and mercy, With compassion, let us care; May your kindness set them free. 12
May your strength be ours to share.
Press our hearts to know the struggle Of the ones we cannot see;
God of justice, love and mercy, Of our Lord. (Romans 8:37–39)

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I am a Black, Christian woman. I am a wife, mother, advocate, and psychological assis-
tant. I am a daughter of the Black church
and a student of Western psychology. I have
often felt I was living in two worlds, and as
the product of both, I now have the privilege
of translating between those worlds while
serving as an advocate and ambassador from
within.

I am so grateful to have been educated in
spaces that lifted up the importance of in-
ter-cultural understanding and engagement.
However, that discussion on engagement
often came from a particular point of view.
The conversation seemed to identify the
student as Western, White, and dominant,
and the ministry recipient as “ethic,” darker,
and minority. Thus, the discussion centered
on who is chosen to translate, and the neces-
sity of translating for those who speak differ-
ent languages—and, more broadly, sees herself as a translator between
the psychological and lay communi-
ties. She sees herself as a translator between
bilingual psychological assistant
and a student of Western psychology. I have
strong interest in serving the church,
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Clinically, she enjoys working with underserved populations and she
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Sarah Ashley Hill

SUFFERING FROM WITHIN: SUFFERING WITH THOSE FOR WHOM SUFFERING IS A WAY OF LIFE

Sarah Ashley Hill

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stigma and challenging perspectives are actions pastors can start to take almost immedi-
ately, with education. Ministry leaders can use their pulpits, programs, and com-
nunity connections to bring awareness to what trauma is and what it might look like.

To be able to accurately name and reveal the sources of suffering, leaders first need to obtain the necessary information themselves. This requires the psychoeducational support of psychological professionals, if you are a therapist reading this, perhaps you are called to this supporting role. Obtaining the ability to recognize and identify trauma for what it can be revolutionary not only for pastors, at the helms of strategic and essential health services may not readily respond by pattern of underutilizing services, those who reporting the suffering is to normalize help-seeking is to normalize help-seeking. A story is a powerful commu-
nication tool and has long been employed by pastors to connect biblical truths with our modern lives. Pastors can use their own stories or the stories of loved ones that demonstrate a rec-
ognition of a problem, seeking out professional help, and getting that help.

EMBRACING MEETING THE SUFFERING WITH PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Lastly, in an effort to create a church culture of being trauma-informed and help-seeking, we can mobilize our church bodies to ensure we are providing support in the most helpful ways. In the first two sections, I highlighted what ministry leaders can do to begin to help the suffering by naming the truth about trauma and pro-
claiming the power of God’s truth. I recognize that pastors are often so overburdened with wearing multiple hats that they may have nothing left to give. But a healthy church can use the human resources that exist in the church body to create a network of support. It is important to realize that in many churches, those networks naturally occur and already exist. Here, I specify how we can help empower parishioners to help right where they are, diffusing the respon-
sibility and lessening the individual burden.

When I gave birth to both of my children, many members of the church responded in supportive ways. Some of the support was automatic (a gift card from the church, given to all new parents), but most of the support was a little help from individual members. Someone brought me food after my 24-hour labor left me unable to walk and my husband knocked out from exhaustion. Another person came to sit with me at home when my husband returned to work, and actually put food in my mouth while I hollered a fuzzy baby on an exercise ball. When families have babies or when somebody dies, our commu-
nities rally to provide support. Everybody who comes in and out of our doors, all of means, including therapy and medica-
tion. We can empower ourselves as the local church body to see and support each other in very practical ways. We can be the hands and feet of Jesus to those who are suffering.

ENDNOTES

1. This article is a response to information thoroughly explored and developed in my dissertation. Specific ref-
ences are detailed and can be found in that manuscript. Some additional specific references are listed here in the endnotes for examples. See A. A. 198, "The Role of the Local Church in Addressing Trauma in African-American Communities: An Examination of Relevant Empirical Liter-
3. R. D. Davis et al., "Treatment Barriers for Low-Income, Urban African Americans with Undiagnosed Posttraum-
“People have always resisted whiteness from the very beginning. People have always resisted the loss of a life to place, resisted being designated racially, resisted their lives being commodified, resisted being forced to live inside of a global system of exchange, death, and money, and resisted as long as they could the restless systems of education and evaluation that supported these things. And they did it by drawing on the only tool they had available: their identities.”

Michael McBride, lead pastor of The Way Christian Center and national director of Urban Strategies and LIVE FREE, on the Black church and resisting structures of white supremacy, at the 2018 Black Public Theology Symposium.

“Toda la teología es contextual, y nuestra comprensión de nuestro llamado estará marcada, inevitablemente, por nuestra historia, nuestro hogar, nuestra gente, nuestra cultura. Y eso es parte de la maravilla y belleza de ser el cuerpo global de Cristo, donde algunos de los puntos ciegos de una persona pueden ser detectados por otra persona porque tenemos ojos para verlos.”

Ruth Padilla DeBorst, vice-rectora académica, Comunidad de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios, speaking at the 2018 Centro Latino Lectures on transcending divisive walls.

“Can we say that we know ourselves without understanding our context? To say that being a Christian and being Asian have nothing to do with one another goes against how we have been created in our own particular histories. You can't escape the fact that race has been so central to our formation as a country. I think it is deeply theological. It’s historical. It’s sociological. It’s cultural—it's all these things. It’s the water that we swim in.”

David K. Yoo, professor of Asian American Studies at UCLA, on race and politics, in his talk at the Public Discipleship event hosted by Fuller's Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry.

“There were some who believed the clergy needed to be there to bring God to the Ferguson uprising, but I met Black Jesus at Ferguson. I met the dark-skinned Jewish carpenter who was birthed by a teenage, unmarried woman in the hood. And I was reintroduced to this Jesus who was constantly bringing disruptive fire to the systems and powers, using the prophetic truths of Scripture, acts of healing, and deep commitments to the poor and the marginalized. I found anew the dark body who was unfairly arrested, convicted by a kangaroo court, sentenced to die, and then executed by the empire of his day. This Jesus, the prophet, the healer, the liberator, the organizer, the exorcist of both individuals and systems, was already hangin' in Ferguson when we showed up. So it wasn’t like we was bringing Jesus, it was more like Jesus was waiting for us to get there. And it was this Jesus who I heard declare, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ This Jesus invited me to follow him.”

+ Willie Jennings, Fuller trustee, and associate professor of systematic theology and Africana studies at Yale Divinity School, speaking at the 2017 Missiology Lectures on “whiteness” as a sociocultural framework.

+ Michael McBride, lead pastor of The Way Christian Center and national director of Urban Strategies and LIVE FREE, on the Black church and resisting structures of white supremacy, at the 2018 Black Public Theology Symposium.

“Discovery: The ability to see is connected to the ability to love. If you don’t see me, you can’t love me. If I seem to you to be something close to Chinese, even though I am Korean-American, and you only have categories for Chinese and cannot see who I am—you can’t love me either.”

+ Daniel D. Lee, assistant provost for the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry, reflecting on a trip with members of the Fuller community to the Japanese internment camp in Manzanar, California, pictured above, an abstraction of a guard tower that loomed over the camp.

+ Ruth Padilla DeBorst, vice-rectora académica, Comunidad de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios, speaking at the 2018 Centro Latino Lectures on transcending divisive walls.

“All theology is contextual, and our understanding of our calling will be inevitably marked by our history, our home, our people, our culture. And that is part of the wonder and beauty of being the global body of Christ, where some of a person’s blind spots can be detected by another person because we have eyes to see them.”

+ Daniel Lee, assistant provost for the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry, on the often neglected Asian American experience, in his address at the 2017 Missiology Lectures.
“There is something with owning the deep particularities. Owning the deep particularities does not do us a disservice but actually serves a greater good. When I own a deep particularity, that’s a testing of my existence. I don’t live every existence, but other people challenge me then—‘Are you going to make space for me, too? Is your ethic and your framework going to make room for my life, too, and my thriving?’”

Valera Cooper, associate professor of religion and society and Black church studies at Duke Divinity School, on occupying the Christian faith and “whiteness,” in his lecture at the 2017 Missiology Lectures

“Five centuries of a history loaded with coloniality, modernization projects, and Occidentalism have left Latin American countries today at a certain standard of living typically referred to with the labels of developing or ‘third-world’ countries. So, that separation, that hierarchy leads us to experience life from a particular place. Some call it the margin, others call it the periphery, and others call it poverty. I am thinking about a different term, a term that I call ‘trans-Occidentality,’ which alludes to the fact that on the one hand we are Westerners, but on the other hand, we are non-Westerners, and both at the same time. In such a collaging encounter, we are more than any one of these two. I believe that doing theology out of this paradox makes us rethink—rethink to live again in different ways. To rethink does not only mean to review the historical processes that have given us identity and a description of our social condition, but it also implies to recreate.”

Oscar García-Johnson, assistant professor for the Center for the Study of Hispanic Church and Community, and associate professor of theology and Latino/a Studies, on FULLER studio school

“Christ’s table. It is only in the decentering of whiteness that white particularities will be included in the body of Christ in a redemptive manner.”

Andrew Draper, assistant professor of theology at Taylor University and senior pastor of Urban Light Community Church, on vulnerability and repentance, in his talk at the 2017 Missiology Lectures
“My father and I were driving in his Toyota four-wheel drive up a mountain on bumpy, dirt roads, and we’d go into this small little hut. I was 10 years old, and my English was not as good as I’m speaking right now, but he sat me down and says, ‘You’re going to sit down next to this nice US American doctor who has come to help us, and you speak English. So you’re going to translate for him. We’re giving out medicine and medical help.’ He said, ‘If you don’t understand something he says, here’s a dictionary. Look it up. I’m going to come back and pick you up at the end of the day.’ Imagine a 10-year-old just sitting there. And it started nurturing this love, this empathy, this compassion that comes from the gap towards others. If you don’t know the narrative for a young girl in Nicaragua, for a man to empower a woman, he was amplifying my voice in ways that now I’m starting to understand. He was amplifying my voice and saying, ‘You have something to contribute.’ I see that Jesus did something like this.

Have you ever asked the question, why does Jesus ask the blind man, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ That’s a question that has annoyed me from Jesus. I have an accent. I’m Colombian by birth. I am a woman of color. I’m many things: I’m a woman of color. I’m a foreigner. ‘You have something to contribute.’ I see that Jesus did the same thing. He amplified the voices in the margins. Have you ever asked the question, why does Jesus ask the blind man, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ That’s a question that has annoyed me from Jesus. I want to say, ‘Well, Jesus, he is blind. He wants to see. If you don’t know the narrative for a young girl in Nicaragua, for a man to empower a woman, he was amplifying my voice and saying, ‘You have something to contribute.’ I see that Jesus did the same thing. He amplified the voices in the margins.

I’m many things: I’m a woman of color. I’m a foreigner. I have an accent. I’m Colombian by birth. I am a woman of color. I’m many things: I’m a woman of color. I’m a foreigner. I have an accent. I’m Colombian by birth. I am a woman of color. I’m many things: I’m a woman of color. I’m a foreigner. ‘You have something to contribute.’ I see that Jesus did something like this. The song that you would write is going to be very different from the song I would write. And I need to hear your laments, and I need to hear your praises. I need to hear what you’re mourning, and I need to hear what you are celebrating. And we need to exchange that with one another, not so that we can celebrate diversity for diversity’s sake, but so that we can use the tools we need to live in this perilous context.”

“I imagine that one way of working toward inclusivity follows this flow: discovering our particularities, being honest about how our distinctions become boundaries that exclude some and empower others, and then repainting by creating spaces of belonging. We don’t repent of the distinctions, the particulars themselves. Those are good things, beautiful things. Our unique histories need to be told, our cultures expressed and celebrated. We repent from giving those particularities the power to decide who matters and who does not, who deserves dignity and who can go without, who is heard and who should be silent. We repent toward a new way of being, a new space that is meant for belonging. A space where these distinctions don’t go away—they are recognized and embraced—but they are denied the power to form hierarchies and foster practices of exclusion. I think Paul was imagining a space of belonging when he said, ‘there is neither Jew nor Gentile.’ But the process isn’t neat; for Paul, creating a space of belonging looked like writing frequently about the practice of circumcision, questioning its power to exclude Gentiles from God’s people. At Fuller, it has looked like a protest, conversations about syllabi, discussion groups, new administrative positions, and a strategic plan. I don’t expect any institution, Fuller or otherwise, to suddenly arrive at inclusivity. But there is a commitment to the process. Recently, we launched Fuller.edu/Inclusion, to illustrate this process—the strategies and efforts that aim toward greater inclusivity at Fuller. Reading about inclusion plans and strategies may feel as odd as reading about circumcision practices, but both are deeply theological. Both are grounded on the conviction that God is forming a people who belong together. The whole process—discovering particularities, naming exclusion, and imagining inclusive spaces—in the work of those who partner with God to cultivate that belonging.”

“Music and the arts help negotiate, construct, express the shifting in multiple identities that all of us actually have and express. And that negotiation—perichoresis, people interpenetrate. That’s the sound for a minute to think about that. When I have all those multiple identities and I bring it and I allow you to take it from me. I expand your world thousands of times. You expand my world in ways that are incredible.”

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Christena Cleveland, associate professor of the practice of organizational studies at Duke Divinity School, on the importance of mutual relationships, in her lecture at the 2015 FULLER Forum

“Vocation involves looking at how our membership in the body of Christ infiltrates all that we do, both in the church and outside the church. So, identifying first and foremost as someone who is part of the larger family, but also someone who’s uniquely positioned in that family because of demographic characteristics—age, gender, sex, or race. But it could also be giftedness, and thinking, I’m part of this larger body. I have my unique viewpoint, now how am I supposed to live out that unique gifting and viewpoint in every aspect of my life?”

Kara Powell, executive director of Fuller Youth Institute, on her passion and call to work with young people, on FULLER studio

“It’s young people that I’m passionate about, it’s young people that I pray for, it’s young people that I weep over. My passion for the last 20 years has been related to young people, first as a youth pastor, and now working with the team at the Fuller Youth Institute. What we are trying to do here is turn research into resources. As a parent, as a leader, so many times I feel like I’m guessing. I’m just hoping for the best with the young people in my family, or in our church. And at this point, my vocational calling is to take the amazing research that Fuller and others are doing, whether that’s theological research or more empirical, social science behavioral research, and turn it into practical tools so that parents, grandparents, leaders—anyone who cares about young people—we don’t have to guess so much. We have better answers.”

Erin Dufault-Hunter, assistant professor of Christian ethics, on her desire to reinvigorate the ethical imagination of the church, on FULLER studio

“I think of my vocation in terms of what do I do in my daily living, to both make a living, but also, what’s my role in the body of Christ? I think that part of what I do is turn up the heat in situations. I don’t like conflict, but I don’t shy away from it. And I’ll often push into things—I’m created that way. That’s part of how I articulate what I’m doing as a professor. In my discipline of ethics, I’m trying to take things that often have become rather dull, and turning up the heat in a person’s life to say, how do you think about that in a way that is not just about a rule but is about a God who is actively involved in the world? Part of my growth as a Christian and as a woman of faith and as an academic is knowing how to do that in ways that aren’t about me. I’m not really the fire. I’m attending to that. I’m attending to the crucible that is the church or is the world in which God is active. Yes, I’m stoking the fire, but I’m not actually the one who’s doing the work.”
I always wanted to be a soldier, and in a way, I think I’ll be one.

Listening to the stories of assault survivors is a holy thing. It’s the precursor of a soldier. I tried to preach at a young age, copying what was heard in church and writing into the expectations of the influencers at home, in high school, and later, in the philosophy and religion department of my college. I went to seminary as a preacher’s son who was continuing along a path that my witness to my childhood and adolescence expected me to walk. Calling was wrapped in my community’s expectations of who I should become.

What drove me to seminary was not what drove me in seminary. The precocious child of a pastor, I tried to preach at a young age, copying what was heard in church and writing into the expectations of the influencers at home, in high school, and later, in the philosophy and religion department of my college. I went to seminary as a preacher’s son who was continuing along a path that my witness to my childhood and adolescence expected me to walk. Calling was wrapped in my community’s expectations of who I should become.

What drove me in seminary was different. I entered seminary without knowing what to do with the budding awareness, begun in college, that things were not right with the world and that I should get involved in changing what was wrong. Attending Martin Luther King’s funeral in 1968 pushed me to consider the disparities between rich and poor blacks and whites, the lot of the marginalized, and the terrible toll of the Vietnam War. How should I fit this wine into the wineskins of ministry I brought from home? A desire to integrate a commitment to the fight for justice with my understanding of ministry and a yearning to understand my own psyche required differentiation from my inherited images of ministry and made for a restless journey through seminary and graduate school.

Clinical psychology gave me a window into my own psyche and developed specific skills I needed to help troubled people. Working for justice and showing God’s mercy were the twin streams that fed my inner sense of calling. Understanding of the inner life and transforming pain and conflict into self-acceptance and harmonious relationships felt consistent with my gifts and my sense of what I was called to do.

How then must I label this hybrid, misshapen career? Is there coherence in the disparate activities of shaping the minds and sensibilities of psychology students, relieving the suffering of troubled people, and creating a culture of compassion and critique in a school of psychology while occasionally preaching in a little church in northwest Pasadena? My desire is that my work and that of our graduates show God’s unending and unmerited mercy to broken people. It is my hope and prayer that I will have the strength to work for justice and share God’s mercy through my remaining days.”

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“At this moment of my Christian journey I understand my call to God’s mission as that of being a bridge. I have the privilege of helping people connect with their divine calling through theological education and pastoral support. At Fuller, I also need to connect people with opportunities, connect people of different cultures, ethnicities, and languages with each other and connect people and organizations with common visions so that they can serve God and others in new and creative ways.”

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What drove me in seminary was different. I entered seminary without knowing what to do with the budding awareness, begun in college, that things were not right with the world and that I should get involved in changing what was wrong. Attending Martin Luther King’s funeral in 1968 pushed me to consider the disparities between rich and poor blacks and whites, the lot of the marginalized, and the terrible toll of the Vietnam War. How should I fit this wine into the wineskins of ministry I brought from home? A desire to integrate a commitment to the fight for justice with my understanding of ministry and a yearning to understand my own psyche required differentiation from my inherited images of ministry and made for a restless journey through seminary and graduate school.

Clinical psychology gave me a window into my own psyche and developed specific skills I needed to help troubled people. Working for justice and showing God’s mercy were the twin streams that fed my inner sense of calling. Understanding of the inner life and transforming pain and conflict into self-acceptance and harmonious relationships felt consistent with my gifts and my sense of what I was called to do.

How then must I label this hybrid, misshapen career? Is there coherence in the disparate activities of shaping the minds and sensibilities of psychology students, relieving the suffering of troubled people, and creating a culture of compassion and critique in a school of psychology while occasionally preaching in a little church in northwest Pasadena? My desire is that my work and that of our graduates show God’s unending and unmerited mercy to broken people. It is my hope and prayer that I will have the strength to work for justice and share God’s mercy through my remaining days.”

“En este momento de mi caminar cristiano yo entiendo mi llamado a la misión como lo de ser un puente. Tengo el privilegio de ayudar a gente conectar con su llamado divino a través de la educación teológica y el apoyo pastoral. Como puente también me toca conectar a gente con oportunidades, conectar a personas de diferentes culturas, etnicidades e idiomas los unos con los otros y conectar a personas y organizaciones con visiones comunes para que puedan servir a Dios y a otros en maneras nuevas y creativas.”

“At this moment of my Christian journey I understand my call to God’s mission as that of being a bridge. I have the privilege of helping people connect with their divine calling through theological education and pastoral support. At Fuller, I also need to connect people with opportunities, connect people of different cultures, ethnicities, and languages with each other and connect people and organizations with common visions so that they can serve God and others in new and creative ways.”
This quote is taken from the introduction to FULLER Formation’s “Redefining Vocation” lesson. FULLER Formation is an online tool to foster faith formation with guided material created and curated by Fuller’s faculty and centers for innovation. For more information, go to Fuller.edu/Formation.

In Spring 2019, the Fuller Leadership Platform launched its first digital learning experience, FULLER Formation, providing guided formation for learners who do not seek a traditional seminary degree. A second digital learning experience, FULLER Equip, will be available later this year and will focus on leadership and professional development.

Dave Evans, adjunct lecturer in the Product Design Program at Stanford University, a management consultant, and cofounder of Electronic Arts, in FULLER Formation’s “Redefining Vocation” lesson. FULLER Formation is an online tool to foster faith formation with guided material created and curated by Fuller’s faculty and centers for innovation. For more information, go to Fuller.edu/Formation.

“Vocation is not about ‘finding’ a particular thing to do, but being formed by God to meet the needs of God’s kingdom.”

If you’ve grown up in the church, you are probably familiar with one specific definition of vocation. Vocation is often defined as the thing that you are supposed to do with your life. It is often considered one particular path that is meant to be your career, your job, or your primary identifier for your life. It is also something that God has planned out for you. Your goal is to simply search for it and find it. Or, in some cases, you wait for God to tell you what your vocation is or reveal what it is going to be.

We have a different definition of vocation.

Christian vocation is responding to God’s call faithfully in the places and communities in which God has placed you. Vocation is not as much about doing a particular thing as it is being in communication with God through the Holy Spirit to meet the world’s deep needs through your particular skills and talents. Vocation is not about ‘finding’ a particular thing to do, but being formed by God to meet the needs of God’s kingdom.

“Before you start looking for some new idea, for some other place you should go, tell me about what you’re seeing of God in front of you now. Do you understand how to recognize God’s revelation of God’s self in every sphere of your life? Tell me about when you notice the Spirit moving in a staff meeting, tell me about when you notice glory in a better-written memo.

For design prototypes, from a spiritual point of view, we have language for this already. ‘Test the spirits.’ You take this counsel you’ve received, and you put it out there a little bit. In my case, you go have a bunch of cups of coffee with people and say, ‘What do you think?’ ‘Come and see,’ Jesus would say. That’s a prototype. So let’s go out there and get in the boat and give it a try and see what happens, and if God confirms, we can keep going, and if not, then we can step back a little bit. Prototyping is the raw material that you’re supposed to bring to the potluck party with the Holy Spirit. You’ve got to give God something to work with.”

Dave Evans, adjunct lecturer in the Product Design Program at Stanford University, a management consultant, and cofounder of Electronic Arts, in FULLER Formation’s “Redefining Vocation”
**Embody Learning in a Digital World**

We heard from Fuller voices reflecting on online community in Issue 110. This time, four faculty members share why they value the unique experience of in-person education at Fuller.

**CREATING A FAITHFUL COMMUNITY**

We’ve been so busy explaining the new things we’re doing, like preparing to move our campus, or launching more online degree programs, that we may have forgotten to emphasize how strongly we still believe in the core of Fuller—the one where students and faculty come to a main campus and participate in a transformative theological education. And eat street tacos together.

I love words more than the average person. I write fast and joyfully, and my life is more or less a constant stream of messages to various people. But I would never suggest that words alone can create deep, transformative relationships.

Online education is not a fad. It is needed; it is here to stay, and Fuller should be excellent at it. But online education is the extension of a core—core resources, a core faculty, and core community of learners who make Fuller what it is.

Why do I love our community of real people in real spaces?

A theological school is about formation, not just education, and anyone who has attended a traditional seminary can attest that much of their formation took place outside of formal classes—sitting around a lunch table, or bumping into each other on the quad. Gathering around a seminar table is another special, formative aspect of in-person education. This is not only at the graduate level at Fuller, but a fair number of upper-level courses are small enough that you finish a quarter feeling a bit like family. Maybe the day will come when videoconferencing will allow you to convey things effectively with a nod or a glance—but we’re not very close yet. Nor can I imagine an online seminar adjourning to the local pub after a colloquium.

It has been said that a large, introductory survey course is a case where online education is every bit the equal of in-person education. It is certainly true that sometimes students can “disappear” and even tune out in a lecture. Crafting a large lecture course is an art form—in the right hands, the lectern is a dramatic stage. As a student, I experienced many stirring lectures, after which we spilled out of the room buzzing about what had happened. I try to create those same moments, and I have students tell me that they’re happening.

In-person education is a creation of a faithful community. For a seminar like Fuller, that certainly means faith in God; but it also means faith in a communal mission. Like a large Bunsen burner, but this lab has sparked laughter, tears, and even transformation. This unadorned space so often becomes holy ground, and to be present in those moments is magical.

My role is to cultivate a gracious learning community that makes risk-taking safe. I strive to model that elusive Pauline cocktail of truth infused with love. I encourage them to integrate personal testimony, and many students said they only offered their art or their harder stories late in the quarter, after trust had been built by our shared time together. We needed to lug our lab coat and head into the lab before we dared to combine the chemicals in ways that catalyzed these surprising new substances. It is an immense honor to open the doors of the “lab.”

And the lab experiments astound me! This past quarter in a preaching practicum that emphasized creativity, students sprinkled sermons with liturgical dance, rap, and an African American traditional Love Feast. I encouraged them to integrate personal testimony, and many students said they only offered their art or their harder stories late in the quarter, after trust had been built by our shared time together. We needed to lug our lab coat and head into the lab before we dared to combine the chemicals in ways that catalyzed these surprising new substances. It is an immense honor to open the doors of the Preaching Lab, hand out the goggles, and see what the Spirit will do when students are let loose with the Living Word.

Some years ago Fuller created a rather ugly space for preaching that bore the odd name, the “Preaching Lab.”

Labs are spaces where bold experiments can happen safely. Students gamely strap on goggles and gloves, then dive in and try things. One dares to let a psalm of lament stand as a cry unanswered, a sermon left untold, with no tidy bow. One shares a story of a rugged, bitter marriage season that felt like living in the valley of dry bones, surprising herself with its rawness still.

“Pardon my tears,” she says, and as she ends, she’s met with hugs and prayers. We lack Bunsen burners, but this lab has sparked laughter, tears, and even transformation. This unadorned space so often becomes holy ground, and to be present in those moments is magical.

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**BLOWING THINGS UP IN THE LAB**

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There are certainly benefits of online arrangements—allowing learners the convenience of structuring their studies around family, work, or other commitments. In this work, or other commitments. Generally speaking, however, note that though learners have to make to even carve out the time for such an endeavor: time away from rest, or from family, and in some instances, even from work. Generally speaking, however, note that such time is “carved out” from the existing schedule; in short, attending online means attempting to insert theological education into our busyness. Such shakeup inevitably invites new schedules and rhythms, tensifying, rather than thoroughly rearranging, our busyness.

Moving to a seminary or attending geophysical seminary classes, however, requires reorganizing one’s life to be present in spaces and times preestablished quite apart from one’s own preferences. This is especially the case if one has to also move their home: “moving” to seminary involves resectionalization and rehabilitation of our lives in a radical manner—meaning, from the ground up. Such shakeup inevitably invites new schedules and rhythms, allowing in some respects a more focused approach to theological study, one more conducive to the kind of renewing of the mind that can only happen through an intentional approach to cultivating and reembodying such virtues. Second, an in-person program of study has long been the traditional format since one of its primary advantages—that of inserting learners in an embodied way into a community of inquiry—remains unrepli- cable in the online platform. True, we now realize that online education generates its own digital community, and it is also increas- ingly the case that many learner-oriented events held by educational institutions are streamed live so that the activities of classes and conversations are accessible to remote learners. From a content delivery perspective, the gap between traditional in-person and digitally mediated learning is almost closed.

On the other hand, after events, online learners log off and return to their regular routines. Geophysically present learners, however, could opt to follow up more personally with speakers or panelists, or choose to interact further with other attendees, even over a meal. Major communities of inquiry, certainly here at Fuller, schedule multiple lectures, symposia, colloquia, and other scholarly activities of a course of the term. Those who are geophysically present enter into and build relationships with others—faculty, staff, other learners, and guests of the institution—in ways not possible for online learners. Traditionalists have always highlighted the immersive character of the historic seminary experience, which effectively baptizes learners into the multidirectional conversations through which the life of the mind is lived out across the institutional environment. In sum, content delivered in classes online is enriched, expanded, even interro- gated in the prolonged discussions carried out by participants present live and in person across the seminary context.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: “Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, nor mourning nor crying nor pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.” [Revelation 21:3–4]

God is a God who resides with us. As Revelation 21 suggests, the ultimate end to which the whole of the created order is moving is one in which God takes up residence with humanity in geophysical space. In the Greek, the word is skenosei—a close analogue to the Hebrew shokmah, or the “glory of Yahweh,” who journeys with Israel as they wander in the wilderness. Beyond a mere happenstance, this vision of God fully residing with creation is in fact a concrete expression of the very same project God initiated by speaking light into existence (Gen 1:3) and brought to a local context in the very first culmination when the “Word was made flesh and dwelt [i.e., skenosei] among us” (John 1:14). In other words, God just is residential.

Who God is and how God is present and active in the world matters, and this is nowhere the case more than when it comes to how we conceive of, structure, and deliver theological education. Given who God is, it is inconceivable to imagine a Fuller Seminary without some kind of residential learning. In the absence of a geophysical residence, Fuller would be like a voice without a body.

That being said, even though God is a God who resides with the people who gather together in physical time and space, that residing is neither fixed nor unmoving. Quite the opposite. It’s a kind of divine residence that is dynamic and highly adaptable, oriented towards God being present with God’s people in the midst of their concrete, on-the-ground experiences, which almost always involve movement and dispersion. In fact, if Israel’s history is any indication, it isn’t until the people of God attempt to isolate and constrain the presence of God’s shokmah that they run into trouble. In the Exodus accounts, God tabernacles with Israel in the wilderness, demonstrating God’s loving faithfulness through residence that is always (perhaps necessarily) on the move (Exod 13:21). Yet the temple: originally conceived and constructed as a way of celebrating God’s incomparable glory, eventually became symbolic of Israel’s misguided attempt to contain, control, and domesticate an otherwise wild and unmanageable God. Put differently, Israel’s mistake was to reduce God’s distributed presence to a permanent residence.

As a theologian who teaches more theology classes online than in person, I also find it inconceivable to imagine a Fuller Seminary that is not leading the way in distributed learning. Delivering high-caliber seminary education to pastors, therapists, and ministry leaders in their local contexts is not outside of Fuller’s DNA from the very start. Rather than require students to engage in an intellectual endeavor disconnected from the particular communities to which God had called them, Fuller created regional campuses where students could access theological education without having to uproot themselves from their ministry context. I am a proud alumnus of the Colorado regional campus, where I learned my MAT while serving teenagers and young adults in Colorado Springs.

I now serve in a role in which I am teaching theology to pastors, missionaries, and industry leaders throughout North America and all around the globe. From my physical office in Pasadena, I am in touch with a diverse and diffuse network of human beings otherwise known as the body of Christ. Yet, even when we don’t share the same residence or inhabit the same geophysical space, the Spirit still gathers with us because that’s simply who God is—the same God who pitched a tent with Israel in the wilderness and took on flesh in the Incarnation and will one day take up residence with us.

Amos Yong, professor of theology and mission

Kutter Callaway, assistant professor of theology and culture

AN “IN-PERSON” GOD

Kutter Callaway, assistant professor of theology and culture

IN-PERSON
Fuller’s Program Options

In-Person Programs
Available fully on-campus
· Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology
· PhD in Clinical Psychology
· MS in Marriage and Family Therapy
· ThM in Intercultural Studies
· ThM in Theology
· PhD in Intercultural Studies
· PhD in Theology
· MA in Theology and Ministry
· MA in Theology

Online Programs
Available fully online
· Certificates
· MA in Intercultural Studies
· MA in Theology and Ministry
· MA in Theology
· Master of Divinity

Hybrid Programs
Each program contains a mix of on-campus and online components
· Doctor of Ministry
· MA in Global Leadership

Gutenberg’s printing press made it possible to mass produce the written word for the first time in history. It could be argued that the personal computer and smart devices have had a greater impact on human life than the printing press. Both technologies were watershed moments in history. Both made knowledge more readily accessible to common people, not just the wealthy and elite. Literacy became attainable for the common man. Learning should be interactive and engaging, as opposed to passive. Learning is inherently social, which refers to the instructor-learner relationship or peer relationships among learners. Instructors should have clear objectives, and learners should have opportunities to measure themselves against those objectives on a regular basis. The thing that we have strived for at Fuller is to make sure that formation was always protected. The faculty were intentional with their students and how they designed their courses, and they’ve made it what it is today. Since then, a majority of our master’s programs now offer an online option. With that early foundation we had with the MAGL, the faculty have carried that intentionality into these new courses as well.

Fuller is committed to hybrid education, taking the best of both in-person and online education and putting them together. Online education allows Fuller to make our instruction more accessible. Rather than asking people to come to us, which can be expensive and logistically difficult for many of our learners, we can go to them. And by sending our research and resources into the world, we also open up communication to reach those who could never reach Fuller, and instructors will be able to take either side, take courses on the ground or on the web at any point in their degree, is something that we hold at a high value and that we always want to protect.

A NEW ERA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

A CAMPUS SCHOOL WITH AN ONLINE COMPONENT

I’ve led an eight-week workshop on composition and grammar every quarter for two years, and when I taught an online version for the first time this summer, I had more online students complete the curriculum and be more interactive in this one workshop than in the previous two years combined. Students were emailing me, they were getting in touch with each other, they were more responsive and open to optional assignments—all because of the online forums. They felt comfortable being vulnerable and making mistakes because they saw each other’s work, and they had more time and space to contemplate their words.

One concern that we often come across is the idea that Fuller is becoming a ‘solely online school.’ Online is a phenomenal modality and many students really enjoy that, but there are also students who really enjoy learning in the classroom. Fuller is still going to be a campus school, now with an online component as well. So the idea that students will be able to take either side, take courses on the ground or on the web at any point in their degree, is something that we hold at a high value and that we always want to protect.

About 15 years ago, Fuller was one of the first to join the whole online conversation and moving students toward this new type of learning. Our MA in Global Leadership (MAGL) faculty did a great job of carving the way to make sure that formation was always protected. The faculty were intentional with their students and how they designed their courses, and they’ve made it what it is today. Since then, a majority of our master’s programs now offer an online option. And with that early foundation we had with the MAGL, the faculty have carried that intentionality into these new courses as well.

The thing that we have strived for at Fuller is to make sure that the faculty and student interaction is always preserved. Unlike other online schools, where the courses are built for them—they’re canned, they’re automated, and the faculty are often removed—Fuller has gone the exact opposite direction in that process. The thing that makes us distinct is that our faculty are the ones hand-designing their courses for each term so that students can grow and thrive.

Online learning is something that students have actually been asking for, for years. This is not just Fuller deciding to try something new or trying to experiment with a new modality.

This is a new era of students. Our current students are taking it a little bit slower, they’re saying, I want to make sure that I can still take care of my family and engage in life and ministry, but I want to do this Fuller thing, as well—I want to grow, I want to get my degree, I want to advance the kingdom, and I can do both if I do it online. I like to joke that they are at home taking their online courses in their pajamas, but that’s only because they’ve spent a full day working, a full day serving in ministry, a full day taking care of their families and providing, then only at 11 o’clock at night when everything is all put away and everything is quiet, they can finally sit down and engage with their classes. So, yeah, they’re sitting in their pajamas, but only after being some of the most productive and powerful movers in their own communities and workplaces.

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A NEW ERA OF STUDENTS

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FULLER studio Explore FULLER studio’s media offerings

Conversing podcast
President Mark Labberton hosts this podcast, speaking with a broad spectrum of leaders on issues at the intersection of theology and culture—from public radio host Krista Tippett discussing wisdom to Yale Divinity theologian Willie Jennings reflecting on race.

Photo: David Brooks, columnist for The New York Times, discusses social transformation and the power of commitment in forming communities

FULLER curated
This podcast gathers the best conversations happening at Fuller Seminary—drawing from lecture series, conferences, panel discussions, special events, and more—and reflects the eclectic, rich quality of Fuller’s intellectual and spiritual life.

Photo: A panel discussion at the Black Public Theology Symposium, held at Fuller in Fall 2018. Hear some of the sessions from the symposium on FULLER curated.

FULLER studio
From an exclusive conversation with Bono and Eugene Peterson to stimulating roundtable discussions with Fuller faculty and community members, FULLER studio produces, curates, and offers a wealth of video, audio, and written resources—free—for all who seek deeply formed spiritual lives.

Photo: Makoto Fujimura, director of Fuller’s Culture Care Initiative, speaks on a “Theology of Making,” and how the arts and imagination play an integral part in the Christian life.

Find these resources and more at Fuller.edu/Studio
All podcast episodes are available on iTunes, Spotify, or your favorite podcast app.

Introducing FULLER Formation
Fuller Seminary is pleased to introduce a new learning experience, FULLER Formation. FULLER Formation is designed to foster Christian formation in everyday contexts. Learn how to integrate your faith and work, discern God’s calling in your life, and develop formative practices as a Christian leader.

LEARN MORE AT FULLER.EDU/FORMATION

THREE DISTINCT CHANNELS FOR DELIVERING HIGH-CALIBER CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

Before founding Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947, Charles E. Fuller was reaching millions of people through his Old Fashioned Revival Hour radio show, which was broadcast over 650 radio stations. Starting Fuller Seminary was his way of extending the reach of the gospel message by training evangelists and missionaries to be sent out across the globe. Today, Fuller still prioritizes its global reach, finding innovative ways to deliver content from world-renowned faculty to as many people as possible.

 Fuller’s original offering of residential theological education has expanded over the decades through the establishment of regional campuses and online degree programs. Three years ago, FULLER studio began creating original, free resources for anyone seeking a deeply formed spiritual life. In Spring 2019, the Fuller Leadership Platform launched its first digital learning experience, FULLER Formation, providing guided formation based on content from Fuller’s faculty and centers for innovation for learners who do not need or want a traditional seminary degree. A second digital learning experience, FULLER Equip, will be available later this year and will focus on leadership and professional development.

As the landscape of higher education shifts under our feet, Fuller is finding new ways to realize its vision of forming global leaders for kingdom vocations. Now individuals across the world can discover the free online resources of FULLER studio, access formation learning experiences and professional development through the Fuller Leadership Platform, and attend Fuller Seminary for rigorous theological degree programs.

Fuller Leadership Platform
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FULLER formation
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The Aesthetics of Atheism
John Calaway and Barry Taylor (Fortress, 2019)

Old Testament Ethics
John Goldingay (InterVarsity Press, 2019)

Luke on Narrative Theology: Texts and Topics
Joel E. Grant (Wipf & Stock, 2019)

Duellops, Rapinents, Reincarnations of Alliterative and Ecolatrical Beelites
edited by Christopher R. Hays and Alexander Massmann (Baker Academic, 2019)

Deep Fusion, Film and Theology in Dialogue
Robert K. Johnston, Craig Detweiler, and Katherin Calaway (Baker Academic, 2019)

Christian Theology in the Pluralistic World: A Global Introduction
Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Eerdmans, 2019)

Growing Up. Every Parent’s Guide to Helping Teenagers and Young Adults Thrive in Their Family, Faith, and Future
Karen Pavel and Steven Aberg (Baker Books, 2019)

Brian Turn, Julie Harmon, and Janett Willing (Rodale, 2019)

Mission in a Can: Reflections on the Journey to the Mission
Charles L. Van Engen (Baker & Stock, 2019)

The Bourgeois Spirit: Apostolic Preaching in the 21st Century
Amos Yong (Cascade Books, 2018)

It was February 2004. I was stretched thin for cash, as is the common denominator for all theology students. I think, and needed to lete the bullet and call home for some funds to cover my registration fees. I went into Payton to use the phone booth to call my dad. I loved those plush phone booths, because they were vintage and felt like a nod to past decades. Plus, that day I really needed the privacy of a closed door to have this pathetic little talk with my dad. We had the usual “are you sure this is money for?” conversation and, as per usual, he came through with the funds. I thanked him, told him, “I’m quier,” and rather than say “Ciao,” like so normally said. It would have been a very random, said. “Adios.” I didn’t know then that that would be the last conversation I had with my father. He died suddenly a day later of an aneurysm. In saying, “Adios,” I had both said goodbye and commended him to God—I just didn’t know that last bit. This has become a tender memory, a final time of me being in need and him coming to my rescue, as he had a million times before, from when he adapted me at 3 months old until that day at 29 years old. I’ll always cherish the Fuller Pasadena campus and the many memories that I made there, but Payton Hall’s row of vintage phone booths, that common space turned sacred by what God did there, will always hold an extra special place in my heart.

—Andrea Cammarota (‘02)

When I had my first tour of Fuller’s Pasadena campus as a prospective student, our guide walked us by the Prayer Garden. She pointed at its cement walls covered in ivy and said that many students find the green, dyng, and returning of the ivy is an aest for the changing seasons in their academic careers at Fuller.

Over the next three years as a residential MDiv student, her comments true. I can remember walking through campus from our apartment on North Oakland Ave., going and coming from classes, and passing the Prayer Garden, seeing the ivy dry as brown as fall became winter (such as it was in Pasadena), and feeling resonance with my spirit as I was struggling with new and challenging learning. I can remember walking with my house in my step from the exhilaration of renewed faith and seeing the ivy and the prayer garden. It reminded me of the cool concrete and watching the light play through the draped doorways, in both dry and vibrant seasons, sitting and reading, or just watching the light change and the shadows move. I can remember the coolness and the changing seasons of our guide saying, “Pastoral Renewal: A Pentecostal Approach to Dialogue, Hospitality, and Sanctuary,” in a Pluralistic World: A Pentecostal Approach to Dialogue, Hospitality, and Sanctuary,” in the Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology, ed. P. Avis, (Oxford University Press, 2018); “Diasporic beloved to me that the that would be the last conversation I had with my father. He died suddenly a day later of an aneurysm. In saying, “Adios,” I had both said goodbye and commended him to God—I just didn’t know that last bit. This has become a tender memory, a final time of me being in need and him coming to my rescue, as he had a million times before, from when he adapted me at 3 months old until that day at 29 years old. I’ll always cherish the Fuller Pasadena campus and the many memories that I made there, but Payton Hall’s row of vintage phone booths, that common space turned sacred by what God did there, will always hold an extra special place in my heart.

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Extending Fuller’s Legacy and Impact

By God’s grace, Fuller’s impact has been extensive and irreparable, as hearts and minds around the globe have been changed through the courageous and steadfast leadership and work of our alumni community.

Now, as Fuller reinvests in the seminary experience, the Office of Development is changing too. We’re launching a fresh approach to fundraising—one that is critical in helping to sustain the seminary for generations to come.

You’ve told us time and again how much Fuller means to you. Your admiration is being unwavering, yet many of you have felt disconnected. We’ve heard your concerns and have been working diligently to ensure you feel more involved in what’s happening in the Fuller community.

As part of our vital work going forward, we’re reorganized our team to best serve our giving partners. We’ve unveiled a revamped website, with more information and easier navigation. And we’ve started the Fuller Leadership Circle as a way of encouraging and recognizing our most loyal donors.

In the coming months, we’ll be doing even more. We’ll connect with onlookers and throughout the seminary, as well as with external partners including alumni, community members, and executives around the world. We’ll also hold special events in key cities across the United States for alumni and donors to engage them more deeply with Fuller on many levels.

Our work is integral to carrying out Fuller’s vision, and you play a key role. We’re excited about this next season in the life of the seminary. We hope you are too, and that you’ll join us on this journey. With God’s guiding hand, we, together, can extend Fuller’s 75-year legacy with even greater impact.

To learn more about Development and our fundraising program, visit Fuller.edu/Giving or call Sandy Strader, Executive Director of Development, at (410) 478-5125.

BRENT ASHOK
Chief of Philanthropy

Who Is Fuller?

Fuller Seminary is an evangelical, multi-denominational graduate institution committed to forming global leaders for kingdom vocations. Responding to changes in the church and world, Fuller is transforming the seminary experience for both traditional students and those beyond the classrooms: providing theological formation that helps Christ followers serve as faithful, courageous, innovative, collaborative, and fruitful leaders in all of life, in any setting.

Fuller offers 15 master’s and advanced degree programs—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through its Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as rich and varied forms of support for the broader church. Nearly 3,500 students from 80 countries and 210 denominations enroll in Fuller’s degree programs annually, and our 44,000 alumni serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businesspersonas, and in a variety of other vocations around the world.

¿Quién es Fuller?

Fuller Seminary es una institución evangélica y multiconfesional que se compromete a formar líderes globales para las vocaciones del Reino. Respondiendo a los cambios en la iglesia y en el mundo, Fuller está transformando la experiencia del seminario tanto para los estudiantes tradicionales como para los que están más allá del aula: proporcionando formación teológica que ayuda a los seguidores de Cristo a servir como fieles, valientes, innovadores, líderes colaborativos y fructíferos en toda la vida, en cualquier entorno.

Fuller ofrece 15 programas de maestría y de grado avanzado—con opciones en español, coreano y en línea—a través de sus escuelas de Teología, Psicología y Estudios Interculturales, así como formas ricas y variadas de apoyo para la iglesia más amplia. Cerca de 3,500 estudiantes de 80 países y 210 denominaciones se inscriben en los programas de estudio de Fuller, mientras que nuestros 44,000 alumnos sirven como ministros, consejeros, maestros, artistas, líderes en organizaciones sin fines de lucro, empresas, y en una variedad de otras vocaciones alrededor del mundo.

BENEFICIARY. Acts that Speak the Good Word

The platform of the Chinatown Metro Station offers an expansive view of Los Angeles. City Hall and Union Station tower above surrounding buildings. The Financial District’s skyscrapers stand farther back. Mary-Glenn, a law enforcement chaplain who also teaches in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, points out buildings that others might not see quick to see, like the Men’s Central Jail. The faculty accompanying her are Chris Blevins, Erin Dufault-Hunter, Susan Maros, Mike McNichols, Mike McNichols, Mike McNichols, Dave Scott, and Alison Wong—members of the Faculty Formation Group that meets regularly around the core of the year.

With the skyline in the foreground, Mary frames the day ahead, an urban retreat into LA. The cohort usually retreats to the nearby Mother Delores or Descanso Gardens, places of stillness and natural beauty. Today’s outing is different. “We’re here,” Mary explains, “to engage with what integrated peace looks like in the city.” For the faculty gathered, listening to the stories the city has to tell is the first step.

The group begins at Homeboy Industries, an organization that supports formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated women and men. The next stop is the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, where Father Alexei Smith describes the church’s desire to be a gathering place for people of different religions. At the foot of the county’s Hall of Justice, the group listens to Sgt. Jenelle Meier about law enforcement in LA. Our Lady of the Angels. The tapestries depict saints, both canonized and not, across history and from all over the world. The saints face the altar, behind which is a stylized map of the Communion of Saints.
During his first quarter as a Fuller student, Rick Reynolds (p. 18) started passing out pizzas to Seattle's homeless as a volunteer with a group called Operation Nightwatch. After more than three decades with the organization, he's learned a lot about recognizing the image of God in the poor. “They’re all created in the image of God, and that’s the thing: I want people to look, and not just look past.”