

ISSUE #14 | SUFFERING WITH

# FULLER



*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, by Dao Zi. Wash-ink painting, 83"x20" x 3, 2017. 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 reborn, 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.

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Rick Reynolds, photographed by Nate Harrison

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## + *To Suffer Together that We May Be Transformed Together*

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 pain, and 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 walk 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.

**LAURALEE FARRER**  
 is chief storyteller  
 and vice president of  
 communications.



+ 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](http://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](http://Fuller.edu/Inclusion).



+ Inés Velásquez-McBryde, pastor, speaker, and MDiv student, contributes to "Voices on Race and Inclusion" on p. 79

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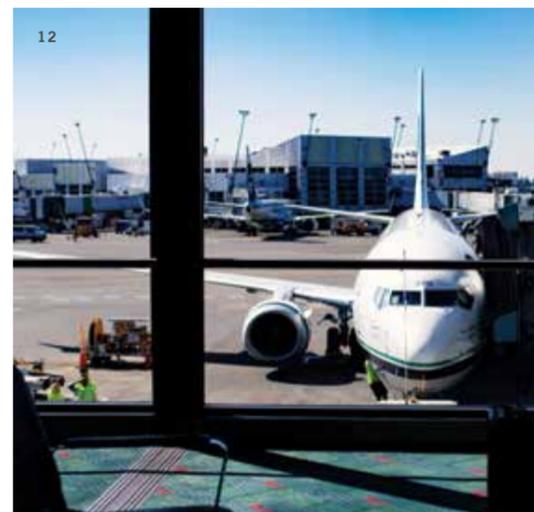
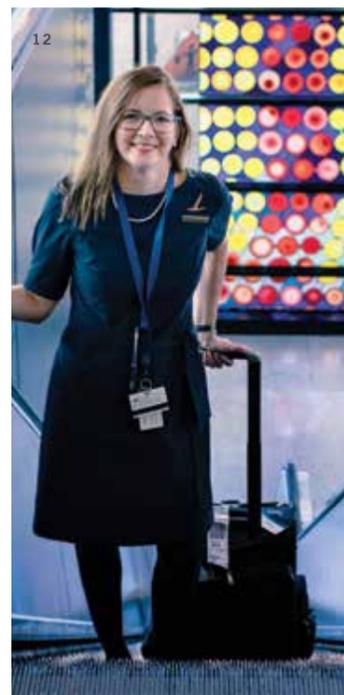
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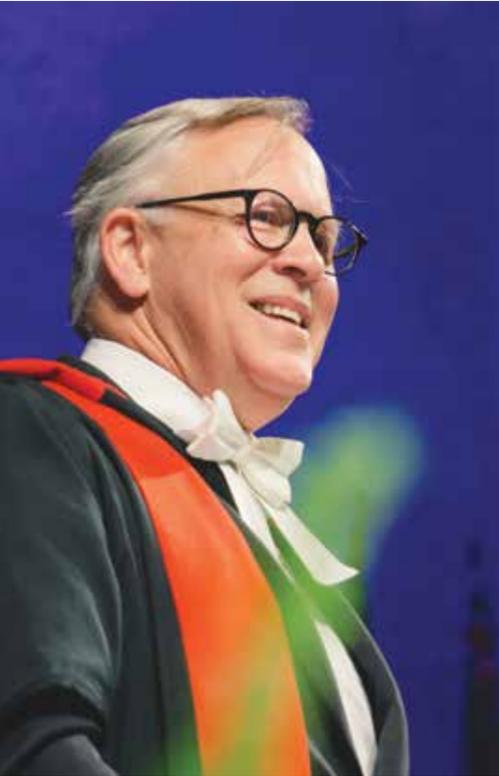
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## Suffering With Sufriendo con

### 함께 고난 받기

From Mark Labberton, President

*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 are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

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.

*Bendito sea el Dios y Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Padre de misericordias y Dios de toda consolación, el cual nos consuela en todas nuestras tribulaciones, para que podamos también nosotros consolar a los que están en cualquier tribulación, por medio de la consolación con que nosotros somos consolados por Dios. Así como abundan en nosotros las aflicciones de Cristo, así abunda también por el mismo Cristo nuestra consolación.*

2 Corintios 1:3-5

Algunas de las dimensiones más profundas del ser humano giran alrededor de nuestras experiencias de sufrimiento. Todos y todas sufrimos. Nadie vive sin sufrimiento. Nuestras experiencias varían grandemente: el grado o intensidad de las dificultades, nuestras capacidades internas o externas de sensibilidad y perseverancia, la resistencia y empatía de nuestra familia y comunidad harán la gran diferencia. Al menos, sabemos que casi toda persona supera mejor el sufrimiento si tenemos a alguien "sufriendo

When the Apostle Paul reflects with 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 theologizing 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 precursor 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 we who are in Christ know One who suffered with us and gave us

comfort. This is the soil from which Christian compassion is explained and fortified.

People ask me if I miss being a pastor. I understand the question, but it assumes difference more than similarity between being a president and being a pastor. I believe what mattered most to me personally about being a pastor is what still matters most to me about being a president: the privilege of standing with others in their stories of joy, of suffering, and of everything in between. These are the

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 pastoreando a los corintios, quienes enfrentan su propio sufrimiento. Todas sus aflicciones, las de ellas y ellos, se ven enredadas dentro del sufriendo-con amor de Dios quien ha sufrido para consolarnos, 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 "regocijamos con quienes se regocijan." Pero definitivamente deben ser ambas cosas. Aunque todos sufren, el sufrimiento 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 solo porque nosotros y nosotras sufrimos, pero primordialmente porque nosotros quienes estamos en Cristo conocemos a Aquel quien sufrió con nosotros y nos dió consolación. Esta es la tierra desde donde explicamos y fortalecemos la compasión cristiana.

Las personas me preguntan extraño ser pastor. Yo entiendo la pregunta, pero esta presume la diferencia más que similitud entre ser presidente y ser pastor. Yo creo

찬송하리로다! 그는 우리 주 예수 그리스도의 하나님이지요, 자비의 아버지지요, 모든 위로의 하나님이지요, 우리의 모든 환난 중에서 우리를 위로하사 우리로 하여금 하나님께 받는 위로로써 모든 환난 중에 있는 자들을 능히 위로하게 하시는 이시로다. 그리스도의 고난이 우리에게 넘친 것 같이 우리가 받는 위로도 그리스도로 말미암아 넘치는도다.

고린도후서 1:3-5

인간 존재의 가장 심오한 특징들의 중심에는 고난의 경험이

있습니다. 인간은 모두 고난을 겪습니다. 고난 없이 사는 사람은 없습니다. 물론 사람마다 경험의 내용은 다릅니다. 곤경의 정도나 강도, 곤경을 느끼거나 견뎌내는 내적 및 외적 능력, 곤경으로부터의 회복력, 가족이나 공동체의 공감 등에 따라 실제 고난의 경험은 크게 달라집니다. 그런데 적어도 우리가 분명히 아는 사실은, 누군가 연민을 품고 ‘함께 고난 받는다’ 이가 곁에 있을 때 거의 모든 사람이 고난을 더 잘 이겨낸다는 것입니다.

고린도 교회에 보낸 두 번째 편지의 첫머리에서 사도 바울이 자신의 고난에 대해 숨김 없이 털어놓는 것은 단순히 그의

환난을 열거하는 것 이상의 큰 의미를 지닙니다. 바울은 현재 고난을 직면하고 있는 고린도 교인들을 목양하며, 함께 그 고난을 신학적으로 해석하고 있는 것입니다. 바울의 환난과 고린도 교인들의 환난은 모두 하나님의 ‘함께 고난 받는 사랑’ 안으로 녹아듭니다. 하나님은 우리를 위로하시려고 고난을 받으셨고, 이제 고통 가운데 있는 다른 이들을 위로하라고 우리를 부르고 계십니다.

물론 우리는 ‘우는 자들과 함께 울기’만 하는 사람들이 아닙니다. 우리는 또한 ‘즐거워하는 자들과 함께 즐거워’ 하기도 합니다. 분명한 사실은 두 가지 모두 우리의

모습이어야 한다는 것입니다. 모든 사람이 고난을 경험하지만, 그렇다고 다른 이들과 함께 고난 받으려는 마음이 자동적으로 길러지는 것은 아닙니다. 그래서 바울은 고린도의 모든 성도들이 삶에서 이미 경험한 예수님의 고난을 높이 들어 표상으로 제시합니다. 다른 이들과 함께 고난 받을 마음과 능력이 우리에게 생기는 것은 단지 모든 사람이 고난을 겪기 때문이 아니라, 바로 그리스도 안에서 우리는 우리와 함께 고난 받으셨고 우리를 위로하신 그 분을 알기 때문입니다. 바로 이 토양 위에서 ‘기독교인의 연민’을 정의하고 함양해야 합니다.

사람들은 제게 목사였을 때가 그렇지 않냐고 묻습니다. 무슨 질문인지 잘 모르지만, 질문의 이면에는 총장직과 목사직 사이에 유사점보다는 차이점이 클 것이라는 전제가 깔려있습니다. 제가 생각하기에 목사로서 제게 가장 중요했던 것이 총장으로서의 지에게도 여전히 가장 중요했던, 그것은 바로 다른 이들의 기쁨과 고난과 그사이의 모든 경험을 곁에서 함께할 수 있는 특권입니다. 사람들 곁에서 있을 때 저는 하나님의 임재를 보고 경험하는 경우가 가장 많으며, 더불어 왜 복음과 신학 교육이 그토록 중요한지 가장 실제적으로 깨닫게 됩니다. 때로는 총장이기 때문에, 때로는 총장임에도 불구하고, 저는 다른 이들의 고난에

places where I most often see and experience the presence of God, and where I find the most grounded reminders of why the gospel, and why theological education, can matter so much. Sometimes because of being a president, and sometimes despite being one, I have the privilege of suffering with others. The suffering love of Jesus towards my suffering has stretched and opened my heart in compassion, certainly not because of my role or title, but because of my raw neediness that

Jesus holds with tender, healing love.

It seems hard to look around at our world and not see suffering in every direction. When the plague devastated 14th-century Europe, it was often the Christians who most distinctively stayed in the cities to care for the dying—an instinct borne of knowing the God of all mercy and compassion. Whenever this has been the church’s reputation, the gospel has been authenticated.

And when such love is not our reputation, or even worse, when it is the opposite, it is no wonder that our gospel is repudiated.

All who follow Jesus must ask: Have we been loved by God in our suffering? If so, then suffering with our suffering world is our vocation. God’s people can and must embrace and embody it, or we apparently have no good news.

que lo que más me importó personalmente siendo pastor es lo que todavía me importa siendo presidente: el privilegio de estar al lado de otros y otras en sus historias de gozo, de sufrimiento, y en todo el entremedio. Esos son los lugares donde veo y experimento con más frecuencia la presencia de Dios, y donde encuentro los recordatorios más fundamentados de por qué el evangelio, y por qué la educación teológica, importan tanto. A veces por ser presidente, y a veces a pesar de serlo, tengo el privilegio de sufrir con los demás. El amor sufrido de Jesús hacia mi sufrimiento

ha abierto y ampliado mi corazón en compasión, y no por mi rol ni mi título, sino por mi franca necesidad de que Jesús me sostiene con su amor tierno y sanador.

Es difícil no mirar alrededor del mundo y no ver el sufrimiento por todos lados. Cuando la plaga arrasó con la Europa del siglo catorce, con frecuencia eran las personas Cristianas quienes permanecían en las ciudades para cuidar de los moribundos- un instinto nacido del conocimiento del Dios de toda misericordia y compasión. Cuando la reputación de la

iglesia ha sido ésta, se da validez al evangelio. Y cuando este amor no es nuestra reputación, o peor, cuando es lo opuesto, con mucha razón nuestro evangelio es repudiado.

Todos y todas quienes siguen a Jesús deben preguntarse: ¿Hemos sido amados por Dios en nuestro sufrimiento? Si es así, entonces nuestra vocación es sufrir con el mundo sufriente. El pueblo de Dios puede y debe abrazar y encarnarlo, y si no lo hacemos, es porque aparentemente no tenemos buenas nuevas.

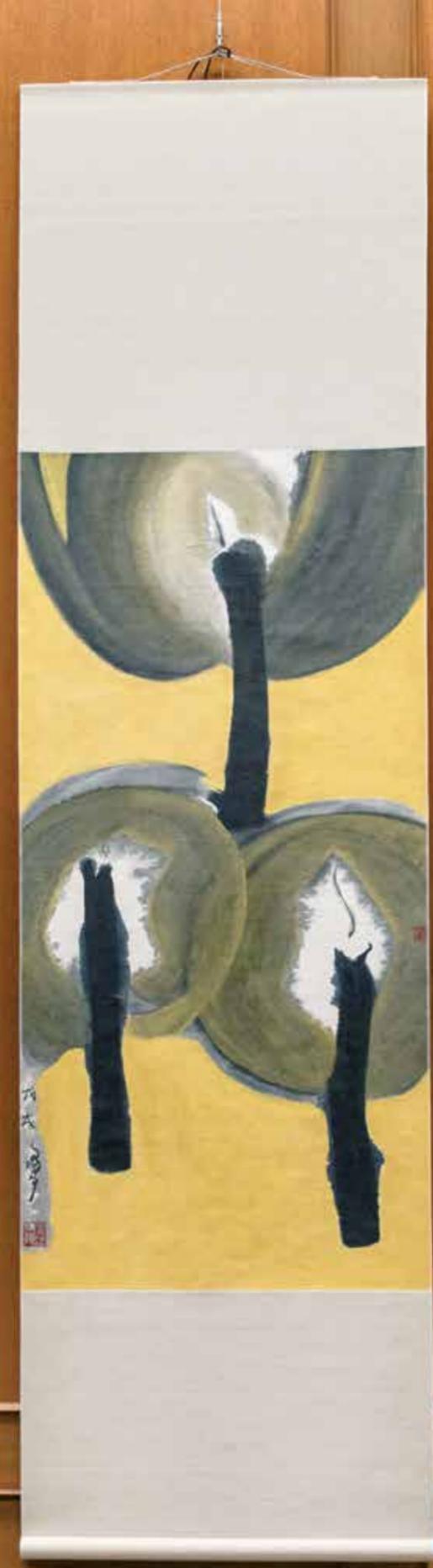
함께할 특권을 갖습니다. 그럴 때마다 예수님의 함께 고난 받으시는 사랑이 고난 가운데 있는 저를 품어주시며 제 마음을 열어주셨고 연민의 마음이 커지게 하셨습니다. 분명 이것은 저의 직책이나 역할 때문이 아니라, 적나라한 저의 궁핍함을 예수님께서 따뜻한 자유의 사랑으로 감싸주시기 때문일 것입니다.

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.

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.



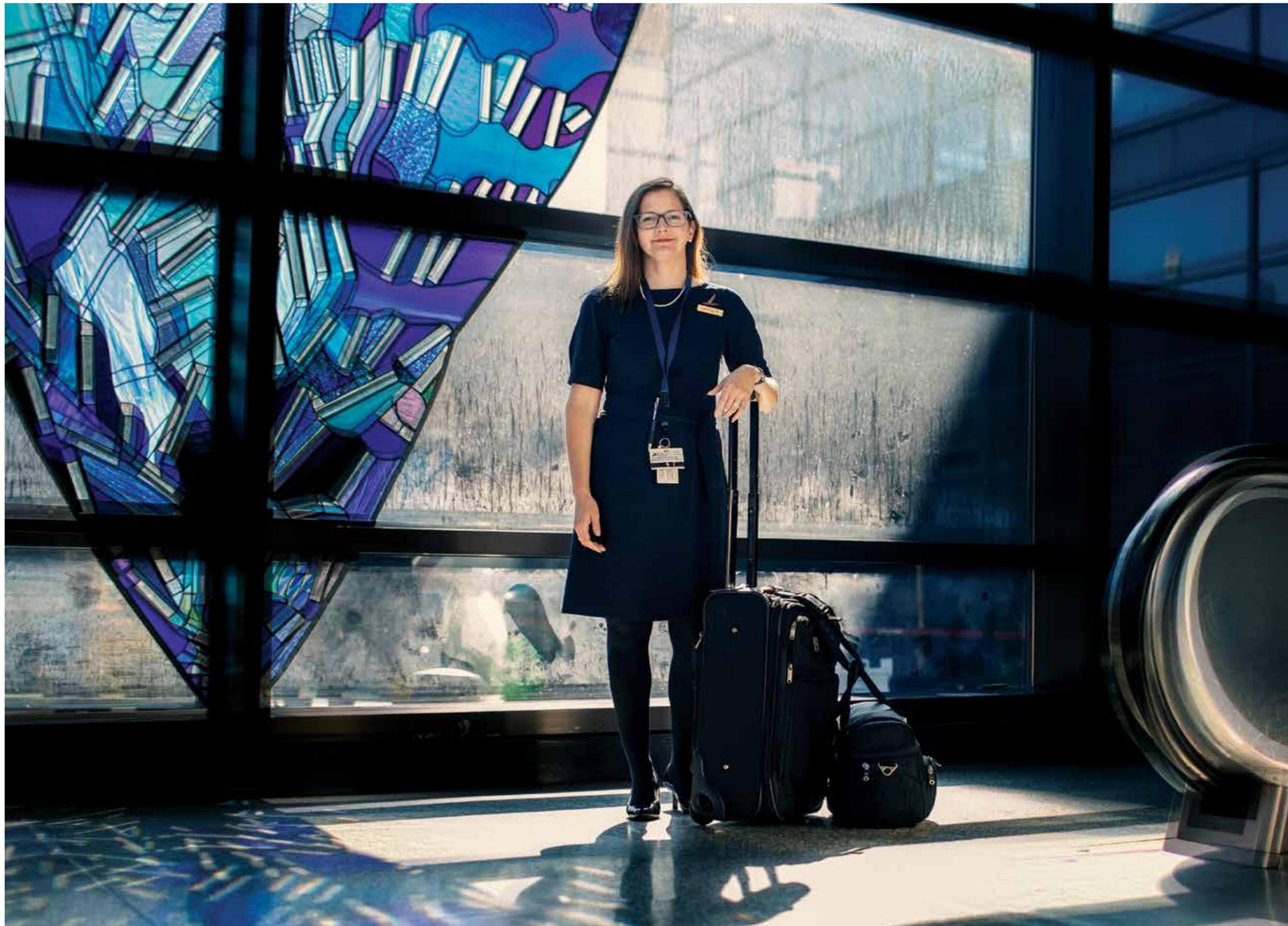
Doxology II: Holy Candle, by Dao Zi. Wash-ink painting, 55"x28", 2018.

✦ Doxology II: Holy Candle, by Dao Zi. Wash-ink painting, 55"x28", 2018. See more of Dao Zi's work on pp. 2–3 and 98–99.

# 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





**A**S KRISTALYN JO Simler (MAGL '11) 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.

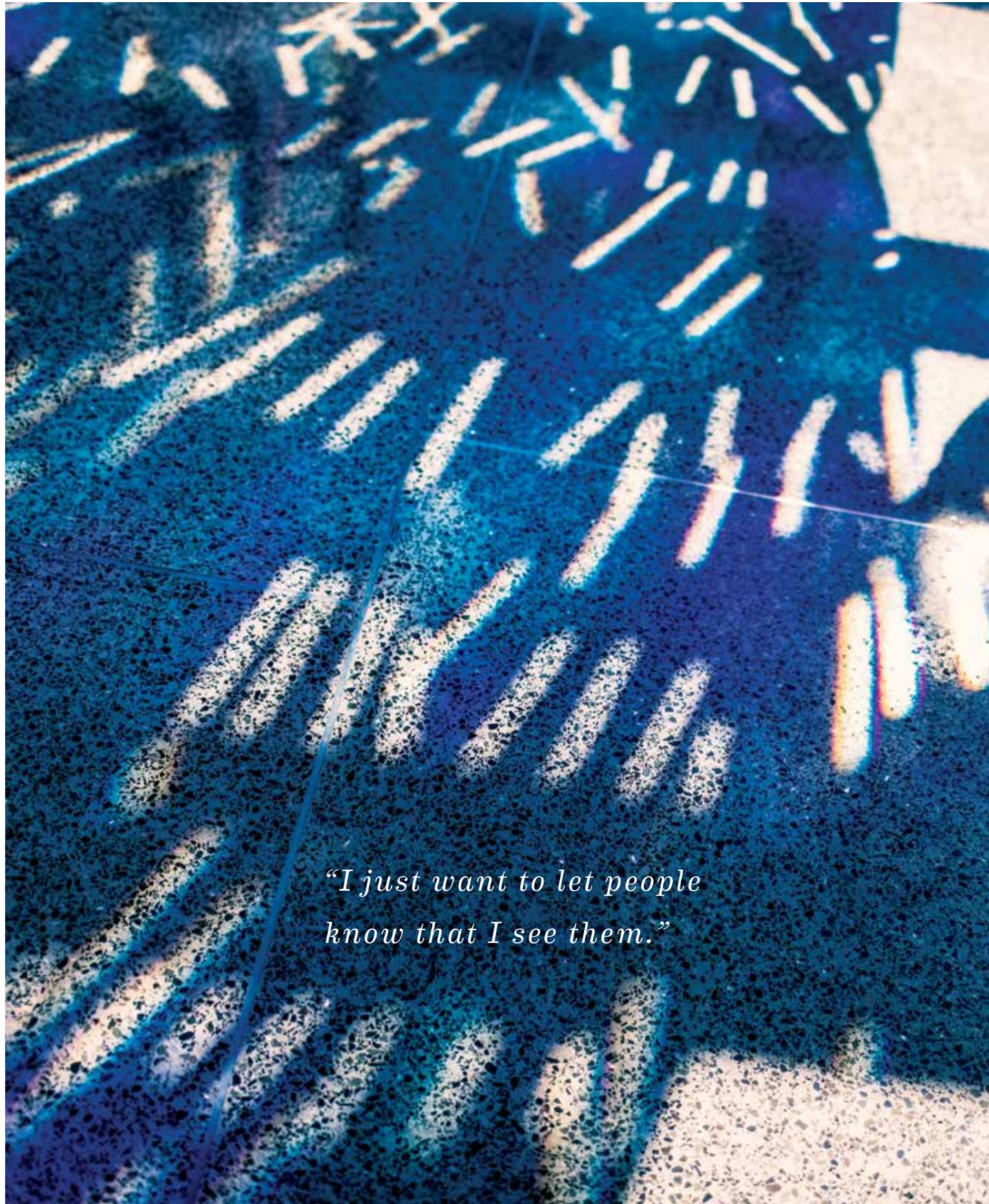
Kristalyn's ministry of encouragement in the small things extends just as much to the passengers on her flights. From the Midwest to the South, the East Coast to Hawaii and Alaska, the routes she flies offer opportunities to interact with people from all different cultures within and outside of the United 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."

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



*“I just want to let people know that I see them.”*



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 filled 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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# ain't i beautiful?

Rick Reynolds shares how in choosing to look at—and not past—the poor, he's seen himself and the image of God

Written by ANDRE HENRY

Photographed by NATE HARRISON

“**W**E DON'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.

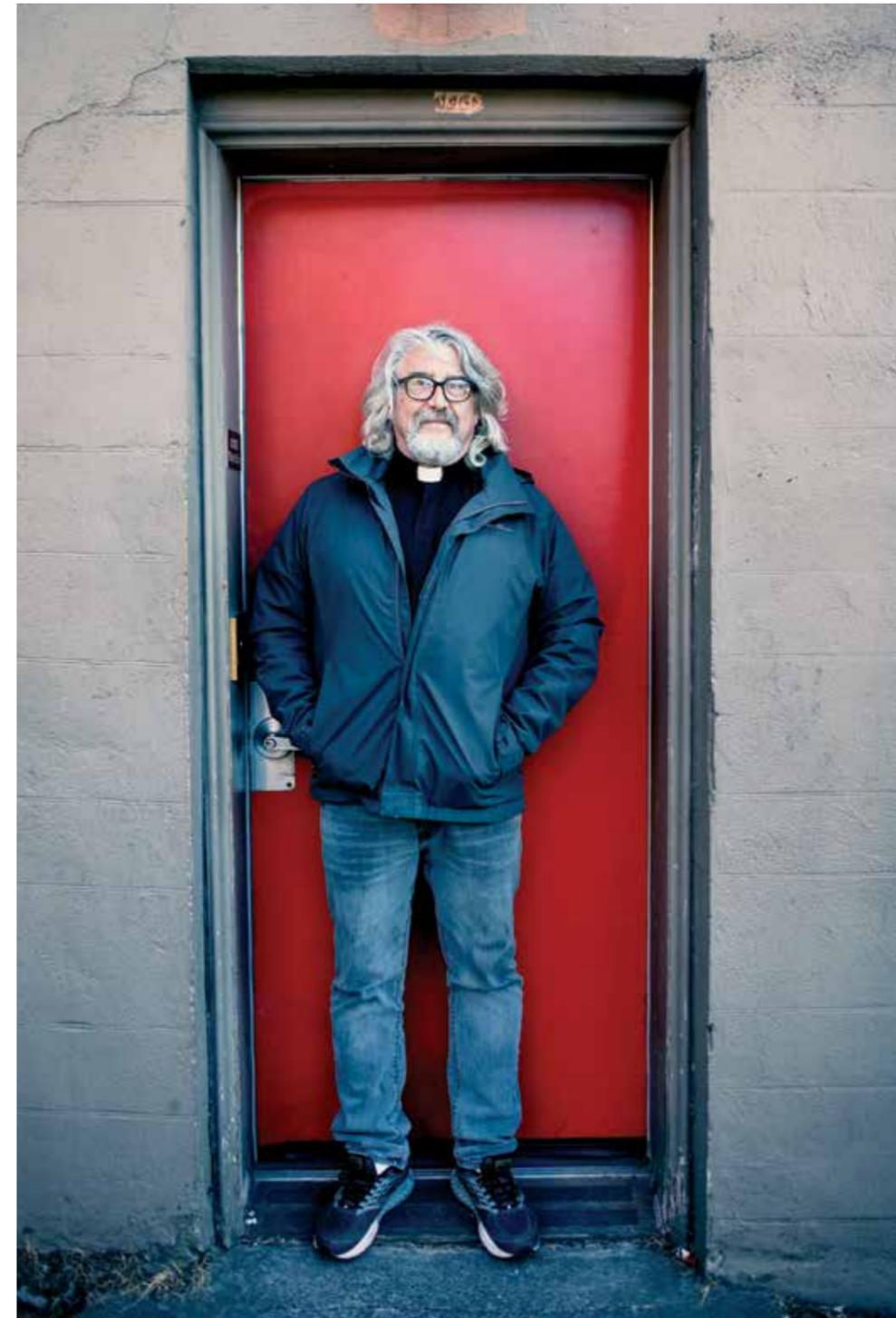
During his first quarter in seminary, Rick seemed to find his calling with Operation Nightwatch. Although he was not yet ordained, he bought a clerical collar to wear while passing out pizzas to Seattle's poor as a volunteer with the organization. “Nightwatch said if you're on an ordination track, which 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 cans 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."

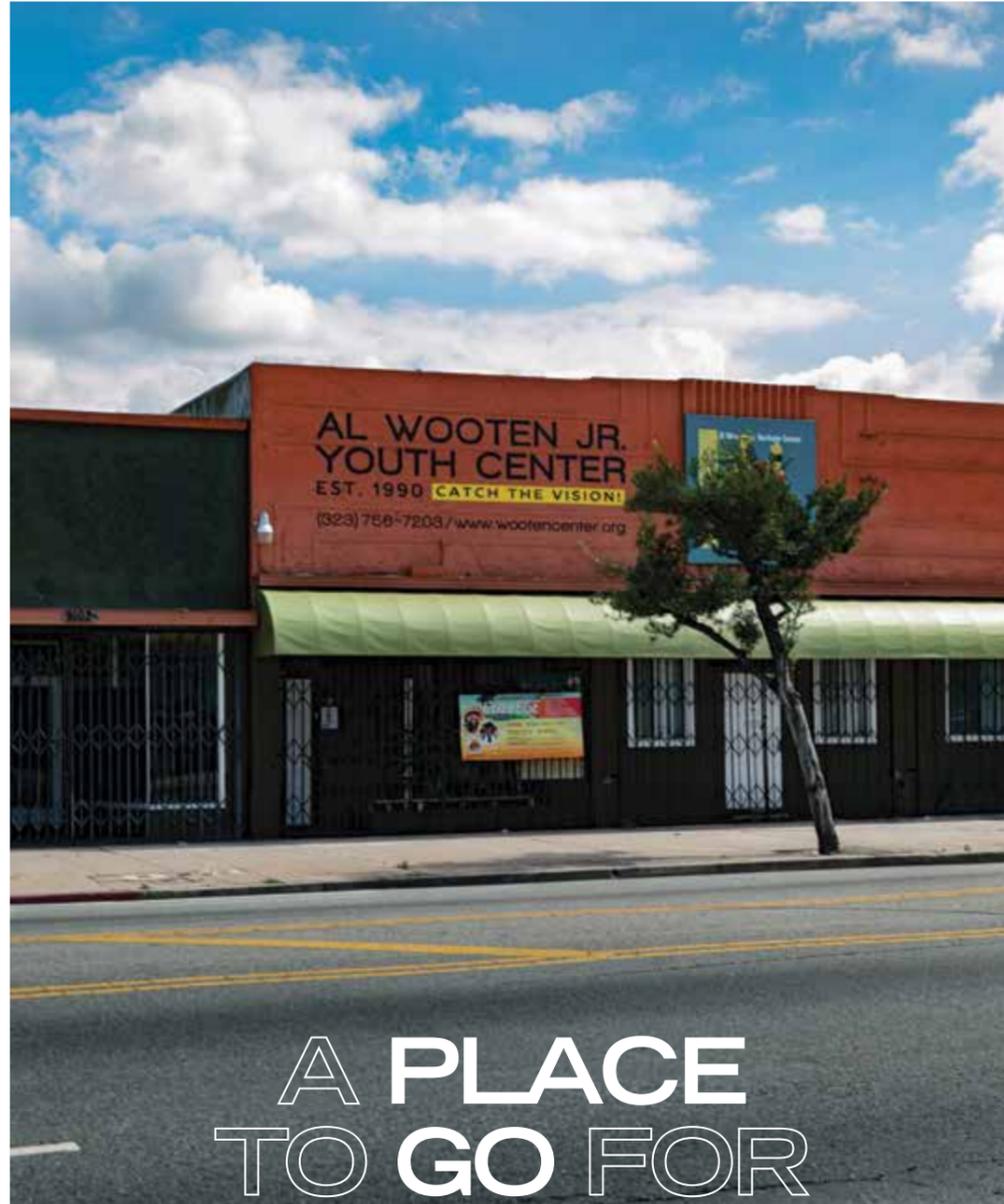
After two and half decades, Rick still understands the temptation many of us have to look past the poor. "There's an awkwardness when you encounter somebody who's maybe panhandling or sitting around. And we all kind of do that little dance around them, and we don't want to look too closely," he says, 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 acknowledgement 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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# 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

**I**N SOUTH LOS Angeles, on 91st and Western, a row of six storefronts faces the humming streets. A colorful mural is painted along a cinderblock wall on one side, detailed with the words “love, understanding, compassion.” On the other end of the mural is a plea: “Please stop the killing because the pain is forever.” Even from the outside, one can sense the weight of the work done in the Al Wooten Jr. Youth Center.

Inside the youth center is a series of interconnected rooms—winding and maze-like in order to connect what used to be six separate retail stores. University pennants line the hallways. Tacked to a bulletin board are college plan worksheets filled out by students from third to twelfth grade, detailing their career aspirations and goals for higher education.

Naomi McSwain (MAICS '09), executive director of the center, explains the 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 honor that went against the spirit and system of violence that ended 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 memorials 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.”

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 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 never entered my mind that I would end up back here,”

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.

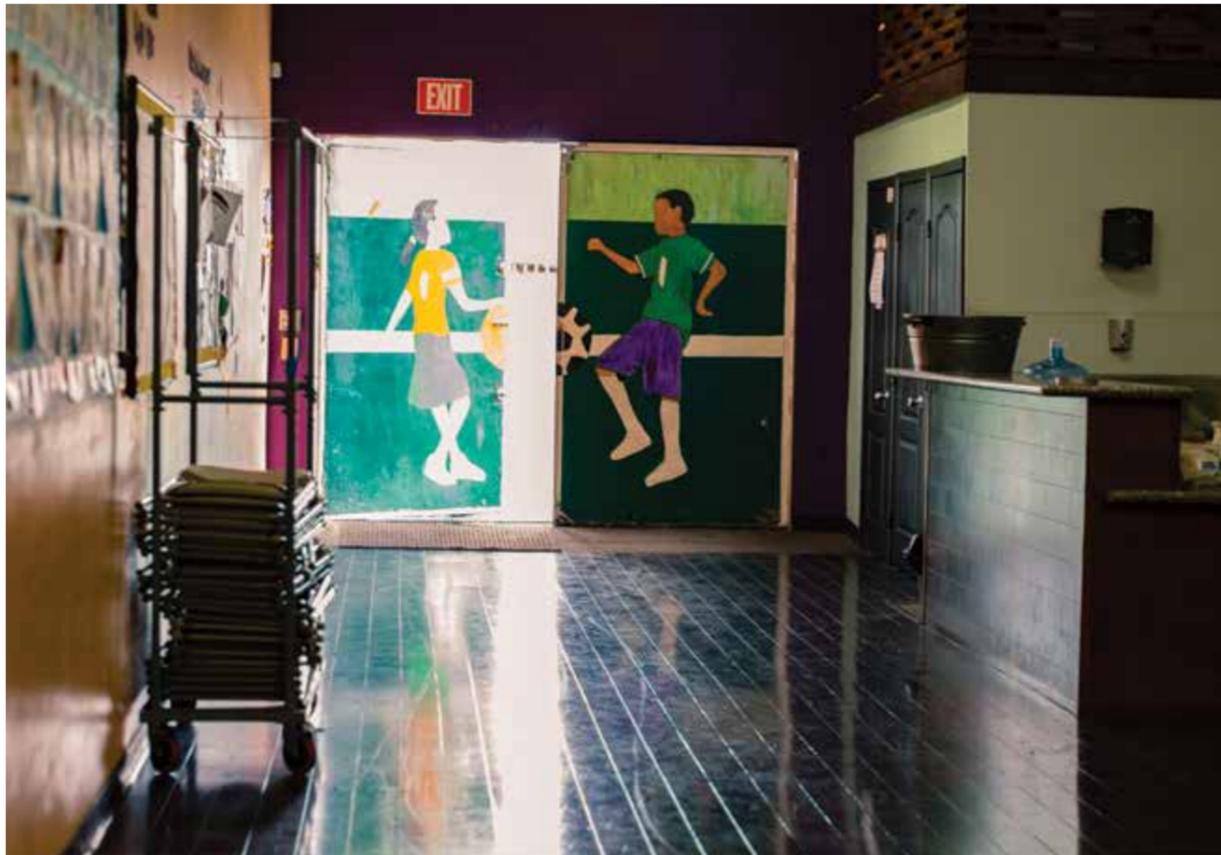
Everything the center does in its after-school program is project based. Instead of math or science lectures, the kids have math and science labs—time to learn through practice. “The kids love it,” Naomi says.

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





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



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.” ■

✦ [Learn more about the Wooten Center at www.wootencenter.org/supporters/.](http://www.wootencenter.org/supporters/)

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# ONE SECOND CHANCE AT A TIME

At Dale House, Jim Oraker helps at-risk teens find a second chance

Written by ALIX RILEY

Photographed by NATE HARRISON

**I**T 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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# FROM WITHDRAWAL TO SUFFERING WITH

by Cynthia Eriksson  
Guest Theology Editor

The natural human response to pain is withdrawal. We hide, avoid, numb, deflect, and blame. It is normal to protect oneself. But the gospel tells a different story: Jesus is moved with compassion. Jesus weeps and cries out. Jesus goes to the cross, and Jesus reaches with forgiveness into the pain of betrayal. Jesus suffers *with*.

We are all called to be present in suffering. Present to the reality of our own pain (Phil 3:10). Present to God with the truth of our deep emotions (Ps 88). Present to our loved ones as their pain rips a hole in our comfort (John 11:33-35). And present to the suffering of the oppressed, the poor, and the marginalized (Ps 82:3; Rom 12:15).

Yet sometimes in our faith communities, suffering may be spoken only after the rescue has come. We value the testimony of triumph, while it is harder to swallow a testimony of pain, confusion, loss, disappointment, or anger toward God.

# DEJANDO DE ALEJARNOS Y COMENZANDO A SUFRIR CON LOS DEMÁS

por Cynthia Eriksson

La respuesta humana natural al dolor es evitarlo. Nos escondemos, evitamos, entumecemos, desviamos y culpamos. Es normal protegerse a uno/a mismo/a. Pero, el evangelio cuenta una historia diferente.

Jesús es movido a compasión. Jesús llora y clama. Jesús va a la cruz, y Jesús alcanza con perdón el dolor de la traición. Jesús sufre *en compañerismo*.

Todos estamos llamados/as a estar presentes en el sufrimiento. Presentes a la realidad de nuestro propio dolor (Filipenses 3:10). Presentes a Dios con la verdad de nuestras emociones profundas (Sal 88). Presentes a nuestros seres queridos, ya que su dolor hace un agujero en nuestra comodidad (Juan 11: 33-35). Y presentes al sufrimiento de las oprimidas, los pobres y los marginados (Sal 82: 3; Rom 12:15).

Sin embargo, en nuestras comunidades de fe, se habla de sufrimiento solo después de que haya llegado el rescate. Valoramos el testimonio de triunfo, mientras que es más difícil tragar un testimonio de dolor,

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That is why *suffering with* is so very important.

The “*with-ness*” in suffering has many postures. It can be a commitment to walking the journey together. Jude Tiersma Watson and Chris Albisurez describe the gift of mutual transformation made possible by vulnerably sharing painful stories. Mary Glenn writes of the unique challenge of walking with those experiencing the pain of suicide.

“*With-ness*” can also be honest leadership that models pain and uncertainty. As Eun Ah Cho challenges us, we do not serve our community or Christ when we keep others away from our suffering. Sarah Ashley Hill describes the importance of showing the messy journey of pain, in particular for leaders in places where trauma is embedded in daily life. Ed Willmington calls us to suffer with those who are suffering for the sake of the gospel.

confusión, pérdida, decepción o enojo hacia Dios.

Por eso es tan importante el *sufrir en compañerismo* con los/as demás.

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

El sufrimiento con los demás también puede ser un liderazgo honesto que modela el dolor y la incertidumbre. Como Eun Ah Cho nos desafía, 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 desordenado viaje del dolor, en particular para los líderes en lugares donde el trauma está incrustado en la vida diaria. Ed Willmington, a

반면, 고통과 혼란과 상실과 낙심과 하나님을 향한 분노에 대해서 입을 떼는 것을 어려워 합니다.

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고난을 함께하는 것(‘with-ness’)은 여러 모습으로 드러납니다. 어떤 이들에게 이것은 긴 여정을 함께 견뎌다는 헌신입니다. Jude Tiersma Watson과 Chris Albisurez는 지워지지 않는 고통스러운 경험에 대해 이야기하며 자신의 약한 부분을 드러내는 가운데 시작되는 상호 변화의 선물에 대해서 말해줍니다. Mary Glenn은 자살로 인해 고통받는 이들과 함께 걷는 일의 특별한 어려움에 대해 서술합니다.

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How do we walk in the presence of real joy and real pain? Daniel Lee reminds us to suffer unabashedly with God, with lament and imprecation. Alexia Salvatierra examines Latin American views of suffering, offering a perspective of redemptive suffering that leads to liberation. I encourage us to consider the discipline of making space for the transformative work of Christ in our own lives, even as we open our hearts to hold, feel, and digest the pain of others.

There is hope. It is in the living and *suffering with* that we grow, “knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (Rom 5:3-4).

Hope is not in withdrawal. It is in *WITH!*

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. Alexia Salvatierra examina la visión latinoamericana del sufrimiento, ofreciendo una perspectiva del sufrimiento redentor que conduce a la liberación. Nos animo a considerar la disciplina de hacer espacio para la obra transformadora de Cristo en nuestras propias vidas, incluso cuando abrimos nuestros corazones para sostener, sentir y digerir el dolor de los demás.

Hay esperanza. Es en el vivir y el *sufrir con lo demás* con lo que crecemos, “sabiendo que el sufrimiento produce paciencia, y la paciencia produce carácter, y el carácter produce esperanza” (Rom 5:3-4).

La esperanza no se retira. ¡Permanece!

그리고 Ed Willmington은 복음을 위해 고난 당하는 이들과 함께 고난 당할 것을 요청합니다.

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## SUFFERING WITH: A TENDER JOURNEY OF MUTUALITY IN SUFFERING, COMFORT, AND JOY

Cynthia Eriksson

Cynthia Eriksson (PhD '97, MAT '96) thought she was going to be a missionary. But by following God's call, she serves today as associate professor of psychology and chair of the doctor of psychology (PsyD) program in the School of Psychology. Her research and teaching have focused on trauma, spirituality, burnout, and staff care for ministry leaders of many types. She has conducted research and training in several international contexts (including Uganda, Jordan, and Guatemala), but the joy of raising her two sons, Noah (19) and Ian (15), and partnering with her husband, Nord, always brings her home.

**W**rite “tenderly.” That was the prompting I felt from God as I prayed for the umpteenth 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 is one that holds great joy and great sorrow. You have seen the best and the worst of people. The really difficult thing (that likely no one warned you about) is that you cannot go back. You cannot un-hear 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, consoling and exhorting, 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?<sup>1</sup> 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 *Can You Drink the Cup?*<sup>2</sup> When James and John, the sons of Zebedee, press 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' cup is the cup of sorrow, not just his own sorrow, but the sorrow of the whole human race. It is a cup full of physical, mental, and spiritual anguish.”<sup>3</sup> Nouwen invites the reader to reflect on the actions this question implies: holding, lifting, 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 storytellers makes the cup of sorrow personal and deeply painful. Psychologists have noted the extent of this pain. In her seminal book *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman writes, “trauma is contagious.”<sup>4</sup> This contagion of traumatic events can spread as you hear a detailed account and picture the experience. Perhaps it is a young woman sharing about the night she was assaulted on a date. Or maybe it is a man describing what he saw when he regained consciousness in the wreckage of a car accident. The stories draw you in, and you

become emotionally, physically, and spiritually engaged.

That engagement can have a cost. It is possible to develop posttraumatic stress disorder just by hearing stories about traumatic events from people we care about.<sup>5</sup> The stories can stick, and the pain is real. It may be that these stories are reminders of earlier pain: memories of our own abuse, neglect, frightening events, or loss. It may also be that the accumulation of stories begins to wear down our capacity to process the emotions. The threat of tragedy and violation can become a shadow that colors our lenses on the world. We can begin to store up evidence that the world is not safe or that people are not trustworthy. All of those examples of pain can begin to cloud our ability to see the hopeful possibilities of human kindness, 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 nightmares, or we can find ourselves easily irritated and jumpy. We may feel especially revved up 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.”<sup>6</sup>

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'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 antidote?

The divine answer to that question is, “No!” Just as Jesus “moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:14, *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.<sup>7</sup>

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 to indirect trauma (including myself) 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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 and feel, rather than disconnect and stay at the surface.<sup>10</sup> The skill needed in this moment is attention to our own feelings as we are present with others'. Noticing our feelings and naming them are steps to “metabolize” pain.<sup>11</sup> When we try to suppress or avoid our feelings, leaving them unexamined and unresolved, we are at risk of bringing those feelings, and the associated physical and cognitive labor, into the rest of our day.

This is not a passive stance in the work of suffering with; rather, experiencing our emotions in this way is actually a skill we can develop. As we pay attention to our feelings, we are also paying attention to our bodily experience. A clenched stomach, tight shoulders, or feeling agitated or jumpy are all signals of our internal state. We can practice taking slow rhythmic breaths, pressing our feet into the floor, and grounding ourselves in the present moment.

Another active skill to practice is attention to rumination. Miller and Sprang note:

*The content of ruminations involves a focus on what we are feeling, and is usually a passive re-experiencing of disquieting events. Ruminations often focus on judgments about the events or people involved and the negative aspect of what happened, or what we should have done, or what was so distressful about what someone else did.*<sup>12</sup>

Rumination happens when we let our minds wander. You can hear the temptation to blame the self or others, to grasp at the illusion of control, or to worry. Yet we are called to “capture every thought” (2 Cor 10:5).

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 (rumination actually reduces our ability to problem solve). Then, a key step in dismantling the ruminative process is to move from passive to active. Capture those wandering 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 prayerfully give the situation

to God in lament or intercession. If you find yourself ruminating at other times of day, move to activities that require attention and build positive emotion (such as exercise or a productive hobby) or seek connection in relationships (and avoid isolation).<sup>13</sup>

As you reflect on the skills and resources you have developed to support the call of suffering with, ask yourself these 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 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.*<sup>14</sup>

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 blessed! He is the compassionate Father and God of all comfort. He's the one who comforts us in all our trouble so that we can comfort other people who are in every kind of trouble. We offer the same comfort that we ourselves received from God. That is because we receive so much comfort through Christ in the same way that we share so many of Christ's sufferings. So if we have trouble, it is to bring you comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is to bring you comfort from the experience of endurance while you go through the same sufferings that we also suffer. Our hope for you is certain, because we know that as you are partners in suffering, so also you are partners in comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:3–7)*

This is an active, healing, mutual transformation. In fact, notice that Paul uses the plural pronouns to remind us that both the comfort and the suffering are communal experiences.<sup>15</sup> It is embarrassing to admit that for many years as a white, highly educated, upper-middle-class privileged woman, I held an idea of comfort as though it meant “comfortable.” I functioned out of an expectation that being “comforted” by God would allow me the strength to reach out and be a comfort to

others. But what if it is less of a state of being, and more of an active process? By being in the midst of experiencing the comfort of Christ as I am honest and open to the suffering in my own and others' hearts, I am available to be a channel of Christ's comfort to others. We are sharing both suffering and consolation (v. 7). By being open to pain, I am open to Christ's comfort, and in receiving that comfort, I am present to the pain of others.

In the drinking and digesting—metabolizing—of the cup of suffering, we experience the mutuality of joining in relationship. It is only when we are *with* the sufferer that we are blessed to hear the day-to-day grace, the moments of God's provision, the gratitude for ordinary miracles, or the internal transformation of character that the Spirit works. As witnesses to this healing, we can also find the strength to bring our own pain to God and others. Through mutuality God's transforming power continues to shape us.

Remember, though Paul was speaking about all affliction, it was in the context of being disciples of Christ. Living out the gospel brings pain and trial, but it also is rooted in the hope of the kingdom to come. As we suffer with, we are also challenged to consider what action we can take to bring change or justice.<sup>16</sup> We are not simply called to comfort and be comforted, we are called to discern the unique ways that God has equipped us to act. We can move from feeling and thinking to acting.

As we suffer with others, we are comforted, invited to transformation, and moved to act in solidarity. The suffering sparks our indignation, the consolation reminds us of the hope of the kingdom coming, and God's presence brings the joy that sustains us. This is a tender journey of mutual healing that ends with joy. ■

#### ENDNOTES

1. Consider the reflections of Kate Bowler in her book *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved* (New York: Random House, 2018). Further, Mark Labberton interviewed Bowler for the *Conversing* podcast: fullerstudio.fuller.edu/kate-bowler-on-suffering/.
2. H. J. Nouwen, *Can You Drink the Cup?* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2006).
3. *Ibid.*, 39.
4. J. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: BasicBooks, 1992), 140.
5. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).
6. For a recent review of literature on these topics see C.B. Eriksson, A. Wilkins, and N. Frederick, “Trauma, Faith, and Care for the Counselor,” in *Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling*, ed. H. D. Gingrich and F. Gingrich (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2017).
7. R. L. Harrison and M. J. Westwood, “Preventing Vicarious Traumatization of Mental Health Therapists: Identifying Protective Practices,” *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 46, no. 2 (2009): 203–219.
8. Additional resources: International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies, [www.istss.org/treating-trauma/self-care-for-providers/](http://www.istss.org/treating-trauma/self-care-for-providers/); Secondary Traumatic Stress Coalition, [www.stscoalition.com/](http://www.stscoalition.com/); Institute for Collective Trauma and Growth, [www.ictg.org/downloadable-guidelines/](http://www.ictg.org/downloadable-guidelines/).
9. K. Shoji et al., “What Comes First, Job Burnout or Secondary Traumatic Stress? Findings from Two Longitudinal Studies from the U.S. and Poland.” *PLoS ONE* 10, no. 8 (2015).
10. B. Miller and G. Sprang, “A Components-Based Practice and Supervision Model for Reducing Compassion Fatigue by Affecting Clinician Experience,” *Traumatology* 23, no. 2 (2017): 153–165, 159.
11. *Ibid.*, 156.
12. *Ibid.*, 157.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Nouwen, *Can You Drink the Cup*, 43.
15. P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 67.
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* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005).





## RESPONDING TO SUICIDE WITH THE MINISTRY OF GOD'S PRESENCE

Mary Glenn

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**“S**tudent committed suicide, please call ASAP.”

The text flashed across my phone while I was sitting in my Tuesday night Bible study. It is the kind of text I have received countless times before, and it is never easy to read. A 14-year-old Chinese boy from an immigrant family killed himself. As the local senior police chaplain, I was called in to provide support, grief care, and help to school personnel. When I arrived at the school the next morning, I was asked to meet in the vice principal's office with the student's teachers and guidance counselors. These staff members were in shock, wrestling with grief and guilt. They asked the “what if” questions: What if I missed something? What if I could have stopped him from doing this?

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 role as a chaplain is not to negate someone's feelings, but to walk with them through their grief.

Before arriving on the scene of a suicide, I remind myself of my particular lens as a white, Irish, Christian, female law enforcement chaplain. The Irish commonly practice and give space for public and communal grief and mourning traditions. There are countless cultural, ethnic, religious, and geographic traditions with regard to loss. It is paramount that I reflect on my own cultural, vocational,

and life experience with, understanding of, and responses to grief. In addition to being aware of my lenses, I try to be sensitive to the lens and understandings of those whose worlds I step into. Their cultural experience with and practices of grief could be starkly different from my own. There is no normative approach to death, including suicide—but there are best practices that span the diversity.

### RISK FOR SUICIDE

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2016 suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34. There were more than twice as many suicides (44,965) in the United States as there were homicides (19,362).<sup>1</sup>

The concern is not just for completed suicides, but also for suicide attempts. It may never be known why an individual takes—or attempts to take—his or her life, or what influences those reasons. There are, however, some warning signs we can watch for. For more information on assessing the risk of individuals for suicide, see the sidebar that accompanies this article.

### SUFFERING WITH

On my first day as a police chaplain, I received my first call out: to deliver 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 death notification to the mother and father—but a relative visiting from Hong Kong was the only English speaker in the home. After we shared the news with the relative, she was overcome with shock and grief, bringing confusion to the parents who still didn't know what was happening. When the parents comprehended 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 each of us 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 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 be angry 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 each 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 to suicide 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.<sup>2</sup> He was involved in sports and service 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 opportu-

nity for us to educate people about suicide prevention.

During the service, we spoke from John 12:24: “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 their lives to the fullest. The memory of this young man now lives in them. We encouraged them to tell others that they care for them and to reach out to those who may feel hopeless.

When the seed dies, 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' care and compassion through listening and being with. During the baptism of Jesus, the Father speaks affirmation and value over Jesus in Matthew 3:17, saying, “This is my

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 on 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 them 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.”

“Together we will find you the help you need.”

“It won’t always be this way.”

“I may not know exactly what you are feeling, but I care about you and I want to help.”

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.** Clichés we use with others can bring more pain. The fact that this individual was 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.<sup>3</sup>

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 OTHERS 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 after tragedies like suicide. Working collaboratively requires ongoing communication before the crisis. This partnership will provide support and care for care-givers and



those who have lost loved ones.

9. **REMINDE 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 32:7 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](http://www.newhopegrief.org)

Jerry Sittser, *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss*

*This article is adapted with permission from a two-part series previously published on the Fuller Youth Institute blog: “In the Aftermath of Suicide: Helping Communities Heal” and “In the Aftermath of Teen Suicide: Working Toward Prevention,” as well as the post “Ministry of Presence.” Find all at [fulleryouthinstitute.org/articles](http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/articles).*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) Leading Causes of Death Reports*, 2016, <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcause.html>.
2. One study revealed that teens under 18 who lost a parent to suicide were three times more likely to commit suicide than children and teens with living parents. See “Children Who Lose a Parent to Suicide More Likely to Die the Same Way, Study Finds,” *ScienceDaily*, April 23, 2010; [www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com).
3. In some cultures, loyalty to community and tradition can be valued above individual feelings. Anthropologist Ruth Benedict says that in a guilt culture, you know you are good or bad by what your conscience feels, but in a shame culture, you know you are good or bad by what your community says and whether it honors or excludes 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, 2016; [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com).

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

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 and understanding, 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 contem-

plating suicide may feel lost, overwhelmed, hurt, confused, alone, and disconnected. All people have needs for attachment, affirmation, and a sense that their lives matter. Do 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 walk with them through their pain.

#### RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
1-800-273-8255 / [suicidpreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidpreventionlifeline.org)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

Ask Suicide-Screening Questions Toolkit: [www.nimh.nih.gov/labs-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/labs-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials)

Karen Mason, *Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014).



조은아는 풀러신학교 코리아센터의 타 문화 리더십 조교수이자 신교학 한국어 MA과정과 ThM 과정의 프로그램 책임자입니다. 연구 및 교수 전공 분야는 리더십 개발과 변화에 적응하는 지도력입니다.

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## 고독한 고난의 우월감에서 더불어 고난의 겸손함으로

조은아

이 글의 목적은 두 가지입니다. 첫째는 고독한 고난을 자랑하려는 경향이 한국 교회 안에 있음을 돌아보도록 도전하는 것이고, 둘째는 자신의 고난에 다른 이들이 동참할 수 있도록 겸손히 초청하라고 한국 교회를 권면하는 것입니다. 이 두 가지 목적을 염두에 두고 저는 구체적으로 1) ‘한’과 ‘삭힘’이라는 개념 및 경험이 어우러져 한국 교회가 고난을 대하는 방식에 어떤 영향을 미쳤는지를 살펴보고, 2) 한국 교회가 상호 의존적인 삶에 새롭게 헌신할 때 어떻게 그리스도의 몸 가운데서 은혜를 발견하게 될지에 대해서 살펴보려 합니다.

### 한과 삭힘

아주 간단히 말하면, ‘한’이란 일종의 고난입니다. 한이란 일반적으로 분노를 동반하는 ‘강렬한 고난을 느끼고 있는 상태’를 일컫습니다.[i] 한이란 ‘정당화될 수 없는 고난’에서 비롯된 ‘해소되지 못한 감정들’을 가리킵니다.[ii] 좀 더 구체적으로, 한이란 ‘심신상에 가해진 관계적, 사회적치적, 경제적, 문화적 압박과 억압’을 겪은 후에 발생하며 대개 억눌린 채 지속되는 ‘마음 속의 허탈한 고통’으로 정의됩니다.[iii] 오랫동안 한은 한국의 역사가 내면화된 것의 한 예로서,[iv] 한국인의 ‘깊은 무의식 기저에 내재’되어 있다고 이해되어 왔습니다.[v] 이렇게 분노와 적대감과 복수심 위에 쌓인 한은 외부로 향한 공격성으로 발전할 수 있는데, 보복 범죄와 같은 극단적인 형태로 표출되기도 합니다.

한에 대한 이상의 정의 및 함의와 관련해, 이런 질문을 던져봅니다. 한이란 한국인만이 지닌 독특한 개념이고 경험인가? 많은 이들이 그렇다고 생각하지만, 필자의 주장은 아닙니다.

그동안 한은 한국인의 핏속에 흐르는 집단 정서로 규정되어 왔습니다.[vi] 심지어 역사적으로 수많은 외침과 압제와 지배 계층의 폭압을 겪은 한국이라는 나라의 실존 그 자체가 한이라고 이해되기도 했습니다.[vii] 그래서 필자를 비롯해 많은 한국인은 한의 모태에서 태어나 한에 의해 길러진다는 말을 듣고 자랍니다. 세계의 다른 여러 나라나 민족들도 마음과 정신에 깊은 상처를 남긴 유사한 억압과 불의의 경험을 지니고 있습니다. 그러나 한은 여러 역동적인 정서들과 얽혀있고, 한국어에는 이러한 정서들을 절묘하게 구분하고 설명해주는 풍부한 어휘가 있기 때문에 한을 다른 나라 말로 번역하는 것은 쉽지 않습니다. 그럼에도

불구하고, 이런 언어상의 이유가 한을 한국인에게 국한된 것이라 단정할 정당한 근거가 될 수는 없습니다. 필자는 한이 한국인에게 독특한 이유는 한이라는 경험 그 자체가 아니라 한을 품고 내면으로 들어가 복수의 순환 고리를 끊어버리기로 결정하는 방식이라고 생각합니다.

그렇다면 어떻게 한국인은 한을 품고 내면으로 들어가며, 어떻게 그로 인해 복수의 순환 고리가 끊어지게 되는 것일까요? 이 질문에 답하려면 한을 더 깊이 이해할 필요가 있으며, 더 깊은 이해를 위해서는 한국인의 ‘삭힘’이라 불리는 개념 및 경험에 비추어 한을 이해하는 것이 필요합니다.

쉽게 말해 ‘삭힘’이란 발효 과정입니다. 가장 적절한 비유를 하나 들자면 한국의 대표적인 반찬인 김치, 즉 발효된 배추를 떠올리면 될 것 같습니다. 김치의 맛과 품질은 얼마나 잘 발효되었는가에 좌우됩니다. 좋은 김치를 담기 위해서는 최소 한 달 이상 독 안에 넣어 땅 속에 묻어두어야 합니다. 이 기간 동안 김치의 참 맛이 우러나게 되는데, 이는 인위적으로 만들어내는 맛이 아닙니다. 김치의 매력적인 맛은 침묵 가운데, 그러나 역동적인 인내와 고립의 시간에서 비롯됩니다. 그리고 마침내 새로운 무언가로 변화합니다. 이제는 더 이상 날 배추가 아니라, 식탁에 올려질 준비가 끝난 잘 발효된 김치로 변한 것입니다.

이와 유사하게 한 사람이 ‘삭힘’의 여정을 가기로 선택할 때 한은 변화하게 됩니다. ‘내면으로의 퇴보’[viii]가 시작되고, 결국에 가서는 오랜 세월 충족되지 못한 바람들로 인해 쌓인 분노와 절망이 ‘수용과 친밀함’으로 변화하기에 이릅니다.[ix] 타인을 향해 원한을 품거나 공격성을 표출하는 대신에 삭힘, 즉 ‘심리적 발효’가 일어날 때 사람은 새로운 무언가를 경험합니다. 고통스럽고 쓰라린 유감과 울분은 온데간데없고, 새로운 희망을 경험하기 시작합니다. 삭힘을 통해 과거에 한(恨)으로 자리 잡았던 것이 이제는 원(願), 즉 열망과 소망으로 바뀌게 됩니다.[x] 더 나아가 삭힘의 과정을 거치면서 사람들은 자신이 다른 이들과 이어져 있음을 느끼는 능력, 특히 유사한 한의 경험을 지닌 사람들과 깊은 유대감을 느끼는 능력이 더욱 발달하게 됩니다. 결과적으로 삭힘을 통해 적대감과 갈등 대신 동정과 공감이 생겨나고, 그렇게 복수의 순환 고리는 끊어지게 됩니다.

한 그 자체의 개념과 경험은 한국인만 경험하는 특유의 것이 아닐지라도, 한을 내면적으로 다스리고 삭힘을 통해 결국 긍정적인 무언가로 승화시키는 것은 한국인의 독특함입니다.

### 삭힘과 고독한 고난

이제 삭힘이라는 개념 및 경험이 한국 교회가 고난을 대하는 방식에 어떠한 영향을 미쳤는지 생각해보려 합니다.

어떤 학자들은 삭힘이 일제의 한국 식민화(1910-1945)에서 비롯되고 지속되었다고 주장했습니다. 이들의 주장에 따르면 일본이 자국인의 안정감 있고 긍정적인 예술 작품을 한국인의 외롭고 슬프고 체념한 듯 보이는 예술 작품을 대조하면서, 한국의 예술 작품에서 발견되는 ‘슬픔의 미’를 강조함으로써 한국을 유약한 나라로 인식시키며 한국이 일본에 의지할 수밖에 없음을 밝혔다는 것입니다. 삭힘이라는 것이 이렇게 의도적으로 문화에 주입되어 발생한 것이든, 아니면 고난 가운데 기질에서 발생한 것이든, 삭힘은 한국 그리스도인들이 고난을 대하는 방식 가운데 드러납니다.

한국 교회의 핍박의 역사 가운데 뚜렷이 드러나는 사실은 한국 교회는 십자가에 대한 믿음과 대속을 위한 그리스도의 고난만을 강조한 것이 아니라, 그리스도와 같이 고난을 경험하는데서 찾게 되는 값진 복 역시 강조했다는 것입니다. 즉 고난을 대하는 한국 그리스도인의 특징적인 태도는 “한 알의 밀이 땅에 떨어져 죽지 아니하면 한 알 그대로 있고 죽으면 많은 열매를 맺느니라(요12:24)”는 말씀에 대한 확신 위에 뿌리를 내려왔습니다. 이 때문에 한국 교회의 전반적인 삶과 사역을 보면 많은 사람을 위해 자신을 희생하라는 가르침이 널리 선포되고, 일반적으로 수용되고, 여러 다양한 모습으로 신실하게 실천되어 왔습니다. 그 결과 고난 당하는 이들과 함께 고난 받고 또 타인을 위해 대신 고난 받으려는 사람이 많이 있지만, 반대로 자신이 고난 가운데 있을 때는 다른 이들이 나의 삶에 들어올 수 있도록 삶을 열어놓는 일에는 주저하는 경향이 한국 그리스도인에게 나타납니다. 역설적이게도 ‘내가 고난 당할 때 다른 이들이 나의 삶으로 들어와 나와 함께 고난 받도록 하는 것’이 한국 교회 안에서는 아주 커다란 도전이 되었습니다. 여기에는 어쩌면 한국 문화 가운데 작동하고 있는 유교적 가치들이 영향을 주었을

수 있습니다. 즉 종교라는 관점을 벗어나서 바라보면, 많은 한국인의 최종 목표는 사회에서 더 높은 자리로 올라가는 것입니다. 이런 사회적 목표가 교회 안으로 스며들어와서, 많은 이들이 자신이 리더의 자리에 있던 그렇게 인식하지 못하든, 영성이라는 위계의 사다리를 더 높이 올라가려 노력합니다. 여기에는 ‘더 영적’인 사람은 그만큼 더 독립적인 사람이어야 한다는 사고도 결부되어 있습니다.

### 우월감에 젖은 고독한 고독에서 떠나

존 오스왈드 샌터스는 우월감을 영적인 지도자가 알아차리기 힘든 위험이라고 설명하면서, 높은 지위로 올라갈 수록 우월감에 빠질 위험 역시 커진다고 말합니다.[xi] 필자는 여기에 동의합니다. 그런데 여기에 덧붙여 영적인 우월감이 커질 수 있는 상황이 또 하나 있음을 지적하고 싶는데, 바로 홀로 고난 받기 위해 지도자가 자신을 공동체로부터 격리시킬 때라는 것입니다. 고독한 고난이 죄는 아닙니다. 실제로 하나님은 그분의 백성을 연단하고 변화시키기 위해 고립시키실 때가 있습니다. 우리는 이것을 받아들이고 하나님이 주권적으로 우리를 고립에서 이끌어내실 때까지 그 가운데 머물러야 합니다.[xii] 하지만 그럼에도 불구하고, 공동체적으로 고난 받기라는 우리의 사명을 간과해서는 안 됩니다. 그리스도 안에서 그리스도와 함께 고난 받는 것, 그리고 그리스도의 더 큰 몸 안에서 서로 함께 고난 받는 것은 우리의 사명입니다.

고난은 우리의 참 모습을 드러냅니다. 따라서 고난 당할 때 다른 이들이 다가와 나를 도울 수 있도록 초청하려면 겸손이 필요합니다. 겸손은 배워야 하는 것인데, 고립된 상태에서는 겸손을 배울 수 없습니다. 자만을 극복하는 방법은 다른 이들과 연결되는 것입니다. 무엇보다 우리는 홀로 서 있을 때 겸손할 수 없습니다. 겸손해지기 위해서, 그리고 겸손해지기 위해 필요한 것들을 경험하기 위해서 우리는 서로를 필요로 합니다. 겸손해지기 위해서는 자신의 연약함을 인정하고 남들의 시선 앞에 연약함을 드러내는 용기가 필요합니다. 마찬가지로 신뢰 역시 배워야 하는 것인데, 고립된 상태에서는 신뢰를 배울 수 없습니다. 불신을 극복하는 방법은 다른 이들과의 관계 가운데로 들어가는 것입니다. 어쨌거나 홀로 서 있을 때에는 신뢰가 무엇인지, 신뢰에 필요한 것이 무엇인지를 알 방법이 없습니다. 겸손과 신뢰는 우리를 연결해주고, 반면에 우월감과 불신은 우리를 갈라놓습니다.

삭힘을 자연스럽게 물려주고 무의식적으로 배우게 되는 문화 가운데 살아가면서 한국의 그리스도인들은 그리스도의 몸에서 떨어져 나와 홀로 고난 받는 것을 자랑으로 여기게 되기 쉽습니다. 고립 가운데 조용히 고난 받는 것을 규범으로 제시하는 문화 속에서, 그리고 고독하게 고난 받는 이들을 더 성숙하고 복되다고 인정하는 문화 속에서, 한국의 그리스도인들은 은혜의 공동체를 경험하지 못하게 될 수 있습니다.

한국 교회는 겸손과 신뢰를 회복해야 합니다. 그리고 겸손과 신뢰를 통해 고난 가운데서 도움을 외면하지 말아야 합니다. 우리를 “반목과 소외에서 불러내어 구속의 관계로 이끄시는” 예수님의 음성을 듣고 그 음성에 응답해야 합니다.[xiii] 외롭게 고난 받는 그리스도인이 되라고 우리를 부르신 것이 아님을 한국의 그리스도인들은 깨달아야 합니다. 무엇보다 그리스도께로 나아가려면 그리스도의 몸의 교제 가운데로 나아가지 않을 수 없습니다.[xiv] 우리에게는 우리를 바라보시고, 우리의 소리에 귀 기울이시고, 우리와 함께 고난 받으시는 하나님만 계신 것이 아니라, 함께 바라보고 경청하고 고난을 나눌 서로가 있습니다. 우리에게는 우리의 연약함을 도우시는 성령님만 계신 것이 아니라(롬8:26), 서로의 짐을 져주며(롬8:26) 은혜를 얻도록 도와줄(히4:16) 서로가 있습니다.

하나님의 은혜에 참여하라는 부르심을 받았음에도 불구하고 피상적인 관계를 가운데서 험겁게 살아가는 지도자들을 바라보는 것은 언제나 가슴 아픈 일입니다. 남들에게는 그리스도 안에서 받는 고난에 대해 가르치면서도, 자신은 고립된 채 여전히 해결되지 않은 문제 및 질문과 씨름하고 있을 것 같습니다. 기쁨 때든 고난 가운데 있을 때든 한국 교회 안에서 하나님 백성의 삶에서 발견되는 관계적 실체들이 회복되어야 합니다. 하나님의 백성은 상호 협력적이고 상호 의존적으로 서로의 고난에 참여하는 가운데 하나님의 은혜를 발견하기 위해 “은혜의 보좌 앞에 담대히 나아”가도록 도전 받고 격려받아야 합니다 (히4:16).

### 겸손한 상호 의존의 삶을 향하여

성경을 보면 하나님의 백성은 기쁨 떠나 고난 받을 때나 관계 가운데서 살아갑니다. 구약 성경에서 예를 찾아보면, 모세와 아론과 미리암과 여호수아는 광야길을 헤쳐가는 동안 함께 기뻐하며 함께 고난 받습니다. 또 가나안을 정복하고 지파 별로 분배하는 과정에서



여호수아와 엘르아살 역시 함께 기뻐하며 함께 고난 받습니다. 모르드개와 에스터도 비교적 짧은 시간이었지만 유배지에서 살아가는 유대인들의 목숨을 구하기 위해 함께 기뻐하며 고난 받습니다. 하나님의 성전을 재건하기 위해 학개, 스가랴, 여호수아, 스룹바벨은 사람들 앞에서나 뒤에서나 함께 울고 웃으며 동역합니다. 뿐만 아니라 느헤미야와 에스라 역시 예루살렘 성벽을 재건하기 위해 함께 기뻐하며 고난 받습니다.

신약 성경 역시 그리스도를 위해 함께 기뻐하며 고난 받는 하나님 백성의 이야기로 가득합니다. 특별히 바울과 그리스도 안의 수많은 형제 자매들 사이에 형성된 강한 유대감을 주목하게 됩니다. 바울은 홀로 일하거나, 홀로 기뻐하거나, 홀로 고난 받지 않았습니니다. 바울은 그리스도의 고난에 동참하는 가운데 다른 이들을 초청해 자신이 겪는 경험에 참여하도록 했습니다. 바울은 겸손하게 그리고 신뢰 가운데 그리스도 안의 형제 자매들에게 자신의 고난에 힘을 같이 해달라고 요청했습니다 (롬15:30).

우리는 상호 의존의 삶으로 부름을 받은 하나님의 백성입니다. 신약 성경에는 ‘서로 서로’가 언급되는 명령이 많습니니다. 주님은 우리에게 서로 사랑하고(요 13:34), 서로 받고(롬15:7), 서로 문안하고(롬16:16; 고전16:20; 고후13:12; 벧전5:14), 서로 복종하고(엡 5:18-21), 서로 용납하고(엡4:1-3; 골3:12-14), 서로 용서하고(엡4:31-32), 서로 돌보고(고전12:24-25), 서로 죄를 고백 (약5:16)하라고 명령하십니다. 뿐만 아니라 서로 덕을 세우고(롬14:19; 살전5:11), 서로 가르치고(골3:16), 서로 권면하고(살전5:11; 히3:12-13), 서로 충고하고(롬15:14; 골3:16), 서로 시와

공동체 가운데서 살라고 부름 받았습니니다. 심지어 고난 중이라도 하나님은 우리가 믿음과 소망과 사랑의 관계적인 삶을 살기를 원하십니다.

**맺는말**  
한국 교회는 즐거워하는 자들과 함께 즐거워하고 우는 자들과 함께 울라는 말씀을 신실하게 지켜왔습니다 (롬12:15; 고전12:26). 하지만 한과 삭힘의 영향 아래 많은 한국 그리스도인들, 특히 지도자들은 홀로 고난 받고, 우울감에 젖어 그리스도의 몸으로부터 고립되고, 자신의 필요를 애써 부정하고, 연약함을 인정하지 않으려는 데 익숙해져 버린 것 같습니다. 아마 처음에는 다른 이들에게 부담을 끼치지 않으려는 좋은 의도에서 시작할 것입니다. 하지만 어느새 이것이 우리의 맹점이 되어버린다면 결국 ‘우울감에 젖은 고독한 고난’으로 우리를 이끌 것입니다. 자발적으로 홀로 고난 받기를 선택하는 사람들이 모두 자기 중심적이고 이기적인 의도로 그렇게 하는 것은 아닐 것입니다. 그렇지만 다른 이들의 도움을 수용해야 할 필요를 지속적으로 거부한다면, 점점 자기 과신과 자기 영광의 늪에 빠져들 수 있습니다.

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## FROM PROUD SUFFERING ALONE TO HUMBLE SUFFERING WITH

Eun Ah Cho

The purpose of this article is twofold. First, it is to challenge the Korean church to examine its tendency to take pride in suffering alone. Second, it is to encourage it to humbly invite others to partake in its suffering. For this, I will look at (1) how the concept and experience of *Han* in association with *Sakim* have impacted the way the Korean church responds to suffering, and (2) how the Korean church’s renewed commitment to a reciprocal life can help it find grace in the body of Christ.

### HAN AND SAKIM

Most generally speaking, *Han* is a concept of suffering. It is a “deep sense of suffering” that is normally accompanied by anger.<sup>1</sup> It is “unresolved emotions” that result from “unjustifiable suffering.”<sup>2</sup> More specifically, it is the “collapsed pain of the heart” that emerges and usually remains subdued after “psychosomatic, interpersonal, social political, economic, and cultural oppression and repression.”<sup>3</sup> It has long been interpreted as an example of internalized Korean history,<sup>4</sup> “embedded down at the bottom of the unconsciousness”<sup>5</sup> of its people. Such *Han*, built on anger, hostility, and a desire for revenge, can grow outwardly offensive. One of the most extreme examples can come in the form of retaliatory crime.

It is with these 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.<sup>6</sup> It has been understood even as the very existence of the Korean nation through its history of numerous foreign invasions, oppression, and the tyranny of ruling classes.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, many Koreans, myself included, grow up hearing that we are formed in and born from the womb of *Han*. Other nations and ethnic groups around the globe have gone through similar experiences of oppression and injustice that have left many hearts and minds deeply wounded. But there are difficulties involved in translating *Han* into another language, especially those dynamic emotions with which it is associated, which the Korean language so astutely distinguishes and defines with its rich vocabulary. However, this cannot be a legitimate basis for judging *Han* to be something exclusively Korean either. Rather than the experience of *Han* itself, I would argue that it is the way that Koreans grow inward and choose to put an end to the cycle of revenge with *Han* that makes it unique to Koreans.

How then do Koreans grow inward with *Han* and how does it disrupt the cycle of revenge? To answer this question, a more in-depth understanding of *Han* is required, and for this, it is imperative to see it in light of a Korean concept and experience called *Sakim*.

In short, *Sakim* is the process of fermentation. It can be best understood in comparison to the Korean national side dish called *kimchi*, or fermented cabbage. The quality and taste of *kimchi* depend on how well it is fermented. For good *kimchi* to be made, it needs to be kept in pits in the ground for at least a month. During this time, the authentic taste of *kimchi* is originally brewed, rather than artificially made; the captivating taste of *kimchi* springs from the time spent in silent but active patience and isolation. In the end, something new emerges: it is no longer raw cabbages, but well-fermented *kimchi*, ready to be served.

Similarly, when one decides to choose the

path of *Sakim*, *Han* becomes transformed: “inward retrogression”<sup>8</sup> begins, ending in a place where outrage and frustration accumulated over many years of unfulfilled yearnings are transformed into “acceptance and friendship.”<sup>9</sup> When *Sakim*, “psychological fermentation,” takes place instead of holding a grudge against others or growing outwardly offensive, one experiences something new. Painful and bitter regrets and resentments are no longer; renewed hope begins to be experienced. Through *Sakim*, what was once identified only as *Han* now turns into *Won*, desires and wishes.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in and through the process of *Sakim*, people become better equipped to feel connected to one another, especially to those with similar experiences of *Han*. Consequently, instead of animosity and conflict, compassion and empathy are generated because of *Sakim*, and now the cycle of revenge is disrupted.

Though the concept and experience of *Han* itself may not be exclusive to Koreans, the way *Han* is processed inwardly and eventually transformed into something positive through *Sakim* is unique to them.

### SAKIM AND SUFFERING ALONE

Now, let me discuss how the concept and experience of *Sakim* have impacted the way that the Korean church responds to suffering.

Some scholars have argued that *Sakim* resulted from and was sustained by Japan’s colonization of Korea (1910–1945). This came in the form of contrasting Japan’s secure and optimistic art with the supposedly lonely, sorrowful, and hopeless Korean art. By doing so, Japan emphasized the “beauty of sorrow” found in Korean art, thus using it to infantilize Korea and ensure its dependence on Japan. Whether it emerged because it was purposefully imposed upon the culture,

or because it is innate to Koreans to grow inward for self-reflection when suffering, Sakim is reflected in the way that Korean Christians have responded to suffering.

Deeply marked by its history of persecution, the Korean church has underlined not only the exclusive belief in the cross and the suffering of Christ for redemption but also the invaluable blessings found in its own Christlike experience of suffering. The characteristic response of Korean Christians to suffering has thus been rooted in the conviction that “unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it lives alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit” (John 12:24). Hence, sacrificing oneself for the sake of many has been widely preached, commonly accepted, and faithfully practiced in many different dimensions of life and ministry within the Korean church as a whole. As a result, though many are willing to suffer with those who suffer and even suffer for others, Korean Christians tend to be hesitant to open their lives for others to come in when they themselves are stricken. Somewhat ironically, “letting others come into my life and suffer with me when I suffer” has become a great challenge within the Korean church. This may be related to a function of Confucian values working in Korean culture. Specifically, when stepping outside the framework of religion, the ultimate goal of many Koreans is to climb up the social hierarchy. This goal is carried over into the Korean church, and many—both in leadership positions and those without such recognition—strive to climb the hierarchical ladder of spirituality. This involves the idea that being “more spiritual” means that one ought to be more independent.

#### FROM SUFFERING ALONE IN PRIDE

Having indicated pride as one of the subtle perils of spiritual leadership, John Oswald

Sanders writes that when someone rises in position, the tendency of pride also increases.<sup>11</sup> To this point, I agree. However, I would argue that spiritual pride may also increase when one isolates himself or herself from the rest of the community in order to suffer alone. Suffering alone is not a sin. As a matter of fact, God puts his people in isolation in order to shape and transform them. We are to embrace this and stay in isolation until God sovereignly pulls us out of it.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, we should not overlook our mission to communal suffering—suffering together in 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. After all, one cannot be humble when standing alone. We need one another 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. Humility and trust connect, whereas pride and distrust separate.

Set in a culture where Sakim is naturally transmitted and unconsciously learned, Korean Christians can end up taking pride in suffering alone, apart from the body of Christ. Brought up in a culture where silent suffering in isolation is presented as a norm, and where those who suffer alone are perceived as more mature and blessed, Korean Christians may fail to enter into a community of grace.

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.”<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> We have not only God who sees, hears, and suffers with us but also have one another. We not only have the Spirit who helps us in our weaknesses (Rom 8:26), but also have one another to carry our burdens (Gal 6:2) and help us find grace (Heb 5:16).

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 in isolation. 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 mutually and interdependently participate in one another’s sufferings (Heb 5:16).

#### 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 in their attempts 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 exiles. Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua, and Zerubba-

bel work 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 New Testament is also filled with God’s people rejoicing and 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 trustfully, 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 (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Pet 5:14), submit to (Eph 5:18–21), forbear (Eph 4:1–3; Col 3:12–14), forgive (Eph 4:31–32), care for (1 Cor 12:24–25), and confess our sins to (Jas 5:16) one another. We are also called to build up (Rom 14:19; 1 Thess 5:11), teach (Col 3:16), exhort (1 Thess 5:11; Heb 3:12–13), admonish (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16), and speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph 5:18–20; Col 3:16). Further, we are commanded to be servants (Gal 5:13–14) and hospitable (1 Pet 4:7) to one another, bear one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2), and pray for one another (Jas 5:16). Also, we are commanded not to judge (Rom 14:13), speak evil of (Jas 4:11), murmur against (Jas 5:9), bite and devour (Gal 5:14–15), provoke (Gal 5:25–26), envy (Gal 5:25–26), or lie to (Col 3:9–10) one another.

Both in joy and despair, we are called to live a life of the fruit of the Spirit, which cannot

be pursued apart from our relationships with one another. We are called to live in a community—more specifically, a community of grace. God wants us to live a relational life of faith, hope, and love even in our sufferings.

#### CONCLUSION

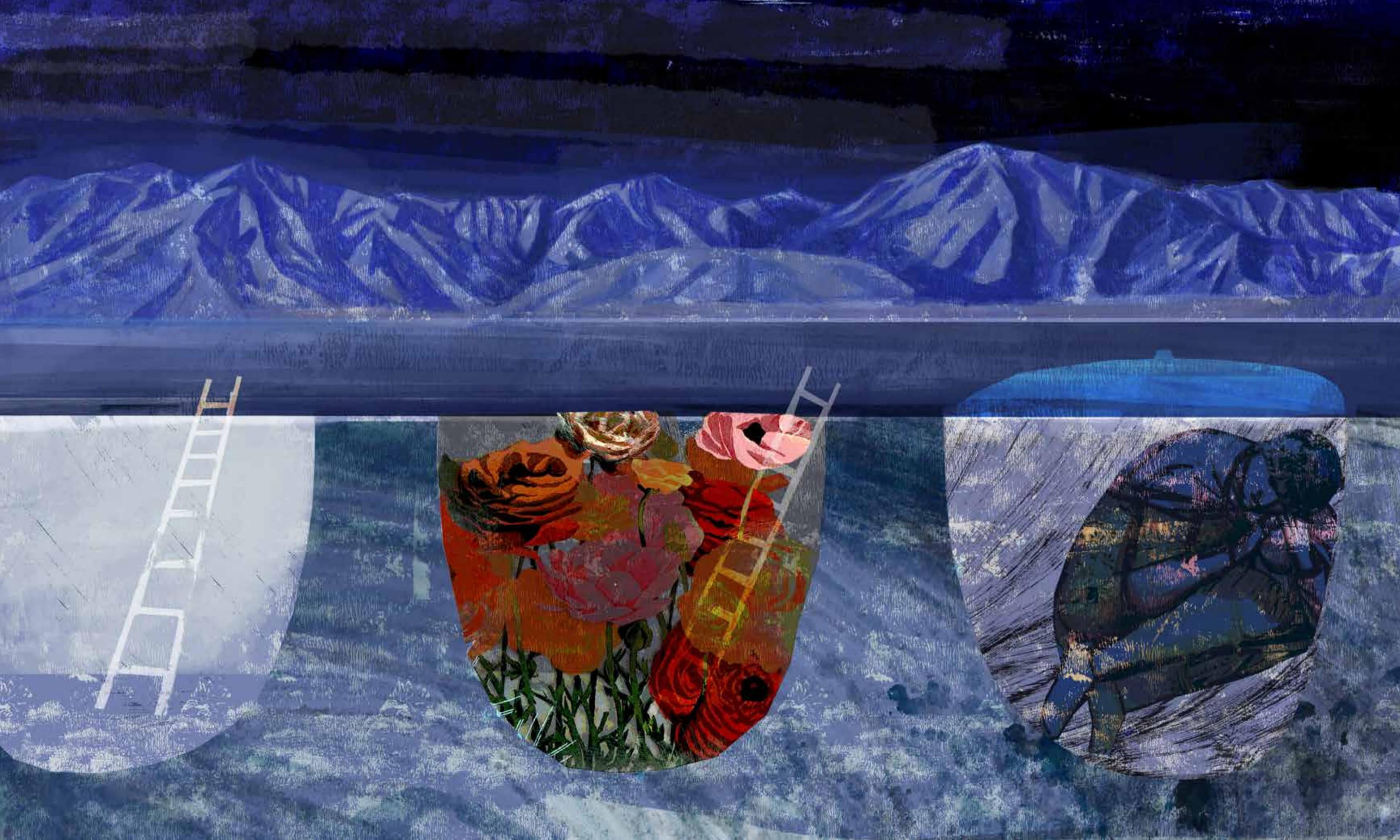
The Korean church has been faithful in rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26). However, under the influence of Han and Sakim, Korean Christians in general—and leaders in particular—seem to have become accustomed to suffering alone, isolated from the 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 blind spot that eventually leads us to “proud 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-glorifying.

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. It is my sincere hope 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

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**Chris Albisurez** immigrated to the United States from Guatemala as a teenager. The deep pain in his life drew him towards skating and graffiti writing on the streets of Los Angeles. His reconciliation with God has led him on a long healing journey and he longs for others to find that same restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of trauma. He is married to Roxy and together they have three beautiful children: Lance, Emmanuel, and Jude Margarita.

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

Jude Tiersma Watson with Chris Albisurez

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—taco trucks, vendors selling *elote*, 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 shaken 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 Albisurez. 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 to find relief from the unrelenting pain in his life. "Writing on walls was my aspirin," he said. Chris began sharing his life with me. Every week he had more stories of pain and trauma that had never been voiced. We spent hours together; Chris talked while I listened prayerfully, holding his story, the ground made holy because God was present with us and between us in the sharing.

We could not have imagined 25 years ago

the deep sense of bonding and belonging we would come to share, the exquisite mutuality<sup>1</sup> of the relationships among all of us, including my husband, John. Chris and Roxy now have three beautiful children that call me Oma. But at that time, it felt like a great risk into a deep unknown, with no certainty where the journey would lead. Recently Chris and I reflected back on those years:<sup>2</sup>

**CHRIS:** *I think what I found in Jude was a person that I can trust. She would just silently sit or cry with me. When I talked, I didn't really have a name for the trauma. It was sexual abuse, physical abuse, being independent since I was five when I lost my two younger brothers—my best friends—in an earthquake.*

*When I met Jude, there was a big war between gangs and graffiti writers 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. And I think 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 let 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 with you at a Carl's Jr. You were waiting for me, and when I got there you were sitting erect. I had never seen you sit like that before.*

**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 meet Chris just so I could visit him in prison for the rest of his life?" I was very aware that he could have been killed on 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 good times and how we have the kids, but at that time it was hard.*

**CHRIS:** *It was; I remember talking about that and I remember that I almost killed my father around that time. . . because I felt that a lot of the pain that I was carrying or the trauma that I lived was caused by the absence of my father and mom in my life.*

### FAITH IN THE MIDST OF PAIN

Listening to Chris's stories of suffering and entering into those painful places with him caused deep wrestling in my own life, as well as in his life. Chris and I reflected on the impact of suffering on our faith:

**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 things had gone well for me in life for the most part. I had a fair bit of privilege in my life that I recognize now.*

*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 just 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 my brothers' passing and one of the*

*things that I recall him saying is that he was an alcoholic at the time. We were hungry that evening when the earthquake happened in 1976, and both of my brothers died hungry.*

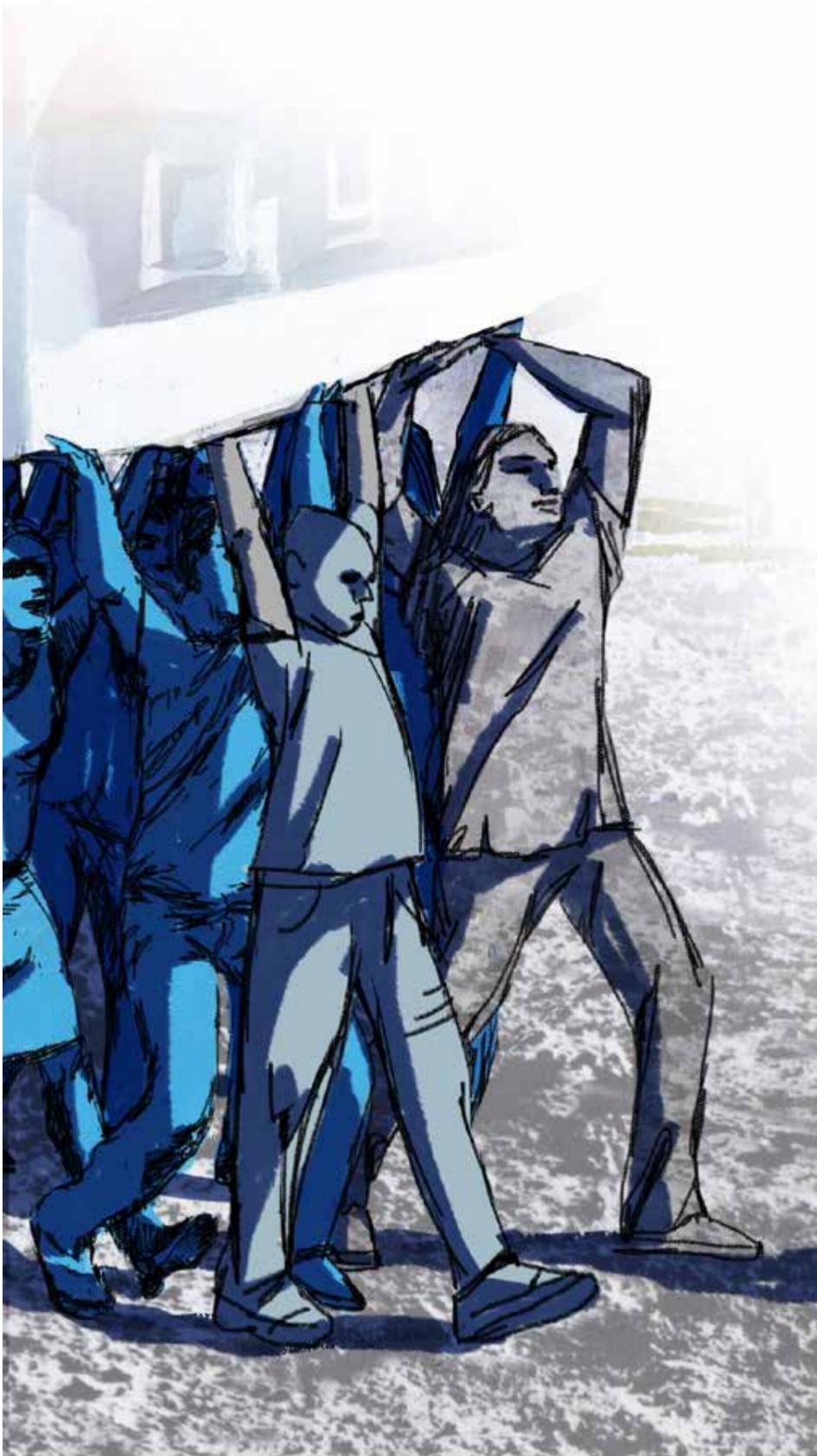
*I began to wonder, "Where is God in all of this?"*

*And so that threw me off, and 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 very 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 cracks. And what do you have left? So you are in a crisis. 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 are 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



will suffer deeply as well. And the joys that 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, with joys shared and remembered together.

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 procla-

mation 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 lifeline. 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 about life and faith did I carry? When John and I married in 1995, his differing lens as an African American continued to help me see my blind spots, reflecting to me my middle-class expectations for control over my life.

Becoming more aware of who I was and my own need for healing, I was able to better separate the trauma of others from my own

pain. Being open to what I carried with me from my own history and culture also challenged my Messiah-complex thinking.<sup>3</sup> Our theology may not allow us to say we are the Messiah, but in ministry, we can act as if we think we are. Although at times we may mediate God's love to people through our presence, we have to be clear that we are not the saviors. And it goes the other way, too: God's presence is mediated to us through those in our ministry context. This is the mutuality of life and ministry.

Father Gregory Boyle refers to this as his movement from "savior" to "savor."<sup>4</sup> 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.*

**CHRIS:** *Beyond ministry, beyond friendship; it's turned into a family matter. My final word is an image that encourages me, from Isaiah: God brings beauty from ashes. God has taken the ashes of my life and brought healing and joy and created beauty. This is the image I hold in my heart. ■*

#### 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), 171.
2. This conversation is made up of selected sections from a recorded interview with Chris Albisarez, August 18, 2018.
3. J. Tiersma, "What Does It Mean to Be Incarnational When We Are Not the Messiah?" in *God So Loves the City: Seeking a Theology for Urban Mission*, ed. C. Van Engen and J. Tiersma (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 7–25.
4. "Greg Boyle: Save the World or Savor It," *Faith and Leadership*, February 2016, [faithandleadership.com](http://faithandleadership.com).



## ¿DOLORISMO U ORTOPATOS? TEOLOGÍAS LATINOAMERICANAS DEL SUFRIMIENTO

Alexia Salvatierra

Tengo un vívido recuerdo de mi infancia, hay velas devocionales, que se podían comprar en la tienda de comestibles de mi vecindario de 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. Otra muestra un sangrado anatómico del corazón bastante realista con varios orificios. Esas imágenes están conectadas en mi memoria a un desfile de Viernes Santo en la Ciudad de México, con personas que practican la autoflagelación (imitando el sufrimiento de Cristo). La prevalencia de estas imágenes está arraigada en el dolorismo, una perspectiva teológica común en América Latina. La teóloga latinoamericana Nancy Bedford define al dolorismo como “la glorificación del sufrimiento por sí misma”.<sup>1</sup> No es sorprendente que los latinoamericanos se sientan atraídos por el dolorismo. Desde la conquista, América Latina ha sufrido estructuras sociales y económicas que causan pobreza extrema en grandes porcentajes de la población. Este nivel de injusticia social ha generado muchas formas de terrible violencia, practicadas con impunidad. Tratar de dar sentido a esta experiencia espiritualmente puede fácilmente conducir al dolorismo. La doctrina popular del dolorismo también se ha utilizado para apoyar el machismo y el masoquismo, alentando a las mujeres a soportar el sufrimiento como la imagen popular de María, incluso frente a la violencia doméstica. Si bien esto ha ayudado a varias mujeres en mi vida a sufrir con dignidad, no las ha equipado para cambiar las circunstancias que causan su sufrimiento.

El pentecostalismo en América Latina ha sido igualmente culpable de reforzar una base teológica para la sumisión a la violencia injusta. Aunque las iglesias pentecostales no han abrazado las formas católicas de dolor, a menudo han alentado a los miembros a enfocarse en el cielo y trascender al mundo en lugar de ver a Dios como un agente activo de shalom. Nancy Bedford usa el término *analgesia de teopraxis* para describir la opinión de que la fe nos da la capacidad de trascender el sufrimiento sin requerir que cambiemos las condiciones generales que crean el sufrimiento.<sup>2</sup> Ella expresa que una teología carismática de la gloria, que ignora al Cristo sufriente, y una teología católica que prácticamente ignora al Cristo resucitado,

contribuyen a que las iglesias se hagan la vista gorda al sufrimiento de sus miembros y vecinos.

Los/las pentecostales hispanos suelen mostrar el amor de Dios en pequeños actos de caridad personal y hospitalidad, particularmente en el cuidado de las necesidades de otros miembros de la iglesia. Según un informe de 2007 del Pew Research Center, el 90 por ciento de los hispanos en los EE. UU. asisten a iglesias que proveen alimentos y ropa a sus miembros; un sorprendente 82 por ciento ayuda a los/as miembros con sus problemas financieros.<sup>3</sup> Sin embargo, los actos compasivos de atención para aquellos que sufren no conducen automáticamente a una comprensión teológica que podría permitir a los creyentes discernir entre el sufrimiento redentor y el no redentor, ni equiparlos para desafiar y transformar sistemas que perpetúan el sufrimiento.

Elizabeth Conde-Frazier sugiere otro enfoque teológico a estas experiencias de sufrimiento injusto. Ella se inspira en las ideas de Samuel Solivan para sugerir “ortopatos” como un enfoque teológico del sufrimiento, reconociendo la presencia del Dios liberador como la oportunidad de combatir las causas injustas del sufrimiento. “En la tradición cristiana primitiva, la comprensión del pathos era de auto-empoderamiento, particularmente como se presenta en el clímax del mensaje cristiano donde Dios es el que ama hasta el punto de sufrir. El término ortopatos hace distinción entre el sufrimiento que resulta en auto-alienación y el sufrimiento que se convierte en una fuente de liberación y transformación social”.<sup>4</sup>

Si bien el ortopatos pueden ser un término teológico relativamente nuevo, este describe una espiritualidad vivida que continúa prosperando en ciertos lugares de América Latina y en las comunidades latinas en los Estados Unidos. Durante la guerra civil en El Salvador, los artistas folklóricos salvadoreños comenzaron a producir cruces pintadas de colores brillantes en las que Cristo está acompañado por personas de las aldeas. En muchas de estas obras de arte, en lugar de estar en una agonía obvia y sangrienta, Jesús está en una posición que hace que sea difícil saber si está crucificado, bailando o proclamando con los brazos extendidos. El pueblo salvadoreño que aparece en las pinturas

también se ve decidido y orgulloso, vistiendo sus ropas indígenas o la ropa típica de los campesinos. Mientras que las cruces comunican el sufrimiento, ese sufrimiento está implícitamente relacionado con el movimiento de la gente por la justicia, mientras que los colores brillantes exudan esperanza y alegría. Estas imágenes contrastan 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.

Podemos conocer a Dios a través del sufrimiento si en esa dolorosa experiencia vemos a Dios actuar para sanar y liberar. La palabra “salvación” tiene connotaciones de curación y liberación, sin un énfasis particular en una a expensas de la otra. La experiencia vivida de sufrimiento puede actuar como una iniciativa divina para resistir el mal y encarnar el movimiento del Espíritu Santo hacia una vida abundante para todos. Con esa perspectiva, la iglesia no se verá tentada a asociar el sufrimiento con la falta del favor de Dios, ni a entenderlo como una cruz que debe llevarse con paciencia, sino 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 del sufrimiento injusto como una oportunidad para el movimiento de misión integral (misión holística) en América Latina—para demostrar el compromiso de Dios con el shalom de nuestras comunidades y la justicia que desciende como un río poderoso en nuestra vida común.

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## DOLORISMO OR ORTHOPATHOS? LATIN AMERICAN THEOLOGIES OF SUFFERING

Alexia Salvatierra

I have a vivid childhood memory of devotional candles, available for purchase at the grocery store in my Los Angeles neighborhood, adorned with truly gory pictures of the suffering of Christ. In one common image, he stares upward while blood runs down his face. Another shows a fairly realistic anatomical heart bleeding from various orifices. Those images are connected in my memory to a Good Friday parade in Mexico City, with people practicing self-flagellation (whipping themselves in imitation of Christ’s suffering). The prevalence of these images is rooted in *dolorismo*, a theological perspective common in Latin America. The Latin American theologian Nancy Bedford defines dolorismo as “the glorification of suffering for its own sake.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising when Latin Americans are attracted to dolorismo. Since the conquest, Latin America has suffered from social and economic structures that cause extreme poverty in large percentages of the population. This level of social injustice has spawned many forms of terrible violence, practiced with impunity. Trying to make sense of this experience spiritually can easily lead to dolorismo. The popular doctrine of dolorismo has also been used to support *machismo* and *masoquismo*, encouraging women to bear suffering like the popular image of Mary—even in the face of domestic violence. While this has helped various women in my life to suffer with dignity, it has not equipped them to change the circumstances that cause their suffering.

Pentecostalism in Latin America has been equally culpable in reinforcing a theological basis for submission to unjust violence. Although Pentecostal churches have not embraced the Catholic forms of dolorismo, they have often encouraged members to focus on heaven and transcend the world rather than seeing God as an active agent of shalom. Nancy Bedford uses the term “teopraxis analgesia” to describe the view that faith gives us the capacity to transcend suffering without requiring that we change the broader conditions that create suffering.<sup>2</sup> She articulates that a charismatic theology of glory, which ignores the suffering Christ, and a Catholic theology that practically ignores the resurrected Christ, both contribute to churches turning a blind eye to the suffering of their members and neighbors.

Hispanic Pentecostals do commonly show God’s love in small acts of personal charity and hospitality, particularly in caring for the needs of other church members. According to a 2007 report from Pew Research Center, 90 percent of Hispanics in the US attend churches that provide food and clothing to members; a startling 82 percent help members with their financial problems.<sup>3</sup> However, compassionate acts of care for those who are suffering do not automatically lead to a theological understanding that could enable believers to discern between redemptive and nonredemptive suffering, nor equip them to challenge and transform systems that perpetuate suffering.

Elizabeth Conde-Frazier suggests another theological approach to these experiences of unjust suffering. She draws from the insights of Samuel Solivan to suggest “orthopathos” as a theological approach to suffering, recognizing the presence of God the liberator in the opportunity to combat the unjust causes of suffering. “In the early Christian tradition, the understanding of pathos was self-empowering, particularly as presented in the climax of the Christian message where God is the one who loves to the point of suffering. The term orthopathos makes the distinction between suffering that results in self-alienation and suffering that becomes a source for liberation and social transformation.”<sup>4</sup>

While orthopathos may be a relatively new term theologically, it describes a lived spirituality that continues to thrive in certain places in Latin America as well as in Latinx communities in the United States. During the civil war in El Salvador, Salvadoran folk artists began to produce brightly painted crosses in which Christ is accompanied by people from the villages. In many of these artworks, instead of being in obvious and bloody agony, Jesus is in a position that makes it hard to tell if he is crucified, dancing, or proclaiming with outstretched arms. The Salvadoran people in the paintings also look resolute and proud, wearing their indigenous garments or typical peasant’s clothing. While the crosses communicate suffering, that suffering is implicitly connected with the movement of the people for justice, while the bright colors exude hope and joy. These images stand in stark contrast

to the images of dolorismo that I encountered as a child and which are still pervasive in many areas of Hispanic life and spirituality.

We can know God through suffering if in that painful experience we see God act to heal and liberate. The word “salvation” 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 evil 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 a lack of God’s favor, or understand it as a cross to be borne patiently, but will rather 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 unjust suffering as an opportunity for the *misión integral* (holistic mission) movement in Latin America—to demonstrate God’s commitment to the shalom of our communities and to justice, which rolls down like a mighty river into our common life.

### ENDNOTES

1. N. Bedford, “La Misión en el Sufrimiento y Ante el Sufrimiento,” in *Bases Bíblicas de la Misión: Perspectivas Latinoamericanas*, ed. C. Rene Padilla (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 385.
2. Ibid.
3. “Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion,” Pew Research Center, April 2007, [www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org).
4. E. Conde-Frazier, *Hispanic Bible Institutes: A Community of Theological Construction* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2004), 122.

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## THE CURSES OF GOD'S PEOPLE: DYNAMICS OF A GENUINE COVENANTAL INTERACTION

Daniel D. Lee

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*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 prepare an entirely burned offering for yourselves. Job 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)*

**H**ow 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 take God to court, and calling for someone to vindicate him against God and his friends, who try to talk some sense into him (Job 3-37). Job's friends reason with him that the Lord is the almighty, all-wise, all-just God and that Job's righteousness does not stand a chance in the divine presence. Just confess that you are wrong, Job! In God's holy presence, who can stand? All we can do is repent and obey! They sound God-inspired; their words could be set right next to the Psalms and we might not be able to even tell the difference. And yet Job defiantly protests that he knows what they know and he is not inferior to them (Job 13:2).

Ultimately, after all of Job's anger towards God, the Lord shows up and rebukes him, rendering him humbly silent. So the take-home lesson is that our human wisdom is

limited, and we need to be humble and not imitate Job in speaking against God. Right?

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 rebuke, Job was correct, and Job's friends were wrong. We know that Job's friends were terrible comforters, engaging in theological discussion with Job instead of mourning with him. But that is not the critique God directs at them. God's problem with them is that they misrepresented God: God is not how they described him to be. The book of Job has been used for theodicy, but this epilogue and God's comments about Job and his friends point 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 disappointed. 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 isn't new, nor should it even be considered impious or disrespectful to God. God's people are called *Israel*, which is an odd name. In Genesis 32, God condescends to wrestle with Jacob as he desperately pleads for divine blessing before reuniting with Esau, the brother whom he swindled years ago. Strangely, God comes in a form unable to overpower Jacob—so God cheats and dislocates his hip. Then, God gives Jacob a new

name: Israel. "God-wrestler." Why would God name God's own people, "the ones who wrestle or struggle with God?" Why not "the obedient ones" or "God-followers"? Throughout the history of God's people, those closest to God talked back to God like they were talking to a friend: sometimes pleading, sometimes bargaining, sometimes accusing and protesting. This is the kind of relationship that God wants. God desires the kind of people who wrestle and come near enough to get in God's face, even while knowing that God is the Almighty.

### A GENUINE COVENANT 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, zoomed in on the problem of anthropocentrism.<sup>1</sup> The liberal theology of his time deceived itself into thinking that we can speak of God simply by speaking of humanity in a loud voice. This theological tradition emphasized humanity and its experience at the expense of God.<sup>2</sup> To speak of it in Jewish philosopher Martin Buber's categories of *I* and *Thou*, they made God into a simple reflection of ourselves (*I* and *I*). Other traditions have erred by making God an object for our management (*I* and *it*). But God must be *Thou*, a person who must be recognized as wholly other.

Barth did not stop there. He realized that divine revelation does not allow us to ignore humanity at the expense of God either. Just as we cannot reduce God to an *I* or *it*, God does not desire to do that to us. God seeks an authentic *I* and *Thou* relationship, a genuine covenantal 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.<sup>3</sup> 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's, God is only surrounded by "yes-men and women" who end up living a faith of "denial, cover-up, and pretense."<sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>5</sup> Basically, we begin to lie to ourselves and externally profess one thing while ignoring the turmoil and conflict within. Speaking "Christianese," 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 compliant servant.

### SERVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL?

A couple of years ago, a pastor friend of mine posted on his Facebook page that the most important thing as a Christian is to obey no matter what. Obedience or submission—are these the most important responses as Christians? Are these the only true offerings of re-

lationship? According to Job's friends, maybe. "God is everything, and we are nothing, mere worms" (Job 25:6). This view is quite popular. God is always right, and we are always wrong. While true in a sense, this is not the kind of faith God is after. We live as though the greatest commandment is to "serve the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength," to "obey the Lord," or to "worship the Lord." However, that is not the greatest commandment. To *love* the Lord is not less than obedience or service, but rather more. We are called not just to action, but to desire, enjoyment, and delight. Love is actually above and beyond service, worship, obedience, and submission. These will not do for God. God wants it all; God wants love.

Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard muses upon the lengths to which God goes for this genuine covenant interaction in the Incarnation.<sup>6</sup> Using the parable of a king who falls in love with a humble maiden, Kierkegaard tells a story of a God who actually wants love and not just the worshipful adoration that is the natural response to the infinite distinction between the partners. Therefore, God truly becomes humble in order to create the real possibility of self-disclosure and a genuine covenantal relationship of "equals." The incarnation of God is that story, a pursuit of genuine covenantal interaction. This relationship is at the heart of who God is. That is why God judges Job's friends for misrepresenting who God is and what God desires from us.

### REPRESSION, PSEUDOCOMMUNITY, AND XENOPHOBIA

As I mentioned, spiritualities that follow the sanctimonious path of Job's friends abound, presented as maturity and faithfulness. Nevertheless, the critical factor in a genuine covenantal relationship is the possibility of protest

and lament, of talking back and taking up space in the relationship. When we are not able to own and express our disappointment, frustration, and anger towards God, but instead repress them, a number of negative consequences occur, including distance from God. While he is speaking more generally, Canadian theologian Douglas John Hall's insights about the impact of a society's inability to acknowledge suffering serve as a guide to the dynamics that occur on three levels: personal, communal, and social.<sup>7</sup>

First, lack of lament towards God can result in the inability to accept and articulate personal suffering. Often, the repressed will use spiritual language, praising God and witnessing to God's healing, all the while hiding the deep pain within. Just as Job's friends believed, this repression is considered spiritual and pious as though it is what God wants.

Second, not only do we fail to process our own suffering, but we will fail to enter into the suffering of others. A lack of genuine covenantal interaction between us and God directly impacts the kind of communal life that we have together. If I repress my own suffering with the spiritual language of repentance, trying harder, or "blessing the name of the Lord," then that is precisely the advice that I will give others as well. And when they fail to do so, I will judge them like Job's friends judge Job. If we believe that our faith is about serving God no matter what, without doubt, faith struggles, or anger and disappointment, then we must all present a false self to each other as we do to God. In such a world there is no community, only a pseudocommunity where we hide behind our pious masks.

Third, according to Hall, this false self and a misunderstanding of self-denial leads us to search for an enemy whom we can blame for our troubles. Not being able to accurately locate the source of the pain, we project outwards and identify the demon elsewhere. It must be the wicked world that is at fault. Those strangers, weirdos, immoral and ungodly, making our lives worse, are hindering me from truly obeying and serving God as God desires. Our present national context of deep fractures and xenophobia, of zealous

tribalism and willful ignorance of injustices, all so often in the name of God, points again to the problem of the self-delusion that Job's friends preach.

#### AN ASIAN 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.<sup>8</sup>

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 pleasant in God's ears than their hallelujahs."<sup>9</sup> ■

#### ENDNOTES

1. Whatever Barth's limitations in other areas, evangelical scholar Bernard Ramm notes that his contribution to dismantling classic liberal theology must be acknowledged, especially given that fundamentalist and evangelical scholars of his time could not do so. See B. Ramm, *The Evangelical Heritage: A Study in Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 111.
2. Jürgen Moltmann discusses the error of affirming God at the expense of humanity in theism and having humanity at the expense of God in atheism, as opposed to a truly covenantal God revealed in Christ. See J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 249–252.
3. K. Barth, *The Humanity of God* (Richmond, VA: John Knox), 46.
4. W. Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 102.
5. Brueggemann, 103–104.
6. S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments/Johannes Climacus: Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. 7 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 26–35.
7. D. J. Hall, *God and Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 43–46.
8. S. Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity: Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. 20 (Princeton: Princeton University, 1991), 140.
9. The original quote attributed to Martin Luther, but made popular by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's reference, is, "The curse of the godless man can sound more pleasant in God's ears than the hallelujah of the pious."





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

Edwin M. Willmington

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

I have had a fulfilling life as a musician in various roles: worship leader, pastor, composer, and professor. I have also been aware of some of the realities of Christian persecution. However, the two realities rarely intersected until, during what was an otherwise normal worship service, my musical self and my understanding of persecution began a journey of convergence. In that service, the pastor provided a short commentary on Christian persecution in the world. A couple of weeks later I was still pondering the issues of persecution, realizing that I didn't know much about it, and wanted that to change. The discoveries I made changed my world view so significantly, they eventually led to the composition of a major musical work.

My research began in Fuller's School of Intercultural Studies. Former dean Scott Sunquist has written a book on Christian mission and suffering,<sup>1</sup> and professors Evelyne Reisacher and Mel Robeck shared a wide-reaching set of experiences and writings on topics pertaining to persecution.<sup>2</sup>

I connected with Open Doors USA (ODUSA)—an outgrowth of the Cold War-era ministry of Brother Andrew—that ministers to people around the world who live in situations of Christian persecution. Through ODUSA, I came upon the writing of Fuller alumnus Ronald Boyd-MacMillan, and it was his book, *Faith that Endures: The Essential Guide to the Persecuted Church*, that became a guide for me.<sup>3</sup> The book included first-person accounts that helped define persecution, discussed ways we can assist those who are persecuted, and offered lessons we can learn from the persecuted.

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 12 Christians worldwide.<sup>4</sup>
- 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. 15 in 2017 to No. 11 this year. Radical Hinduism and Indian nationalism are driving factors in the increasing levels of unrest and instability Christians face.
- During the World Watch List 2018 re-

porting period, 3,066 Christians were killed; 1,252 were abducted; 1,020 were raped or sexually harassed; and 793 churches were attacked.<sup>5</sup>

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 159,000 lives per year—159,000 daughters, sons, mothers, fathers, wives, husbands. In the 20th century, there were 26 million documented cases of martyrdom.<sup>6</sup> Christian martyrdom is not a thing of the past; it is a modern issue that should capture our present attention. And yet martyrdom is a small part of the bigger picture, the "sizzling tip of the iceberg that hides the dark bulk" of the story of the persecuted church.<sup>7</sup>

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 Sarwar and Lilian Ateh have personally experienced guns on their foreheads as their activities were questioned.<sup>8</sup> I cried as I heard stories of kidnappings, burned churches, and threats of reprisal on family members. Yet I was amazed to discover that most of the students fully intend to return to their home countries to continue their ministries.

I continued to hear voices echoing with the

request, "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*,<sup>9</sup> 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 by inclusion in our Holy Scriptures" is "a continuing and reliable witness that weeping has an honored place in the life of faith."<sup>10</sup> 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 J. S. Bach, Purcell, and Monteverdi have all utilized minor and modal tonalities, descending bass lines, and the *passacaglia* form (a form that usually has a low, repeated line that etches deep into the ear of the listener) to express lament. Classical composer Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* became one of the most played forms of lament after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Some of these same forms have been accessed by popular composers such as George Harrison, Steven Tyler, 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: *Consolation for the Suffering*. 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 banging in frustration on the piano; still other times it meant manically skipped 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 *Consolation*, 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—a requiem, of sorts, for the living. It became a wrenching cry for mercy (*Kyrie eleison*), a plea for the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world (*Agnus Dei*), a prayer for God to deliver us from evil (the Lord's Prayer), and a petition for the angels to welcome those who lost their lives for their faith into their heavenly home (*In paradisum*).

Our Christian faith teaches us of a coming day of victory based on our hope in Christ. Astoundingly, many who suffer persecution



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.”<sup>11</sup> 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 strands of hope in the face of immense suffering because of one’s faith, a tension that finds its example in the cross of Jesus Christ. Yet the cries heard in the psalms of lament almost always have a final upturn of hope and faithful affirmation. Further, Scott Sunquist reminds us that the mission of the church is to act as agents of hope, regardless of the condition in which we live. In Revelation 7, we have a glimpse of the ultimate result of the church’s mission: a grand picture of all tribes and tongues gathered, with no more tears or sadness, no suffering or persecution, and the Lamb of God as the sole focus of worship and adoration. What a great vision of hope!

Knowing that hope is both present in suffering and the conclusion to it, I wanted to weave words of hope and expectation into *Consolation for the Suffering*. In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul asks a series of honest questions that are relevant to today’s accounts of persecution.

*What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his 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, 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)*

There is also a strong, convincing answer for all the questions raised:

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39)*

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;  
As we come in humble weakness,  
May your strength be ours to share.  
Press our hearts to know the struggle  
Of the ones we cannot see;  
Brothers, sisters, all who suffer,  
May your kindness set them free.<sup>12</sup> ■*

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Listen to selections from *Consolation for the Suffering*, and watch testimonies from Fuller community members on what it’s like living as Christians under persecution at [fullerstudio.fuller.edu/consolation-for-the-suffering/](http://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/consolation-for-the-suffering/).

The *Consolation for the Suffering* audio recording and DVD of the concert premiere are available at [jubalhouse.bandcamp.com/](http://jubalhouse.bandcamp.com/).

Ronald Boyd-MacMillan, *Faith that Endures: The Essential Guide to the Persecuted Church*

Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert, and Nina Shea, *Persecuted: The Global Assault on Christians*

Nik Ripken, *The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrection*

#### ENDNOTES

1. S. W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013).
2. H. D. Hunter, C. M. Robeck Jr., eds., *The Suffering Body: Responding to the Persecution of Christians* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2006).
3. R. Boyd-MacMillan, *Faith that Endures: The Essential Guide to the Persecuted Church* (Lancaster, UK: Sovereign World Publishers, 2006).
4. Open Doors USA publishes the World Watch List, which offers updates about current statistics, conditions, and trends related to Christian persecution. The World Watch List provides a map showing the areas of the world where Christian persecution is rated from “High” to “Extreme.” The list provides information about the source of persecution in each locale and also covers current major trends in the area of world persecution. It is an ever-changing, dynamic list, and as of this writing the list highlights three growing edges of persecution in the world: the spread of radical Islam, the rise of religious nationalism, and the increasing intensity of persecution in Central Asia. There is a special note that Azerbaijan has been added to the list of places where high persecution is taking place.
5. See [www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/](http://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/).
6. J. D. Long, “More Martyrs Now than Then? Examining the Real Situation of Martyrdom,” for John Mark Ministries, [www.jmm.org.au](http://www.jmm.org.au) (January 5, 2003).
7. Boyd-MacMillan, *Faith that Endures*, 22.
8. “Consolation for the Suffering: Stories from the Persecuted Church” on FULLER studio, [fullerstudio.fuller.edu/consolation-for-the-suffering/](http://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/consolation-for-the-suffering/).
9. M. Card, *A Sacred Sorrow: Reaching Out to God in the Lost Language of Lament* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005).
10. E. Peterson, foreword to *A Sacred Sorrow*, II.
11. T. Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 191.
12. E. M. Willmington, “God of Justice, Love, and Mercy,” in *Consolation for the Suffering* (Shepherd’s Staff Worship Music, 2016).



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

Sarah Ashley Hill

**Sarah Ashley Hill** (PsyD '17) has a strong interest in serving the church, particularly communities of color. A bilingual psychological assistant fluent in Spanish, she has often translated for those who speak different languages—and, more broadly, sees herself as a translator between the psychological and lay communities, seeking to bridge the two. She is passionate about empowering Christians and churches to seek out resources for their mental health. Clinically, she enjoys working with underserved populations and she currently works for a private practice in the Santa Clara Valley. Her first ministry, however, is loving her husband, Christopher Hill, and their two young children.

I am a Black, Christian woman. I am a wife, mother, advocate, and psychological assistant. 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 and serving as an advocate and ambassador from within.

I am so grateful to have been educated in spaces that lifted up the importance of intercultural understanding and engagement. However, that discussion of 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 “ethnic,” darker, and minority. Thus, the discussion centered on those who choose to enter into communities of color, coming from without. As a daughter of the Black church, I am compelled to give space to the voices of those who exist and serve alongside and from within.

While some of our work may require entering into spaces and times of suffering, some of us have no separation between where we were raised, where we work, and where we live, so we serve and suffer from within the walls of our own community. And some, like myself, have the honor of equipping and supporting those who are already faithfully laboring in those spaces. This article speaks to those who are embedded—physically, socially, and culturally—in the same context of those they serve.

In the following paragraphs, we will explore some of the steps ministry leaders can take when they serve in churches impacted by repeated exposure to ongoing, systemic, and complex trauma. Specifically, I will discuss how communities can shine the light of

truth on the impact of trauma (naming), model health- and help-seeking behavior (proclaiming), and actively work to foster environments that are conducive to support and healing (embracing). Since my dissertation studies and subsequent outreach have focused on churches comprising primarily ethnic minorities, especially urban Black congregations and parachurch organizations, I will frequently reference insights gleaned from these contexts.<sup>1</sup>

### EQUIPPING TRAUMA SUPPORT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Research shows that exposure to at least one traumatic event is fairly common. And those who are exposed to traumatic events do not always develop symptoms of distress.<sup>2</sup> However, with trauma there is a dose-response effect: The more trauma one is exposed to, and the more personally violating the trauma, the more likely one will develop lasting symptoms of traumatic stress. Empirical evidence shows that ethnic minorities in urban areas are disproportionately exposed to community violence and its related stressors.<sup>3</sup> It makes sense, then, that in communities where there are layers of trauma—systemic, generational, familial, direct—we see the impact of prolonged and repeated exposure to stress. Individuals are exposed to suffering on multiple levels: in bodies weary from too many interactions with the autonomic physiological stress response, in families seemingly compelled to repeat generational patterns of hurting and being hurt, in minds convinced that the world is unsafe and unpredictable, and in communities inhibited from getting the help they need.

Yet, even in the midst of communities that are disproportionately burdened with trauma and have systemically underutilized health resources, we see obvious flourishing,

resilience, power, and beauty. The realities of the suffering of many communities demand a multipronged approach to healing, something which has often been embodied and championed by local Black churches. For generations, Black people have turned to their pastors and local churches in times of need.<sup>4</sup> Even now, long before a person comes into my turquoise-tinted office, seeking help from a veritable stranger, they are more likely to first seek help from the men and women who have been loving and leading them for years.

So why should we empower pastors and leaders to address mental health issues instead of teaching them how to triage and refer? Because we must give the tools to the people who are already doing the work. Let me tell you a story.

When I was newly married, I was alone in our apartment when I thought I smelled gas and noticed the stove wasn't working. I called the gas company and they came right away. The technician was kind and performed a thorough inspection of all the necessary equipment. It became quickly apparent that my pilot light was out. He told me that fixing the pilot light is something he could teach me so I could then do it on my own. If something more complicated occurs, I could call them and they would use their expertise to fix it. I cannot fix a gas leak nor do I need to; but I can now fix a pilot light. So it is with the education of our ministry leaders. They are not therapists and do not need to be (though they are often doing the work of therapists, without the educational preparation or financial compensation!). And not everybody and every problem requires therapy. But we can do a better job of equipping our pastors with the knowledge they need to fix the pilot lights around them and ensure they know psycho-

logical professionals are accessible should a more complicated issue arise.

In communities impacted by repeated exposure to trauma and prevented from getting help due to stigma or lack of access, what tools can we share to help in the work of cultivating churches that promote holistic health, including mental health? We can use the preexisting power of our words, our leaders, and our church bodies to model truth-telling (naming), help-seeking (proclaiming), and social support (embracing). In naming, proclaiming, and embracing, local churches can change the conversation around the suffering that lurks, undiscussed, in the corners of our communities.

### NAMING: IDENTIFYING TRAUMA IN UNDERSTANDABLE WAYS

Names are powerful—small words that carry worlds of history. To call somebody by their name is to recognize them; it is to see them, acknowledge them, and call attention to them. Naming the pain in our lives can be just as meaningful. There is power in identifying something for what it is, in naming it. Even if what has happened is so common as to seem almost normal, trauma and suffering are not normal. The horrible things that happen to us are not okay, even if we are okay. And when we use the clarity of our words to see, acknowledge, and call attention to the traumatic nature of the suffering happening to us or around us, we require the trauma to show itself so we may deal with it head on.

In the Headington Research Lab, led by Cynthia Eriksson, doctoral students carried out the Urban Project, which focused on ministry leaders and their experience with trauma. During the start of my own research as a student, the lab took preliminary research results to stakeholders to receive

feedback on how to proceed with addressing the apparent trauma in our neighborhoods. In the middle of that stakeholder meeting, a community leader raised his hand and stated, “You are asking what you can do in our communities about trauma, but the people I work with wouldn't call it trauma. They would just call it life.”

His statement mirrored similar experiences in my clinical work, I asked my clients, “Have you experienced trauma?” and they responded with confusion in their eyes. But when I returned, after supervision, to ask about specific traumatic events, I often had to pause to stretch my hands from writing so much.

“Have you ever seen somebody die?”

“Yes.”

“Have you ever been assaulted?”

“Yes.”

“Have you ever seen someone you love badly hurt or killed?”

“Yes.”

In my clinical and outreach work, I regularly have the privilege and pain of looking someone in the eye after reviewing questions like these and saying, “That is trauma.” It always comes as a revelation, a paradigm shift of how they understand their world and the things that have happened to them.

Trauma and suffering wreak the most havoc in the dark, when unseen and undiscussed, disguised in typicality and silenced by stigma. Our first steps are to name the trauma, to call a spade a spade and shine a light into the darkness. My dissertation research revealed the importance of shifting perspectives about trauma through language. First, in increasing awareness, we can begin to label and identify that which is traumatic. Breaking

stigma and challenging perspectives are actions pastors can start to take almost immediately, with education. Ministry leaders can use their pulpits, programs, and community 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.<sup>5</sup> Obtaining the ability to recognize and identify trauma for what it is can be revolutionary not only for our suffering communities, but also for the pastors who are suffering alongside them. Several easily digestible resources for basic information on trauma exist online.<sup>6</sup>

#### PROCLAIMING: GIVING PERMISSION TO GET HELP

As we work in our churches to reveal the truth of suffering and normalize talking about it, a recognition of pain and traumatization necessitates a response. Given the pattern of underutilizing services, those who are suffering from serious, complex mental health issues may not readily respond by seeking out the help they need. For those who may need professional services like therapy or medication, our next step in supporting the suffering is to normalize help-and health-seeking behaviors. If you have sat under any preaching, you know what it means for someone to proclaim. Local pastors, at the helms of strategic and essential ships in our communities, are skilled at proclaiming the truth from their pulpits. Encouragement, rebuke, discernment, revelation: every Sunday, their words fall on the thirsty ground of the congregation. This is the very reason that pastors are the prime candidates to boldly call

the suffering out of their silence: they can use their role and what they already do so well to shed light on the hidden pain of trauma.

Recently, I was asked to speak at a convention of predominantly Black churches. When I asked the person who had invited me to speak what kind of information would be most helpful, the pastor responded, “I want you to tell them that it’s okay for Black people to go to therapy.” I pushed back, asking what other topics might be helpful, but the pastor was insistent. The most important message I could communicate that day was that it is okay for Black people, even those with a robust faith, to seek out therapy. So that’s what I did. Afterward, many people approached me discussing a secret experience with therapy, a sense they might need therapy, or appreciation for finally hearing a discussion of God and mental health in the church. My message was trusted and accepted because I was first validated and invited by the pastor, whom the congregation had trusted for many years.

From the pulpit, Black pastors proclaim the freeing power of God’s truth. For decades, they have also led the way in changing that which

isn’t right, beautiful, lovely, or true in our communities. As a result, programs encouraging physical health offered by Black churches have been more successful than other community public health efforts.<sup>7</sup> And now, the time is ripe for pastors to use their authority and platform to validate the usefulness of accessing needed mental health services. Ministry leaders can do this through explicit exhortations to their congregations to go seek out help if they need it, or through sharing stories of health- and help-seeking. Story is a powerful communication 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 recognition 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 proclaiming the right to get help.

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, these networks naturally occur and already exist. Here, I specify how we can help empower parishioners to help right where they are, diffusing the responsibility 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 systematic (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 26-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 bounced a fussy baby on an exercise ball. When families have babies or when somebody dies, our communities rally to provide support. Everybody provides a little help, and the family is able to survive through a tough transition. I wonder what it would look like if we responded to those in mental health crises with the same practical support. What if we brought meals to those in a major depressive episode and unable to get out of bed? What if we drove people to therapy or picked up their medications? What if we used our intimate knowledge of each other’s lives to encourage one another to get the help we need?

There is a movie I like very much because it provides the compassionate response to suffering that I hope for the church: *Lars and the Real Girl*. In it, a young man named Lars, who we learn has experienced silent suffering, invents a relationship with a life-sized doll. His family is understandably disturbed. But instead of responding with disgust or

distance, the family and townspeople (at the advice of the local psychiatrist) engage with both Lars and his doll as cherished members of the community. The people see beyond his dysfunction and respond in love. Furthermore, healing is able to occur when his family sees and names his pain. Could we, as the body of Christ, do that? Could we embrace the suffering—even if they are weird, disturbing, ugly, or angry? Could we respond with restorative love that shines light on pain and removes the need for delusion? Can we even have eyes to see them, perhaps sitting quietly, almost invisibly, on the fringes of society?

Our people are suffering, and they have needlessly suffered for too long in silence. We can empower those working in the trenches with the information they need to identify the sources of suffering. We can shatter stigma as we proclaim our right and responsibility to seek out our mental health, by a variety of means, including therapy and medication. 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 references are detailed and can be found in that manuscript. Some additional specific references are listed here in the endnotes as examples. See S. A. Hill, “The Role of the Local Church in Addressing Trauma in African-American Communities: An Examination of Relevant Empirical Literature” (PsyD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2017).
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4. K. Hardy, “Which Way Did They Go? Uncovering the Preferred Source of Help Seeking among African-American Christians,” *Social Work & Christianity* 41, no. 1 (2014): 3–15.
5. F. Streets, “Social Work and a Trauma-Informed Ministry and Pastoral Care: A Collaborative Agenda,” *Social Work & Christianity* 42 (2015): 470–487.
6. For general information and resources on trauma, see the following websites: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Violence Prevention” page, [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/); the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org); the National Center for PTSD, [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov).
7. C. Y. K. Lumpkins et al., “Promoting Healthy Behavior from the Pulpit: Clergy Share Their Perspectives on Effective Health Communication in the African American Church,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 52, no. 4 (January 2011): 1093–1107, doi:10.1007/s10943-011-9533-1.





VOICES ON

## Race and Inclusion

“People have always resisted whiteness from the very beginning. People have always resisted the loss of a life in 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 relentless systems of education and evaluation that supported these things. And they did it by drawing on the only tool they had available: their identities.”

+ 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

“I tell a lot of Asian American students that, even though your family might have come in the last ten years, you become a part of a larger group of people. Your history goes back 150 years in America because you become a part of this larger Asian American experience. It’s the whole Asian American racial experience. The fact that different ethnic groups come together and form the Asian American identity. I know so many Asian Americans who are relatively recent immigrants that weren’t there in the ’40s, who don’t really think about Japanese Internment as their story. They feel like, ‘that happened a long time ago, it doesn’t really matter,’ without realizing the fact that the past is always with us. It’s not something that is just in the past—it actually has an impact now and you can see the impact around you as well. I am a part of this Asian American experience that is actually 150 years long. It’s not just my family history. I’m part of this bigger story.”

+ 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 is a reconstruction of a guard tower that loomed over the camp

+ This content is curated from ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Visit this Voice section on Fuller.edu/Studio for links to full videos, articles, and more.



“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 hanging out 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.”

+ 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.”

“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.”

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

“How 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

“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 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

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ME, YOU CAN’T  
LOVE ME.



“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 truth against particularities. But it also requires this openness to humility. I am constantly being challenged because I am very particular in 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?’”

+ *Lisa Thompson (pictured right), assistant professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, on the power and role of proclamation, in her address at the 2018 Black Public Theology Symposium*

“Salvation and whiteness. These terms point to a history that we yet live within. Whiteness as a way of being in the world has been parasitically joined to a Christianity that is also a way of being in the world. It was the fusion of these two realities that gave tragic shape to Christianity in the new world at the dawn of what we now call the modern colonialist era, or as scholars like to call it, colonial modernity.

It is precisely this fusing together of Christianity with whiteness that constitutes the ground of many of our struggles today. The struggle against aggressive nationalism is the struggle against the fusion of Christianity and whiteness. The struggle against racism and white supremacy, and some aspects of sexism and patriarchy are the struggle against this fusion. The struggle against the exploitation of the planet is bound up in the struggle against this joining. So many people today see these problems of planetary exploitation, of racism, of sexism, of nationalism and so forth, but they do not see the deeper problem of this fusion. Which means they have not yet grasped the energy that drives many of our problems.”

+ *Willie Jennings, Fuller trustee, and associate professor of systematic theology and Africana studies at Yale Divinity School, on uncoupling the Christian faith and “whiteness,” in his lecture at the 2017 Missiology Lectures*

“The kneel-ins during the Civil Rights Movement failed because even if you could get Black bodies inside a segregated white church, you could not force the church’s white members to treat those Blacks like Christians. Nor could you do anything to make so openly racist congregations a desirable place for Blacks or anyone committed to interracial fellowship to want to worship there.”

+ *Valerie Cooper, associate professor of religion and society and Black church studies at Duke Divinity School, speaking about segregation in the American evangelical church at the 2018 Black Public Theology Symposium*

“Cinco siglos de una historia cargada de cierto colonialismo y colonialidad, de proyectos de modernización, de proyectos occidentalizadores que nos tienen hoy en cierto nivel de vida donde se nos llama algunas veces a los países de Latinoamérica países en vías de desarrollo o países del tercer mundo. Entonces, esa separación, esa jerarquía nos llevan a nosotros a experimentar la vida desde un lugar muy particular. Unos le llaman el margen, otros le llaman la periferia, otros le llaman la pobreza. Yo estoy pensando de un término diferente, un término que le llamamos transoccidentalidad, que es el aceptar que somos occidentales por un lado, pero que somos no occidentales por el otro y en ese encuentro somos más que todo eso. Yo creo que el teologar así nos hace a nosotros repensar, repensar para vivir de nuevo con formas diferentes. El repensar no sólo significa revisar los procesos históricos que nos han dado a nosotros identidad, que nos han dado a nosotros una condición social. Sino que el repensar implica también el recrear.”

“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-Occidentalism,’ 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 provost for the Center for the Study of Hispanic Church and Community, and associate professor of theology and Latino/a Studies, on FULLER studio*

“Theologically speaking, whiteness will not be overcome through uncritical reassertions of tradition but in learning to accept by grace a marginal seat at 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*

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?



WE NEED TO CREATE  
NEW SPACES THAT  
WE DEVELOP  
TOGETHER, WHERE  
NO PERSPECTIVE  
OR CULTURAL VALUE  
IS PRIVILEGED OVER  
ANOTHER. WHERE NO  
ONE POSITION  
IS CONSIDERED SUPERIOR  
TO THE OTHER.



+ Alexis Abernethy,  
p. 79

“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 gut 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 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. He wants to be healed, and he wants to see.’ But Jesus says, ‘What do you want me to do for you? Do you want me to make you well?’

That question shows that he doesn’t assume that he knows what they want. He invites the voices in the margins into a conversation; he invites them into collaboration, and he invites them to take part in their own liberation. My father did that often by disrupting the conversation and placing the odd person right in the middle of that conversation. He did it often.”

+ Inés Velásquez-McBryde, MDiv student, from FULLER studio’s Story Table on “Seeking Justice”

“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 naturalized US citizen. I’m a psychologist working in a marriage and family department at Fuller Theological Seminary. I’m a Christian. I’m a mother. And I mention these because I love the concept of *perichoresis*—the relationships between people interpenetrate. Pause for a minute to think about that. When I have all these 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.”

+ Lisseth Rojas-Flores, associate professor of marriage and family therapy, on culture and privilege, in her address at the 2017 Missiology Lectures

“One of the questions we are entertaining is ‘decentering whiteness.’ I have a little challenge with that because when you say decentering whiteness, whiteness is still the target. We need to do more than that. Reconfiguration is what is needed. Voices that have not been included not only need to be heard, but inform the redesign, implementation, and leadership. We need to engage in a conversation in a safe enough way that it creates spaces for all voices to be heard. Not only with the goal of understanding, but with a commitment to change. To have those voices inform the reconfiguration. We need to create new spaces that we develop together, where no perspective or cultural value is privileged over another. Where no one position is considered superior to the other.”

+ Alexis Abernethy, associate provost for faculty inclusion and equity and professor of psychology, in her lecture on “Navigating (White Evangelical) Academia” at the Forum for Theological Exploration

“If you do a study of new cultures being birthed, it’s always in mixed zones of influence. I call it a cultural estuary, where freshwater and saltwater come together to create the most beautiful, diverse ecosystem. Interdependence flows right out of the gospel. It recognized the fissure and limitation of Babel and the potential of Pentecost at the same time. You have to frame this carefully. Because if you go over too far in the direction of unity, this kind of uniformity, you lose everything. If you go too far in the direction of separate, distinct identities, or just insisting on the boundaries, not creating porousness between cultures, you lose something. You can’t create new from either place.”

+ Makoto Fujimura, director of Fuller’s Culture Care Initiative, speaking on trauma and restoration at the 2018 Missiology Lectures

“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 it can give us the tools we need to live in this perilous context.”

+ David M. Bailey, founder and executive director of Arrabon, on the church’s role in reconciliation, in his lecture at the 2019 Brehm Conference

“Music and the arts help negotiate, construct, express the shifting in multiple identities that all of us actually have and express. And they negotiate tradition and innovation, and it’s good. They are able to choose the best elements from the local and non-local, the old and the new, fuse the sounds and create a new hybrid sound. How exciting can that be! This is the sound that I feel the church of Southeast Asia needs to hear. One that affirms their local, national identity and also their Christian belonging.”

+ Sooi Ling Tan, adjunct assistant professor at Fuller Seminary and adjunct lecturer at Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary, speaking at the 2018 Missiology Lectures about the cultural power of the performing arts

“I imagine that one way of working toward inclusivity follows this flow: discovering our particularities, being honest about how our distinctions became boundaries that exclude some and empower others, and then repenting 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 particulars 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—is the work of those who partner with God to cultivate that belonging.”

+ Aaron Dorsey (MAT ’18), Communications Inclusion Liaison at Fuller Theological Seminary



VOICES ON  
**Vocation**

+ This content is curated from ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Visit this Voice section on [Fuller.edu/Studio](https://Fuller.edu/Studio) for links to full videos, articles, and more.

“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?”

+ 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

“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.”

+ Kara Powell, executive director of Fuller Youth Institute, on her passion and call to work with young people, 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.”

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

“Saying yes to the angel Gabriel was a risky response. Mary’s pending marriage would have been in jeopardy if Joseph decided her tale of the angel’s announcement was only a cover-up for infidelity. Her legal status would have been in jeopardy if accused of adultery. Her economic status would have also been in jeopardy, since first-century Jewish women were dependent on the finances of either their parents or their husbands. I imagine that Mary’s emotional stress was incredibly high, because apart from the logistical impossibility of pregnancy without consummation, there was also the fact that infant mortality was common in that time. Not to mention that her life would have been at risk, as dying in childbirth was a real possibility. Mary’s yes to the angel was a sacrificial yes. It was a yes despite her own needs. It was a yes despite what made sense. It was a yes for the sake of others.”

As women, we encounter elements of sacrifice when it comes to our vocational lives. A yes to work can mean a sacrifice of time with our children. A yes to staying at home with children can mean a sacrifice of vocational development. A yes to balancing both vocation and family may be a sacrifice of self-care. Work and life balance can feel like an ongoing choice for many women, but we are not left alone in these decisions. Whatever the task before us, whatever the next season God calls us to, we are affirmed in our identity in Jesus Christ and assured that the Lord is with us. God’s invitation to us is accompanied with a reminder that we too are highly favored and that, like Mary, the Lord is also with us.”

+ Joyce Del Rosario, SIS PhD student, from her essay on Mary as a risk-taker in *She Is...: Biblical Reflections on Vocation* produced by Fuller’s De Pree Center

“Listening to the stories of assault survivors is a holy thing. It’s gritty work, but this is what Christ did: emptying himself to hold our pain on the Cross for the sake of redeeming us—and this has become the model through which I understand our Christian calling. It’s in this sacred work of emptying myself to hold another’s pain that I’ve been able not only to help restore a sense of personhood to others, but to come into more of who God has made me.”

+ Ellen Hong (MDiv '03), in FULLER magazine issue #11

“I always wanted to be a soldier, and in a way, I think I’ll be one until I’m dead. When I came to Fuller, I wrote down all my sins along with my propensities—things that maybe weren’t ‘wrong’ but that could get in the way of serving God—and one propensity was ‘being a soldier.’ I wrote them all down on a piece of paper and then burned it up, as a way of giving it all over to God. I’m not sure a lot changed, except one important thing: God gave me more love, even for those I’m sometimes called to fight. I have a love for my enemies in Iraq, Syria, Burma. That didn’t happen out of will power. It happened out of surrender to Jesus.”

+ David Eubank (MDiv '95), in FULLER magazine issue #11

“What drew 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 fitting 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 key witnesses 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 strength to work for justice and share God’s mercy through my remaining days.”

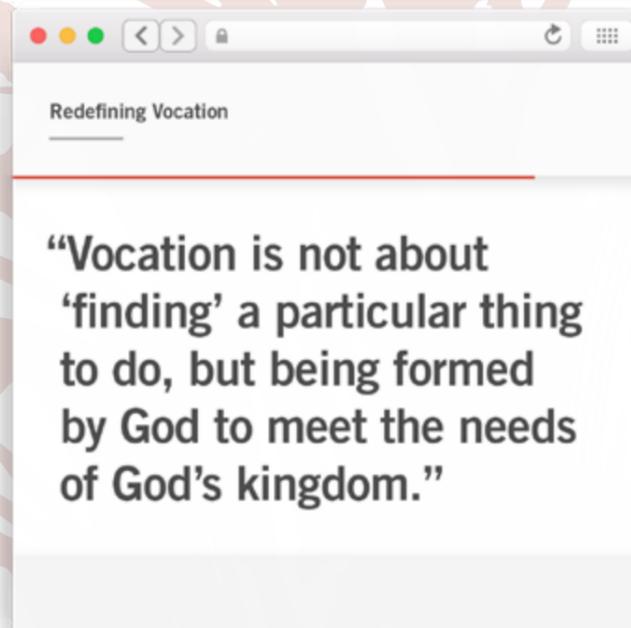
+ Winston Gooden, dean emeritus and Evelyn and Frank Freed Professor Emeritus of Psychotherapy and Spirituality, in FULLER magazine issue #1

“En este momento de mi caminar cristiano yo entiendo mi llamado a la misión divina como la 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. As a bridge, 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.”

+ Juan Martínez, professor of Hispanic studies and pastoral leadership, on FULLER studio





+ 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.

“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.”

+ This quote is taken from the introduction to FULLER Formation’s “Reframing 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](http://Fuller.edu/Formation).

“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 “Reframing Vocation”

VOICES ON

## Embodied Learning in a Digital World

We heard from Fuller voices reflecting on online community in Issue #10. This time, four faculty members share why they value the unique experience of in-person education at Fuller.

+ This content is curated from ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Visit this Voice section on Fuller.edu/Studio for links to full videos, articles, and more.

### 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 over various platforms. 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 a 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 doctoral level at Fuller; 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's 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 seminary like Fuller, that certainly means faith in God; but it also means faith in a communal mission. Like a lot of the works of faith, this mission is costly, but at least it comes with tacos, and the flash in your colleague's eye when they laugh.

+ Christopher B. Hays, D. Wilson Moore  
Associate Professor of Near Eastern Studies

### BLOWING THINGS UP IN THE LAB



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 untied, with no tidy bow. One shares a story of a ragged, 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.

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 in my own feedback to students. Because seminarians tend to be kind, I am often pushing them to add more truth to the love in their feedback to each other. When a student hears in real time that his or her illustration inadvertently excluded listeners of one gender or socioeconomic level, I often see them visibly blush. They hear real pain in the

voice of their classmate; they see it written on her face. The preacher swallows hard, awkward silence descends, and I must let it linger, for something important is happening in the shared silence. There is a heightened awareness that preaching can wound even as it intends to heal, and a firm resolve to do less of that wounding.

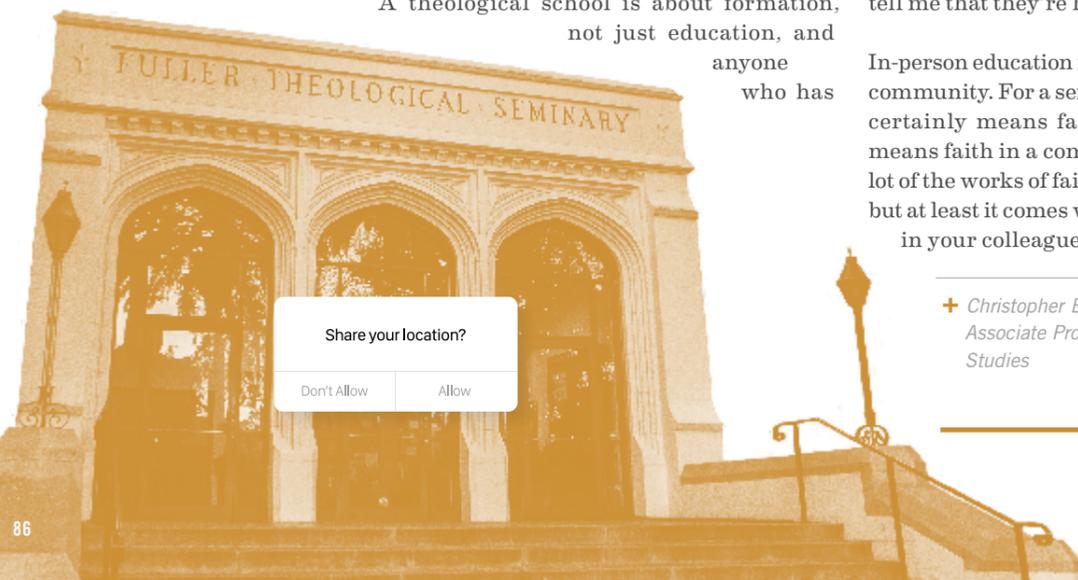
By contrast, in my online courses, students reply in written comment boxes over several days, and preachers are not required to reply to their feedback, so we never really hear whether any given critique landed, or simply glanced off with negligible impact. We never get to hug or pass Kleenex or spontaneously pray after class in the hallway. While real care can be expressed online, I do love the visceral expression of it that happens in our “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 log time together in 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.

+ Lisa Washington Lamb, visiting assistant professor of preaching



Want to study together later?



## IMMERSIVE LEARNING



learner



learner

There are certainly benefits to online programs that allow learners the convenience of structuring their studies around family, work, or other commitments. In this case, then, study and learning is an added dimension of activity, arranged around the other nonnegotiables. There is no minimizing the sacrifices 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 study into already crowded lives, intensifying, 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 resocialization 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 unreplacable in the online platform. True, we now realize that online education generates its own digital community, and it is also increasingly the case that many learner-oriented events held by educational institutions are streamed live so that more of the activities of educational institutions 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 during the 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 are enriched, extended, even interrogated in the prolonged discussions carried out by participants present live and in person across the seminary context.

+ Amos Yong, professor of theology and mission

## AN “IN-PERSON” GOD



*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 not exist any more—or mourning, or crying, or 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 *shekinah*, 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 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 a 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’s 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

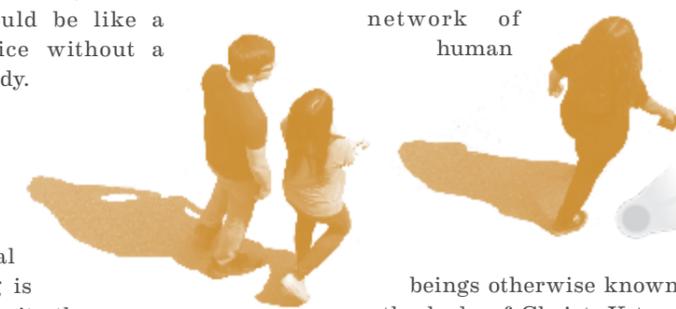
constrain the presence of God’s *shekinah* that they run into trouble. In the Exodus accounts, God tabernacles with Israel in the wilderness, demonstrating God’s loving faithfulness through residence that is always (perhaps necessarily) on the move (Exod 13:21). Yet the temple, originally conceived and constructed as a way of celebrating God’s incomparable glory, eventually became symbolic of Israel’s misguided attempts 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 has been a core part 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 earned 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 able to connect to a diverse and diffuse network of human

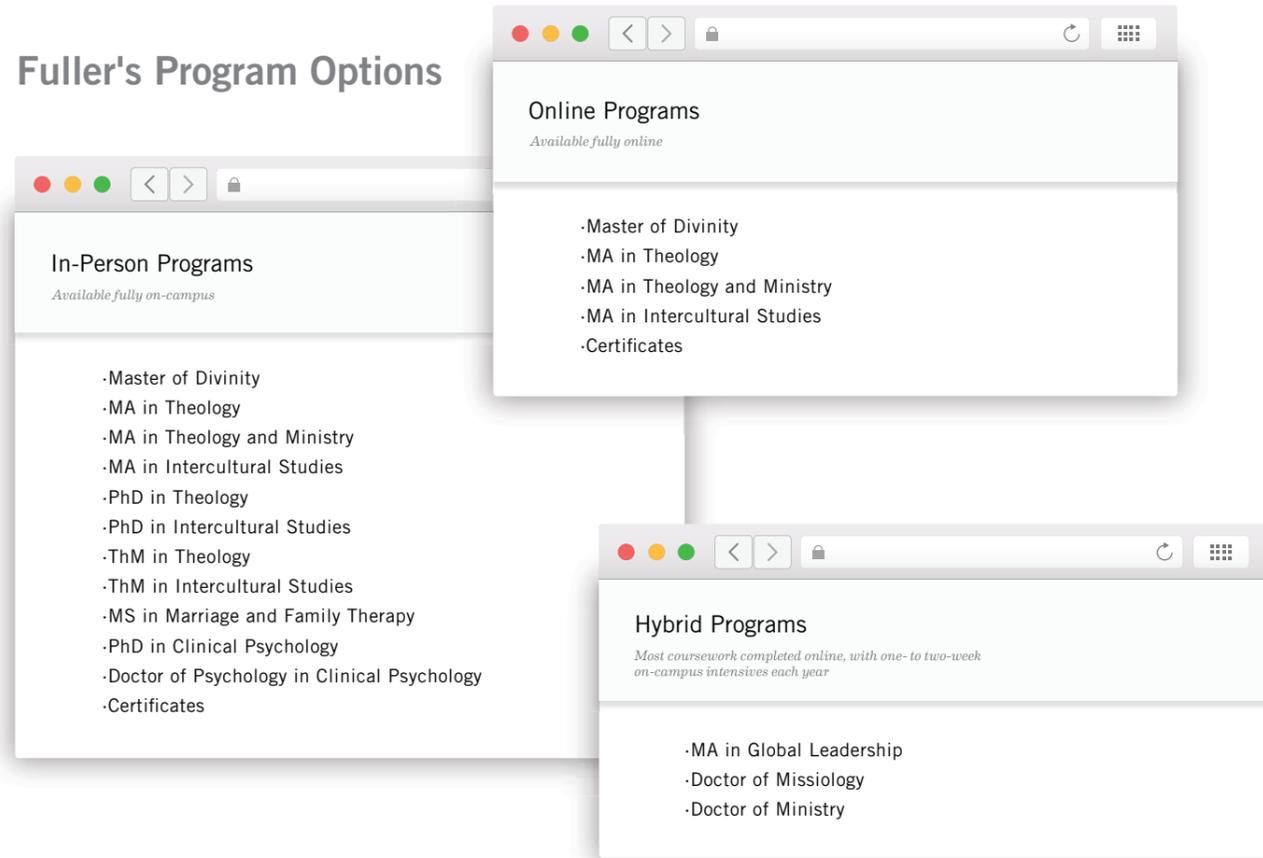
beings otherwise known as the body of Christ. Yet, even when we don’t share the same residence or inhabit the same geophysical space, the Spirit still gathers with us because that’s simply who God is—the same God who pitched a tent with Israel in the wilderness and took on flesh in the Incarnation and will one day take up residence with us.

+ Kutter Callaway, assistant professor of theology and culture



6 min

## Fuller's Program Options



Gutenberg's printing press made it possible to mass produce the written word for the first time in history. Literacy became attainable for common people, not just the wealthy and elite. The parallels are significant: the introduction of the printing press and digital technology were watershed moments 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 have changed the way we access and consume information, and both have made knowledge more readily accessible to people around the world.

Learning should be interactive and engaging, as opposed to passive. Learning is inherently social, whether that 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. Learners should have opportunities to apply their learning to real-world problems and see how their theories match the practical application. Nothing about these principles changes whether you're in a classroom or learning on a computer.

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 learn from others in other contexts. In our effort to form global leaders for kingdom vocations, online education gives us the opportunity to reach those who could never reach Fuller, and learn from those who we would otherwise never interact with.

+ Jeff DeSurra, director of digital learning, Fuller Leadership Platform

## 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.

+ Rachel Paprocki, managing editor of the Fuller Writing Center, originally quoted in "Voices on Online Community" in Issue #10

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.

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.

+ Tommy Lister, executive director of the Office of Teaching and Learning





## 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](https://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](https://Fuller.edu/Formation)




Fuller Theological Seminary

## 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



FULLER studio





✦ *The Fuller community grieves the loss and celebrates the life of our dear colleague Evelyne Reisacher, who passed away on March 30, 2019, after a long battle with cancer.*

*For years, Evelyne served as associate professor of Islamic studies and intercultural relations in the School of Intercultural Studies, while also working as a leading global missionary to the Muslim world. We give thanks for her life as a joyful witness to the love of Christ. She is dearly missed.*

## RECENT FACULTY BOOKS

### *The Aesthetics of Atheism*

Kutter Callaway and Barry Taylor (Fortress, 2019)

### *Old Testament Ethics*

John Goldingay (InterVarsity Press, 2019)

### *Luke as Narrative Theologian: Texts and Topics*

Joel B. Green (Mohr Siebeck, 2019)

### *Deathless Hopes: Reinventions of Afterlife and Eschatological Beliefs*

edited by Christopher B. Hays and Alexander Massmann (Altes Testament und Moderne, 2019)

### *Deep Focus: Film and Theology in Dialogue*

Robert K. Johnston, Craig Detweiler, and Kutter Callaway (Baker Academic, 2019)

### *Christian Theology in the Pluralistic World: A Global Introduction*

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Eerdmans, 2019)

### *Growing With: Every Parent's Guide to Helping Teenagers and Young Adults Thrive in Their Family, Faith, and Future*

Kara Powell and Steven Argue (Baker Books, 2019)

### *Systemically Treating Autism: A Clinician's Guide for Empowering Families*

Brie Turns, Julie Ramisch, and Jason Whiting (Routledge, 2019)

### *Misión en el camino: Reflexiones sobre la teología de la misión*

Charles E. Van Engen (Wipf & Stock, 2019)

### *The Kerygmatic Spirit: Apostolic Preaching in the 21st Century*

Amos Yong (Cascade Books, 2018)

## RECENT FACULTY ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

**JUSTIN L. BARRETT**, "What Do We Think about God When We Aren't Careful?" in *The Cognitive Science of Religion: A Methodological Introduction to Key Empirical Studies*, ed. D. J. Slone and W. W. McCorkle (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019). **JEFFREY P. BJORCK**, with G. S. Kim, D. A. Cunha, and R. W. Braese, "Assessing Religious Support in Adolescence: Validation of the Multi-Faith Religious Support Scale-Adolescent (MFRSS-A)," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 11, no. 1 (2019): 22–31. **WARREN S. BROWN**, with L. K. Paul, "The Neuropsychological Syndrome of Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum," *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* 25, no. 3 (2019): 324–330. **OLIVER CRISP**, "On the Vicarious Humanity of Christ," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 21 (2019); "Against Mereological Panentheism," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* (2019); "Is Jesus God Incarnate?" in *Logos Questions* (Logos Institute, 2019). **CARLY L. CROUCH**, "Forced Migration, Political Power and the Book of Jeremiah," *Political Theology* 19, no. 6 (2018): 457–536. **CHRISTOPHER B. HAYS**, "Making Peace with Me: The Josianic Origins of Isaiah 24–27," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 73, no. 2 (2019): 143–147. **VELI-MATTI KÄRKKÄINEN**, "Necessity, Chance, and Indeterminism: A Theological Account of Freedom of Will in a 'Regulated' World," in *God's Providence and Randomness in Nature: Scientific and Theological Perspectives*, ed. R. J. Russell and J. M. Moritz (Templeton Press, 2019); "Legitimate Diversity or Heretical Deviation: 'Local Churches' and the Challenges of the Globalized Pluralistic World," in *Local and Global Development in Chinese Christianity*, ed. C. Kuo, Y. Tsai, and F. Chou (Center for the Study of Chinese Religions of the National Chengchi University, 2019); "Christian Church among Religions: Toward a Hospitable Missionary Encounter with the Other," in *Wrestling with God in Context: Revisiting the Theology and Social Vision of Shoki Coe*, ed. M. P. Joseph, P. H. Huang, V. Hsu (Fortress, 2019). **SEYOON KIM**, "Paul and Violence," in *Ex Auditu* (Wipf

& Stock, 2019). **LISA LAMB**, "Enabling Diverse Learners to Thrive in the Online Homiletics Classroom," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 22, no. 2 (2019). **CECIL M. ROBECK JR.**, "Can We Imagine an Ecumenical Future Together? A Pentecostal Perspective," *Gregorianum*: 100 (2019), 49–69; "Pentecostals and Charismatics in North America," in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Groups, vol. 4, The Twentieth Century: Traditions in a Global Context*, ed. J. Hanciles (Oxford University Press, 2019). **WILBERT R. SHENK**, "Alan Kreider and Kwame Bediako: Context and Conversion," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 93, no. 2 (April 2019): 43–60. **SIANG-YANG TAN**, "Beyond Resilience, Posttraumatic Growth, and Self-Care: A Biblical Perspective on Suffering and Christian Spiritual Formation," in *Psychology and Spiritual Formation in Dialogue: Moral and Spiritual Change in Christian Perspective*, ed. T. Crisp, S. L. Porter, and G. Ten Elshof (IVP Academic, 2019). **KENNETH T. WANG**, with A. Morales, "The Relationship between Language Brokering, Parent-Child Bonding, and Mental Health Correlates among Latinx College Students," *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* 40, no. 4 (2018): 316–327. **AMOS YONG**, "Missional Renewal: Pentecostal Perspectives to and from the Ends of the Earth," *Quadrum: Journal of the Foursquare Scholars Fellowship* 1, no. 2 (2018): 133–56; "Many Tongues, Many Discursive Practices: Whose Systematics, Which Global Christianities?," *Plerōma: studii și cercetări teologice* (Serie nouă) 20, no. 1 (2018): 35–42; "Pentecostal Ecclesiologies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology*, ed. P. Avis, (Oxford University Press, 2018); "Diasporic Discipleship from West Asia through Southeast Asia and Beyond: A Dialogue with 1 Peter," *Asia Journal of Theology* 32, no. 2 (October 2018): 3–21; "The Missio Spiritus in a Pluralistic World: A Pentecost Approach to Dialogue, Hospitality, and Sanctuary," *Pittsburgh Theological Journal* 9 (Autumn 2018): 11–48.

# LET THE BUILDINGS SPEAK

As we prepare for the move to Pomona, we've invited all Fuller alumni to share some of their fondest memories from the seven decades we've spent in the buildings that make up the Pasadena campus. See more reflections and photos, and share your own stories, at [Fuller.edu/Building](https://Fuller.edu/Building).

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*It was February 2002. I was stretched thin for cash, as is the common denominator for all theology students, I think, and needed to bite 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 “so what is this money for” conversation and, as per usual, he came through with the funding. I thanked him, told him, “Te quiero,” and rather than say “Ciao,” like we normally would, I very randomly 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 adopted 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 growing, dying, and returning of the ivy to be an apt metaphor for the changing seasons in their academic careers at Fuller.*

*Over the next three years as a residential MDiv student, her comments rang true. I can remember walking through campus from our apartment on North Oakland Ave., coming and going from classes, and passing the Prayer Garden, seeing the ivy dry and 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 also remember walking by with a bounce in my step from the exhilaration of renewed faith and seeing the ivy surrounding the Prayer Garden a lush and vibrant green.*

*Perhaps the most memorable and evocative image is entering into the Prayer Garden’s sacred space, through ivy-draped doorways, in both dry and vibrant seasons, sitting on the cool concrete and watching the light play through the stained glass cross, and listening to God in the silence, or filling the space with harmony as I participated in one of the many Taizé services we held in that space. It reminded me to turn toward God, who was always near and faithful to me in every season.*

—Luke Hyder (MDiv '06)



**BENEDICTION:** 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 Intercultural Studies, points out buildings that others might not be quick to see, like the Men’s Central Jail. The faculty accompanying her are Chris Blumhofer, Erin Dufault-Hunter, Susan Maros, Mike McNichols, Johnny Ramirez-Johnson, Dave Scott, and Alison Wong—members of the faculty Formation Groups that meet regularly over the course 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 Mater Dolorosa 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, they hear from Sgt. Jenelle Meier about law enforcement in LA.

The group listens intently as each voice adds contours to the urban landscape around them. In response, they pray. At each location, they pause to recite the words: “Jesus, together we seek your peace in this place.”

“God has already been doing amazing things here,” Dave Scott says in reflection. Yet for all the good that’s made up the city’s narrative, it has its sins, too. Mary identifies the spot across the street from the district attorney’s office where indentured servants were once sold. Walking through Little Tokyo, one can’t escape the memory of internment during World War II. And injustice is a present reality as well. As they pass federal buildings, Mary points to the immigration prison that looms close behind. Los Angeles, she says, has trained itself to become a city that forgets. Erin Dufault-Hunter laments, “How much forgetting has made LA a very unjust and unkind city?”

Erin, the only LA native of the group, stands by Chris Blumhofer, a recent arrival from the East Coast. Yet each faculty member present recognizes that they have a part to play in the city’s life and peace. Looking around at the new architecture sprouting around older buildings, Johnny Ramirez-Johnson notes the city’s ongoing transformation. “It breaks the old way of thinking,” he says. “A new and unpredictable path.”

Their day ends in the plaza marking the Azusa Street Revival, a time in the city’s history that saw a great movement of the church through the Spirit. Circling up, they breathe out their prayer once more: “Jesus, together we seek your peace in this place.”

*+ By Jerome Blanco (MDiv '16), communications writer for FULLER studio. In the image, Erin Dufault-Hunter, assistant professor of Christian ethics, and Chris Blumhofer, visiting assistant professor of New Testament, take in the Communion of Saints tapestries lining the sanctuary of the Cathedral of 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 downtown LA, reflecting the church’s outward mission to the city.*

## Extending Fuller’s Legacy and Impact

By God’s grace, Fuller’s impact has been extensive and immeasurable, 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 reimagines 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 has been 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’ve 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 every unit throughout the seminary, as well as with external partners including alumni, community members, and ministries 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 70-year legacy with even greater impact.

To learn more about Development and our fundraising program, visit [Fuller.edu/Giving](http://Fuller.edu/Giving) or call Sandy Shrader, Executive Director of Development, at (480) 478-5125.



**BRENT ASSINK**  
Chief of Philanthropy

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## 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 classroom: 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 110 denominations enroll in Fuller’s degree programs annually, and our 44,000 alumni serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businesspersons, 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 ayude 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 110 denominaciones se inscriben en los programas de estudios de Fuller anualmente, y nuestros 44.000 ex-alumnos sirven como ministros, consejeros, maestros, artistas, líderes en organizaciones sin fines de lucro, empresarios, y en una variedad de otras vocaciones alrededor del mundo.

## 풀러 신학교란?

풀러 신학교는 복음주의에 기반을 둔 초교파 대학원으로서 하나님 나라를 위해 부름 받은 지도자 형성에 전념하고 있습니다. 교회와 세상 속 변화에 반응하며 풀러는 캠퍼스 내 재학생과 온라인 학생들의 신학 교육 경험에 변화를 가져오고 있습니다. 예수님을 따르는 자들이 성실, 용기, 혁신, 협력, 그리고 열매의 삶으로 섬길 수 있도록 돕는 신학적 형성에 힘쓰고 있습니다.

풀러는 신학, 심리학, 선교학과와 스페인어, 한국어, 온라인 옵션 선택 가능한 15개의 석사 및 박사 학위 과정을 통해 교회를 위한 풍부하고도 다양한 지원을 제공하고 있습니다. 80 국가, 110교파에서 온 약 3,500명의 학생들이 매년 풀러에 등록하며 44,000 명의 졸업생들이 전 세계에 흩어져 목사, 상담사, 교사, 예술가, 비영리 지도자, 사업가, 그리고 다양한 일터의 현장에서 일하고 있습니다.



+ Doxology I: Holy Grail by Dao Zi. Wash-ink painting. 55"x28", 2017. See more of Dao Zi's work on pp. 2-3 and 11.

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

+ 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."

