STORY Priscilla Santos, pictured above, learns what it means to be an advocate in the work of anti-trafficking p. 22
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For this art series of constellations, artist Liz Carver (MATM ’17) says her curiosity was her inspiration. “I have always wondered how the ancients came up with such rich stories about the stars,” she says. “How is this particular collection of stars an Ethiopian princess (Andromeda)? How is that particular collection of stars a narwhal (Cetus) or a swan (Cygnus)?” Liz chose to draw on high-resolution images from NASA (which are free to anyone) in order to “see the stories behind the stars.”

The constellations represented in the art in this issue can be seen through the autumn months in the Northern Hemisphere. Cygnus (pictured above) can be observed in September. See more of Liz’s artwork on pages 11, 78–79, and 98–99.

Liz Carver is a designer, artist, and creative living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she is the director of communication and first impressions at Eastbrook Church and co-owner of Third Coast Paper. Find this constellation series at thirdcoastpaper.com and more about Liz and her work at lizcarver.com.
Trailblazing science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin defined technology as “how a society copes with physical reality: how people get and keep and cook food, how they clothe themselves, what their power sources are. . . . Perhaps very ethereal people aren’t interested in these mundane, bodily matters, but I’m fascinated by them.”1 Le Guin’s broad definition shifts the locus of technology toward ordinary life, centering its value not in some dazzling standard of innovation but in how it serves the everyday. Not surprising, then, that Microsoft artificial intelligence (AI) designer Jonathan Foster finds his days occupied with the question, “In an age of rising robots and digital immersion, what does it mean to be human?”

Director of AI Strategy at Microsoft Michael Ebatyne (p. 61) concurs: “Today, ethics is central to every technology conversation. I’m a part of. Historically this wasn’t the case. Now that digital technology is on the verge of mimicking human-like behaviors . . . there are so many unspoken assumptions about what being in a human community is truly about.” Alumnus and HTC Decentralized Chief Officer Phil Chen (MDiv ’05) agrees, suggesting that we should consider technology a natural frontier for Christian ethics. As he ponders whether the innovations of his world—including big data, cryptocurrencies, and blockchain technologies—have sufficient moral compass, Chen imagines Fuller filling a crucial gap.2

This is the territory investigated by Associate Professor of Theology and Culture Kutter Callaway as guest editor of this issue’s section on technology and theology (pp. 42–77). At the dawn of the information age, Le Guin wrote in Dreams Must Explain Themselves: “Hard times are coming when we will be wanting the voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now and can see through our fear-stricken society and its obsessive technologies to other ways of being, and even imagine some real grounds for hope.” Nearly half a century later, this is a useful prediction to keep in mind as theologians, psychologists, and missiologists ask, “How should we live as fresh and blood followers of Jesus in a world of unfettered technology?”

LAUREL FARNER
is chief storyteller and vice president of communications.

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우리를 향한 제의의 끝. 저는 사람 정책에 대해 끝낼 수 있을지, 아니면 공정한 것이나 느슨한 것이든 모든 사람이 이해할 수 있는 하나의 원리로 앉아야 한다는 생각을 가지고입니다. 우리는 인간이 되는 데 참여하는 사람, 충고, 안내를 의지로 지배하고 있다. 그래서, 최근 몇 년 동안 이러한 인간의 삶이 허무해 보이기 심해 했지만, 변함없이 변하고 있는 한국의 현실에 대해서도 다른 우리들의 삶은 이를 토대로 능동적으로 바뀌고 있다.

가장 먼저, 우리는 빌미를 깨닫고, 우리 삶의 몫에 대해 주의를 기울여야 한다. 그러나 거기에는 만성 인종적 불평등도 있다. 일부 인종적 차별은 아직도 우리 사회에 깔려 있다. 이런 문제는 우리 삶의 구조를 바꾸는 데 제대로 된 방법으로 연계될 수 있는 목표로, 이LAND(아이언랜드)와 같은 단체들이 주목하는 문제이다. 이런 문제를 해결하기 위해서는 모든 사람들과의 대화가 필요하다.

그러나, 이런 경험은 우리 사회의 전반적 특성을 반영할 수 있는 경우도 있다. 여전히 많은 사람들이 우리 사회의 현실에 대한 비판을 통해 우리 사회의 전반적 특성을 이해하고 있다. 그러나, 이러한 경험이 우리 사회의 전반적 특성을 반영할 수 있는 경우도 있다. 그러나, 이러한 경험이 우리 사회의 전반적 특성을 반영할 수 있는 경우도 있다.

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Strangers, Neighbors, and the Unexpected Promise of Rideshare Technology

 personas desconocidas, vecinos y la promesa inesperada de la tecnología de vehículos compartidos

From Mark Labberton, President
than an Uber fare: I have met extraordinary hopes envelop me and teach me again and again.

"Breathtaken" is a word that captures what I have felt after such rides. Maybe we just cross town, but we traveled a continent in times of day, and mashed-up American cultures. As they do so, they carry in themselves their own rich narratives—reflections of diverse persons, made in the image of God, trying to get by, living stories that glimmer in ways we are all usually blind to. I am humbled by the glimpses their brief life-tours give me, and always eager for them to know that their gifts are received and treasured.

Even though I have many friends, colleagues, and students who represent a wide diversity. Uber drivers teach me that my world always needs more perspectives like theirs. Who might have guessed that ride-sharing technology would bring me so much more than transportation, that along the way of where God is leading on any particular day, a stranger might become the “neighbor” I am to love as myself?

I am grateful for the glimpses they have of where God is leading me, and always eager for them to know that their gifts are received and treasured.
In situ: from the Latin, meaning “in place.” In-situ is also the name for the Hong Kong-based artist residency founded and run by Fuller alumnus John Lui (MAT ’11). Established in the center of Hong Kong’s thriving cultural scene, In-situ hosts visiting artists from all over the world for one to three months, providing them with studio space, networking opportunities with local artists, cultural immersion, and new perspectives on art, culture, and life—not to mention, John stresses, access to Hong Kong’s mouthwatering cuisine.

John, who was born in Canada but spent years of his upbringing in Hong Kong, admits that running a residency wasn’t exactly what he dreamed of doing when he was a younger artist. He was trained in design and photography at Pratt Institute and the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and he studied theology and the arts at Fuller. But he attended residencies during his summer breaks between school, and there he stumbled upon his love for these unique spaces. He says, “I found it really fascinating, this idea of community. It was really interesting to just live together and share different cultures.” The intimacy not only among individuals, but among the peoples and places each artist represented, was apparent in these temporary yet close-knit fellowships. “That led me to work at an artist residency and to eventually starting my own.”

John founded In-situ in 2017, after living in the States for school and working a stint at the world-renowned Red Gate Residency in Beijing. Since then, he’s hosted artists from a variety of nations—like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Canada.

“Even if it’s for a short period of time,” he says, “a bunch of artists living together for a couple of months means you’re sharing different cultures. You’re sharing what you like to eat. You cook for each other. You learn about each other through art and through conversation. You’re hoping that kind of learning inspires new ideas.”

The artists, who find their own lodging around the city, share a 2,000-square-foot studio with individual work areas but also a communal lounge, conference table, and kitchen.

John recalls a meal one of his artists-in-residence prepared for the community. Rafael from Spain made tapas—chilled tomato soup with grilled asparagus, sautéed mushrooms, onions, and hard-boiled eggs—along with grilled pork chops and fried potatoes. “Apparently it was not as good as his mother’s,” John laughs, “but he was still pretty happy with the way it turned out.” John explains that these moments are the heart of the residency. “It’s times like this where we can come together and not only share a meal but experience each other’s cultures in a meaningful way.”

Of course, the art is a crucial element too. John prides himself on the intentionality he invests in selecting artists out of the program’s applicant pool. He’s always on the lookout for artists who are ready and willing to have their work—and their selves—changed by encountering a new place, a new people, and a new culture. People who are “open to new ideas,” he says, and ready to receive. What one can get out of coming to a residency like In-situ hinges on this willingness to transform. And once these guests do arrive, John considers it his responsibility to make the best of Hong Kong available to them.

In addition to affording residents time and space for their research and work, In-situ prioritizes the connection between the visitors and the host culture. John takes his residents to local studios and art shows so they can see what kind of work Hong Kong artists are producing, and he invites local artists to participate in In-Situ’s gatherings. John talks about a recent event he hosted in which emerging artists Andrew Luk, Angela Yuan, and Kwong Man Chun joined for a lively conversation. Of these meetings John says, “both visiting artists and local artists become exposed
to different artistic practices while finding common ground as creative practitioners.”

John explains that Hong Kong is an especially ideal spot for this cross-cultural exchange to take place. “It’s a very international city,” he says, and he adds that the city’s efficient transportation, thriving arts scene, tourist-friendly navigability, and wide use of English all foster the back-and-forth conversation that happens.

With the demands of running the residency, John says that it can appear like his own artistic pursuits have taken a back seat. But he says this isn’t the case. Instead, the entire process of curating residents and facilitating a multifaceted cultural conversation has become his primary medium of artistic expression. “Some people see the residency as an art project. And I do see it that way. I put a lot of my own personality into the program.”

And inasmuch as the work of In-situ is an art, John insists it is a ministry too. “One thing that really stuck out during my time at Fuller was the idea of incarnational ministry,” he explains. “One aspect of sharing the gospel is sharing the gospel. And another is actually working within a community, changing the community socially as well. Being intentional about it.” Everything John does in serving as host, guide, and friend to his residents is part of that ministry. It’s his hope that the cultural exchange that comes out of the residency has deep and far-reaching benefits for everybody.

Artists who come to In-situ gain new perspectives and broaden their imaginative horizons from the experience the residency offers. They then take those new insights and cultural gifts home with them so that others around the world can experience a taste of it themselves. John guarantees that his local culture is left better for the experience as well. Hong Kong locals learn a thing or two about new cultures and ideas, having their worldview expanded without ever having to leave home. The process is mutually enriching. “The whole idea is that it’s a conversation,” he explains. In-situ “creates touch points between international artists and locals.”

Because of his unique intercultural upbringing, John says he feels especially suited for this kind of work. His own life has seen its fair share of intercontinental transitions and displacement. He was born in Vancouver, where he lived with his family until his father passed away when he was six years old. He, his mother, and his sister then moved to Hong Kong—where his parents were from—before he ended up returning to Canada for boarding school. He wrapped up high school in an international school in Beijing, and he lived for years in the States, completing degree programs on both the West and East Coasts and in the Midwest. He returned to Beijing for work and then ultimately ended up in Hong Kong.

“I’ve always had to interact with different cultures,” he reflects. “I always felt equipped.” Of the continual transitions demanded by In-situ, he says, “For someone who isn’t used to moving around, it can be a lot to handle.”

Even then, he admits that the constant coming and going of residents can be difficult “because I’ve had to say goodbye to a lot of people.” But he quickly adds that it is all part of the role in ministry to which he feels called. “The thing with being in ‘place’ and with ‘incarnational ministry’ is this idea of being present.” He can miss those who leave or be looking forward to artists before they come, he says, “but I think for the most part I really focus on my time with the artists that are here and just try to be really present and live life together with them.”

It’s those small moments of connection, he explains, that make this work important. “And that’s very gratifying,” he says. “That’s the best part about all this.”

JEROME BLANCO (MDiv ’16) is a communications writer and social media strategist for FULLER studio.
As a second grader in Memphis, Tennessee, Broderick Leaks (PhD '09) and his cousin attended a party with friends where they were the only Black children. He noticed his friend’s grandfather was generally nice to the other children, but unusually cold toward him and his cousin. While all his friends enjoyed themselves, picking up toys and presents to play with, Broderick was reprimanded by the grandfather when he tried to play with the same toys. “Put that down! That’s not your toy!” He ran home to his grandmother, who said, “I love you, God loves you, and God don’t like ugly.” Today, Broderick says that one statement forever changed the way he approaches race relations. “Even as a little second grader, that spoke to me.”

As a child, with the guidance and support of his family, Broderick began learning the art of navigating the pervasive boundaries of race. Today, as a therapist and professor at the University of Southern California, Broderick not only continues to exercise that skill, but helps others learn how to navigate the complex spaces—the challenges of racial identity, the distinctions between religion and mental health, the struggles that attend major transitions—in their own lives.

Hanging on the wall of Broderick’s office are a series of photos. In each frame is a group of young people—students of his course called Foundations of Self. “The class is open to all students, but the actual content is focused on men of color,” he says. The course covers topics like identity development, leadership skills, and cultural analysis, and provides mentoring opportunities. “Some people are from different neighborhoods, then they come here and it’s like they’re on another planet. They’re interacting with different people on a level they never did before,” he says. “I love having those conversations—why this person is comfortable and this person is not—and then helping them work through that.”

Foundations of Self allows Broderick to bring together all he has learned from both his experience and his scholarship to help students navigate a complex world. An opportunity to consider one’s community and culture with thoughtful guidance can be an essential part of thriving in a new context, especially for minority students. Broderick’s work revolves around those conversations; he situates himself in borderlands and then teaches others to find their way in contested spaces.

While working on his PhD in clinical psychology at Fuller, Broderick began to interact with the often fraught boundary between therapeutic work and spirituality. This has meant bringing the field of psychology and mental health into the church, even when churches are resistant. “There is a belief that if you have any kind of issue you should be able
to pray and God will heal it,” he says. “I attend a predominantly Black church, and many of us trace our heritage to enslaved people, so we believe we are resilient and don’t deal with anxiety or depression. But we do struggle with it like everyone else.”

During Mental Health Awareness Month, Broderick spoke to the church in Pasadena where he and his family attend, encouraging them to see therapy as a means of God’s healing work. “I and other mental health professionals are co-laborers with God,” Broderick preached, stating that “when we cut off certain avenues of support, it limits our ability to access all that God has provided for us to achieve healing.” Broderick encouraged the congregation to consider how God might bring healing and wholeness from the people they don’t expect, to consider how God might use mental health professionals. “The cool thing was that a lot of people came up to me after the service, many of them in tears, saying they appreciated that mental health was addressed. They felt they could pursue treatment and be under God’s guidance.”

Just as Broderick seeks to bring the world of psychology into the church, he also creates space for faith in mental health. During a seminar on faith and psychology, he showed a recording of his sermon to his colleagues at USC and spoke about the connections and tensions between Christian identity, African American identity, and psychology. “Some of my colleagues had never been in a Christian church before; they never saw a service,” he says. “If we’re going to be working with students, it’s best to see what their worship spaces are like and know what they are experiencing. That means visiting Buddhist temples, mosques, and Jewish synagogues as well as churches.”

Much of what Broderick brings to his context is the willingness to always engage his full personhood, never leaving out his history, family, profession, or faith. “After I gave a presentation on faith and psychology, I was struck when a trainee came up to me and cried,” he recalls. The trainee expressed how important it was to see faith brought up in a professional context. “They didn’t even think it was okay to talk about their faith in this field, to really bring all of who they are into their professional roles.”

Broderick’s focus on the whole person helps his clients by providing space for them to bring their own faith experience. As a Christian in a large secular institution, Broderick has been able to help orient Christian students to their new environment. “I’ve noticed that students who come from very conservative Christian backgrounds have a real hard time when they get into non-conservative settings,” he says. Having learned himself how to function in such spaces and still embrace his faith, Broderick is able to guide students in their own processes and ask helpful questions. “How do you engage the broader world while still holding on to your values? How do you engage people without outrightly dismissing them because they don’t have the same belief system? How do you actually live life in an environment that is not overtly Christian or even pro-Christian and still be a meaningful contributor to the community without isolating yourself? How do you love on people?”

A good example, says Broderick, “would be some students come in and don’t even associate with LGBT-identified individuals, don’t talk to them. But then those students are like, well, my professor was actually pretty awesome and my roommate is LGBT and they’re a good person.” Broderick tries to help them think through that. For such a student and their particular values, what does
One student visited our apartment—she was adjusting to her life as a college student—and told me about how much she appreciated my family living here,” Broderick says. “She told me, ‘It’s so nice to live next to a family. It feels like home.’

It’s not so much that Broderick builds bridges, but that he has made a home in the intersection. It’s not so much that Broderick is a psychologist at one moment and a Christian the next, but that these worlds and their stories mingle and intertwine in his person. These identities, and the collective experiences they represent, become the very home into which Broderick invites others to find rest. “One of the comments I get a lot is how measured I am when it comes to difficult conversations, or how I create safe spaces,” he notes. “I get affected by stuff just like everyone else, but I’m approaching it from a lens of, ‘we’re all human.’ I might think you’re really misguided, but I’m starting from a place of love versus attack. Of course, I have a lot of work to do internally. But I know who I am, I know how valued I am in the kingdom, how much God loves me. So I’m not going to let someone make me question my identity and my value.”

Having learned to embrace his own identities and move between worlds, Broderick has found a calling to help others learn that same art of navigation. Sometimes that looks like guiding a student through the therapeutic process. At other times, it is teaching a class on identity to students of color, asking them questions, helping them find mentors so that they can succeed in a new environment. “I love having those conversations with students and helping them figure that out. A lot of them have major crises when all these worlds are conflicting and I create a safe space for them to explore.” In every context he provides a space of refuge, a home, so that people have a place to find their orientation, heal, and become whole. Then they can walk, as God created them, back into the world.

“AARON DORSEY (MAT ’18) is the communications inclusion liaison for FULLER studio.
NATE HARRISON is the senior photographer and director of photography at FULLER studio. Find more of his work at NateCHarrison.com.
Priscilla Santos learns valuable lessons about advocacy as she comes into her own working in the young field of anti-trafficking.
Instead, she discovered that those same stories of exploitation were happening right in her own city. As part of a ministry with her church, she was spending several hours a week building relationships with women and kids in a low-income neighborhood just minutes from her apartment. As she became friends with different women and learned how they spent their days, she noticed common stories. “Many were single moms working multiple jobs and in dire situations,” recalls Priscilla. “They had to exchange sex for money from the neighborhood men just to support their kids.” Then she learned that some of the younger girls were doing the same thing, to bring in income for their mothers.

“It was happening in my community,” she says. Further, she realized she could be more effective serving stateside rather than overseas. “I have fewer barriers serving people here in my community—I’m familiar with the culture, with the history, with the geography, and I speak the primary languages, English and Spanish.”

But Priscilla quickly understood that she would need formal training to make an impact. “I could see right away that human trafficking is very complex and nuanced, and affected people in ways that I couldn’t understand,” she says. “I wanted to be as best equipped as possible.” Having heard about Fuller from a friend, Priscilla visited the website and was moved by a video of School of Intercultural Studies (SIS) alumna Rachel Goble, founder of The Freedom Story (formerly The SOLD Project). Soon after, she moved across the country to attend Fuller at 25 years old. “I was really young, and pretty green,” she says. “But I was formed very, very deeply at Fuller.” One of the themes from her time in SIS was that of consistently acknowledging and assessing one’s privilege, power, and “savior complex.” “I learned that the way of Jesus is actually to give away your power and your privilege, and to walk alongside those who are marginalized in society.”

These lessons served Priscilla well when, upon graduation, she started working with the Salvation Army as a case manager with their anti-trafficking initiative in Orange County, California. “Case manager is the most on-the-ground position that exists,” she explains. “You are the person who meets with the survivors and walks alongside them as they are coming out of their trafficking situation, as they’re becoming stable, as they’re trying to find resources, and hopefully all the way to thriving. You really are their go-to person.”

Her first week on the job, she went to meet with a woman staying at a domestic violence center who had been referred by the police as a potential trafficking victim. After Priscilla met her and offered resources, the woman told her that the last person who had tried to help her was murdered by her abusive boyfriend. “There’s no training or research or school that could prepare you for those types of conversations and experiences,” Priscilla says.

Still, working with survivors is what has impacted her the most in her five years in anti-trafficking. “Working with people who have experienced this level of trauma and that are marginalized in society—it’s made me a better person,” she says. While Priscilla loved her time in the field, after a few years she was asked to take on a leadership role and tasked with creating a 10-year strategic plan for combatting human trafficking in the Salvation Army’s Western Territory, which covers 13 states. She wrestled with whether to take the job. “It meant leaving the field, leaving my staff, leaving the survivors,” she says. The deciding factor, though, was that Priscilla knew she had “a macro brain and a micro heart.” She explains, “I have a heart for working directly with people, but my brain is wired for the bigger picture.” Out of the chaos and fast pace of the field, she would be able to implement strategies that could multiply what she was doing. “Ultimately I knew that I would have a greater impact,” she says.

Now, as the social justice initiatives coordinator for the Salvation Army USA Western Territory, Priscilla is able to “think more holistically,” she says. “We realize that human trafficking is just one of the issues,” and part of her job is helping people see how various systems interact with one another and how working for social justice is necessary in each area. She says as an example, “I see so many people now who want to fight trafficking, but they don’t necessarily know that the majority of domestic sex trafficked girls in our community are coming out of the foster care system.”

She’s strategically laying the social justice “groundwork” by hosting regular webinars open to her territory’s ten thousand staff on the topic “Jesus, Justice, and the Salvation Army,” where she helps others see how Jesus lived out a life of justice, and also reminds them that social justice is in the DNA of the
Salvation Army. “I do think as a whole there are a lot of misconceptions, especially in the church, around social justice. Some people see it as socialism. I’m really just connecting the dots for people about how pursuing justice is something that should branch out of living a life of faith, and seeing the way that Jesus did that in his life.”

Priscilla realizes that in her work, she’s often treading new ground. The anti-trafficking field is extremely young, especially in the US, where the Trafficking Victims Protection Act—the first anti-trafficking law—was passed only in the year 2000. Even then, the law was meant to protect foreign nationals being trafficked into the US. “Back in 2000, we thought that all human trafficking survivors were coming from other parts of the world,” she says. “We didn’t even realize there was domestic human trafficking happening in our neighborhoods.” Research and specialized experience in the area of human trafficking has only been available for 20 years, she points out, and often refers to “promising practices” in her work because “we’re not super confident yet to say these are ‘best’ practices.”

The field has come a long way, she acknowledges, and the promising practices of having a trauma-informed, survivor-led, and culturally informed approach have yielded positive results. “Before, you just had someone with a big heart who would knock on brothel doors and try to get women out. But that’s not safe and it’s not necessarily the way it happens.”

The language and imagery used to raise awareness has “changed tremendously” as well, she points out. When the conversation about human trafficking first started gaining traction, images of victims in chains and stories resembling the plot of films like Taken, with dramatic kidnappings of girls off the street, were more common. “The narrative has changed a lot,” says Priscilla. “We have dropped the rescue mentality and see our job as walking alongside survivors; they’re really the ones removing themselves from the situation. We are giving them back their voice on that.” Further, the anti-trafficking movement has widened to acknowledge labor trafficking in addition to sex trafficking. “Now we know that, globally, labor trafficking happens way more often than sex trafficking, but it’s harder to detect because it happens in plain sight.”

One survivor of human trafficking, whom Priscilla calls Joanna, represents to her an example of the restoration that’s possible as these promising practices are put into action in the real world. Joanna was trafficked with other women from the Philippines for forced labor in Orange County. After leaving her situation, she was part of the Salvation Army’s program for several years, living in a safe house and receiving different services as she rebuilt her life. But after testifying at her trafficker’s court trial and watching him pronounced “not guilty,” Joanna despaired. “I remember getting a call from one of my staff, the day before New Year’s,” says Priscilla. “She said Joanna had tried to take her own life.” Later, Joanna explained that she couldn’t bear to live in a world where justice is not granted.

“That made me think deeper about social justice and its implications for how we serve survivors of trafficking,” says Priscilla. “Perhaps we’re not in control of the legal justice system, but we could be a part of creating opportunities for survivors like Joanna to experience social justice in ways that bring her meaning.” Eventually, what brought justice to Joanna’s life was the opportunity to share her story and educate others about human trafficking, “shifting the power back to her after her traffickers had stripped it away,” says Priscilla. She remembers attending a church event where Joanna was part of a panel of survivors discussing human trafficking. “Watching her on stage, educating others—she exemplified such resilience, such grace, such bravery,” she says. “I’ll always be in awe of her and grateful for the opportunity to be in the life of someone like her.”
After months of online discussions and a retreat in Colorado, the 38th cohort of the MA in Global Leadership program was about to meet in Pasadena for two weeks of class—their last time to be together in person. The day before, Bob Freeman, associate dean of the program, moved from seat to empty seat, praying. “This class is about submitting to one another and really listening. I don’t know all the answers, but together we can ask good questions and find some answers,” he says. “I sit in every chair and ask the Holy Spirit to do his work, and the Spirit always does.”

Although it was their first time in Pasadena, the students entered the fluorescent-lit classroom the next day as if they were home. Two years of online coursework made them like family, sharing intimate laughter and chatting over coffee. Before he began, Bob walked from seat to seat, hugging and speaking with each student and smiling often.

Over the next two weeks, the students settled into a rhythm of personal testimonies, presentations about their own ministries, group prayer, and worship, trying to integrate what they were learning about ministry and organizational leadership into their own contexts. After each student presented on his or her own ministry, the group discussion turned to empowerment, laying on of hands, and prayer. “Just about everyone who has experience in ministry gets hurt in different ways, and many of them come to the program carrying personal pain,” Bob says. “When you allow ministry people to come together in a safe place, they bond immediately. Even though their circumstances may be different, they really know what the other person is going through.”

On the final day of the course, the students stood in a circle as Bob passed out bright autumn leaves he had collected for them. In that small circle were a senior pastor from a multiethnic Detroit church, a young nonprofit leader from South Los Angeles, a missionary from Nigeria, a founder of Italy’s Youth for Christ chapter, and even a student on a video call from Indonesia who stayed up through the night to participate in real time. “At the end of a season,” Bob said to them, “the green drains out of this leaf and leaves the true colors of what it actually is. That’s what you’re called to do when you leave this place—die to yourself and let Jesus be born in you and show through you.”

Later that night, the students celebrated with an ad hoc pizza party, staying up late at a nearby home to share more stories and brainstorm ways to stay connected as they traveled back to their ministries around the world. “They were coming to the realization that they probably won’t be together again in the same room,” Bob remembers. “They were grateful for what God had done during this time.”
When I was working on Hollywood film sets, I came across representations of people from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities that didn’t honor the complexities of people’s lives in the Los Angeles neighborhoods of my childhood. These one-dimensional stereotypes created barriers in the lived experiences of these residents, and it certainly wasn’t our people telling our own stories. I decided to do something about it and partnered with community members to create a nonprofit organization called the Social Justice Learning Institute. As the creative arts director, I developed programs utilizing the arts as a tool for marginalized communities to reshape their own narrative in ways that lead to hope, action, and transformation. I’ve been able to help them reenvision their own lives despite their circumstances.

Art provides the tools to dream and imagine. It helps you to reflect on your life, your relationships, and pretty much everything around you. It’s therapeutic for people to hear their story shared aloud and to revisit the darkest parts of their stories, and as they speak about their lives on camera or other media, they see that their stories are valuable enough to share with others. We want to remind them that they’re made in God’s image and that they have agency to tell their own narratives in ways that transform systems and people.

For the youth I work with, their environment tells them they’re not worth anything. The media, overpolicing, underresourced schools, a lack of employment opportunities, liquor stores, the dilapidated buildings and lack of green space—everything you can imagine devalues their lives and strips away their humanity. It limits their ability to dream and reimagine something different. So we build school programs that help students reimagine their lives. We help them create media about the nuances of their lives and communities that aren’t in the mainstream, and they spend time together at the institute practicing community. Before meals, for example, a student will call to the group, “Is my family ready to break bread?” Everyone responds, “I am my family’s keeper,” and the caller says, “Then let’s break bread.” It’s the idea that we won’t eat until everybody has something to eat; we won’t begin until everybody has enough. It’s a ritual that helps them understand the value of each other’s lives and why community matters.

When I was in the MAGL class, I joined another community—one of pastors and nonprofit leaders like me, and I was inspired as we shared our own histories. By telling our stories, we learned from each other’s setbacks and victories and how God develops you over a lifetime. Whatever work you’re doing, even through your mistakes or uncertainties, God finds ways to redeem your story.

Daniel Castillo (MAGL ’18) recently transitioned out of the Social Justice Learning Institute to work with other community organizations throughout Los Angeles as a creative consultant helping them use art to empower local residents to create and share their own stories. He hosted an “Exegeting the City” day-long site visit for fellow MAGL students so they could examine his ministry in its context.
Sometimes when you start things, you don’t know where you’re going. Yes, God calls you, but you may not know the specifics. I knew I had a heart for young people, especially unchurched young people, but I wasn’t sure how to get involved. Most churches in Italy were waiting for them to come inside, but young people won’t come to an evangelical church in Italy when their worlds are so different. As a church we need to go to them! That’s what pushed me to get involved with Youth for Christ, and after my two years of volunteering, they asked me to start a regional chapter in Italy. I didn’t have a strategic plan, so I tried theme parties, outreach in the park, and things like that. Step by step, the Lord made a way for us.

Now I travel to churches and conferences in the area, consulting them on what they could do. I’m an integrator and facilitator, trying to cast a vision and support that vision and the national team carrying it out. I’ve been doing this for 11 years, and now I’m starting to feel stuck. In a way the organization in Italy was built around me, as the founder and national director, and I’m starting to realize that the more time passes, the harder it will be to let it go—both for me and for the organization. At some point you need to inject some new blood so it doesn’t die. So now we’re wondering what succession would look like and designing a leadership transition.

Being with my MAGL cohort, I could tell that the spectrum was so broad politically, ethnically, denominationally. That was very valuable to me. The evangelical context I’m from in Italy is very divided and fragmented, and if you don’t share the same theology, it’s rare you’ll be around other kinds of Christians. To be in a class with such diverse ideas and convictions, yet everyone loves the Lord—that was a gift.

At the end, we were all standing in a circle in the classroom and praying for the last time. I looked at all those faces and thought, “Wow, these are the people of God from around the world, and we won’t see all of us together in one room again in this life.” Until then, I’ll miss the conversations and the openness, the way we weren’t afraid to ask the tough questions. To experience that unity, to have the courage to speak up and say what you think while also respecting other people’s views—that to me is the kingdom of God.

Ester Montefalcone (MAGL ’18) lives in Bologna, Italy, where she has led the Italian chapter of Youth for Christ for over a decade.
I spent 25 years of my life as a touring musician playing jazz and world music. I often was the minority as a white male playing with other cultures, and it was such a formative experience. We came together to create something larger than ourselves, and now I see that potential in our church community. With multiple cultures and ethnicities, God could create something that would look like the kingdom of heaven.

The church I pastor is in the middle of one of the most diverse cities in Michigan, and we dream of becoming a multibehind, multicultural community. For the past five years we’ve prayed, “Lord, would you make our seats look like our city?” And that is what God is starting to do. In addition to our service in the main auditorium, we have a Chinese congregation meeting on Friday nights, a Portuguese-speaking Brazilian church meeting Sundays, and a Southeast Asian church meeting Saturday nights. All of these communities are starting to mingle, so how do we become one church?

My fellow MAGL student Daniel helped me as he took me on a tour through Inglewood. He shared the history of his city, and at one point showed us a block-long mural telling the story of God from the beginning of Genesis through the lens of the Black experience. I stayed quiet most of the day and just listened. I never have to think about many things in my privilege, but it’s important to me that I let other perspectives inform the way I lead my own community. It was very eye-opening. Like a drop of red dye in a glass of water, it permeates and changes the water, creating something new.

Our classmate Alan wasn’t able to leave Indonesia so he stayed up every night on a video conference call. At one point, he gave me a scripture from Isaiah 58 that brought me to tears. “You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail . . . you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.” I’ll never forget that—that scripture will sustain our church for two years, ten years, maybe longer. Because it’s a vision from God of what I believe he is doing in our midst. That’s what you long for—you long to be around people showing you different perspectives and reminding you of God’s mission.

On our final night, a few of us stayed up late after dinner and talked for hours. When you take a two-year trek with people, you don’t realize how you become family through Christ. There was a sadness, because you don’t want it to end—but also a deep sense of gratitude.

After decades as a touring musician, Danny Cox (MAGL ’18) joined the staff of a Detroit megachurch. When he entered the MAGL program, he had just transitioned to lead pastor.

Michael Wright (MAT ’12) is a curator and content developer for the Fuller Leadership Platform.

Brandon Hook (MAT ’16) is an art director at Caltech in Pasadena, California. Find more of his work at brandonjhook.com.
JEROME BLANCO: In the last few years, you completed a tremendous five-volume work on constructive theology. Your newest book, *Christian Theology in the Pluralistic World*, was released this summer, and you’ve got another one on the way. You’ve written that a goal of yours is to engage with issues largely ignored by many traditional systematic theologies—to more deeply engage with the cultural, ethnic, sociopolitical, and religious diversity in the world. Is this a necessary way of doing theology in today’s day and age? How did you come to see the need for this type of scholarship?

VELI-MATTI KÄRKKÄINEN: I came to write constructive theology in a “new key” through several “conversions.” I was first awakened to the need to write from an interconfessional—that is, ecumenical—perspective because no one Christian tradition has it all! The second conversion was intercultural, as I moved with my family to live and teach theology in Thailand, where even after learning Thai and teaching in it, I found it challenging to communicate theology to my Asian students. The third conversion was also initiated in Thailand, which is a multireligious country and a “homeland” to Theravada Buddhism. I realized there that theology had to be taught and written with an interreligious perspective. Engaging other living faiths is necessary, even when presenting and arguing for the Christian tradition.

Upon arriving at Fuller about 20 years ago, I soon realized that an interdisciplinary perspective had to be robustly adopted into developing Christian theology. How else could you speak, for example, about the doctrine of creation or of humanity? Sciences have much to say about the origins and workings of the world and us as human beings. I began to envision a totally new way of doing theology, namely constructive theology, which would incorporate these various perspectives into the standard theological discussion—which is based on biblical, historical, and contemporary theologies, as well as philosophy. At the same time, I noticed that the third millennium was calling theologians to take much more seriously the surrounding cultural milieu of the globalized world in which we live. Alongside cultural and scientific contexts, there are a number of issues that are deeply theological in nature even though Christian theology has ignored them by and large—particularly in typical systematic theology. These include the environment, poverty, violence and war, peace and reconciliation, gender, entertainment, and so forth. If God is the Creator of all—as we Christians believe—then nothing is outside the theological interest. Doing theology in this new key does not mean leaving behind or undermining the rich theological tradition based on the Bible, creeds, and cumulative doctrinal development. Even the most recent...
constructive theology has to be based on and engage critically with tradition. At the same time, a keen focus on current issues also helps refine tradition in a more relevant and exciting manner.

JEROME: It makes sense that multiple factors over a long period of time shaped your understanding. In that vein, writing can often be perceived as a very solitary act, yet it took multiple influences outside of yourself to arrive at this sort of theology. Additionally, by engaging in issues like those you mention, you must have had to seek out an incredible number of conversation partners. Can you speak to the communal aspect of writing these works? What was it like to engage with so many disciplines and voices outside of your academic expertise?

VELI-MATTI: Sure, the actual writing process—particularly of this magnitude—is a solitary act. For the sake of curiosity, let me mention that rather than at my Fuller office or home office, I do all of my academic writing at one end of our dining room table! Years ago, when our children were still with us, the large dining room table also had them doing their homework and my wife, a teacher, working on hers. For me a “solitary” act of writing has this nuance.

That said, everything that goes into doing and writing theology gleans from wide and diverse scholarly engagement. Because I write in an interdisciplinary—and even interreligious—perspective, over the years I have had to consult, learn from, and discuss topics with experts in different fields of academic study. For example, when it comes to natural sciences, I have benefited greatly from collaboration with institutes and their scholarly networks of scientists, such as the Center for Theology and Natural Sciences at Berkeley, headed by Robert J. Russell. I have also learned a lot about neuroscience and philosophy of mind from having co-taught doctoral seminars with Fuller’s own Nancy Murphy and Warren Brown, as well as in a semester-long interdisciplinary sabbatical at Biola’s Center for Christian Thought. Regarding world religions, I have learned a lot from having co-taught the course that I created about 15 years ago, World Religions in Christian Perspective. Similarly, doctoral mentoring of students who have worked in the intersection of, say, Islam and Christianity, or Buddhism and Christianity, has enriched my own knowledge.

The six-year project of creating the Global Dictionary of Theology was particularly important for beginning to establish a wide network of scholars from all over the world. With my Fuller colleagues Bill Dyrness and Juan Martinez, almost 200 scholars from all continents worked together to write this massive dictionary. My continued teaching position at the University of Helsinki, my alma mater, also keeps me widely connected with European and continental scholarly networks. Similarly, my unusually busy international traveling to conferences, academic and theological/ecumenical consultations, and speaking engagements all over the world helps create and sustain scholarly relations.

In sum: I would not have been able to do anything like what the five-volume set is without these various scholarly communities and collaboration.

VELI-MATTI: One of the things I am deeply concerned about in the current academic world is the often-too-thin connection between theologians and the church. This is an oxymoron, so to speak. What we nowadays call “theology” was birthed and developed for hundreds and hundreds of years by pastors, bishops, and other church leaders, rather than academicians. It was only after the Enlightenment that one could be a theologian without being a “church(wo)man.” Particularly concerning to me is the rise of a new generation of younger theologians distanced from the church—sometimes even intentionally.

I am an ordained clergyperson in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America—and preaching, teaching, and doing services and pastoral duties all the time, including mentoring pastoral candidates. I was first ordained in my native land—Finland—the very same year I finished my first academic degree in theology decades ago!

Since, I have been engaged in church work. I know many doubt the relevance of academic theology for the church. And we theologians are to blame for it to some degree. At the same time, we have to remember that “relevance” does not mean that you just learn some simple “things” that easily apply to ministerial problems. The relevance of theological education has to do with a lifelong shaping of the minister, and through the minister, the community. When I preach to the congregation—and I do so regularly, unlike most contemporary theologians—I do not “speak theology.” I preach. But my sermons are formed by my lifelong study of theology. My counseling of the sick and the bereaved is similarly shaped by my studies, alongside experience. And so forth. A good pastor-theologian is able to educate and train leaders and volunteers in the church through the scholarship she or he has acquired. That kind of pastor is able to “translate” to the local context a high-level academic theology and put it into work. My own spiritual formation and church ministry have benefited tremendously from the lifelong study of theology. And I can’t think of a better way to enrich, challenge, and develop the minister’s aptitude than the continual study of theology, alongside active ministry and spiritual disciplines.

JEROME: Do you hope that the church and the academy will be able to push back against this separation and distancing in some way? How would you address it?

VELI-MATTI: I think it is very important to see both the integral link between the church and theological
academia and their distinction. Regarding the former, I often ask my colleagues and students: What would you think of training medical doctors without continuing work and practice in the hospital? Could you be a professor in a medical school with little or no experience and continual work in the hospital? This same observation relates to training ministers and leaders for the church. I have fears about how a close connection with the church is not a requirement for the instructors and professors in theological schools. It is left to the choice of the individual professor whether to work in a congregation alongside their academic work. And too often, it is mistakenly assumed that the “practical” aspects of the training—especially in the MDiv—will be taken care of by one department of the seminary, namely the Division of Ministerial Studies, and that others (e.g., theology and history) do not have to worry about it. That is really a mistaken assumption and should be challenged. I am urging theological schools and educators to forge closer links with the church and church life. And I am encouraged by the growing calls to the same effect in various quarters of the theological training world.

Concerning the distinction (though not a separation) between the church and academia: Graduate school theological education has a particular task and mandate to teach theology based on high-level academic research and learning. That the theological school should be “relevant” for the church does not mean that therefore it should focus mostly on “practical” matters. In this regard, I am very proud of Fuller, where we value high-level research and academic publication, which is made possible to a large extent by our unusually generous research sabbatical program.

A part of the theological school’s academic, research-driven mandate is also to sympathetically critique, challenge, and at times even confront teachings, practices, and phenomena in congregations that seem to be problematic or erroneous. Critical thinking belongs to the very essence of academic work and it does not have to be “negative” at its core but rather a tool for helping churches develop and improve.

JEROME: Circling back then to your recently published and forthcoming books, which touch on a wide range of issues, are there matters in the church today that you believe such critical thinking must most urgently address? Or, to put it another way, are there specific new or underexplored frontiers where you really hope to see such innovation in the church’s theological and ministerial approach?

VELI-MATTI: In my understanding, the single most important issue for the church and theological academia has to do with religious plurality. It is astonishing that, even today, major systematic theological studies are published, doctrinal presentations given, and church sermons delivered as if the world we live in consisted of only two kinds of people, the “sinners” and the “Christians!” That is of course not the case: the church and academia find themselves living in a deeply religiously pluralistic world and in a world in which secularism is also gaining a stronghold. My own five-volume constructive theology as well as the two most recent textbooks are unique in that they integrate the dialogue with other faith traditions into the matrix of doing “normal” Christian theology. I believe that something similar to what I have done, namely including interfaith comparisons into the discussion of all Christian doctrines, may well become the norm in the near future. The great challenge here is that very, very few theologians are knowledgeable about other faiths. Our theological education has to equip them with such knowledge.

And as I mentioned earlier, there are also topics that have been so far ignored in typical systematic theological investigations, including violence, the environment, gender, power, war, peace, entertainment, and so forth. Among the topics usually not included in Christian doctrine—island other faith traditions—is the relation of Christian faith to natural sciences. Sciences dominate the consciousness of the contemporary world and have extremely important lessons to teach us. Additionally, among many innovations at Fuller, I am extremely proud of our Brehm Center, which integrates theology with film, entertainment, literature, and pop culture. These cultural spheres exercise an amazing influence on the global world. All these things merit careful theological reflection, and they all belong to the “standard” theological menu.

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“If God is the Creator of all—as we Christians believe—then nothing is outside the theological interest.”
TECHNOLOGY

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E n su libro de 1950 sobre televisión tecnológica, Edward Carnell, uno de Fuller’s former presidents, comienza con una reflexión crítica sobre lo que él llama “meylza”. Al hacerlo, Carnell pudo hacer dos afirmaciones proféticas (entre otras) en un momento en que la televisión apenas era un punto en el radar. Primero, destacó el importante papel que los cristianos y teólogos de su generación desempeñaron en la interpretación, comprensión y dirección de lo que fue, y sigue siendo, una innovación cultural rebosante de posibilidades no aprobadas. En segundo lugar, basado en lo atinado de su predicción (¡sabía mucho!), Carnell también sugirió que esta tecnología emergente contenía el potencial no solo de beneficiar a la sociedad, sino también de causar estragos imprevistos.

“Cada obra de arte, cada símbolo cultural, cada invención, por más cautivadora que se la aprecie por primera vez, revela, cuando se examina minuciosamente, algunas áreas de imperfección manchadas de perfección. . . . Cada pieza de tecnología está mal calculada en algún área. . . . Mixture, like the poor, is always with us.”

The beauty of this or any kind of theological reflection is not that it implies a critical condemnation of innovation, but that it is fundamentally self-critical. It’s about becoming more fully aware of our flaws and blind spots. But it’s also about making important (sometimes technical) distinctions so that we don’t throw the technological baby out with the bathwater.

Indeed, all the contributions in this theology section attempt to strike a critically engaged balance of exactly this sort. Whether we are discussing the particular focus is thriving, accessibility, racial (re)molding, young adults, proverb, therapeutic extension, or social media, each and every author navigates the tension between an unchecked, technological optimism on the one hand and a dystopian pessimism on the other. My prayer is that we all might take a cue from these wise guides, regarding not only what they say about our relationship with technology but the posture they assume in saying it.


“La belleza de este o cualquier otro tipo de reflexión teológica no es que implique una condena crítica de la innovación, sino que es fundamentalmente autocrítica. Se trata de ser más conscientes de nuestros defectos y puntos ciegos. Pero también se trata de hacer distinciones importantes (a veces técnicas) para que no echemos las nuevas tecnologías con el agua del baño.

De hecho, todas las contribuciones en esta sección de teología intentan lograr un equilibrio crítico de este tipo. Ya sea que el enfoque particular sea el desarrollo, la accesibilidad, el repensar la raza, los adultos jóvenes, los proverbios, la terapia o las redes sociales, todos y cada uno de los autores y autoras navegan la tensión entre un optimismo tecnológico sin control por un lado y un pesimismo distópico por el otro lado. Mi oración es que todos y cada uno de sus lectores busquen el ejemplo de estos sabios guías, no solo con respecto a lo que dicen sobre nuestra relación con la tecnología, sino también con la postura que asumen al decirlo.

"Todo el arte, todo el simbolismo, todo el invento es un tanto de lo mismo. Nuestros defectos y puntos ciegos son constante e inevitable. Pero también nos da un punto de vista crítico. No significa que implique una condena crítica de la innovación, sino que es fundamentalmente autocrítica. Se trata de ser más conscientes de nuestros defectos y puntos ciegos. Pero también se trata de hacer distinciones importantes (a veces técnicas) para que no echemos las nuevas tecnologías con el agua del baño.

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**THE YES (TO TECHNOLOGY) IN OUR NO (TO SOCIAL MEDIA)**

**Kutter Callaway**

I'm no Barthian, but as a fellow contrarian and over-corrector, I've always found Karl Barth's notion of "the yes in our no and the no in our yes" to be a helpful way of reflect-
ing theologically on a variety of topics.1 For in-
stance, in my early exuberance for the deliver-
ances of modern technologies, I was willing to say "yes" when others might have been a bit more cautious. In my view, a blanket acceptance of emerging technologies and new media were not only reactionary and un-helpful, but they also seemed to gloss over the ways in which God's actions are personal and active in a variety of digitally mediated spaces.

But that same kind of optimism ran the risk of preventing me from making critical dis-
tinctions between and among the variety of tools, media, systems, and social practices that are often lumped into a single category called "technology." There are important differences, for example, between the tech-
nological devices we use (e.g., the iPhone), the multinational corporate entities profiting from the active manipulation of our online behavior (e.g., Apple, Google, Amazon), the various platforms organizing our social network(s) (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), and the basic architecture—the superstruc-
ture—of the increasingly participatory, us-
er-generated digital world we inhabit on a day-to-day basis. These differences matter, not only for people of faith attempting to think theologically about the relationship between theology and culture and co-director of Real Spirituality. He is actively engaged in writing and speaking on the interaction between theology and culture—particularly film, television, and online media—in both academic and popular forums. His most recent books are The Aesthetics of Atheism: Theology and Imagination in Contemporary Culture (2019) and Deep Focus: Film and Theology in Dialogue (2017). Past books include Reading the Manga Bible: Reconstructing Our Cultural and Spiritual Norms (2018), Watching TV Religiously: Television and Theology in Dialogue (2016) and Scoring Transcendence: Contemporary Film Music as Religious Experience (2013).

1. EMPATHY: TO SAY YES TO TECHNOLOGICAL VIRTUE IS TO SAY NO TO FORMATION BY "IMPRESSIONS"  
So then, let us pursue what makes for peace and for building up one another. (Romans 12:18)  
Based mostly upon gut instinct and anecdotal evidence gathered from informal conversa-
tions with other parents, I would imagine that many if not most parents feel a twinge of guilt when it comes to their family's tech-
nological habits. Some may be resigned to the fact that digital technology is a necessary part of contemporary life, even if they feel badly about how much time they and their children spend in front of screens. Others might see it in somewhat more positive terms, but still think of digital technology as, at best, ethically neutral tools not unlike a re-
frigerator or car. (Parents: see Kara Powell and Brad Griffin's fantastic article on page 64.)  
I would also imagine that practically no parent is of the mindset that digital technol-
ologies might actually cultivate virtue, espe-
cially not with their kids. But that's exactly what a team of researchers in Fuller's School of Psychology are testing in their studies in-
volving app-based virtue interventions with teenagers. In this particular instance, the virtues in question are patience, self-control, and emotional awareness.2 They are exam-
ing whether routine practices prompted by an intentionally designed smartphone app can and do cultivate those virtues. They are also assessing if end-users whose identities are shaped by a community of faith are more likely to become more patient, self-controlled, and emotionally aware as a result of this technologically mediated practice.

Without hesitation, we can offer a resound-
ing yes to technology that helps us cultivate virtues like patience, long-suffering, and empathy. What is more, people of faith should be actively (and perhaps fiercely) committed to developing new technologies that enhance rather than inhibit these virtues, especially as it concerns the ways in which virtue de-
evelopment of any kind is intimately bound up with one's identity as a member of a larger community of persons in relation.

But this affirmation of technology necessar-
ily implies a no to a digital landscape that makes virtue development impossible. As Lanier points out, the world we see when we log in to our social media platform of choice is one that has been completely customized by algorithms that privilege "impressions" over everything else. Unsurprisingly that which generates the most "impressions" are bits of data that either align with our hyperindividualized preferences, or are radically opposed to our preconceptions. Making matters worse, advertising dollars artific-
ally inflate this polarisation, which means that Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, et al., have sold our eyeballs millions of times over to corporations more than willing to show us only posts that either reinforce everything we already believe or present the polar opposite. In the end, what emerges is our own fully customized (and hyperpartisan) view of the world to which no other individual has access. Neither can we see what anyone else's feed looks like.

If the cultivation of empathy begins and ends with our ability to see the world through someone else's eyes—even if just for a moment—then people of faith need to radically rethink our participation in social networking sites that make this empathetic gesture literally不可能.

In other words, it's a hearty yes to digital technologies that cultivate Christian virtue and help us see with the eyes of the other. And it's a hard no to platforms that profit by destroying our capacity for empathy.

2. TRUTH: TO SAY YES TO TECHNOLOGICAL INCARNA-
TION IS TO SAY NO TO TECHNOLOGICAL EXACRATION  
Now the Word became flesh and took up res-
idence among us. (John 1:14)  
Matt Lampkin is an alum of Fuller Seminary who served for nearly a decade as Fuller's director of TT for web and mobile and as a user experience strategist. To put it in lay terms, Matt spent most days designing the user interfaces that all students, staff, and faculty use while navigating Fuller's intranet. He also designed and helped build the CharacterMe mobile app, the brain-train-
ing app used in the psychological studies I mentioned above.

Matt now works as a product designer at Tidepool, where he develops technological solutions for families living with disease. Matt's professional move from higher educa-
tion to applied technology was in part driven by a personal frustration: after his youngest daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, he discovered a glaring lack of thought for the experience of the patient in the available

...
At first blush, it might be surprising that John’s Gospel suggests, reality itself is con-

veloping new or more sophisticated technol-

gies he is quite literally generating a new kind of intimacy between the technologies 

hand and our living, breathing, bleeding 

is already inclined toward excarnation and 

disembodiment. Actually, it’s far worse than 

that. It’s not simply that social media allows 

people to inhabit a world entirely detached 

from their own physical bodies or the bodies 

of others. It’s that, in many instances, we’re 

not even interacting with other human bodies 
at all. We’re interacting with armies of digital bots masquerading as flesh-and-blood human beings. And it is undermining the truth of our incarnate lives. Lanier writes:

Leaving aside explicitly fake people like Alexa, Cortana, and Siri, you might think only you’re never interacted with a fake 

person online, but you have, and with loads 
of them. You decided to buy something 
because it had a lot of good reviews, but 

many of those reviews were from artificial 

people. You found a doctor by using a search 

engine, but the reason that doctor showed up 

high in the search results was that a load of 

fake people linked to her office. You looked 
at a video or read a story because so many 

other people had, but most of them were 

fake. You became aware of tweets because 

they were retweeted first by armies of bots… 

This is a difficult truth to accept, but because 
of the importance of social perception, it is 

true to all a small degree that you have been 
living a fake life yourself. [This system] is making you partially fake. ²

It is a resounding yes to technology that is 

excarnation and its undermining of truth. 

For our struggle is not against flesh and 

blood, but against the rulers, against the 

powers, against the world rulers of this 
darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil 
in the heavens. (Ephesians 6:12)

It’s probably fairly obvious by now, but I am 

quite proud of Fuller’s students, staff, faculty, 

and alumni, especially when it comes to 

matters of technological innovation. A 

perfect example is Phil Chen, an alum who 
takes this theology degree from Fuller 

and used it to frame his work as a technolo-
gist and venture capitalist. After designing a 

mobile device that could deliver entire digital 

libraries to students in developing countries 
(what eventually became the first Barnes & 
Noble e-reader), and then, developing one of 

the first attempts at a mass-market virtual 

reality headset (what eventually became 
the HTC Vive), Phil now works as HTC’s de-

centralized chief officer. In this role Phil is 

sparking the development of HTC’s first 

blockchain phone, which, not insignificantly, 

is called “the Exodus.”

In a recent op-ed about the Exodus phone, 

Phil makes the theological implications 

of his work explicit.

Much like the Israelites under the tyranny 
of Pharaoh, the users of the internet are being oppressed—slaves to large masters. 

Internet users are being worked to generate 

and build modern treasure houses for their 

overlords, using their own data as bricks. 

Within the walls of these modern pyramids 
is all of our personal data, which empowers 

and wealthifies the modern-day Pharaohs— 
Facebook, Apple, Amazon, and Google 
(because of the acquisition of Netflix, as the 
FAANZ), coupled with their Asian coun-

terparts Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent.

The father of the world wide web himself, 

Tim Berners-Lee, has called for a new 
architecture that places security, privacy, 

and ownership of data back where it 

belongs: with the people. We are current-

ly in a crisis of giving away our data and 
digital identity for cheap endorphins, and 
surrounding all of our attention and power 
to the Big Data monoliths: cloud compa-
nies, which mine that data for artificial 

intelligent agents and advertising revenue. 

In some cases, our data has been used by 

bad actors to steal money or confidential 

information, but in the worst cases, it has 
gone as far as impacting and influencing 
democratic processes. ³

We are at the internet’s burning-bush 
moment. We have been given a generation-
al opportunity to utilize a new technology 

for good, and the ability to lead people away 
from being controlled to being in control.

The promise of the internet 

was a world without borders, but corpo-

rate sovereigns have built multiple walls 
that now divide humanity. As in the Book 
of Exodus, we need to lead users to the 
promised land.⁴

Phil is hoping to do nothing less than inculcate 
a grassroots exodus with the Exodus phone. 

He is providing people with a tool that will 

enable them to escape not a geographical 
place, but an entire digital 

architecture. In this way, he is echoing the 

Apostle Paul’s words regarding the ways in 

which we struggle not against flesh and 

blood but against non-human systems and 
structures that are ruled by an ever-smaller 

number of centralized, global powers.

It might be tempting at this point to say 

that these systems and structures are broken 

and that the Christian calling is to work 

at fixing what’s broken so that the poor, 
marginalized, and oppressed might regain 
some semblance of economic dignity. The 

only problem with this kind of vision is 

that the system isn’t actually broken 
at all. It’s working perfectly. It’s 
doing exactly what it was designed 
to do. The current architecture is 
designed to profit off our labor, 

while also convincing 

3. ECONOMIC DIGNITY: TO SAY YES TO TECHNICAL-

ICALLY ILLIBERAL IS TO SAY NO TO OPPRESSIVE 
SYSTEMS OF POWER

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PART THREE: CONCLUSION

TAKING A TECHNO-SABBATH

Recall that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there by strength and power. That is why the Lord your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15)

In the account found in the book of Exodus, the rationale for observing the Sabbath is that God rested on the seventh day of creation (Ex 20:11). In Deuteronomy, however, Sabbath keeping is connected to the Exodus experience of liberation from Egyptian slavery and alludes to more than recovering the energy we expend during the work week. It has something to do with resisting the oppressive systems and structures within which we operate. Sometimes our participation in those power structures is willful, but more often than not, we are completely unaware of just how complicit we have become.

For this very reason, during the past Lenten season I chose to fast not from technology, but from social media in particular. I needed to observe the Sabbath. I needed to rest. I needed to resist. Of course, as my colleague Fuller alumnus Aaron Dosrey says, “Fasting from social media is part of the modern world survival toolkit. Right next to your phone you do not have to share a story on your phone and YouTube tutorials.”

But that’s exactly the point of Sabbath keeping, isn’t it? It’s a routine (and somewhat mundane) reminder to yourself and others to not be hold captive by life-de- nying structures of power, no matter the form they may take. It’s to remember that it is God and not Pharao that we serve. In this particular case, to observe the Sabbath is to say no to digital platforms that demonstrate very little concern for our bodies, our dignity, or our basic ability to empathize with others.

The theological twist, however, is that there is always a yes embedded in our no, and this which addresses what is potentially a radical embrace of technology that provide us with the means for pursuing “what makes for peace and for building up one another” (Rom 14:19). From this perspective we need not be cautious or concerned about technology. In fact, we can confidently affirm the transformative potential of technological innovations, especially those that help adolescents cultivate virtue, that allow families to manage chronic illness, and that liberate people from economic structures robbing them of dignity and worth.

And at least in my book, that’s something worth saying yes to.

ENDNOTES

4. Larsen, Ten Arguments.
Erik Aasland is affiliate assistant professor of anthropology at Fuller, specializing in digital anthropology, research methods, and folklore. He carried out five years of field research in Kazakh oral traditions in Kazakhstan, during which time he developed new methods of proverb research. The journal New Directions for Cultural Research recognized the innovative nature of his methodology in his most recent publication, which combined ethnographic interviews with methods from digital anthropology as well as corpus linguistics. He has a wife and four children and lives in Altadena, California.

HIGH TECH / HIGH TOUCH: SHARING, EXPRESSING, AND CRAFTING WISDOM FOR OUR AGE

Erik Aasland

More than 30 years ago, John Naishbitt wrote that high tech could only be embraced when there was an outside, counterculturalizing, high-touch response.1 Naishbitt describes high tech as an expression of human potential and valuing of what is highly personal. For example, technological advances to extend life were complemented by a hospice movement. Fast forward to 2015, we have groundbreaking cultural research showing that social media effectively integrates high tech and high touch across the globe in a wide range of cultures. People are using social media in a way that fits their cultural distinctives and supports their personal as well as interpersonal needs.2 In her ethnography of Chinese migrant workers’ lives and social media use, Xinyuan Wang found that the ability to present oneself as modern in online postings is a feature long recognized by cultural research showing that social media are complementary to a hospice movement. Fast technological advances to extend life were made life more livable for migrant workers.3

Integrating high tech and high touch offers three unprecedented opportunities:

1. A means for people—no matter who they are or where they live—to connect and find community online.
2. New ways to research cultural development and change.
3. The opportunity for people to craft their own wisdom for daily life online.

Just a few years ago, I realized the potential of online media to build community. I had lived with my wife and four kids in Kazakhstan for over a decade, with the last five years spent doing field research concerning Kazakh proverbs. We returned to the US and settled in Pasadena in 2011, excited to enjoy time with family and get to know new friends. Still, we missed our Kazakh friends and wished we could stay in touch with Kazakhstan culture. During this time, I was in the Bay Area presenting on my research about Kazakh proverbs at the Silk Road House, a cultural center in Berkeley.4 Shortly before the presentation, a young Kazakh man who used the English name Kevin approached me and introduced himself. He was doing business in San Francisco and enjoyed coming to the Silk Road House for their various events. I commented that I was interested in getting together with Kazakh in Southern California but had up to that point little success finding them. He recommended that I request to join his Facebook group for Kazakh in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Once I was approved for his group, I could appear to myself as modern in online postings made life more livable for migrant workers.4

In the ten years and the following decade a revival of the Kazakh language was underway. Kazakh proverbs could be found in conversations in the neighborhood, in schools, in the newspaper, and even on a primetime game show! Kazakhstan view their proverbs as an entrutement and a resource for the future.5 When the government considered how to reestablish character in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, they encouraged instruction in Kazakh proverbs from pre-kindergarten through secondary school.6 I was struck by both the language revival and how Kazakhs were using their traditional proverbs to solve their everyday issues, both big and small.

Considerable work had been done since the early 20th century to gather and publish Kazakh proverbs, whereas the other is limited to use in interpersonal and online chat forums.7 The two proverbs operate in different spheres, whereas the other is limited to use in interpersonal and online chat forums.8 While the proverb operates in mass media whereas the other is limited to use in interpersonal and online chat forums.9 The two proverb operate in different spheres, whereas the other is limited to use in interpersonal and online chat forums.10 Rather than simply assimilate into a generic globalized culture. The Kazakh people are crafting new proverbs as they negotiate personal as well as societal challenges. In this way, my personal interest in using social media to join other Kazakhs living in Southern California has met up with my proverb research that explores online use of proverbs in various media.

WISDOM AS A MODE OF COMMUNICATION

Whereas Kazakhs show a commitment to continuity with the past through their use of Kazakh proverbial forms, Western theologians have long debated how one proverb operates in mass media whereas the other is limited to use in interpersonal and online chat forums. Therefore, one proverb operates in different spheres, whereas the other is limited to use in interpersonal and online chat forums. This approach allows us to consider how this emerging, digitally mediated way of being will neither follow the Soviet past nor simply assimilate into a generic globalized culture. The Kazakh people are crafting new proverbs as they negotiate personal as well as societal challenges. In this way, my personal interest in using social media to join other Kazakhs living in Southern California has met up with my proverb research that explores online use of proverbs in various media.

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Wisdom situates us in relationships and work with Kazakh proverbs has convinced my position. Consider the Book of Proverbs—genre into question. Similarly, extensive each having a set of relationships that roles as well as brings us to the point of ap-

part of wisdom. However, current scholar-

JUMPING AHEAD TO OUR PRESENT DAY WE SEE THE JUNCTURE OF HIGH TECH AND HIGH TOUCH. WHEN I TELL ON-THE-LINE ON-FROM ONLINE PLATFORM, SUCCESS IS BASED ON EXCELLENT CONTENT ACCOMPANIED BY CONTACT AND CONNECT.

In 2013 I was invited to be the full-time worship director at a church in downtown Los Angeles. It was a dream position for me—not only because of my background as a musician and worship leader, but also because I had been prayerful-

Wisdom on the page

Jumping ahead to our present day we see the junc-

duction of high tech and high touch. When I tell on Fuller’s online platform, success is based on excellent content accompanied by contact and connection. I am hopeful that in the one-dimen-

sional forest of ones and zeros, context is king, with relationships and the efforts to situate ourselves having more promise for the future. For it may very well be that the current combination of high tech and high touch in our internet communication is opening the way for us to craft wisdom—

ENDNOTES


Jason Min is the lead pastor at Sovereign Grace Church in Los Angeles. He earned his BA in Communications and History at the University of Pennsylvania and his Master of Education at Harvard University. He is currently working toward a MA in Theology at Fuller. Jason and his wife, Carol, have two children, Avery and Jack.
A faculty member in the Thrive Center in the School of Psychology at Fuller, I am often asked, “What does it mean to thrive?” The second question I am asked is “What about technology and thriving?” Everyone from Kaiser Permanente to Arianna Huffington, president of Thrive Global, is using the language of thriving. Yet, despite its popularity, it’s hard to find a substantive definition of the word. With so many years of theoretically predicated research and deep theological reflection, the Thrive Center hopes to move “thriving” beyond buzzword status. More important, we aim to promote the notion of thriving as a hopeful vision for all people.1 After all, who wants a society in which people merely survive? To thrive in the deepest sense of the word is something far more life-giving and generative than mere survival.

The second question about technology and thriving is often asked with a knowing eye and a tone insinuating that technology is a threat to human thriving. No doubt current research reveals the negative effects of technology on human thriving. The recent opening of the Thrive Center on Adolescence is a faculty member in the Thrive Center at Fuller, and a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford’s Center on Adolescence. She is ordained in the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The Handbook of TELOS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THRIVING

TELOS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THRIVING

Pamela Ebstyne King

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TELOS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THRIVING

Pamela Ebstyne King

A

creation (Gen 1:27). Consequently, I understand the goal for humankind in three ways.

Conformity to Christ. First, as Christians we affirm that we are made in the image of God. The Bible tells us that Christ is the perfect image of God. Becoming like Christ is part of our telos (see figure 1). Being conformed to the likeness of the image of God in Christ is a shared telos among humans. Therefore, we take on the ways of Christ and grow toward the character of Christ. The life of Christ recorded in the Bible provides a pattern of redeeming, healing, rescuing, and so on for us to follow. I’m pretty sure that when Jesus said, “Follow me” he was not referring to his Twitter handle! Consequently in thrive is to become more like Christ.

Human uniqueness. Second, although we are called to be conformed to the image of God in Christ, this call to conformity does not mean uniformity with Christ. The Bible never suggests that we are to become Christ; rather, we are to become like Christ as our selves. I strongly believe that an element of our telos is to be and become more fully the unique person that God created each of us to be. This involves developing our unique constellation of gifts and becoming who we are in our deepest passions and sense of calling.

Human relatedness. As much as this telos concerns human uniqueness, it insists on human relatedness. One of my early seminary professors, the late Ray Anderson, used to say, “God is being in communion.” Created in God’s image, we too are created to be in communion—in relationship—with God, humankind, and God’s creation. All believers are called by God to be a part of a community, placed in the body of Christ by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). Thus, thriving is not individualism run amuck. It is not unbridled humanism. From a biblical perspective, we are not renegade selves that develop to our fullest potential without regard for one another. Thriving is not just about “me.” In fact, it’s the turning “me” on its head to find “we.” For me to thrive, we must thrive.

Human telos involves understanding how we fit with the people and world around us. We are created to live in reciprocity with the people, societies, and environment that surround us. Frederick Buechner is often quoted in discussions like this. He states that vocation is the place where our deepest gladness intersects with the world’s deepest hunger.2 Not only is our engagement with the world part of our telos, but our ongoing relatedness to God, others, and the world leads us to a deepening discovery of our places of contribution, vocation, and ultimately our telos. As such, a distinguishing aspect of thriving is contributing beyond the self—at all ages.

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What this contributes makes it clear that thriving involves an understanding of human telos that is characterized by a deep theology of human uniqueness. In other words, thriving is a theological stance which God created humans. I follow the trail of countless theologians and lean heavily on the notion of thriving as a hopeful vision for all people.1 After all, who wants a society in which people merely survive? To thrive in the deepest sense of the word is something far more life-giving and generative than mere survival.

The second question about technology and thriving is often asked with a knowing eye and a tone insinuating that technology is a threat to human thriving. No doubt current research reveals the negative effects of technology on human thriving. The recent opening of the Thrive Center on Adolescence is a faculty member in the Thrive Center at Fuller, and a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford’s Center on Adolescence. She is ordained in the Presbyterian Church in the United States.
vigorous growth and vitality, it's important to ask, "Which direction is one growing?" For example, to grow in habits of addiction or cheating is not thriving. Telos provides a lens through which to view what is true thriving—growing toward what God intended—and to evaluate what promotes thriving.

TECHNOLOGY AND THRIVING
This framework of telos provides a means for understanding how technology can help or hinder thriving. From this perspective, technology—whether social media, virtual reality, or artificial intelligence—can help people thrive when it enables them to (1) become more authentic and to live more into their strengths; (2) connect and contribute in meaningful and life-giving ways to God, others, and our earth; and (3) grow in the character and ways of Christ and/or refine their ethics that guide their life.

This is a sharp contrast to most of the New York Times bestsellers, which promise to promote individual thriving or well-being. Thriving is not about self-fulfillment, but about fullness of life in Christ. A deep theological and psychological understanding of thriving insist on transcendence—and requires the self’s relationship with ultimate, humanity and creation. As Christians, we understand transcendence in terms of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, but in order to engage the broader public in a vision of thriving, we point people and communities toward pursuing thriving through growing in individual strengths toward the greater good, and refining their ethics and source of meaning in a way that propels and guides them to become responsible and fulfilled adults.

In regard to thriving, technology needs to be viewed as a potential source of transformation, not mere information. Whether reordering of priorities, clarifying one’s ethics that guide their life. Telos provides a lens through which to view what is true thriving—growing toward what God intended—and to evaluate what promotes thriving. Therefore, thriving is the way in which it grants us the ability to practices that support the identification of purpose and the psychological strengths necessary to pursue it.

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TECH TIP ON PURPOSE:
Prayer of Examen, on- or offline, routinely work your mind out through the HealthyMinds inventory. How does your tech use reflect what and augmented reality experiences may be for as a Prayer of Examen app. If podcasts or prefer platforms or apps that are developed by cultivated many visual meditations, as well
Formation. FULLER studio has produced and literal and virtual distant lands, that despite
discern their sense of purpose or calling.

VITALITY AND VISION:
One of the primary values of contemplative practices. Whether using apps, podcast, or
weary mind of prayer to wrestle with the challenges of the "habitual participation in the
Prayer of Examen, on- or offline, routinely calls to mind the themes of God’s presence and
finding joy in one’s life. In addition, many apps are created to cultivate enduring character and psychological strengths (e.g., focus, empathy) that are necessary to live out one’s purpose.

TECH TIP ON PURPOSE:
Take a tech usage inventory. How does your tech use reflect what you love? How does it either reflect or inform your sense of purpose or calling?

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Recent technological innovations provide opportunities to cultivate psychological skills that promote and sustain thrive. Work your mind out through the HealthyMinds app. If podcasts or prefer platforms or apps that are developed by Christians for Christians, check out the many resources at www.prayasyougo.org or FULLER Formation. FULLER studio has produced and cultivated many visual meditations, as well as a Prayer of Examen app. Postcards or videos can shape our psychological, moral, and spiritual lives, imagine how formative virtual and augmented reality experiences may be intentional for some.

Research has demonstrated that unmitigated technology use shatters our concentration and sense of identity and scatters us among so many "friends" and followers in literal and virtual distant lands, that despite all our lives, we are isolated and often don’t feel loved. That said, when technology can be used to distill and not dilute relationships, to explore and not explore one’s values and beliefs, and to leverage practices to promote purpose, technology can be a resource for thriving. However, while technology may provide a rich digital ecology that promotes connection, character, and calling, it can also replace the complexity and richness of human communities lived out in the goodness of God’s creation.

Whether we’re talking about the latest technological innovations or how to navigate the social media landscape in healthy ways, thriving involves being planted in fertile ground rich with ideological, relational, and transcendent resources that nurture and fortify one to grow into authentic, reciprocating, and more Christlike selves. Further, thriving matters because it provides a vision for humankind that does not just emphasize what Jesus has saved us for, but also points to what Jesus has saved us for to participate in God’s ongoing work in this world as our unique selves and as we become more Christlike. From that standpoint I recommend being purposeful about technology use and say, “Thrive on!”

ENDNOTES
1. See the Therex Center website: www.therexcenter.org.
6. An additional discussion of theological perspectives on thriving, see King and Whitby, “What’s the Point? in Positive Psychology,” and for a similar understanding of individual and communal flourishing, see M. Volf and M. Croneman, For the Life of the World: Theology that Makes a Difference (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015).
8. It is important to note that not all ideologies are created equal and many are destructive to the self or others. The threshold of trans of bias in this article can be used to evaluate the constructive or destructive ideologies. Belief systems that promote individual, communal, and ethical flourishing are those that do not appear to be reducing the irreducible differences between worldviews will always arise, humility and the correction of human dignity are necessary to sustain civil society.

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL EBSTYNE

I was grateful for the opportunity to catch up with my brother, Michael Ebstyne, director of AI strategy for Microsoft, soon after he returned from speaking at Oxford University, at a Templeton WorldCharity Foundation conference centered on the theme of “Citizenship in a Digital Age.” It was fascinating to hear his reflections on the pitfalls and potentials of current and emerging technologies.

PAMELA EBSTYNE KING: As director of AI strategy at Microsoft, what do you work on?

MICHAEL EBSTYNE: I’ve worked at Microsoft the better part of the past 10 years, primarily on applied artificial intelligence—computer vision and speech services, including HoloLens, the world’s first holographic computer. Now my focus is more broadly working on defining the next generation of AI and wrestling with the challenges created by old technologies. Ethics has rapidly become an integral part of my work.

PEK: Why ethics?

ME: Today, ethics is central to every technology conversation I’m a part of. Historically this wasn’t the case. Now that digital technology is on the verge of mimicking humanlike behaviors, observing things and making decisions on our behalf, it’s highlighting the importance of trust. There are so many unsung assumptions about what being in a human community is truly about. When digital actors start to take on those roles, we find that people, rightfully so, have great cause for concern as to what alternative agendas the digital actors may be supporting. Our innate sense of safety is being challenged in a new way by technology.

PEK: You were recently speaking at Oxford University on “Citizen- ship in a Networked Age,” funded by Templeton World Charity Foundation. Tell us about that.

ME: Recent technologies have amplified individualism at the cost of responsibilities or a sense of accountability. Without accountabil- ity, there can be no trust. Without trust you get an exclusive culture. When individuals feel excluded, you get poor decision-making and a poor personal experience. There is a direct connection between accountability, or duty, and trust. And higher trust environments perform better—creatively, finan- cially, and all around.

This is a much more global issue as it is a corporate issue as it is a local issue. Today, it appears the hyperindividualism accidentally ushered in by smartphones and digital technology has strained communities at all levels. It is impacting nations, corporations, schools, cities, social groups, and families.

More information doesn’t directly translate to more freedom. If it’s practiced in a way that overindividualizes individuals, then it appears to be reducing freedom. At the highest levels, we have reason to pause and contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding. Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- alism that is unfolding? Is democracy dead and we best contemplate whether democracy can endure the hyperindividu- 

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Michael Ebstyne is director of AI at Microsoft. His 20 years in technology have included his work on Microsoft’s HoloLens move from concept to product and helping deliver it to the International Space Station. He has 11 patents in analytics and “mind read- ing.” His mission is to unlock the hero within individuals, enabling them to achieve extraordinary dreams.

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THEOLOGY

PARENTING IN TODAY’S DIGITAL PLAYGROUND

Kara Powell and Brad M. Griffin

DIGITAL PLAYGROUND

If you happen to be in your 40s as we are, you might remember your first Walkman. The very word evokes the memory of riding a school bus to a skating rink, cranking up Bon Jovi through the foam-padded headset wired to a box that was barely small enough to hold in one hand, fueled by the all-too-short life of two AA batteries. This was when our listening options toggled between either radio or cassette tapes, and “rewind” literally involved tape spanning in the opposite direction around a hub.

That world no longer exists. Whether or not you miss skating rinks or the humming sound of cassette tapes rewinding is beside the point. For several decades, with ever-increasing momentum, families have welcomed one game-changing new system, appliance, or device after another into our homes. But what’s causing parents some of our biggest headaches is the technology that lands directly in kids’ hands.

Today those devices are almost universally digital, mobile, and ever-connected to the outside world—school buses and skating rinks optional.

Consider that among US households, 82 percent of today’s teenagers report owning digital meters, 72 percent own digital photo cameras, and 65 percent own digital video cameras.1 This development alone signals the plethora of new questions about technology that lands directly in kids’ hands.

Those of us who parent in this new world find these changes especially disconcerting. If it feels like you’re making it up as you go along, it’s because you are. Keep in mind that our kids are trailblazers too. But as adults, we hold perspectives from a world both with and without digital media. We remember our Walkmans while appreciating our smartphone pheromones. Our kids, on the other hand, are just trying to make sense of the only world they know—the digital one we’ve given them.

Embodied living in our digital playground:

Generational differences manifest in the ways we use and make meaning around media, and understanding our different approaches can shed light on some of today’s parenting paradoxes. For example, if we could experience digital media through our kids’ eyes, it might look a lot like a playground.

Adults tend to use digital media as a kind of hybrid of other media—we do work, send email, watch videos, read articles, and listen to music and podcasts. When our kids use digital media, the experience is often one of play. In other words, where we might see an office, they see a playground. These distinctions matter.

Think about your experiences with kids at a physical playground. What we have learned to see as a jungle gym here and a swing set there, kids see as infinite opportunities for play. They might run laps around the swing set or shimmy up the pole rather than use the swings. The jungle gym, a base, platforms, and slides can be transformed instantaneously into a pirate ship, a castle, or a space shuttle.

This is why, even at an early age when outdoor and non-tech play continues to be developmentally important, kids are as drawn to digital media. Their young minds experience the interactive nature and seemingly infinite possibilities a lot like a playground where anything can be touched and altered. This experience of play extends into adolescence—what teens vaguely describe as “messing around” or “hanging out” is just their slightly more grown-up version of playtime.2

What we see on our devices as helpful new features and upgrades, our kids experience as new pieces of equipment on their playground. Embodied capacities to create, imagine, and explore await today’s young people—and most all of those experiences are inherently social, tapping the deep longing of teenagers for connection.

The way teens seem to migrate from one app or game to the next very few weeks or months reflects their quest for play. Once the feeling of amusement wears off, they get bored and move to a new site. It is only as we get older that learning how to use something new starts to feel like a chore. For kids, it’s fresh slice to slip down (or subversively climb up). Eventually our kids might settle into using media in certain routine ways like we do as adults. But in the meantime, they are using digital media to collectively explore possibilities.

While today’s digital playground may look different from our play when we were kids, it helps to see the underlying motivations that haven’t changed since then. For example, my (Kara) oldest two kids are very close and have many mutual friends at church, so they often end up on the same game text. That means whenever a group member sends a message, not one but two devices beep or buzz in our house.

I’ll admit it used to drive me crazy. I could feel my shoulders tense and my jaw tighten every time the chimes announced a new text—literally. Especially when it happened about every 20 seconds.

But then I remembered two realities. First, those are friendships that I hope grow. Second, when I was a teenager, my mom purchased an extended cord for our family phone so that every afternoon I could drag it into my room to talk to my friends. Even though I had seen those friends that day, we still “missed” them to talk about homework, relive what happened in PE, and make plans for next weekend. Now my teenage children “need” those same kinds of connections. They’re just using different technology. Same need; different playground equipment.

Helping our kids find their way on the digital playground—faithfully

We have all come across adults whose treat of the digital world looks nothing like the lighthearted innocent fun of a typical playground. These adults seem to want their anger and frustrations from real life by sharing and posting online in ways that are obnoxious or offensive. The most hate-filled are appropriately referred to as “internet trolls”—anonymous users who post nasty comments in forums and on social media for their own amusement. The nickname fits because they can make the digital world an ugly, unhappy place for the rest of us.

There are also more typical social media users who seem to indulge themselves by behaving in less offensive or obnoxious, but equally self-absorbed, ways. When we were meeting with focus groups to develop our parents’ Guide to Navigating Our Digital World, Carrie, a mom of three, explained, “We adults use social media to tell others who we are, who we believe, how successful we feel. We use it to brag and show off, and I think the kids imitate that in their own ways.”

Sadly, adults have set a pretty lousy example for kids when it comes to online etiquette. We’ve created an atmosphere that often feels like a race to the bottom. Adults use digital media to behave and interact in all sorts of ways that they never would in real life.

Researchers have called this free-for-all the “online disinhibition effect.” Our society seems to have reached a consensus that this is okay, but our faith compels us to ask harder questions.

We want our kids to learn how to love their neighbors and live out their faith online as well as off. But what does that look like? How can we help young people get into the habit of being salt and light, and ambassadors for God’s kingdom in the digital world? Perhaps one way forward is to emphasize two key traits as we raise thoughtful digital citizens: authenticity and empathy.

These virtues are the hinges on which questions of “Can I?” become “I can, but do I want to?” and “Who am I becoming along the way?”

Authenticity. I want to be more honest online about my real life offline.

Our biblical commandment against lying does not say, “Don’t lie,” though that may be how we’ve been taught to remember it. Exodus 20:16 actually warns “Do not testify falsely against your neighbor” (CEB). This image of a person witnessing to their side of a story before a judge or jury alerts us to how truth-telling isn’t just “saying the right words.” It is an embodied practice that happens in relationship—embodied within social networks. It bears consequences not only for us but also for our neighbors, friends, and even strangers with whom we cross paths.

As we’ve talked with parents, one mom gave this definition of authenticity as she described her family’s “We’re the kind of people who don’t really have a home personality and then a public persona. This has always been clear to our kids. They just know who we are.” This family has sidestepped the pervasive temptation to manufacture a virtual life that is something foreign to reality.

Authenticity in digital spaces means being...
ACCESSIBILITY AND TECHNOLOGY AS HOSPITALITY

Bethany McKinney Fox

A ccess Services at Fuller is an office tasked with making “accommodations” in our courses and programs to make them accessible to students with disabilities. Ongoing medical conditions, or temporary impairments (whether from surgery or injury). However, it is up for discussion whether we are accommodating the student or the inaccessible structure of the course or program.

Accommodations include things like texts in accessible formats for students who are blind; captions on videos for students who are D/Deaf or have hearing impairments; extra time on exams for students who have certain types of learning disabilities; and adjustments to any other course elements that need them. This kind of logistical effort to remove barriers and make our programs accessible to students who learn and demonstrate learning in diverse ways is the most fundamental level of accessibility. It is also legally required for any school whose students receive federal funding, as ours do.

But here at Fuller, we don’t provide accessibility primarily because we are legally bound to compliance (though this is certainly true). Creating an accessible learning environment goes beyond these kinds of responsive, individualized plans for modifying course components; it also means being a deeply Christian community that recognizes how much we need the gifts and full participation of each member of the body, understanding accessibility as an aspect of hospitality, welcome, and following in the way of Jesus.

Beyond logistical modifications for accessibility of physical and pedagogical structures, creating real access means being a community that recognizes the theological importance of accessibility, and values the presence, experience, and God-given gifts of our students and other community members with disabilities and diagnoses of all kinds.

In pursuit of the other direction of increasing accessibility—better access and access, we might incorrectly believe that accessibility simply benefits the students who directly need it, when in reality it benefits our whole community. Or we might regard accessibility-related tasks as chores we do only to meet legal requirements, or out of pity for people who we regard as lesser in some way. These ways of framing the issue create inaccessible, inhospitable learning environments.

As the person who currently runs the Access Services office, I strive to increase Fuller’s overall accessibility in two directions. One direction involves individual supports like connecting students (and faculty) to technology, apps, and other strategies that allow them to take in information and demonstrate learning using multiple senses and modalities. Quite a few delighted exclamations have followed my informing people that Adobe—a widely used computer program for reading PDF documents—comes with a built-in feature to “read out loud,” so they can access the words auditorily instead of, or in addition to, visually. This helps students who struggle maintaining focus when reading, students who have various kinds of visual impairments, and people who simply retain information better by hearing it.

In pursuit of the other direction of increasing access, using Fuller’s accessibility, I draw upon my PhD in Christian ethics, focusing on disability issues and what it means to engage the matter of accessibility in a way that reflects our deepest values as Christians. These values include the belief that every person is created in the image of God and essential
to the body of Christ with an important, God-given vocation. Hospitality is a practice we engage in to embody these values in our communities.

Hospitality and extending welcome, particularly to people whose presence and gifts have been previously excluded, is one key part of what it means to follow in the way of Jesus. We live out our faith commitments through this engagement in to embody these values in our communities.

There will be legally required architectural design, an approach that uses design and technology to create an accessible environment for people who navigate the world in myriad ways. The Ed Roberts Campus at University of California, Berkeley, is widely known as a beautiful, functional space that takes universal design and accessibility seriously. The campus was named after a student who attended UC Berkeley in the 1970s who had polio, slept in an iron lung, and revolutionized the independent living and disability rights movements. The elevators at the Ed Roberts Campus are one example of universal design. Each elevator is large enough to fit multiple wheelchairs at a time, has buttons that can be pressed with wheelchairs, crutches, hands, or feet, and also offers braille and voice accessibility. A large circular ramp ascends from the first to the second floor, so wheelchair users can move between floors even if the elevator is not working and can leave an emergency when elevator use is unsafe.

Further, the bathrooms have been designed so that every feature to make them more accessible to a variety of users. This space doesn’t just meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it exceeds them.

I think also of St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Lilburn, Georgia, where a priest was so deeply committed to creating an accessible community in installing a pulpit, lectern, and altar (heir table for the Eucharist) that were automatically adjustable by height, allowing clergy who used wheelchairs to easily provide for the services. Church spaces often make some attempt to create accessibility for congregants, but we see less of this addressed in a church’s leadership spaces and platforms. This attention, or lack thereof, communicates some thing about what we imagine our leaders to be like. I wonder how as an institution of higher education, especially as we imagine the architecture, furniture, and technology in a new campus, we might think about not only our students with disabilities, but also staff, administrators, and faculty who will be more deeply welcomed by a thoroughly accessible environment.

Fuller’s Pasadena campus has a few buildings that are readily accessible and many others that are not. But making it technically possible for folks who use wheelchairs or have difficulty climbing stairs to get to every part of the building does not mean a space truly feels accessible or welcoming. Elizabeth Staszak, an MDiv student with some physical disabilities, was recently invited by Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics Erin Dufault-Hunter to speak about some of her experiences in a course centered on issues of life and death. As an assignment, Elizabeth invited the students in the class to take only the accessible routes as they navigated Fuller’s campus in the week before her lecture. As the group reflected on that experience, student after student mentioned how much further to find a route that didn’t require getting from place to place, and how even when they could get where they needed to go, often they needed to walk a long distance to get there.

There are further ways technology aids us in making an online learning environment more welcoming and accessible space for all students. As Bishop,”

ENDNOTES


NATURAL-BORN CYBORGS:
CAN TECHNOLOGY SUPERSIZE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Brad D. Strawn and Warren S. Brown

Words like “cyborg” and “supersizing” do not seem relevant to a discussion of Christian life: they seem to belong to some other domain of discourse. Nevertheless, terms like “cyborg” and “supersizing” are very much a part of the current discussions of the nature of the human mind, particu-

larly in the work of philosopher Andy Clark. Over the past few years, we have been thinking about how the theory of extended cognition (promoted by Clark and others) is relevant to our understanding of Christian life, including its relevance to understanding the role of technology in Christian life and the life of the church.1

THE TELECARE STUDY

A great deal of research has demonstrated that chronically stressed individuals are at higher risk for depleted immune systems and physical illness. We know this not just from self-report measures, but also from studies of stress-related changes in the quantities of immune cells circulating in the blood. We also know that social support and self-disclo-

sure of stress reduces the impact of chronic stress, helping sufferers experience both better physical health and improved psycho-

logical functioning. Finally, we know that caregivers of a chronically ill or disabled loved one are a highly stressed group and, due to the demands of caregiving, it is hard for them to get out of the house to receive the emotional support they need. We know a lot—but what are we to do?

Some years ago, a group of students (includ-

ing Brad Strawn) working with Warren Brown investigated a telephone-based (land-

line) method to intervene in the sorts of stress that can compromise immune function, which we called “Telecare.” Particip-

ants would receive a weekly call from the same individual with no particular agenda other than to ask, “How are you doing?” We developed a Conversational Symptom Assessment to track general psychosocial distress (through the calls), caregivers became comfortable talking about things that they might not talk about in a face-to-face conversation. Perhaps the absence of eye contact releases interpersonal inhibitions in talking about their distress and caregiving experiences. While this may have been the outcome of training our Telecare callers well, we believed it also had a lot to do with the medium of the telephone—a technological device through which vocal cues of compassion can be heard without the distraction and self-consciousness created by eye contact. Telecare turned out to be one of the intervention worked to significantly lower stress and increase well-being in a number of at-risk groups. 

Participants would receive a weekly call from the same individual with no particular agenda other than to ask, “How are you doing?” We developed a Conversational Symptom Assessment to track general psychosocial distress (through the calls), caregivers became comfortable talking about things that they might not talk about in a face-to-face conversation. Perhaps the absence of eye contact releases interpersonal inhibitions in talking about their distress and caregiving experiences. While this may have been the outcome of training our Telecare callers well, we believed it also had a lot to do with the medium of the telephone—a technological device through which vocal cues of compassion can be heard without the distraction and self-consciousness created by eye contact. Telecare turned out to be one of the interventions that we carry in our pockets or purses (i.e., our smartphones). And, just as amputees who wear prosthetics actually incorporate the prosthesis into the brain systems that map and control their bodies, so we all readily incorporate all sorts of hu-

man-created artifacts into our cognitive networks in ways that extend and enhance—super-

size—our mental capacities.

Further, the sort of supersizing made possible by the incorporation of various artifacts and tools is even more powerful when we are joined in dialogue with another person. The conversational exchanges, emotions, and real-life problem-solv-

ing. However, one can imagine a telephone “conversation” in which each person talks, but without regard to anything said by the other. Scientists have demonstrated that the presence of another person is helpful, even when the person is just a voice on the telephone—a technological device through which vocal cues of compassion can be heard without the distraction and self-consciousness created by eye contact. Telecare turned out to be one of the interventions that we carry in our pockets or purses (i.e., our smartphones). And, just as amputees who wear prosthetics actually incorporate the prosthesis into the brain systems that map and control their bodies, so we all readily incorporate all sorts of hu-

man-created artifacts into our cognitive networks in ways that extend and enhance—super-

size—our mental capacities.

Our experience with Telecare described above illustrates the basic concepts of cog-

nitive extension. Although the telephone is a powerful tool, in and of itself it does not supersize cognitive and interpersonal ca-

pabilities. Rather, the telephone—a technological device through which vocal cues of compassion can be heard without the distraction and self-consciousness created by eye contact. Telecare turned out to be one of the interventions that we carry in our pockets or purses (i.e., our smartphones). And, just as amputees who wear prosthetics actually incorporate the prosthesis into the brain systems that map and control their bodies, so we all readily incorporate all sorts of hu-

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man-created artifacts into our cognitive networks in ways that extend and enhance—super-

size—our mental capacities.
The use of the phone for supportive calls with intensive 24-7 caregiving, but most of us have also experienced how a telephone conversation can, for instance, exacerbate interpersonal or family stress.

In the end, there are two important properties of Telecare suggested by the theory of extended cognition: (i) the capacity to enhance mental and relational processes through the rich social interactions fostered by the telephone, and (ii) the supportive nature and content of the interaction. In this manner, an important congregational mission can be supersized using the medium of a telephone.

First, with respect to the depth of interpersonal interactions and the possibility for the soft-coupling of individuals into shared life at least for the length of a conversation, certain forms of digital media are significantly limited. They typically restrict length of expressions (e.g., texts, tweets) or are not specifically interpersonal but broadcast unidirectionally to larger groups (e.g., Facebook). What interactive feedback is available is not immediate and often significantly delayed. The effort involved in typing messages also reduces robust interactivity. Most important, these media are severely limited in interpersonal bandwidth by eliminating tone and modulation of voice, and facial expressions that signal emotions—as media of social interaction they are deaf and blind. This creates the sorts of feedback and accountabilities that can foster community.

The Amish have an interesting relationship to technology. For example, they can use landline phones but eschew cell phones. When considering the incorporation of a new technology into their community, they ask a simple question: “Will this technology facilitate or impede community?”

Many churches and individuals in ministry are excited about the use of digital technologies and emerging media platforms, but perhaps, like the Amish, we need to be more discerning about the capacities and values of the different forms of media. The thinking that has surrounded the theory of extended cognition might give us some help. Based on our thinking about Telecare and extended cognition, we would ask two questions: (i) does the incorporation of a particular technology or media platform facilitate social extension and interaction in deep and significant ways; and (ii) is the media being used in ways that are consistent with a Christian life and narrative?

In the same vein, think about the difference between most social media and a telephone call. The phone is much more interactive. It creates social extension. While blind, it is not deaf. It allows for the sharing of emotion and fosters full expressions that are not cut short by the limits of the medium or the effort of typing (particularly the effort of typing on a smartphone). When we consider the communal life of the church, while social media might foster a morsel of cognitive extension, it is extremely thin and is best reserved for unidirectional information communication. In other words, digital technologies are only useful in building community when they foster robust person-to-person interaction that is not blind and deaf. This creates the sorts of feedback and accountabilities that can foster community.

The second question about digital technologies has to do with what one dares to say at the social distance and disengagement of text, tweets, or Facebook posts. The affordances and physical (or immediate auditory) presence of the other individual in real time creates a level of awareness of the other that causes one (and perhaps the community) to consider the immediacy of interpersonal and emotional impact and to moderate what is said. In fact, as we have argued above, two individuals involved in a telephone conversation can enter into a soft-coupled interaction where they become, for the moment, a single mental processing system where they are thinking and speaking as one.

First Corinthians 12:1-26 is an oft-overused passage whenever someone speaks of Christ-centered community or church life. Despite its sometimes-glib use, from the lens of extended cognition, Paul’s metaphor of the church as the body perfectly describes what a congregation “is—the latter case can facilitate community”—the latter case can be answered in the affirmative more readily than the former.

We now live in a world where phones are not only ubiquitous, but also grant us unlimited access to many other forms of social media that foster widespread usage. What is to be said about these other forms of media from the perspective of extended cognition? Do they (and can they) extend and enhance the life of a church community in significant ways? We need to critically examine all forms of technology and social media with respect to their outcomes and best uses, rather than presuming that all communications enhance the community life of a congregation.

To be the body is to become coupled into an extended life with one another, making use of the technologies available to us in a manner that fosters a congregation that is highly interconnected, and in ways that are deeply resonant with the narrative of the gospel. Such interactive extension can serve to supersize Christian life.

Describing a scientific study that used landline telephones now sounds quaint or even antiquated. Technology is advancing at a pace that we couldn’t have imagined when we first set out to aid caregivers. Nevertheless, old fashioned telephones worked because they allowed individuals to interactively soft-couple with caregivers through conversations that extended and supersized their capacity to cope. Such processes are possible because humans are natural-born cyborgs, effortlessly incorporating things and people into our interactive networks.

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ENDNOTES

1. A preliminary version of our thoughts in the area of extended cognition can be found in our book, The Physical Future of Christian Life (Cambridge University Press), and in our forthcoming book, Supervising Christian Life: In-Conviviality Press
O ne day I was sitting in Starbucks, my “second office.” While reading and writing, I often take short breaks and just people watch. I noticed two teenagers come in and take a seat at one of the empty tables. They were doing what teenagers do, which is laughing and giggling while simulta- neously operating their smartphones. They were immersed in whatever or whomever they were interacting with on their phones. For the next half hour, as I went in and out of reading and writing, I was mindful that they never said a word to each other. They typed as if they were texting friends who weren’t present (or maybe each other). They laughed, apparently at videos. But they never spoke to each other. After 30 minutes went by, they got up and left. I’ve noticed this same phenomenon time and again, not just among teenagers but also among people of all ages who have adopted this new cultural practice. I have experienced countless meetings where the person I’m with cannot go more than a few minutes without picking up their phone even if no one is calling (I’m sure I’ve been guilty of this as well).

As a society, our relationship with technology has really changed. When I was young, it was okay to sit at a table, maybe even same-sex pairs, and allusions to the church as the body of Christ, the ways in which they dismember this embodied com- munity by stifling the transfer of life from one person to another. Technology’s capacity to dismember our individual and collective body is not always obvious or even visible. Like an athlete’s dislocated shoulder, the source of the pain is largely imperceptible. His or her arm is still attached to the body, but the joint is not secure in its place, which means the arm and the rest of the body cannot function as they should. Similar- ly, technology can give us a false sense of what it means to be genuinely related to others. Technology can encourage people to mistake constant access with connection. The result is that our relationships with others, with God, and with the past are at risk of becoming or re-}

100 yards away from the young man, in the mobile home of a known racist couple. This and other suspicious evidence surrounded the boy’s death and presented a case for homicide that law enforcement refused to investigate. In the film, the director, Jacque- line Olive, drew upon the history of lynching that Black people had to endure so that she could make real-time connections between the past and present-day events. The film’s title, Always in Season, comes from a phrase made popular during those Jim Crow days of white terror upon Black bodies.

As I watched the film I became slightly distressed by how much the details resembled the events surrounding my maternal great-grandfather’s death in 1933 and my paternal grandfather’s death in 1963, both at the hands of racism. My grandfather, a veteran of the US Navy, was killed by the gun of a white man he knew and worked for. His body was later found with a bullet hole in his neck, yet his death certificate contains the false statement “accidental drowning.” There were three types of racism that played out in this case: the active racism/hatred of his murderer, the passive racism of the witness who said nothing to the authorities, and the systemic racism of the man who signed the death
In stark contrast to my joyful experience of connecting with my nieces via video calls on my smartphone, the re-membering facilitated by the documentary is a painful one. The pain inherent to telling this kind of story is what causes many people to avoid or intentionally forget particular aspects of our/their history. When one generation disconnects, the likelihood of subsequent generations continuing the disconnect is high as they will often inherit the habits, practices, engagements, and avoidance of their predecessors. Yet, as unpleasant or disruptive as they may be for some viewers, documentaries such as Always in Season are necessary for authentic progress. They are like the initial disgusting taste of medicine that brings the body back to wholeness, or the sting of an antiseptic that precedes the healing of fresh cuts on the skin. As painful as it may be, there is hope that technology used in this way can, like medicine, initiate awakening and healing for individuals and communities.

To be disconnected from our past is to be rendered incapable of understanding who we are, where we come from, and ultimately where we are headed. My father recently shared with me that when he was 37 years old, he finally asked my grandmother to tell him about his father. Up until that point, the memory of his death had made it too painful for her to speak about him, even to her own children. My father made a tearful confession to her on that day, acknowledging that he didn’t know anything about his father other than stories from people in the community. As a result, he said, “I don’t know who I am.” He was disconnected from a primary source of shaping his own identity. And if my father didn’t know who he was, how could he impart any sense of a shared identity to his children? How could he convey a sense of self to me, his son?

Yet at Sundance, there I was, watching a story about the murder of another Black man, remembering and reconnecting with my father’s story, my great-grandfather’s story. In that moment, I became painfully aware of the ways in which the technology of film can serve as a device for re-membering fractured parts of our nation, our communities, and ourselves, even if only vicariously through the lives and stories of particular “others.” Indeed, I encountered the redemptive and restorative potential hidden within this technologically mediated form of re-membering.

Films like Always in Season are necessary because they keep us from succumbing to a collective amnesia born of a more fundamental dis-memberment. In John Hanvey’s contribution to Understanding Human Dignity he writes, “Where that image remains degraded or humiliated, then so do we; society itself remains unhealed, and it must bear the legacies of unreconciled [dis-membered] histories. When forgetfulness or silence is accepted, the relationality of our being in the present is weakened and we are rendered ontologically insecure.”

Amnesia—leaves all of us insecure about our beingness, in large part because the whole of our existence is interrelated, as Martin Luther King Jr. once wrote. Many find it difficult to comprehend how there can still be so much racial division today. But what they fail to understand is that the continued deaths and violent treatment of black and brown bodies is the legacy of a dis-membered past that too many have forgotten. And as my experience at Sundance made crystal clear, the time has come for us to set down the technologies that disconnect us from the body, and take up the technologies that help us re-member.
Andromeda by Liz Carver, 2014. This constellation can be observed in the month of November in the Northern Hemisphere. Find details about this project and the artist on p. 3, and see more constellations on pp. 11 and 98–99.
“Humans are not defined in essential but relational terms. That is, unlike the philosophical stream running from Plato to Descartes and into the present, Scripture is not concerned with defining human life with reference to its necessary parts. Nor does it concern itself with explaining the nature of our physicality in life, death, and afterlife. Instead, Scripture presents the human person above all in relational terms. And it marks the human being as genuinely human and fully alive only within the family of humans brought into being by Yahweh, in relation to the God who gives life-giving breath, and in harmony with the cosmos God has made.”

— Joel B. Green, professor of New Testament interpretation and associate dean for the Center for Advanced Theological Studies, in “What Are Human Beings? Perspectives from Science and Scripture” on FULLER studio

“Love and trustworthiness are the pillars upon which relationships are built. Love gives individuals meaning about their identities. Simply stated, love is the relational language where we as humans learn about our uniqueness, worthiness, and belonging. Trustworthiness, on the other hand, is the language of action where we learn about the reliable process of giving, the fairness and justice of balancing what we receive, and the openness and vulnerability that leads us to a sense of safety and security in relationships. Love informs our identity while trustworthiness forms our sense of safety. Together, this identity and safety form the nouns and verbs of our language of existence.”

— Terry Hargrave, Evelyn and Frank Freed Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy, and Sharon Hargrave, executive director of the Boone Center for the Family at Pepperdine, in “Restoring Identity” in FULLER magazine issue #6

“Sometimes when I introduce myself at professional conferences, I say I am a Mennonite feminist evangelical. There are many ways of hearing this, such as that I am enamored with labels or that I am clearly confused. But what I want to convey by appealing to these descriptors is that I am not my own. Whatever hope I have to enjoy that eternal feast with Christ, it cannot come apart from joining myself to the bedraggled, ragtag family into which I have been baptized . . . .

I suspect for many a Fuller student, staff, faculty, and alum, claiming to be ‘evangelical’ sometimes drops from our lips only reluctantly. Perhaps like me, you might have a story of why that label both compels and repels you: It shapes the contours of your life and work, yet it also causes you to shift uncomfortably in your chair as you read an article, view a YouTube video, overhear a colleague’s rant, or listen to certain preachers. Yet despite the unlikeableness of it from a human perspective, I need to claim and be claimed by others if I am to be Christian. When I allow it, Fuller teaches me how to embody these particular identities—Catholic-turned-Anabaptist, feminist, and evangelical—so that they shape me for faithfulness to Christ. Indeed, this last term must shape the other two, so that they foster not merely my desire to be ‘cool’ but rather direct me to the One who finally satisfies my desire to belong and forms me for faithfulness.”

— Erin Dufault-Hunter, assistant professor of Christian ethics, in “Confessions of a Reluctant Evangelical” in FULLER magazine issue #2

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“Ultimately, Jesus Christ is the image of God, the perfect image of God. And we are called to be conformed to Christ as our unique proclivities, I think, is very much part of our vocation and part of our calling to be humans and Christians.”

“Somewhere along the way, I had fallen in love with the archetypal of the Tall White Man. For almost 400 years, my ancestors have been conditioned to know a Jesus embodied in people who did not look like them. First, they fit in love with a Spanish, Catholic Jesus for 350 years. And then an American, Protestant Jesus for at least 50 more years. My love affair with the metaphorical Tall White Man started hundreds of years before I was born. I wanted to be the Tall White Man. I’m addicted to the ‘atta girls’ and ‘good jobs’ and A’s and distinctions because deep in my psyche I actually believed that if I could just get the degree, the ordination, the title, and the grades, I would actually achieve full maturation into whiteness. Maybe then I could be accepted. I actually believed that if I could just get the degree, the ordination, the title, and the grades, I would achieve full maturation into whiteness. Maybe then I could be accepted. I actually believed that if I could just get the degree, the ordination, the title, and the grades, I would achieve full maturation into whiteness. Maybe then I could be accepted. I actually believed that if I could just get the degree, the ordination, the title, and the grades, I would achieve full maturation into whiteness. Maybe then I could be accepted.

“The decisions that we make around life/work balance . . . When I was starting out in ministry there was a very well-known organization in this country that was promoting that women’s roles were to be full-time in the home and that was what women could do, and that’s what women should do. Anything else was not biblical. It was difficult. There were people explaining that my choice to head up a nonprofit as a woman meant I was going to hell. I was going to hell! I was having to work against that and having to work against my mom’s voice that said, ‘What do you mean you’re not cooking homemade lasagna for dinner tonight?’”

“My mother’s generation was one where, for the most part, everyone was calm. Their identity, who they were, was very much centered in how they took care of the home and what kind of childhood they gave us. My mother was dedicated to giving me this extraordinary childhood. She invested her whole self in me, so when I did not affirm her life choices by going someplace different—it was one of the big struggles for me. I had very few people at the time affirm the way that I felt I needed to go. But I had a lot of voices, my mother in particular, that were not supportive of my not being full-time in the home. I got a lot of grief about all the sacrifices that I was going to make because I was not going to be giving the same kind of childhood to my kids that my mother had given to me. It was going to look different, and that scared me half to death. There were some men who sat me down and said, ‘You are going to destroy your kids’ lives. You are making huge sacrifices,’ and so many times throughout my life I would just hear those voices repeated in my head. ‘I am making the biggest mistake of my life. I am going to destroy my kids.’”
“Born with cerebral palsy, I am a disabled woman. I am a disabled woman.

Our different cultures pick out, for various reasons, different aspects of 

human experience and cultivate them. It gives them names. It symbolizes them.

Makes them feature in stories. Creates speech forms that will highlight them and so forth. These are the things that change over time. The cultural cues.

So am I saying really the basic elements of the self are universal and it’s just the cultural shaping that changes? Not quite. Because our cultural practices—

including the symbols we use, the stories we tell, etc.—these practices will reinforce certain synaptic patterns in our brains and so make these connections stronger in our minds. So culture does in certain respects shape and reshape the brain and so makes us literally different people. If cultural practices give us words for various aspects of emotional and interior experience, if it gives us forms of speech that name and model acts of introspection, or puts before us characters who express and enact inner conflict or soul searching and repentance, then we begin to pay attention to the corresponding features of our own experience and value them and cultivate them.

In that sense we do have a different self experience. We become different selves than we would be if we were equipped with different cultural resources.”

—Carol A. Newsom, Charles Howard Candler Professor of Old Testament at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology, in “FULLER dialogues: Sin, Spirituality, and the Self,” originally delivered at the 2019 Payton Lectures

“We tend to dismiss stories of our past. Why? We think they’re irrelevant, uninteresting, embarrassing, hurtful, or shameful. However, our past can be our biggest asset. Those experiences tie us to history, to a specific moment in time. They tie us to our family and our ancestors. They make up who we are.

Knowing our immigrant stories unlocks another layer of our identity. The United States is predominantly a nation of immigrants, whether they historically came enslaved or voluntarily. And so, unless one is a native First Person, most of our families have an origin story from elsewhere. We all have a story, a history of people migrating. Learning this story can help us empathize with other people groups, finding compassion through the shared struggles immigrants often face in coming to a new country. There are a variety of ways to trace our immigrant story. We can ask our eldest relative. We can look at church denominational family records.

We can examine city records and census data or naturalization records. There are even online databases that contain records, such as immigrants who arrived via Ellis Island or Angel Island. Or we can join ancestry websites or submit our DNA for testing. Our past connects to our present, and those past stories and experiences help us recover a sense of who we are.”

—Giovanny Panginda (MDiv ’17), project coordinator at Fuller Youth Institute, in “Finding Abundance Through Reclaiming Your Immigrant Stories” on the Fuller Youth Institute blog

“Every aspect of yourself, whether it’s the most painful—maybe it’s the most presentable—has to be fully transformed. And a lot of people who don’t talk about identity are the people who are normative, who can say, ‘Well, I’m just a person.’ In America, it’s actually people who are white, who are male, who are heterosexual—who people who are like, ‘I’m just a person. You’re just a person? You know, I spend a lot of time at Fuller telling every single student, even the white students, ‘It’s so important you know the fact that you have a particular color, skin, [culture, and story] . . .

Because all that you do—you’re embodying the gospel with this thing—it’s basically what’s going to help you to be fully transformed. It’s almost like you’re working the gospel into the dough of your life. You’re working every bit of it. Maybe there’s some past, some structure, some history you don’t want to know. It’s not pretty, but it must be transformed by the gospel. Christ will have it all. He will have every part of you transformed. Even the part of you that you’re like, ‘This is just a liability, there’s no point to this thing’—no, that too. He will have that transformed and used for God’s kingdom.”

—Daniel D. Lee, assistant professor for the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry, in “(You Don’t) Know Your Immigrant Story,” originally delivered at the 2019 Urbana Mission Conference and available on the Asian American Center’s website, Centered for Marriage and Family Therapy, in “FULLER dialogues: Sin, Spirituality, and the Self,” originally delivered at the 2019 Payton Lectures

“We belong to God. We are his. In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul writes, ‘We belong to Christ and Christ belongs to us.’ And again in Galatians 3: ‘So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith . . . . There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’ As humans, we are created to long for and to be in relationships. Our trinitarian God, who created us in his image, has instilled in us a desire to belong to one another and to live interdependently. Belonging gives us security. It serves as a secure base from which we can live into our imaginations and flourish without fear. The many years of clinical and neuroscience research on attachment affirms this truth. That being attached to and belonging to another person is critical for biological, emotional, psychological, and spiritual survival—let alone thriving.

Belonging to God, who loves us and is all-sufficient, results in a life of freedom and shalom.”

—Miyoun Yoon Hammer, associate professor of marriage and family therapy and chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Therapy, in “FULLER dialogues: Sin, Spirituality, and the Self,” originally delivered at the School of Psychology’s 2017 Integration Symposium

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—Miyoun Yoon Hammer
At the tomb of Lazarus there are three words that describe and express Jesus’ feelings. He was greatly disturbed. He was deeply troubled. And he wept. And all these emotions led those who were gathered at the grave of Lazarus to conclude, “Oh, see how Jesus loved him.” Jesus’ tears are for Lazarus, I believe, but also for Martha and Mary. And in this passage, I find it really beautiful that Jesus ministers so very differently to each sister. So very personally. He responds valuing and respecting the unique personhood of both women. For the pragmatic and down-to-earth Martha, he obliges this theological conversation to calmly reassure her that Lazarus will rise from the dead. For the deeply contemplative and inward Mary, he simply weeps with her. There are no words, just tears. And it reminds us that Jesus knows us. He is there for us—not in some general, abstract, universal, sentimental way, but personally, he is with us. In the way that you and I need him. Knowing who each of us is. That he gets us. That he knows us.

As I was contemplating this passage in John 11, the thought occurred to me that Jesus seems to be very close to the Gentiles will hope. And so while the Gospel writers don’t recall Jesus talking explicitly about hope, hope is mentioned, I think, 76 times in the New Testament. But there’s only one reference of ‘hope’ in the four Gospels. The one reference being Matthew 12:21, where Matthew describes Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel, and in his name the Gentiles will hope. And as while the Gospel writers don’t recall Jesus talking explicitly about hope, I still think it’s there. Hope simply stands there. In the midst of hardship and oppression and suffering. Jesus stands there. In the face of death, hope stands there with Martha and Mary and Lazarus and their friends. Which means that before hope is a concept of longing or a theological construct, hope is first a person. Jesus is our hope. He is the resurrection and the life, he is the savior of the world.”

The following voices are excerpts, edited and adapted, of sermons delivered at Fuller’s All-Seminary Chapel during the 2018–19 year. Each sermon can be listened to in full through the FULLER sermons podcast, on Fuller.edu/Studio or iTunes, Stitcher, and Spotify.

Kevin Doi (MDiv ’94), Fuller Seminary’s chaplain, on the raising of Lazarus, hope in Christ, and healing as “a present sacrament of a future resurrection.”

Voice: Anxiety is complex and there’s not one kind. And the sermon is not a therapy session. But anxiety in my life has felt like a present darkness and a pressing darkness. There are different sources of anxiety: the darkness of disease, the darkness of grief and loss, the darkness of job and food insecurity; the darkness of uncertainty; the darkness of change and our fear and resistance to change; the darkness of broken relationships, the darkness of addiction, the darkness of tragedy, the darkness of racism, the darkness of sexism, the darkness of mass incarceration, the darkness of the inhumane treatment of immigrants just down the road, the darkness of hate crimes against our Muslim or Jewish siblings. All kinds of darkness. You can just turn on the news for five minutes and have enough. We live in times of a very present, anxiety-inducing darkness.

Whatever the source of the darkness that is pressing us, I believe that Paul is not dismissing the darkness—he is not denying the darkness—but he is defying the darkness when he says do not be anxious. Jesus is not anxious about anything. He was totally dark. The lights were out, but my grandmother was sitting in a rocking chair, and her grandchildren were around her feet. She was sitting there holding a flashlight to read her Bible. She was reading Psalm 91. My abuela took refuge in the shelter and found peace in the shadow of God’s presence. God was her shelter, and she lived in his shadow. God was her shelter, and her prayers put her on a path to a person whose name is Emmanuel, God with us. She knew that Emmanuel. She knew his name. He took those hearts and those anxious minds even when the storm is raging.”

Inés Velasquez-McBryde (MDiv ’19) on the peace God’s presence brings in the midst of our seasons of personal and public anxiety.

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Paul is not giving the command to ‘rejoice in the Lord always’ simply to individuals in the church at Philippi. The word used for ‘rejoice’ is second person plural. He is saying, as we do in Texas: ‘Y’all rejoice!’ In other words, God is not merely seeking a bunch of individuals who are content with their own private joy. No, God by the Spirit is seeking to form a community of joy. The church is to be a defiant community of joy. A community that is made up of people so rooted in the love of God, so rooted in the goodness of God, so rooted in the ultimate justice of God, that empowered by the Spirit they pray and dance and eat and sing and paint and serve and laugh even in the midst of the whirlwind.

This is not blind hope. This is not burying our head in the sand. This is not undermining the troubling of our soul, of our society, of our world. But it is an unrelenting refusal to allow the forces of despair to have the last word. Of course, for some of us—whether because of background or biology or brutal life circumstances—rejoicing may be inauthentic or even impossible. However, when I struggle to experience joy in Christ, there is a sense in which the community’s joy can be my joy. The community’s dance can be my dance. The community’s song can be my song. The community’s laughter, by some miracle of grace, can be my laughter. To put it another way, at their best, communities of joy rooted in Christ sustain both the joyful and the joyless. There is something of the joy of the risen Lord that enables communities to resist the forces of despair. It’s a joy that is not achieved as much as it’s something that is received, in Christ, by the Spirit, and in community.”

“Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice!” (Phil 4:4). How can we rejoice when there is so much dis-ease in our lives and in the world? How can we rejoice in the midst of grief and sadness that seem to follow us like a shadow? How can we rejoice in the midst of rapid change and transition that leave us anxious, vulnerable, and fearful of being deemed ‘nonessential’? How can we rejoice in the midst of tragedy, traumatic shootings, and polarizing politics?

For Paul, I think the answer is found in three words: in the Lord. In other words, the command to ‘rejoice in the Lord always’ is a command to stay rooted in the reality of the risen Christ who reigns and who will return to set all things right. This doesn’t mean that we pretend to always be in a great mood. It doesn’t mean that we fail to lament over the pain of our lives and our world. It doesn’t mean either of those things. But it does mean that by the power of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of love, joy, and peace—we remain rooted in the Lord, rooted in hope, rooted in the God of Israel’s larger story of redemption. A story that is larger than the latest disappointment. A story that is larger than the latest doctor’s report. A story that is larger than the latest news update. God’s work of making all things new in the risen, reigning, and returning Lord Christ is the larger story that sustains our life.

And there’s one key thing in Paul’s words we don’t want to miss. It’s important to underscore that Paul is not giving the command to ‘rejoice in the Lord always’ simply to individuals in the church at Philippi. The word used for ‘rejoice’ is second person plural. He is saying, as we do in Texas: ‘Y'all rejoice!’

In other words, God is not merely seeking a bunch of individuals who are content with their own private joy. No, God by the Spirit is seeking to form a community of joy. The church is to be a defiant community of joy. A community that is made up of people so rooted in the love of God, so rooted in the goodness of God, so rooted in the ultimate justice of God, that empowered by the Spirit they pray and dance and eat and sing and paint and serve and laugh even in the midst of the whirlwind.

This is not blind hope. This is not burying our head in the sand. This is not undermining the troubling of our soul, of our society, of our world. But it is an unrelenting refusal to allow the forces of despair to have the last word. Of course, for some of us—whether because of background or biology or brutal life circumstances—rejoicing may be inauthentic or even impossible. However, when I struggle to experience joy in Christ, there is a sense in which the community’s joy can be my joy. The community’s dance can be my dance. The community’s song can be my song. The community’s laughter, by some miracle of grace, can be my laughter. To put it another way, at their best, communities of joy rooted in Christ sustain both the joyful and the joyless. There is something of the joy of the risen Lord that enables communities to resist the forces of despair. It’s a joy that is not achieved as much as it’s something that is received, in Christ, by the Spirit, and in community.”

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Phil 4:4–9

If anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Phil 4:8–9

— Trey Clark, pastor and PhD student, on Paul’s imperative to rejoice against despair, with joy being rooted not in one’s circumstances but in the truth of Christ
"How can we get to a comfortable space when so many of us often find ourselves waiting for something to happen—waiting for something to happen in a place called ‘in-between’? In between broken relationships and reconciliation, In between sickness and healing. In between work and a paycheck, In between transition and suspension. In between disruption and continuity. In between the promises of God and the manifestation of the promise. How many of us find ourselves constantly in those in-between spaces? It is amazing that God has created us to be able to wait in the in-between place, and to celebrate and be frustrated at the same time. And I believe it is amazing that God has created us to be able to wait in the in-between time, to deal with anxiety and worship at the same time. And I believe God has created us to be able to wait in the in-between space, and to celebrate and be frustrated at the same time.

For those of you that are suffering because of the in-between time, don’t fret and fear that the promise that God made has gone away. In your anxiousness, don’t get off track. In your anxiousness, remember that the faithful God is still there. And when it seems like it’s not happening, I dare you to worship. I dare you to worship. I dare you to walk through your house and worship God in those anxious moments where it looks like something is happening that is not supposed to happen, or nothing is happening. Worship God, and let God fill your spirit in that moment of anxiousness, so that in that in-between time you don’t get off track, but you stay with God, and you move with God. Because he loves you, and what he has called you to do is so much bigger than you—and that was the thing that Abraham had to get.

The Bible is so definite in letting us know how much time it took for Abraham to get to the place where the promise could be actually manifested in and through him. The in-between time that Abraham had was actually about 25 years—24 years and some change—and in that time things had to happen for Abraham to be actually considered the ‘father of faith.’ He didn’t start out being the father of faith. He started out being simply Abraham who was obedient to God, and in the course of his journey he traveled, and then he did some things that were wrong in that in-between time. But I believe that the in-between time was one of the most important times in Abraham’s journey.

It’s not about ‘I suffer, I suffer, I suffer.’ It’s not about that. It’s not about ‘the me’ suffering, it’s about ‘the we’ suffering. That’s why we’ve got to keep our eyes on the global church—because they’re directly in the space where God has called you to be, because the work of the gospel is the work of suffering. It’s not about ‘I suffer, I suffer, I suffer.’ It’s about ‘I suffer, you suffer, we suffer.’ That’s why we’ve got to keep our eyes on the global church—because they’re directly in the space where God has called you to be, because the work of the gospel is the work of suffering. It’s not about ‘I suffer, I suffer, I suffer.’ It’s about ‘I suffer, you suffer, we suffer.’ That’s why we’ve got to keep our eyes on the global church—because they’re directly in the space where God has called you to be, because the work of the gospel is the work of suffering.

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The Future of Fuller

CHANGES IN SENIOR ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

Significant appointments and changes have been made in Fuller’s senior academic leadership in the last year, beginning in January 2019, when Mari Clements was named the ninth provost of Fuller, after serving as acting provost for the previous year. She is the first woman to occupy the role in Fuller’s history. In the same month, Ted Cosse, executive director of Fuller Psychological and Family Services, was selected as dean of the School of Psychology. And beginning July 1, 2019, Amos Yong became the first dean to serve both the School of Theology (SOT) and the School of Intercultural Studies (SIS), following the shorter terms of Marianne Meye Thompson as dean of the School of Theology and Peter Lim as acting dean of the School of Intercultural Studies. This reorganization will foster new levels of integration between SOT and SIS and an increased ability to respond to the diverse needs of students seeking degrees in theology and intercultural studies.

While it was necessary to develop a new structure to provide better cohesion and integration for students in SIS and SOT, it is also vital that we preserve the unique identity of each school and improve administrative and curricular functions. Thus an associate dean of SOT and SIS position was created to provide this academic and administrative oversight, and Dave Scott was named to that position in July 2019. Additionally, the position of director of the Center for Missiological Research (CMR) was converted to the associate dean of CMR, a role that has been filled by Kirsteen Kim as of July 2019. At the same time, Joel Green was named the associate dean of the Center for Advanced Theological Studies (CATS).

Further, in July 2018 Fuller added to its senior academic leadership Alexis Abernethy, appointed as the first to fill the role of associate provost of faculty inclusion and equity. This position is devoted to creating more concrete, intentional, and comprehensive strategies regarding inclusion and equity at Fuller. As part of that strategic approach, the directors of Fuller’s ethnic centers—Daniel Lee of the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry; Oscar García-Johnson of Centro Latino, the Center for the Study of Hispanic Church and Community; Sebastian Kim of the Korean Studies Center; and Clifton Clarke of the William E. Pannell Center for African American Church Studies—have each been elevated to the position of assistant provost. This status change gives the center directors, and the people under their care, unprecedented and guaranteed representation at some of the highest levels of institutional authority, and as full members of the President’s Council.

The Fuller community is grateful to have these gifted scholars, practitioners, and administrators providing leadership, alongside President Mark Labberton, as we continue to navigate this significant season of transition and make our way toward the future of Fuller Seminary.

To learn more about these changes and other updates on Fuller’s future, visit FULLER.EDU/FUTURE.

Prayer of Examen App

Practice the Prayer of Examen—an ancient spiritual discipline allowing you to review your day and tune into the sacred in everyday life. Download FULLER studio’s first app and engage in this daily practice with guidance from a contemplative short film series or simple text—available in four different languages.

Discover the Prayer of Examen app at Fuller.edu/Studio/PrayerOfExamen
Introducing FULLER Equip

FULLER Equip is a flexible, online learning experience offering access to research-based courses that promote Christian leadership, professional development, and spiritual growth. Take courses developed by trusted experts. Earn professional recognition. Demonstrate greater competency and be more effective in your field.

LEARN MORE AT FULLER.EDU/EQUIP

As we move through a season of transition as an institution, 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/buildings.

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LET THE BUILDINGS SPEAK

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In the summer of 1972 I was enrolled in the 12-week summer Greek class. Women students were not allowed to live off campus. I took top residence in a large room in Storrier Hall with no access to kitchen facilities. I prepared food in a toaster oven and washed dishes in the bathroom (tub and sink) and had access to a fridge in the stairwell. I ate as many Subway sandwiches that I cannot face them to this day.

When Pasadena was sweltering, I carried a pad of blankets to the fire escape and slept there. Given the crime rate at the time in Pasadena, this was foolish but a lot cooler.

I lived in that space for one academic year before moving across I-210 for shared rent with my fellow student Beth Frykberg. By then I had painted the room a very hard-to-paint-over blue as a passive aggressive message to the administration that women students should be treated equally with their male counterparts.

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That space would become Paul Jestett’s office, with his fantastic octagonal desk, by the time I was a senior. Dr. Jestett was a great advocate for women students (there were three in my class!). Had I known what a problem that blue paint would be and the match-up with Paul, I might have made a different decision.

I was delighted to come back in 2012 and visit with Marpicrie Shuster in another office in that building—one of the other women in the class of 1973.

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Eucalyptus, the aroma of the campus. Eucalyptus has been called the healing tree. It heals the respiratory system, reduces inflammation, and has been used for centuries. In the midst of stress, sitting outside helped my mind find a sense of healing my spirit, my soul recovered from the sounds caused by learning through fierce and forceful theological debates. I learned in a very diverse and multicultural environment. The structures of my simplistic belief system were replaced with truth. I hurt at times, but I found just smelling the sweetness of the campus. Thirty years later I give thanks to God for the opportunity to be at the Pasadena campus, and I still use eucalyptus essential oils to reflect and praise God.

—Hector Rivera-Velez ’90
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—alongside Spanish, Korean, and online options—through its Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as rich and varied forms of support for the broader church. Nearly 3,500 students from 80 countries and 210 denominations enroll in Fuller’s degree programs annually, and our 44,000 alumni serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businessperson and in a variety of other vocations around the world.

Benediction: Acts that Speak the Good Word

The Arol Burns Mall at Fuller’s Pasadena campus has long been a favorite dog-walking spot, thanks to its plentiful shade and, perhaps, abundance of squirrels to chase. But since last April, one dog has inexplicably captured the hearts of students, faculty, and staff. “Since she was 10 weeks old, I’ve made a point of exposing her to people of all ages and ethnicities,” says Bernadette “BJ” Barber, Fuller’s executive director of Human Resources and Organizational Development, of her golden retriever puppy, Oona. “I want her to be comfortable and confident, in the future I want her to be a therapy dog.”

But Oona has already become a de facto therapy dog. BJ often brings the pup to Barker Commons to sniff around and practice tricks on the grass. Students shift toward them, and employees look down from their office windows and then come out to greet Oona, who offers them the gift of tenderness. Regularly, BJ says, people will bold Oona in their arms and start crying. “They’ll say, ‘I don’t know what this is all about. I can’t cry when I see her.’” She shares, “Dogs have this special gift of allowing us to be vulnerable, to come out of the anxiety of the stressors we’re trying to manage the perfectionists we’re trying to achieve or the people we’re trying to impress . . . she allows an openness and release, a break for a moment to just be.”

Recently a colleague, who had been growing multiple deaths among her family and friends, called BJ and asked, “Do Oona here today? I’d like to see her.” The colleague had just learned of yet another loved one’s death. BJ went home at lunch to bring Oona back to campus, leaving the dog with her bumbling friend for the afternoons. “Having Oona in her office allowed her to keep working, but also probably to lay on the floor with Oona and cry and do what she needed to do,” says BJ.

“There’s an impact dogs like Oona have on individuals,” she reflects, “but there’s also an impact on the relationships between the humans who are interacting with the dog.” Oona becomes an access point, so strangers—whether visitors walking through campus, or Fuller students and employees—who would usually just walk by BJ stop and talk to her instead. “There’s everything from the tentative inquiry about Oona to the people rushing over and just hugging her. But there’s definitely that movement to another level of conversation.”

Besides the dogs that frequent campus, BJ points out, “There are kids who are grown up here, whose parents are students or employees, or alumni; they play on the mall. Fuller has been a playground for many.” Having dogs and children come through campus, she thinks, helps reinforce the wholeness of our lives that we bring to our work at Fuller. “We’re here to live life together, and the dogs help us not just be cerebral about it, but actually learn to practice a faith and connectedness that is much more whole.”

Fuller offers 15 programs of maestría and de títulos avanzados—con opciones en español, coreano y en línea—y no limita su propósito y potenciales de formación teológica que ayude a los seguidores de Cristo a servir como fieles, valientes, innovadores, líderes colaborativos y fructíferos en toda la vida y en cualquier entorno.

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.

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¿Quién es Fuller? Fuller Seminary is an institution 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 y en cualquier entorno.

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Cetus

The constellation Cetus, also known as the Sea Monster, can be observed in the month of December in the Northern Hemisphere. Find details about this project and the artist on p. 3, and see more constellations on pp. 11 and 78–79.
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+ Priscilla Santos (MAICS '12). Read her story on page 26.