

ISSUE #16 | IMAGINING HOPE

FULLER



STORY Ezer Kang, pictured above, finds a model for embracing the other on repeated trips to a medical clinic in Delhi, India *p. 12*
THEOLOGY A collection of articles curated by Scott Cormode reflects on what it looks like to imagine hope in the midst of pain *p. 36*
VOICE The Fuller community explores the practices of rest and repentance *p. 76*



HOPE

by Dea Jenkins

*Failure hits heads like swinging bridges
How did I miss that?
And where did Your word go?*

*My eyes, bloodshot, peering through
strained grains of finely held hope
I watch it disappear like falling snow*

At times, disappointment does indeed crush

*Soul to bone my heart sinks
down into my esophagus
I gasp and sip hollow breaths*

Ready to blow, ready to blow

*Always Your calm voice whispering
Ever gentle, ever kind*

*To wait and to hope
To hope against all hope lost
To fight against all joy gone*

To look again

*Though my neck is tired from the strain
and my back is twisted from the journey
and my hands have wrung themselves dry*

*Hope
Hope again against all hope lost*

✚ Phoenix by Dea Jenkins. Watercolor on paper, 9" x 12", 2018. Dea Jenkins (MAT '19, MAICS '19) is an artist, writer, and filmmaker based in Pasadena. See more of Dea's artwork and poetry on pp. 11, 74–75, and 98–99. Find more of her work at DeaJenkins.com.

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✦ *Reimagining Pasadena*

When we were kids, we used to insist that California had four seasons just like everyone else had—only ours are summer, winter, fire, and flood. Though more true than not lately, with fires decimating much of the wild brushlands around us, once in awhile, fall and winter are still so sublime here that weather alone seems to merit study at Fuller’s Pasadena campus. That’s what we had for a recent chapel service on the Arol Burns Mall: pristine blue sky, framed by palm trees, punctuated by the wild parrots of Pasadena (seriously, google it), and Chapel Director Julie Tai’s worship team singing “I choose to trust in Jesus” like a soundtrack in the background. All senses enlivened, hope was easy to imagine.

A lovely vision was prompted for me by the solidarity of that chapel service: A little freshwater brook that started in the prayer garden flowed all the way through the mall, gracefully, as water does, along paths of least resistance. It poured out from “the elbow,” down Ford Place and up Oakland Avenue and beyond, to all our offices north and south, out to our Houston and Arizona campuses, and farther yet to our students and learners, our alums and donors, our trustees and friends.

The stream bubbled and it sang; it greened up everything it touched; it caused a faint cool breeze. The sound was restful and soothing; the air carried extra oxygen and hydration, and it was nice to imagine dragging your fingers in it to snap water in the face of whoever you were rushing to a meeting with. (I mean, if you’re the kind of person who would do that.) As I’m writing this, a colleague has texted me a photo of the campus, green and still, regarding it as “a moment of peace.”

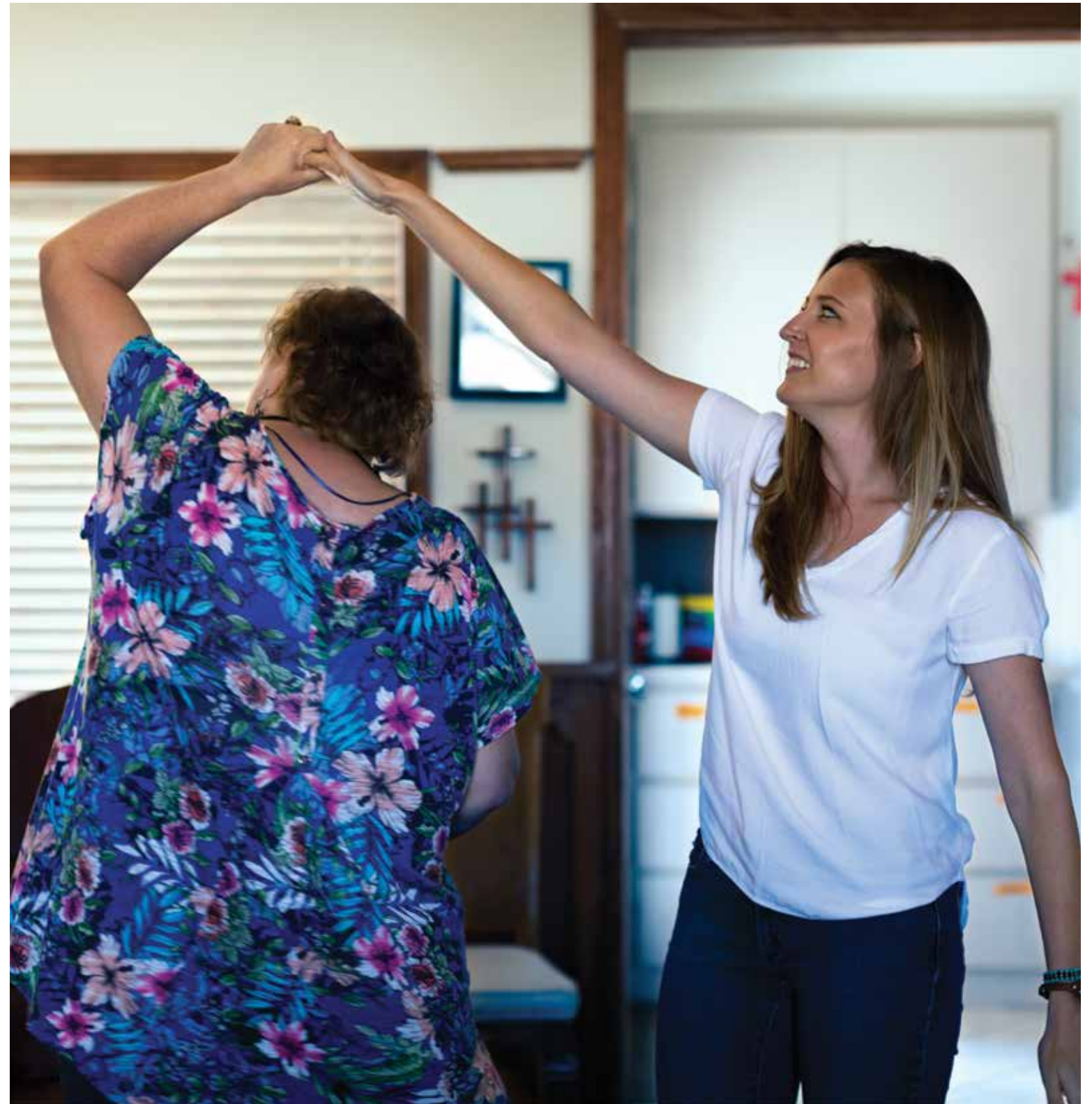
We could use a moment of peace around here. To quote Bill Pannell, “Have mercy!” The strip of land that cuts through the middle of Fuller’s Pasadena campus has known many literal and figurative seasons of winter and summer and fire and flood: seasons of thoughtful pondering, passionate protest, raucous music, shy introductions, earnest prayers, rented regalia, harvest-party bounce houses and child-sized ponies. It has contained the smells of Ethiopian flatbread and Mexican churros and Thai curry; the sights of placards and memorials, of fists raised in protest and palms open in praise; the sounds of trees uprooted by violent winds, air whistling through ancient window casings, and breezes gently snapping a banner quoting trustee Willie Jennings: “If the incarnation teaches us anything, it’s that God cares about place.”

These are evidence that streams, both seen and unseen, have coursed through the campus over the seven decades of our life here, bringing cleansing, new life, knowledge, and transformation. That’s apropos for an institution of higher learning. Though some of us were eager to see the flourishing of a new life for Fuller in Pomona (and disappointed when that dream died), I won’t regret the chance to call this green oasis home again in a new way. There is something about a place that has seen so many gatherings of diverse groups with equally diverse purposes, a place that has contained bodies in tension or in unity, voices raised in tumult or song, over so many generations. It is easy to imagine hope for Fuller to flourish here because this is where we are together.



LAURALEE FARRER

is chief storyteller and vice president of communications.



✦ *Cara Vezeau (MAICS '17) dances with resident Cathy at their home, L'Arche Wavecrest, in Orange, California. Read Cara's story on p. 18.*



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✦ President Mark Labberton in his office, seated in front of a painting of his own inspired by a whirlwind.

Imagining a Hope that Transcends

From Mark Labberton, President

Imaginando una Esperanza que Trasciende

Por Mark Labberton

초월하는 소망을 꿈꾸기

마크 레바튼

People in pain have a keen sensor that sniffs out platitudes in a flash, that rebuffs cheap comfort, that makes them wary of people whose words fit only a tailored, two-dimensional life. Advice to “imagine hope” from such a flat perspective falls equally flat. Among other things, hope has to be sufficient for real need, durable in the worst seasons (not just the better ones), empathic without dissolving on contact with anger.

To stand in the ashes of your burned-up home would be devastating: the immediate loss would be what, at first, overwhelms; yet the longer agony would emerge from the lingering second-guessing and utter irretrievability of all that was lost. Finding hope in the face of unending pain like this can be beyond daunting.

Yet the world is filled with such overwhelm-

ing realities. Being Jewish or Palestinian can feel like this. A diagnosis of Alzheimer’s can feel like this—for both patient and family. Becoming a quadriplegic can be the same. Driving while brown or black in America can feel like this. Multigenerational poverty fits this theme. So, too, mental health conditions without effective treatment. Long-term pain, loss, or crises can drive hope into extinction.

So what counts as hope in the face of “hopeless” chronic need? Caricatures of Christian hope that portray the gospel like a magic pill violate both those who suffer and the love of Jesus to heal them. Such a “gospel” makes its presenters like Job’s friends: full of the noise of conviction but lacking wisdom and empathy, let alone life-giving power.

If we allow the gospel to speak for itself, we

see and hear an entirely different hope. To start, the sheer capacity of the incarnate Christ to share our suffering is essential to this trustworthy gospel. We seldom identify fully with the pain of others we seek to comfort—our experience is virtually never theirs, and vice versa. But in Jesus’ life and death, we meet someone who, having faced injustice, suffering, and silence, can hold our pain with us. God’s empathy with us

Las personas heridas tienen un sentido de olfato agudo que huelen los clichés a la legua, que rechazan el consuelo barato, que se cansan de otras personas cuyas palabras encajan en una vida de solo dos dimensiones. El consejo de “imaginar la esperanza” desde una perspectiva tan simple, simplemente no encaja bien. Entre otras cosas, la esperanza debe ser suficiente para las necesidades reales, resistente a las peores temporadas (no solo las buenas), comprensiva a tal punto que no se disuelve cuando se enfrenta al enojo.

Pararse en las cenizas de su casa calcinada sería algo devastador: la pérdida inmediata es lo que abruma primero; sin embargo, la agonía que perdura surge de las dudas y de todo lo irrecuperable que se ha perdido. Encontrar esperanza en medio de tanto dolor sin fin es más que abrumador.

Sin embargo, el mundo está lleno de estas realidades abrumadoras. Así debe sentirse ser judío o palestino. Así debe sentirse al recibir una diagnosis de Alzheimer - tanto para el paciente como su familia. Llegar a ser

cuadrupléjico debe ser lo mismo. Conducir un auto siendo moreno o negro en América puede sentirse así. La pobreza multi-generacional cabe en este patrón. Al igual que las condiciones de salud mental sin tratamiento efectivo. Dolor a largo plazo, pérdida o crisis pueden extinguir la esperanza.

¿Entonces a qué podemos llamar esperanza cuando enfrentamos una necesidad crónica “sin esperanza? Hay caricaturas de esperanza Cristiana que presentan al evangelio como una píldora mágica la cual perturba a

aquellos que sufren y el deseo de que el amor de Jesús los sane. Tal “evangelio” convierte a sus locutores a ser como los amigos de Job: llenos del ruido de convicción pero faltos de sabiduría y empatía, y ni se diga del poder que da vida.

Si permitimos que el evangelio hable por sí mismo, vemos y escuchamos una esperanza totalmente diferente. Para empezar, la capacidad plena del Cristo encarnado de compartir en nuestro sufrimiento es esencial para un evangelio del cual sí podemos

confiar. No es común que nos podamos identificar completamente con el dolor de aquellos que buscamos consolar - nuestra experiencia raramente es la de ellas y ellos, y viceversa. Pero en la vida y muerte de Jesús, nos encontramos con alguien quien ha encarado la injusticia, sufrimiento, silencio, y puede sujetar nuestro dolor con nosotros. La empatía de Dios hacia nosotros y nosotras nos fortalece en nuestras circunstancias, tanto agudas como crónicas. La profundidad del amor de Aquel que comprende totalmente todo lo que somos, sentimos y sabemos es el fundamento

고통을 겪고 있는 사람들에게는, 상투적으로 건네는 말들을 구별할 수 있고, 값싸게 건네는 동정을 거절할 줄 알며, 맞춤형 이차원적인 삶에나 걸맞은 조언을 하는 사람들을 조심하게 되는 예민한 장치가 있습니다. 단편적인 관점에서 나온 “소망을 꿈꾸라”라는 조언은 아무런 반응을 얻지 못하기 마련입니다. 그 무엇보다도 소망은 진정한 필요를 충족해야 하고, (더 나은 시절뿐 아니라) 가장 힘든 시절을 견딜 수 있을 만한 것이어야 하며, 분노로 인해 사라질 없이 공감할 수 있는 것이어야 합니다.

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그렇다면 “소망이 결여된” 막연한 필요 안에서 소망으로 간주될 수 있는 건 무엇일까요? 복음을 무엇이든 고칠 수 있는 마법의 약으로 과장하는 기독교적 소망은 고통 가운데 있는 사람뿐 아니라 그들을 고치시는 예수님의 사랑에 위배되는 것입니다. 이러한 “복음”은 전도자들을 욕의 친구들처럼 만드는 것입니다: 확신에 차 있기는 하나 생명을

주는 힘이 있기는커녕 지혜와 공감이 부족한 것입니다.

만약 복음이 복음 자신을 스스로 말할 수 있다면, 우리는 완전히 다른 소망을 보고 들을 것입니다. 우선, 우리의 고통을 함께 나누시는 성육신한 예수 그리스도의 능력이 바로 이 신뢰할만한 복음의 필수적인 요소입니다. 우리는 우리가 위로하고자 하는 다른 사람들의 고통을 완전히 동일시하여 느끼기는 어렵습니다—우리의 경험은 사실상 결코 그들의 것일 수 없고, 그들의 경험도 나의 것일 수 없습니다. 그러나 우리는 우리의 고통을 함께 떠안아 줄 수 있는 분을 만나게 되는데, 그분은 불의와 고통, 그리고 침묵을

삶과 죽음에서 마주하신 예수 그리스도입니다. 우리와 함께하시는 그분의 공감은 급성이거나 만성적인 우리의 상황에서 우리를 더 강건하게 합니다. 우리가 존재하고, 느끼고, 알고 있는 것을 모두 이해하시는 그분의 사랑의 깊이야말로 기독교적 소망의 근원인 것입니다.

이 소망은 어려운 문제에 대한 분명하고 즉각적인 해결과는 질적으로 다른 소망입니다. 이것은 “우리를 절대로 놓지 않을” 소망입니다—무슨일이 있어도, 우리의 절망에도 불구하고 말입니다. 그리고 그 상실의 근원이나 어둠의 깊이가 사라지지 않더라도, 우리는 예수그리스도 안에서

fortifies us in our circumstances, both acute and chronic. The depth of love from the One who alone understands all that we are, feel, and know is the bedrock of Christian hope.

This hope is qualitatively different than hope that is a clear and immediate resolution of difficulty. This is the hope that “will not let us go”—no matter what, despite our hopelessness. And while the source of our loss or the depth of the darkness is not necessarily taken away, in Christ we discover that hope, not suffering, holds the final word. This good news is palpable and transformative—even relieving—in the midst of waiting.

I think of the long day’s journey for friends who have lost a child or spouse to suicide, or to addiction, or to war, or to accident. Daily

sorrow makes their loving hearts beat arrhythmically for as long as they live. Christian hope may temper this, but it does not eliminate it. Instead, the heart’s pulse bears witness to another Heart that joins their unique rhythm. In Christ, sorrow and pain are held by a hope that is still greater and deeper than the darkness. God’s promise to those in exile was this:

To provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. (Isaiah 61:3)

If we embrace this promise to point to our fullest eschatological fulfillment, now present in the resurrection of Jesus and implanted in our hearts, we then hold by faith a hope that remakes today. The most imaginative portrait of hope is our resurrected Christ, who demonstrates that even death is no longer the most definitive end. This is hope that reaches even beyond our imagination. This is the gift that allows us to embrace hope with confident, joyful sobriety, holding fiercely to hope’s ultimate fulfillment while living each day between what is and what is not yet.

de la esperanza Cristiana.

Esta esperanza tiene un calibre diferente de aquella esperanza que ofrece una solución clara e inmediata de cara a la dificultad. Esta es la esperanza que “no nos soltará” - no importa lo que suceda, a pesar de nuestra falta de esperanza. Y aunque la causa de nuestra pérdida o la profundidad de las tinieblas talvez no desaparezcan, en Cristo, descubrimos que la esperanza tiene la última palabra y no el sufrimiento. Estas buenas nuevas son palpables y transformadoras - casi un alivio - en medio de la espera.

Pienso como el día se les hace largo a mis amigos quienes han perdido a una hija o a su pareja por suicidio, por adicción, por guerra or por un accidente. El dolor diario de sus

corazones que latirán irregularmente el resto de sus vidas. La esperanza Cristiana puede apaciguar este dolor, pero no lo elimina. Sin embargo, el pulso de su corazón es testigo de otro Corazón que se une a ellos con un ritmo único. En Cristo, la pena y el dolor caben dentro de una esperanza que es todavía más grande y más profunda que las tinieblas. La promesa de Dios hacia aquellos en el exilio fue la siguiente:

a ordenar que a los afligidos de Sión se les dé esplendor en lugar de ceniza, aceite de gozo en lugar de luto, manto de alegría en lugar del espíritu angustiado. Serán llamados “Árboles de justicia”, “Plantío de Jehová”, para gloria suya (Isaías 61:3)

Si abrazamos esta promesa para que apunte hacia la realización escatológica, la cual está ahora presente en la resurrección de Jesús y ha sido implantada en nuestros corazones, entonces nos sujetamos por fe a una esperanza que transforma nuestro presente. El retrato más imaginativo de la esperanza es nuestro Cristo resucitado, quien demuestra que aun la muerte no tiene un final definitivo. Este es el tipo de esperanza que alcanza más allá de nuestra imaginación. Este es el regalo que nos permite abrazar la esperanza con una solemnidad confiada y gozosa, sujetándose ferozmente a la realización última de la esperanza, aun mientras vivimos hoy en día entre lo que es y lo que todavía no se ha realizado.

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“무릇 시온에서 슬퍼하는 자에게 화관을 주어 그 재를 대신하며 기쁨의 기쁨으로 그 슬픔을 대신하며 찬송의 옷으로 그 근심을 대신하시고 그들이 의의 나무 곧 여호와께서 심으신 그 영광을 나타낼 자라 일컬음을 받게 하려 하심이라 (이사야 61:3)”

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도래하였으나 아직 온전히 성취되지 않은 하루하루를 사는 동안 소망의 궁극적인 성취를 굳건히 붙들고 자신감과 기쁨이 넘치는 맑은 정신으로 소망을 품게 하는 선물입니다.



SHADOWS

by Dea Jenkins

I stood on tiptoe
searching across the distance
past insurmountable obstacles
knowing you would be on the other side

Knowing your eyes would meet mine
I glimpsed a future glorious
My face bright with delight
I looked to see if you saw it too

But your eyes clouded over
and shadows passed between us
So, I stepped into darkness
weary of cliffs

I couldn't find you anymore

I turned, only to see your outstretched hand
and for a moment . . .
I thought you would push me
off that steep edge into a never ending abyss

Frozen we stand
my eyes searching yours
your hand ever wavering between

Life
Death
Love
Despair

✚ Shadows by Dea Jenkins. Watercolor on paper, 12" x 12", 2018. Find details about the artist on p. 3, and more of her artwork and poetry on pp. 74–75 and 98–99.

WE TREAT THEM WITH DIGNITY

Ezer Kang learns on repeated trips to a medical clinic in Delhi, India, about choosing embrace over moral disgust

Written by **AVRIL Z. SPEAKS**
Photographed by **NATE HARRISON**



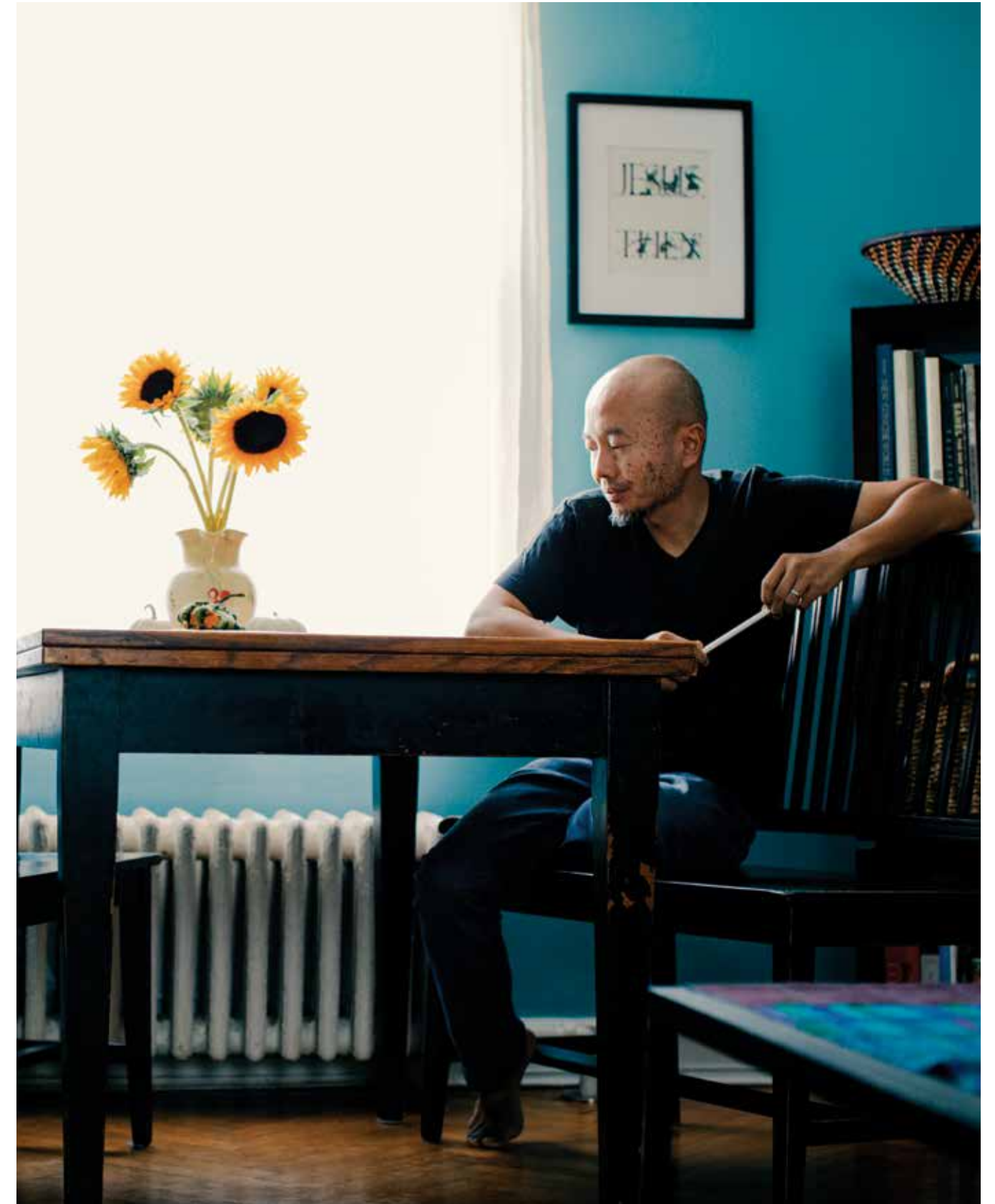


FOR SEVERAL YEARS now, Ezer Kang (PhD '99) has been studying people suffering from both poverty and HIV around the world. More specifically, the associate professor of psychology at Howard University in Washington, DC has investigated how community interactions in the context of poverty influence the mental and physical well-being of people living with HIV. His research has led him to places such as Rwanda to work with survivors and perpetrators of the 1994 genocide, and to Nigeria to study accessible mental health treatment for children and adolescents. An unexpected result of Ezer's work has been an increased awareness of the current divide between the American church and the LGBTQ community. That division was made abundantly clear for him in a surprising place: a medical clinic in Delhi, India, called Shalom.

Ezer started partnering with Shalom after visiting the clinic in 2011, when he watched how the team there serves people living with HIV. Central to the mission of Shalom is a commitment to provide preferred, dignity-bestowing treatment to members of society who are vulnerable to marginalization, following the example of Jesus. He was so impressed and moved by their work that he began to collaborate with them on substantial research projects: creating a mental health

program that can be facilitated by community health workers; developing ways for parents to tell children about their HIV status in a careful, systematic, and sensitive manner; and improving mental health among HIV-positive women by improving their economic life, thus alleviating depression. Dr. Savita Duomai, the director of Shalom, and her team then piloted a program called Kiran, which trains women with HIV in a trade. They also created a program to examine how hijras and kotis—both sexual minorities in India—wrestle with gender stigma, HIV stigma, and poverty, in order to test the theory that the more stigma a person has to deal with, the more challenging life is.

While Ezer continued to be inspired by the clinic's outreach, he soon discovered that not everyone recognized the work of Shalom as a form of Christian mission. He approached different churches and Christian individuals in the US about supporting Shalom, but they were wary about the clinic's work with transgender people. "This surprised, confused, and—frankly—angered me," says Ezer, because it was Shalom's "high regard for the gospel" that led to both their traditional views of gender and their serving transgender people with HIV. The Shalom team simply saw it as their duty to work with HIV patients who came into their clinic in need of care



because they weren't being cared for in government hospitals. "As a faith-based clinic they feel the need to treat them with compassion regardless of who they are, just like the Gospels instruct," Ezer says. Considering that, and thinking about the hesitation of the Christians he sought to support the work, he was left to wonder, "What was the tension?"

Fueled by his curiosity and his anger about the reaction of those churches, Ezer decided to write an article entitled "Conservative Protestants and Engagement with Sexual Minorities Living with HIV: The Role of Disgust and Recategorizing Contact," which was published in the *Journal of Mental Health, Religion and Culture* (2019). "I came across the idea of moral contamination," Ezer says of his research for the article. "It's this idea that, similar to sexual disease, where you are afraid of catching a virus or being infected by another person, there's this fear of moral contamination—that through proximity, you might catch what they have." His effort to explain the idea of moral contamination led him to the construct of disgust. "The other person disgusts you for some reason and because of that, you are afraid to be in contact with the person, to be near the person," he says. "Because if you are in contact with the person, they will contaminate you—not physically but morally." Putting it in the context of Shalom's work, he continues, "Simply treating or being close to a transgender person, a hijra or koti, will infect your theology; it will make you lean left." Ezer finds that this assumption also shows up in his daily work, as many people assume he holds a certain position on sexuality because of his work with persons living with HIV. "It's a very reflexive emotion that's intuitive, but it doesn't make sense at all."

Writing the article was cathartic for Ezer because it gave language to what made him so angry. It also triggered something: "In many ways," he says, "I'm just as culpable of what I'm critiquing certain conservative Christians on, because I can just as easily regard them with disgust because of our different views." In the US we can get away with distance, he points out, wondering what it might be like if he intentionally attended a church that held views less aligned with his on particular issues. "I don't have to agree with them theologically, but perhaps I would distance myself less," Ezer imagines. "I would be more willing to listen to viewpoints that are not my own. I would perhaps be willing to genuinely have my mind changed through relationships."

Through his research, Ezer observed that some conservative Protestants have certain reactions to sexual minorities not necessarily based on doctrinal issues but based on the knee-jerk response of disgust. But for the Shalom workers, consistent interactions with their clients challenged them, serving as a reminder that the core of the gospel message is to embrace others as Jesus embraced them—period. They struggled a lot in the beginning of the program with hijras and kotis living with HIV because the idea didn't fit into easy categories. But that didn't deter them from wrestling

with the questions, and it didn't stop them from continuing their work. "They really rolled up their sleeves and asked the hard questions. And those questions weren't answered overnight," says Ezer.

Savita, Shalom's director, speaks very openly to the staff about her personal views on faith. She doesn't impose it on anyone, Ezer has observed, and she is open about the things she is wrestling with and identifies the things she holds to be true. Says Ezer about Shalom's approach: "At the end of the day, it always goes back to, we're not sure about X, Y, and Z. But let's remind ourselves of what we are sure of, which is that everyone who is living with HIV who walks through our clinic door, regardless of gender, caste, ethnicity—we treat them with worth and dignity. Everything else is superfluous."

Ezer believes that the measure of success for Shalom is whether or not there is a willingness to engage meaningfully. The work itself allowed the team to deeply engage hijras and kotis, despite their initial uncertainties of how to do so. The more they spoke to their clients, learned about their stories, visited them, ate with them, and prayed with them, there was a "recategorization" of the kotis. When Ezer accompanied workers on home visits, he noticed the houses were very small and proximity was not conceptual, it was literal—and he believes even that was transformative.

While Ezer says he does see Christians in the US serving persons with HIV, he doesn't see many embracing an ideology similar to Shalom. "I just don't feel that discourse in our country regarding sexuality, or any of today's divisive issues, is sustained enough where relationships are transformed," he says. So he keeps returning to Shalom, to catch the vision once again of proximity, embrace, and dignity. "Some people go on retreats to be spiritually renewed," Ezer says. "I visit my friends at Shalom to be spiritually rejuvenated." Serving at the clinic has been a breath of fresh air for Ezer as he has observed the workers' ability to embrace people, whoever they are. It has become a beautiful marriage of Ezer's academic research and his understanding of faith.

"Here in the West, we live in such segregated communities, and disgust, when it emerges, won't change unless there is meaningful interaction and contact," he says. "I'm not talking about interacting once or twice a year at Thanksgiving or Christmas. I'm talking about continual, intentional engagement—the kind that doesn't naturally occur. And I'm wondering if a community goes through that process, if that disgust will somehow be turned on its head."

Reiterating that the opposite of disgust is embrace—a certain type of embrace that results from being close to someone—Ezer says, "Embrace doesn't merely require a person's views to change, it requires a person themselves to change." ■

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A Home with Heart

Cara Vezeau learns about disability, inclusion, and community with her friends at L'Arche Wavecrest

Written by **JEROME BLANCO**

Photographed by **LINDSEY SHEETS**

“IT’S NO PICNIC having a disability. You’re only too aware that you’re different from everyone else, and not everyone is very accepting,” says Cathy to Cara Vezeau (MAICS ’17) as the two speak about Cathy’s experiences while having tea in their shared kitchen. Cara is a live-in resident at L’Arche Wavecrest, where she shares the load of everyday tasks around the house and spends relational time with core members like Cathy. “Core” comes from the French *coeur*, meaning heart, emphasizing that life here revolves around these members of the community.

L’Arche Wavecrest is one of over 150 communities like it worldwide under L’Arche International. The organization was birthed in France in 1964 by Catholic philosopher and theologian Jean Vanier, who was deeply distressed by the conditions of French asylums, which hid away people with intellectual disabilities in sordid conditions. Vanier decided to purchase a home and proceeded to invite two men, Raphaël Simi and Philippe Seux, to leave their institutions and live with him there instead. The home was named L’Arche—“The Ark” in English—and became a community for people with and without disabilities learning to live intentionally together. In the decades since, L’Arche has grown into an international movement. And while L’Arche Wavecrest in Orange is currently the only one in the state, plans for other California locations are in the works. Cara has lived in the house since 2018.

“This was not my trajectory,” says Cara, who didn’t plan on studying disability when she chose to attend seminary. “I keep asking myself, ‘How did I get here?’” An Indiana native, Cara came to Fuller because of a passion for international missions, which she still very much holds. Her experiences over the years, however, had her continually confronting the reality of disability, compelling her to think about how disability spoke to her ministry and theology.



✦ Cara with residents Cathy and Chris



Long before she'd known about L'Arche, in the year after graduating from college, Cara found herself back in her hometown looking for work. She landed a position as a special education paraprofessional at her old middle school, while simultaneously working in ministry under Youth for Christ—at the very same school. Cara spent mornings running Youth for Christ clubs and afternoons with her special needs students. It didn't take long for her to feel the gap between the two. "This was my first time really recognizing there was a divide," Cara admits. "One of my special needs students came into our club once. He had autism, and he walked around at the back of the room. I was at the front. No one said hi to him. He sat down and didn't know how to participate. Then he left," she says. "I've always wondered if the atmosphere was too loud and too stimulating. One way or another, the ministry I was doing had no place for him."

Later on, after Cara had spent some time teaching abroad and solidifying her decision to attend seminary to study mission, she returned home to Indiana and had another pivotal moment. She'd begun taking Fuller classes online in preparation for moving to Pasadena and balanced her schedule with another paraprofessional position—this time at an elementary school. In one of her courses, Cara was assigned a paper on "theology in my context," and she decided it would make sense to write about her special needs classroom. "It was so eye-opening for me. It was the first time I'd thought about salvation and what that looks like for someone without words, because most of my students could not verbalize in that way. I was kind of questioning the whole system," she says of the traditional concept of salvation through the recitation of a prayer. How much, Cara wondered, did traditional theologies miss by overlooking people with different levels of cognitive ability?

When she moved to Fuller's Pasadena campus, Cara's classes focused largely on missiology and intercultural studies, but she found herself engaging with issues of disability in her papers and assignments whenever she could. With scholars like Amos Yong and Bethany Fox, Cara says Fuller

was a good place to learn about how disability played a role in every culture and context. As her passion and knowledge around the topic grew, friends began to introduce Cara as a student emphasizing in disability studies. This makes her laugh because, she exclaims, "that isn't even something Fuller offers!"

Yet Cara insists, "This wasn't on my radar as something to focus on." She hadn't so much felt called to an academic study of disability as much as she felt compelled to learn about what it meant to be a Christian alongside the people and community around her. During her time in seminary, she was a member of a church small group in which adults with disabilities were key members. Disability for her was never only a subject on a page.

Cara learned about L'Arche Wavecrest through Fuller's faith and disability student group, when the group hosted a trip to visit the community. She stayed in contact. Later on, when the live-in resident position opened up, Cara applied.

For the most part, Cara's role involves daily tasks for and around the house—grocery shopping, cleaning, and meal prep. She also helps coordinate regular outings and events like their monthly prayer night. But most importantly, she explains that being part of L'Arche comes down to living life together in community.

"An essential part of L'Arche is sitting around the table," she explains. Smiling, she goes on to tell a story of a recent dinner they'd had at the house: "The other day, Cathy finished eating really quickly and went right back to the TV. I said, 'What are you doing? We eat dinner together every day.' And she said, 'I know! Every day!' like she was so tired of it!" Cara laughs and says, "This is what we do."

Cathy, who is very involved in a local arts program, has lived at L'Arche Wavecrest for about 10 years and is one of four current core members. Jazz has been at the house for over six years, and John has been a core member for a little over four. Chris arrived 15 years ago, when the house was founded. Chris's family, Cara notes, relocated from out of state so that he could live here. His Catholic family prioritized faith,



and L'Arche's cornerstone of spirituality was an important draw for them. Cara explains how this dimension of faith shapes L'Arche as a unique place compared to other group homes, as it sincerely positions core members as the heart of the community. This sentiment is evidently felt. Chris says, "I love being here. I plan to stay forever!" And L'Arche is Cathy's "favorite place she's ever lived," according to Cara.

Cara says what she's heard and seen of some other homes can be dreary. And abuse, in various forms, is all too common. Cathy, who lived a few places before coming to L'Arche, says, "When you've lived in several group home situations, you're able to compare things. Like the staff always looked down upon you, and you were less than they were. Those group homes were basically a business rather than a family. Here, they don't look down at you. They don't think they're any better than you are."

Despite L'Arche doing good work to model faith engaging with disability, however, Cara laments that the church as a whole still suffers great deficiencies when it comes to relating to and including people with disabilities. "It feels like the church is behind in thinking about these things," she says. Cara thinks specifically of the rigidity of our expectations when it comes to Sunday mornings and worship services. She asks what it would look like if people were okay with their church programs not going as planned. "Are you okay with—and I'm going to use quotes here—'disruptions'? Are we ready to invite people in who are going to 'ruin' our regular menu of worship?" Cara brings up children with disabilities, for instance, saying, "It's really hard for parents to bring their children in, feeling like it might disrupt the service. I keep using the word 'disrupt,' but it isn't that. We have routines and schedules, but sometimes we just have to say, 'Not today, it's not gonna work today.'"

She recalls the small group she'd had at her previous church, and how they often deviated from their schedule—instead letting the evening revolve around its members with

disabilities. "Sometimes we just did music forever, and they did spontaneous singing or dance. That was very unique and very beautiful." Cara ended up at her current church because of how kindly everybody engaged with the core members when she brought them to visit—"It was so refreshing to see," she says.

Cara admits that difficult situations do come up. She talks about a friend who caused a big stir in the middle of a service once. The way some at the church responded still concerns her. She struggles with what appropriate action looks like when complicated scenarios like that one arise, but she says we cannot form our responses lightly and without being deeply informed.

"Disability is so important for the church to think about," she says, without pushing the onus off of herself to keep learning more: "I've become very passionate about this, but I don't feel very knowledgeable. I don't have a special education degree. I've had experience with some varying diagnoses or different abilities—however you want to say it—but there's so much out there."

Living at L'Arche has been a season of learning for her. And doing life alongside Cathy, Chris, Jazz, and John continues to shape her. Presence itself has power, Cara says. She thinks back on an early memory of when her father was her youth pastor. One of the boys in the group had autism and would often stand at the back of the room, shouting and making noise. "My dad insisted he be there. He said, 'He's going to be in our youth group. He's going to be here and that's important.'"

Cara holds fast to this insistence on presence. "Being inclusive of people. That's it," she says. "That's really all this means. And it touches on every divide you can think of." ■

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LINDSEY SHEETS is a photographer, video editor, and colorist for FULLER studio.



SEEING THEIR TRAUMA

Rick Jackson uses EMDR—eye movement desensitization and reprocessing—therapy to help his clients view their trauma in a new light

As told to **BECKY STILL**
Photographed by **NATE HARRISON**

WHEN I WAS 13 years old, my buddy and I rode a go-cart we'd made down a steep hill in San Francisco, determined to make it to the bottom. Well, that didn't work out for me. When we hit a bump, I flew off that go-cart at top speed and did a face-plant in the road—severely breaking my two front teeth into jagged stubs and scraping up my face something awful. I ran home, looked in the bathroom mirror, and let out a bloodcurdling scream. When my mom rushed in I told her, “I'm not crying because I'm hurt, I'm crying because of the way I look!”

More than 40 years later, as a new therapist, I brought this experience to mind while taking a training class in EMDR—Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing—a type of therapy that can work well for those who have experienced trauma, especially single-incident trauma like mine. EMDR uses a form of rapid eye movement, like what happens when we sleep, perhaps to connect the left and right brain in a way that makes what has been implicit more explicit, helping a person better understand their trauma and move beyond it.

Here's how it works: The client brings their traumatic memory to mind and holds it—noticing the physical and emotional feelings that memory brings, too—as the therapist moves two fingers, or a light, from side to side and has the client follow that back-and-forth movement with their eyes. Or they might use alternating taps or tones. As they're doing this, the client will talk about what's coming to mind for them, and it's amazing what can emerge because of the left brain to right brain processing that's going on. Often feelings and perceptions that have been packed away for years come to the surface, and the client is able to see their trauma in a clearer, healthier way that leads to a rewriting of their story.

That's sure what happened to me in that EMDR training class. As I held that go-cart memory in my mind and followed the other person's fingers back and forth, it was as if a puzzle piece suddenly fell right into my life story. I realized that when I looked in that bathroom mirror as a 13-year-old I told myself, “I am flawed”—and then spent the next few decades pushing against that flawedness by being a perfectionist, by not allowing myself to enjoy a good moment without wondering if I could do it again. It's physical for me: an actual knot in my stomach that keeps coming back. When that piece fit

in I began to weep, because now I fully saw the core of the meaning I'd made in that traumatic moment.

Seeing myself as flawed can still be a part of my story, as it is for so many of the couples and individuals I now see as a therapist. I've worked on rewriting that story for myself—through contemplative and experiential practices, imagery, and breath/body work—so that when my gut tells me, “You're flawed; you don't know what you're doing!” I can take a deep breath and remember that I am participating in the significant work of God. This is the journey I lead my clients through as well: helping them rewrite their stories.

Being a therapist, for me, came later in life. For more than 30 years I was a worship pastor in Texas, where I lived with my family. Once our kids were out of the nest, though, my wife and I had one of those “I don't know if I want to be with you anymore” experiences—which now, as a therapist, I've found are all too common at that stage of life. We had to roll up our sleeves and do some really deep work, but we got through it. And as part of our story-rewriting process, we bought a wedding planning business in Maui, Hawaii!

In Maui I also took on an executive pastor job, found myself doing a lot of pastoral counseling, and discovered over the years that I loved it. My daughter and son-in-law convinced me to apply to Fuller's MS in Marriage and Family Therapy program, but I put things on hold when our church needed me to serve as interim lead pastor for a while. Then, when the new pastor came and spoke about psychology being ineffective because it looks to the past, I realized this would no longer be a place where I could thrive.

Around that same time, my wife and I had lunch with a couple, and I told them all about my passion for counseling and wanting to grow in my studies. Later that day they called me and said, “We've been thinking about what you told us, and we want to cover your expenses to go to Fuller.” They'd had their own positive counseling experience and really valued what I wanted to do. I was stunned by their generosity—that was a \$75,000 lunch!

But when we moved to Fuller, within moments my gut started churning. Here I was in my mid-50s, in a place where many of the professors were younger than me and the students half my age. I loved learning and did well

academically, but couldn't shake the sense that I was way past my time. There was that internal voice again: "You are flawed!" Certain people at Fuller were grounding to me, though. Kenichi Yoshida, the director of academic affairs in the Department of Marriage of Family, in particular was so helpful and gracious. We'd meet for lunch each quarter or so and just talk about life, and he'd help me process the struggles I was working through.

Yet I still often felt that my timing was off as an older Fuller student. When I graduated in 2012, I was privileged to give one of the speeches at Commencement. I felt really good about my speech—I even got a hug from Dr. Mouw! But as soon as I left that auditorium I pulled off my cap and gown, even before I went out to see my family. Instead of being able to celebrate being a graduate, a part of me didn't want to identify as one because that shaming voice told me I was out of season. Now I wish I'd left my cap and gown on a little longer!

Many years later, though, I'm in a good place. I've been a therapist at La Vie Counseling Center in Pasadena for several years and love it. Working through my own feelings of being flawed helps me better understand what many of my clients are experiencing. I do a lot of work with couples, and this is my motto: How we love is what brings us together, but it's how we repair that keeps us together. It's something my wife and I discovered. Over time, many couples move from positive expectations about their relationship to negative expectations—from "we think so much alike" to focusing on the differences. This can shift even further, from negative expectations to negative characterizations: you're selfish, you're an inconsiderate person. That's harder work to get past, and unfortunately some couples come to therapy too late. Probably three-quarters of the couples I see are able to work through a repairing process, and it's so rewarding to see them experience the results of our work together.

When a client has experienced a traumatic event, EMDR often helps them as it did me. One of my clients was in a severe car accident caused by a drunk driver. As he was lying on the ground, injured, he saw the drunk driver walking around as if nothing had gone on. Over time this client developed a paranoia: he'd hold a gun behind his back whenever he

answered his door, because he felt he couldn't trust that people would do what they should do. This became the implicit meaning of that accident for him. Through EMDR, we were able to bring that meaning to a more explicit awareness for him, and it caused a shifting in his psychological and physiological reactions so that he could begin to move beyond his trauma.

What we all need in our human experience is someone else's presence affirming us, a sense of being believed in. To me that's what the integration of psychology and theology is all about. I worked with one client who was going through a deconstruction and reconstruction of his evangelical faith. As he moved through that, he reached out to someone who was an influential part of his past and got a very judgmental response. He read it to me—it was a very harsh letter—yet my client didn't show a bit of emotion as he read it. With permission, I reached over and held his hands, looked into his eyes and said, "Here's what I would write to you instead." As I spoke words of affirmation instead of criticism, we both began to cry. Because someone looked at him eye to eye and said, you're not alone, I'm here with you, it regenerated a feeling for him. We were then able to process this because instead of feeling judged for what he was trying to authentically discover, he felt safe.

These are the experiences that keep me going. They chase away that internal voice telling me I'm flawed and remind me instead that I'm part of the significant work of God. Whether it's using EMDR or another form of therapy, I love being able to journey with people through their experiences, often painful ones, and see them begin on their own to rewrite the meanings they thought were indelible. I can't help anybody forget that something difficult happened; we can't rewrite their history. But over time we might find a different meaning for their story. We journey together from being flawed to being human, and that inspires me. ■

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NORTHEAST OF CAPITOL HILL

Pastors Justin Fung and Delonte Gholston
engage the challenges that face their
communities in Northeast Washington, DC

Written by **AARON DORSEY**
Photographed by **NATE HARRISON**

Alumni Delonte Gholston (MDiv '15) and Justin Fung (DMin '19) are pastors in Northeast DC, their churches just 15 minutes apart. The two meet occasionally to share their experiences pastoring in the nation's capital. While the city is often thought of as a stage for national politics, they focus their ministries first on the lived experiences of their communities and the people that fill them. Because DC does not have voting representation in Congress, they point out, political engagement has certain limitations for many DC residents. However, together with their congregations, they engage their neighborhoods and the political circumstances that face them, such as access to education, gentrification and displacement, and police violence. Here are two stories of pastors whose ministries don't avoid politics—rather, their political engagement is from the ground up. It begins with the streets, schools, homes, and people that make up their communities.

ON THE EVENING of September 27, 2019, the DC Peace Walk was scheduled in a Washington, DC neighborhood that had recently received notice that their homes would be torn down. As dusk fell, friends and neighbors sat outside talking with one another as kids ran around and climbed on the jungle gym at the neighborhood playground. While they played, a police SUV drove back and forth on the street, bright white lights shining from its roof onto friends gathered and into their living rooms—a constant traumatizing reminder of violence. Before officially beginning the peace walk, which would be a time to meet neighbors and share job and health resources, Delonte

Gholston, known in his community as Pastor Delonte, lifted his hands and prayed: “We’re here because of a collective trauma. We’re all survivors of violence in some way. We’re here to say no to violence. We’re here to say yes to love.”
Saying Pastor Delonte grew up in DC may give the wrong impression if it leads to imagining large white monuments and people in suits chauffeured in motorcades with tinted windows. Those images of the nation’s power do not represent Northeast DC, where Delonte now pastors, a predominantly Black area of the city 15 minutes east of the US Capitol Building. The tightly packed rows of two-story brick houses and apartments are full

of families and friends, the neighborhood alive with people walking, talking, and living. But conspicuously missing are the grocery stores, restaurants, and businesses that mark the wealth and resources pooled into other DC neighborhoods down the road.
Pastor Delonte was raised in Northwest DC by parents who fled the racist terrorism of the deeper South and lived in a city that still felt the warmth of the civil rights era fire. “You know, I grew up when Marion Barry was the mayor, almost my whole childhood—the former chair of SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee]. Our shadow-elected congressman was

DELONTE



JUSTIN

AT NOON ON Sunday, pastor Justin Fung leads the voices of his church in a final chorus. As the last chords are strummed, a new rhythm takes its place. Bodies all over the room begin to move chairs, fold curtains, and wrap cables. In a few moments, the place where Justin and his congregation gathered for the cup and bread becomes once again the place where children will gather for lunch on Monday. Christ City Church, where Justin serves as a pastor, meets at Miner Elementary School, a predominantly Black public school in Washington, DC’s H Street Corridor.
While walking through the streets, passing brightly colored brick buildings, each with its own stoop and porch, Justin has

grown comfortable retelling the story he has heard about the neighborhood. The H Street Corridor was devastated by the 1968 riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. “Just a few years ago, you could still see the burn marks on the buildings,” he says. “But they’re being painted over now.” H Street, which is now known for its trendy restaurants and designer shops, has been on the front end of rapid change and gentrification in Northeast DC.
Justin was part of the team that planted Christ City Church, originally a parish of The District Church, in this neighborhood in 2013. Learning to be a good neighbor in a community threatened by change and displacement is an essential concern

for Justin as a pastor, whose congregation is made up of both native Washingtonians and transplants. “It’s one of the ways we’re wrestling now,” he says. “We’re predominantly transplants, we’re predominantly middle class with resources to move and all that.” The question is, he says, “How do we become a multiclass church? How do we wrestle with gentrification and our place in that?”
While they’re trying to understand their place in the neighborhood, Justin’s church is also debating its own theological identity, navigating LGBTQ conversations. “We got tired of seeing queer folk walking away because they didn’t feel like they could stay,” he says. “But we’re also a community that

DELONTE

Walter Fauntroy, the man who helped to organize the March on Washington.”

As a child, Delonte learned from the leaders of the civil rights movement, even performing their speeches under the eye of the pastor-activists who helped lead the movement. “When I was six years old, I was memorizing King speeches. My dad was really into King and X. He would have me listening to vinyls and I would memorize them.” Pastor Delonte remembers that, the second year that Martin Luther King’s birthday was celebrated as a holiday, “All the Black churches around the city were trying to figure out what to do. So they had a bunch of us do

different things and I did my King speech. And then somebody else there was like, ‘You should do that speech at this other thing.’ So I did my speech at Israel Baptist Church, which is a big church in Northeast DC. And Wyatt Tee Walker was there, who was Dr. King’s correspondence secretary—was like his right-hand man. I’ll never forget it.”

At the same time, DC was experiencing turmoil. The arrival of crack cocaine, increased police surveillance and harassment, and violence all came as a package in the ’80s for many Black communities, including those in the nation’s capital. “Growing up in this city, the power of the nation has always been

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JUSTIN

is theologically diverse. We’re trying to pursue unity in Christ, not uniformity, while also centering the marginalized—in this case that is folks who identify as queer.” Christ City Church, like many churches, is full of competing identities and visions. It is forming its identity as a transplant in a new space.

When you ask Justin about how to pastor a church that is trying to understand itself and its place in a foreign land, he starts with himself and his experiences of migration, having been born and raised in Hong Kong. Living in LA and DC—a city that embodies a Black-White binary with large Black and White populations but very few Asians and Asian Americans—propelled him to ask new questions about the world he entered

and about himself in that space. “Starting at Fuller was my first time living in the US. I remember arriving here, hearing the stories of friends of color—about this thing called race. It was a whole new world that I had to figure out and research,” he says. Figuring out the undercurrents of a culture have become second nature to him. “After moving around a bunch, my inclination is always to listen first. Learn the history, the lay of the land, and what’s going on underneath the surface.”

For Justin, there is another layer of complexity when it comes to his experiences “transplanting” in the US. “I have to navigate my own identity as Asian American and learn the history of Asians in America,” he says. “We are people of color,

but we don’t fit in the Black-White binary. We have experienced indentured servitude, we’ve been exploited, we’ve been otherized.”

“Every Asian American has had the question asked of them, ‘But where are you really from?’ And for me, yeah, I was born in Hong Kong, I can answer that question in a way that they’re expecting me to,” says Justin. “But it still adds to a lack of settledness. Not just do I belong here, but where do I belong, period?”

Justin remembers a conversation he had more than a year ago with Kathy Khang, a Korean American author. “How do I navigate this?” he asked her. “I don’t feel like I fit in the box.

I was born an American citizen, but I didn’t live here until I was 23. My parents moved back to Hong Kong from the US. I don’t know what box I fit into.” Kathy told him, “The journey is part of the process—learning to share where you’re at right now, not expecting yourself to have it all together.” Justin reflected on that advice. “It’s hard to acknowledge that I might not have it together,” he admits. “Because then you’re like, should I even share? Should I even share where I’m at? But at the same time, we’re always functioning from imperfection and incompleteness.”

“So I’m always figuring out ‘who am I and what’s my space?’” he says. “What’s the place for my voice and what’s the

centered here, but the resources of the nation have never made their way here.”

Even though Pastor Delonte felt that church provided a sanctuary for him through his childhood, it did not stop him from experiencing the trauma happening in the neighborhood. “I still saw everything everybody else saw, still heard everything everybody else heard. Still saw people bleed out. I mean, I have tons of friends who have been killed. Still pulled over by police, harassed. For different things like having an air freshener hanging from my mirror, being pulled over because it’s an obstruction to my view.”

A tradition and memory of Black church resistance, along with a community burdened by violence, led Pastor Delonte to search for prophetic fire—the fire that led the church of the 1960s to resist the political realities crushing the marginalized. To him, even churches with histories of political resistance seemed to have lost the fire. “I guess it’s just been a lifelong kind of query, or a lifelong quest—what happened to the prophetic fire? What happened to Wyatt Tee Walker’s fire? What happened to that generation’s fire?”

“As a Progressive National Baptist, I really felt like that was where I was coming from,” says Pastor Delonte. “But I didn’t

really see as much of that on the ground. And it wasn’t until I went into the belly of the beast at Fuller that I learned the roots of our own white supremacist theology.” As a student studying the white Euro-American traditions of theology that provide the foundation of evangelicalism, he says he began to realize, “So this is where we get this problematic theology from.”

The search for the Spirit, for the fire of the civil rights movement, led Pastor Delonte into the Black Lives Matter movement. A turning point came for him one day during a demonstration outside of Los Angeles City Hall. “A few of us had been showing up in BLM spaces for quite a while. People

knew we were pastors and somebody asked me if I sang,” he remembers. He brought out his guitar and asked, “Does anybody know ‘There’s Power in the Name of Jesus?’ This sister who hadn’t been in church in over a year said, ‘Oh yeah! That’s my song!’ And this brother named Amari, he said, ‘Oh I love that song! That’s my song!’ And Amari is Black, experiencing homelessness in downtown LA, and a strong believer. He followed the Spirit where it led him. And we followed the Spirit where it led. And we were together outside the city hall. And we just sang, ‘There’s power in the name of Jesus to break every chain.’ And that’s where I discovered, I realized—oh my



place that I have to listen? What’s the place I have to step up and engage? All of that has shaped and formed who I am as a pastor now.”

Justin guides his church through those same questions that come from his own story. As a transnational Asian American with experience processing his identity in LA and, for the past 10 years, in Washington, DC, Justin hopes to lead his church of transplants and locals in learning who they are together in the Black and gentrifying H Street Corridor—when should the church raise its voice, when should it listen, and how should it engage? Justin leads his church to listen honestly to itself and to the neighborhood. This is reflected in the collaborative nature

of Christ City Church, as Justin considers himself part of a team there—pastors, elders, staff, leaders, and congregants, all committed to living out the gospel in their city. “We don’t have an attitude of showing up with solutions. We’re asking folks how we can help.”

Schools are often a hub of neighborhood life, and as H Street experiences the intense shifts of gentrification, Christ City Church has found its place by supporting a local public school and its families. The church has been meeting at Miner Elementary for six years, and by now, Justin says, “The administration and the Parent-Teacher Organization know that if they ask for something, we show up.” One example is providing

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childcare for PTO meetings once a month. “On the surface, you might think we’re just caring for babies,” he says. “But it’s huge. It allows for more parents to be involved in the lives of their kids.” The community itself vocalized the need for childcare, without which parents with fewer resources may not be able to be involved in the education of their children, and Justin’s church took a posture of listening and then responding to those needs.

Listening to stories is what propels Justin to take up challenging topics. “It’s not like I’m thinking, ‘What’s the next most controversial thing that we can address right now?’” No matter the topic, the impetus is conversation. For example,

goodness, these are our people.”

Pastor Delonte was able to recognize the Spirit and the Spirit’s people on the street because of the prophets of the Old Testament. “I guess that was one of the gifts of John Goldingay’s class,” he says. “He didn’t have us read a whole bunch of people; he just had us read the prophets. And what really struck me about the prophets was that many, many prophets were really outside the temple courts. Many kings really just wanted to hear from good-news prophets.”

Reflecting on that element of prophetic history in the Old Testament, Pastor Delonte sees a similar pattern today. “When it comes to the movement for Black lives,” he says, “what I

learned is that the answer to my question of, ‘What happened to the Spirit of the movement?’ was that it jumped over the church because the church wasn’t willing to continue to be part of it.”

When Pastor Delonte and his family moved back home to DC to pastor Peace Fellowship Church, he knew to search for the Spirit and the Spirit’s people on the streets. Every other week over the summer, Peace Fellowship Church, along with other local churches, met on the streets to walk, to meet neighbors, and to build peace by providing information on job and health services. These were gatherings of God’s people on the streets, a testimony of peace in neighborhoods that suffer what seems

to be endless violence.

At the Peace Walk on September 27, Pastor Delonte approached the police vehicle that had been patrolling the area, shining bright lights onto the people after dark, and asked the officers to consider how their surveilling presence might retraumatize the community. Advocating and caring for the community, Delonte serves as a pastor on the street, and all those who join the DC Peace Walks also pastor on the streets as they talk with neighbors, attending to their needs.

The search for the Spirit, the search for the fire, led Pastor Delonte to the streets, where he found the Spirit already interacting with the community, attending to its daily realities

and caring for its trauma. What he learned from the Old Testament prophets, and from his work in LA, continues to give direction to his ministry in DC as a pastor of the streets. “What does Genesis chapter 4 say? Genesis chapter 4 says that when Abel was killed, that the blood cried out from the ground,” he says. “The streets are sacred. Where blood is shed is sacred ground.” ■



Justin says, “I grew up in a setting where heterosexual marriage was just presumed to be normative. But then so many folks came out to me during my first two years of ministry. I didn’t know what to do but listen.” That listening challenged his own theological constructs. “We have those constructs, concepts of black and white, this is right or wrong, until reality challenges them and then we have to wrestle with, ‘Does this fit what I thought?’”

The elders at Christ City Church mimic the same process of listening to work through their theological identity. “Our elders went through a process of reading, talking, sharing stories, and praying. Because nobody wants to draw a line in the sand

that means one of our friends is walking out the door.” While listening is essential, Justin also believes that more is needed. He says, “We’re balancing the care we want to have with the conversation with pastoral urgency. This is not a theoretical conversation. There are people who are like, ‘I’m just sitting around waiting to see if you will acknowledge my humanity, and my personhood, and my relationship.’”

“I don’t want a theology that can’t handle reality,” Justin says. “I don’t believe that’s what Jesus came to do. The kingdom Jesus inaugurated engaged real-life and real-world problems. So whenever I become aware of something in the world, I chase it down and allow my theology and my

understanding of how God works to be shaped by what I see—as opposed to this abstract box that you try to cram everything into to make it fit. Then the stuff that doesn’t fit you pretend doesn’t exist.” Justin, being wholeheartedly committed to the gospel that is good news for the poor and marginalized, isn’t afraid of where reality will take him or his church.

For now, every Sunday Justin and Christ City Church will gather in the cafeteria of a local school in a changing neighborhood as a congregation trying to find its way, and finding the courage to listen and to share a story that hasn’t ended yet. “You gotta figure out who you are and what God is calling you to. It would be easier for me to look at other churches and be like, ‘I

wish we were where they are’ in terms of organizing and being out in the neighborhood. Maybe we’ll get there,” he says. “But you give thanks for where you are and you continue to pray for grace to keep moving to where you need to go.” ■

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IMAGINING HOPE IN THE MIDST OF PAIN

by Scott Cormode
Guest Theology Editor

Hope in the midst of pain. We Christians can have a hard time holding the two—hope and pain—together. Our discussions of hope often skip past the reality of pain. And our thoughts about pain are often surprisingly unspecific about the sources of Christian hope. Each author in this section was given a similar assignment: Start with a specific source of pain—especially one rooted in a communal context that they knew well. Then, think of specific sources of hope that take seriously the reality of that pain.

The gospel is God’s response to the human condition. It is God’s imaginative response to our shared story of longing and loss, and that gospel is what turns our common experience into a shared

IMAGINANDO LA ESPERANZA EN MEDIO DEL DOLOR

por Scott Cormode

Esperanza en medio del dolor. Los cristianos podemos tener dificultades para mantener a los dos, esperanza y dolor, juntos. Nuestras discusiones sobre la esperanza a menudo pasan por alto la realidad del dolor. Y nuestros pensamientos sobre el dolor a menudo son sorprendentemente inespecíficos en cuanto a las fuentes de la esperanza cristiana. A cada autor en esta sección se le asignó una tarea similar: comenzar con una fuente específica de dolor, especialmente una enraizada en un contexto comunitario que ellos(ellas) conocieran bien. Luego, pensar en fuentes específicas de esperanza que tomen en serio la realidad de ese dolor. El evangelio es la respuesta de Dios a la condición humana. Es la respuesta de Dios a nuestras historias, las cuales comparten anhelo y pérdida, y ese evangelio es lo que convierte nuestra experiencia común en una historia comunitaria de esperanza futura.

고통 중에 소망을 꿈꾸다

스캇 코모드 (Scott Cormode)

고통 중의 소망. 우리 그리스도인들은 이 두 가지—소망과 고통—을 동시에 가지는 것에 어려움을 느낄 수 있습니다. 소망에 대한 논의에서 우리는 종종 고통스러운 현실을 빼놓곤 합니다. 그리고 우리의 고통에 대한 생각이 놀랍게도 많은 경우에 그리스도인의 소망의 근원에 대하여 구체적이지 않습니다. 이 섹션의 각 저자에게는 비슷한 주제가 주어졌습니다: 특정한 고통의 근원—특히 잘 알고 있는 공동의 맥락에 기반한 것—으로부터 시작할 것, 그 다음 그 고통의 현실을 진지하게 받아들일 수 있는 구체적인 소망의 근원들을 생각해 볼 것 이었습니다.

복음은 인간의 상태에 대한 하나님의 반응입니다. 그것은 우리 모두의 갈망과 상실의 이야기에 대한 하나님의 창의적인 반응이며, 그 복음은 우리의 일상적인 경험을 미래 소망의 공유된 이야기로 바꾸는 것입니다.

story of future hope. We in the church tend to think that the human condition is simply about the need for forgiveness—as if being forgiven will remove the longings and losses that make being human so complicated. But even after redemption, we long for the healing of all creation, and we still suffer losses because creation remains (for now) tainted with sin. Those longings and losses permeate our lives. They define us. They are what it means to be human.

That is why Jesus came to live among us—to experience what it meant to be human. He came to literally inhabit our story. The Book of Hebrews describes Jesus as our mediator and high priest who stands between God and humanity. But he is not just

En la iglesia, tendemos a pensar que la condición humana se trata simplemente de la necesidad del perdón, como si ser perdonado(a) eliminara los anhelos y las pérdidas que hacen que ser humano sea tan complicado.

Pero incluso después de la redención, anhelamos la sanidad de toda la creación y aún sufrimos pérdidas porque la creación permanece (por ahora) contaminada con el pecado. Esos anhelos y pérdidas impregnan nuestras vidas. Ellos nos definen. Son lo que significa ser humano. Es por eso que Jesús vino a vivir entre nosotros, para experimentar lo que significa ser humano. Él vino a habitar literalmente nuestra historia. El libro de Hebreos describe a Jesús como nuestro Mediador y Sumo Sacerdote que se interpone entre Dios y la humanidad. Pero él no es solo un Sumo Sacer-

교회 안에서의 우리는 인간의 상태가 단순히 용서를 필요로 하는 상태라고 생각하는 경향이 있습니다—마치 용서를 받는 것이 인간됨을 복잡하게 만드는 갈망과 상실을 완전히 없애주는 것처럼 말입니다. 그러나 구속 이후에도 우리는 여전히 모든 피조물의 치유를 갈망하고 있으며, 또한 피조물이 (현재로서는) 죄로 물들어 있는 상태이기 때문에 우리는 여전히 상실로 인해 고통받고 있습니다. 이러한 갈망과 상실은 우리 삶에 스며들어 있습니다. 그것들이 우리를 정의하며, 우리가 인간임을 보여줍니다.

그것이 바로 예수님이 우리들과 함께 이 땅에 거하신 이유입니다—인간으로 살아간다는 것이 무슨 의미인지 경험하기 위해서 말입니다. 문자 그대로 그분은 우리의 이야기를 살아내기 위하여 오셨습니다. 히브리서는 예수님을 하나님과 인간의 사이에 있는 우리의 중재자이시며

a high priest. He is a high priest who knows our weaknesses (Heb 4). He too lay awake at night, burdened by the longings and the losses of what it means to be human. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us to experience the depth of longing and the agony of loss—to understand people by being a person. Then, he created a way for us to imagine hope in the midst of our pain by dying and rising again.

As you read these articles, perhaps you can experience empathy for those who describe a pain you have never faced. And perhaps you can find hope in the articles that describe a pain you may know all too well. We proclaim the gospel because it allows us to imagine a godly hope in the midst of human pain.

dote. Es un Sumo Sacerdote que conoce nuestras debilidades (Heb 4). Él también permaneció despierto por la noche, agobiado por los anhelos y las pérdidas de lo que significa ser humano. La Palabra se hizo carne y habitó entre nosotros para experimentar la profundidad del anhelo y la agonía de la pérdida, para comprender a las personas al ser una persona. Luego, creó una forma de imaginar esperanza en medio de nuestro dolor al morir y resucitar.

Al leer estos artículos, quizás pueda experimentar empatía por aquellos(as) que describen un dolor que usted nunca ha enfrentado. Y tal vez pueda encontrar esperanza en los artículos que describen un dolor que usted conoce muy bien. Proclamamos el evangelio porque nos permite imaginar una esperanza piadosa en medio del dolor humano.

대제사장이라고 묘사합니다. 그러나 그분은 그저 대제사장이 아닙니다. 그분은 우리의 연약함을 아시는 대제사장이십니다. (히브리서 4장) 그분 역시 인간이 됨으로서 가지는 갈망과 상실에 대한 부담감으로 밤잠을 이루지 못하셨습니다. 갈망의 깊이와 상실의 고통을 경험하시기 위해, 또 친히 육신의 몸이 되시어 우리들을 이해하시기 위해 그 말씀이 육신이 되고 우리 가운데 거하셨습니다. 그 후 죽으심과 부활하심으로 고통 가운데 우리가 소망을 상상할 수 있는 길을 만들어주셨습니다.

이 글들을 읽으면서, 당신은 당신이 한 번도 경험해보지 못한 고통을 묘사하는 이들에 대한 공감을 경험할 수 있을 것입니다. 그리고 아마 당신 스스로가 너무나 잘 알고 있는 고통에 대해 서술한 기사에서 소망을 찾을 수도 있을 것입니다. 우리가 복음을 선포하는 이유는, 복음이 우리로 하여금 인간의 고통 안에서도 경건한 소망을 꿈꾸게 하기 때문입니다.



Scott Cormode

A SHARED STORY OF FUTURE HOPE

Scott Cormode is Hugh De Pree Professor of Leadership Development at Fuller, and previously also served as academic dean and as director of innovation. He founded the Academy of Religious Leadership, an organization for professors who teach leadership in seminaries, and its *Journal of Religious Leadership*. Author of the book *Making Spiritual Sense: Theological Interpretation as Christian Leadership*, Cormode has also published numerous articles on leadership, organization, and technology. He maintains case studies and other resources at leadership.fuller.edu, a website for developing Christian leaders.

The church as we know it is calibrated for a world that no longer exists.

Almost everything about the current experience of church was established in a bygone era: the way we worship, the passages of Scripture we cherish, and who we expect to see. The basic contours of church have not changed, even as the world has been transformed. The church as we know it is calibrated for a world that no longer exists.

Erica knows this all too well. In 2018, she brought her youth ministry team from Florida to Fuller for an “innovation summit.”¹ Erica came to the summit with a problem she was trying to solve: Her young people were looking to the church for help, she said, in “navigating their way toward hope and joy in a world of suffering.” But the old ways of doing church emphasized following rules rather than dealing with pain. As she listened to her middle-schoolers (and their parents), Erica could see that young people today are far more anxious, busy, and stressed than they were in the past. The old ways of being church are not calibrated to speak to the new (and painful) circumstances.

A changed world demands innovation, and a changed religious world demands Christian innovation. But there is a problem. Most of the literature on innovation assumes that the best innovations will tear down the past and replace it with something better, in the same way that the iPhone camera destroyed Kodak and Amazon replaced Borders bookstores. The best way to innovate, they want us to believe, is to abandon the past. “Burn the boats,” they say. “Cut the ties to the past.” But we Christians cannot abandon the past. We are inextricably—and happily—bound to the past. We will never stop reading Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, we will never stop

loving our neighbor as ourselves, and we will never stop saying, “Jesus is Lord.” Christian innovation cannot abandon the past.

So the question of Christian innovation comes into focus. How do we Christians innovate when our credibility depends on continuity with the past and honoring tradition? Or to put it another way: How do we maintain a rock-solid commitment to the unchanging Christian gospel while at the same time creating innovative ways to express that faith in an ever-changing culture? This is why Erica came to an innovation summit at Fuller. She wanted a way to do ministry that took seriously her middle-schoolers’ experience of pain and one that encouraged them, in the midst of that pain, to be what she called “people of compassion and empathy.”

As Erica worked through the process of innovation, she answered five questions. The first three questions helped her stay connected to the ever-changing experience of her people, and the final two questions helped her construct a response that is anchored in the never-changing gospel. Allow me to list the questions and then to show how they helped Erica create an innovative way to bring the gospel to her people.²

1. Who are the **people entrusted to your care**?
2. How do those people experience the **longings and losses** that make up the human condition?
3. What **Big Lie** do your people believe that prevents them from hearing the gospel?
4. How do you **make spiritual sense** of those longings and losses?

Q5. How do you express that spiritual meaning as a **shared story of future hope**?

Let us consider each question, along with Erica’s responses. Together, these questions allowed her to create a shared story of future hope to make spiritual sense of the longings and losses of the people entrusted to her care. And that is Christian innovation.

1. WHO ARE THE PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO YOUR CARE? Christian leaders do not have “followers”—only Jesus has followers. Instead, Christian leaders have people entrusted to their care. There are three theological reasons for recasting the mental model of leadership to be about “a people entrusted to your care.” First, it emphasizes God’s role as the one doing the entrusting. Second, it emphasizes that we are stewards of people who already belong to God. And third, it says that the measure of good work is not my intentions, but is instead the effect my work has on the people entrusted to my care.

How, then, should we understand Christian leadership? One short verse of the Bible summarizes Christian leadership. The church in Corinth was founded amidst turmoil and even dissent. And, at that fractured founding, Paul “planted; Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (1 Cor 3:6). In Christian leadership, God’s action is the decisive work. Paul and Apollos tended the Corinthian crops, but God made them grow. The distinction is important because the work of Christian leadership is planting and watering.

My grandfather was a citrus farmer for an absent landlord (what the Bible calls a “steward”); he recognized that the trees did not belong to him and that his labor would be measured by the fruit his trees produced.

He stood between the owner and the trees. In the same way, a Christian leader recognizes that God may have called Paul to plant and Apollos to water, but the Corinthians were not Paul’s people nor were they Apollos’s people. The people belong to God and it is God who gives the increase. This has serious implications for how we understand the practice of vocation. God calls leaders not to a task but to a people.

Erica came to Fuller with a clear sense of whom she was called to serve. Her first responsibility was to her youth group, especially the large percentage of middle-schoolers. After that, she would recognize an additional responsibility to the teens’ parents and to the congregation as a whole. But, from the start, Erica was called to the middle-schoolers entrusted to her care.

2. HOW DO THOSE PEOPLE EXPERIENCE THE LONGINGS AND LOSSES THAT MAKE UP THE HUMAN CONDITION? Leadership begins with listening.³ The greatest act of leadership began with the greatest act of listening, when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Every time God entrusts a new person to my care, I have to begin by listening because, before I can invite a person into a story, I have to understand that person’s story. I have to understand what matters most to them—what stories define them. Only then will I be able to invite them into a gospel story that gives them hope. Otherwise, I am just treating them as a stereotype.

What do we listen for? The sociologist Robert Wuthnow argues that the reason our current crop of congregations is in crisis is that we have been listening for the wrong things.⁴ Most congregations, he says, are too concerned with the culture war issues of

(other people’s) morality and the minutiae of doctrine, paying attention to the small issues of theology that separate Christians rather than the large issues of theology that unite us. Wuthnow does not say that values and beliefs are unimportant; quite the opposite. He says that what we believe is so important that it must be connected to the lives people lead each day.

We need to listen to the issues that matter most to the people entrusted to our care—issues such as work and money or health and family. The way I describe it is this: There is a moment for each person when she lays her head on the pillow at night. She is not yet asleep, and the worries of the day come rushing in upon her. Do you know that moment? That is when the issues that matter most to you jump into your mind. Some are aspirations—things you long for. And some are fears—things you worry you might lose. These are the issues that are so important that they keep a person awake at night. Before we can engage in Christian innovation, we must listen to the people entrusted to our care until we know their stories.

Before Erica came to Pasadena, she engaged her team in a listening project. As they listened to their middle-schoolers, they heard about the things that keep them awake at night: “school stress, fitting in, sports performance, social media, family dysfunction, homework,” as well as what her team came to describe as “sources of worth failures (predicted and experienced).” The listening led them to see their people as anxious, busy, and stressed.

3. WHAT BIG LIE DO YOUR PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT PREVENTS THEM FROM HEARING THE GOSPEL? Longings and losses are such a powerful and indeed overwhelming part of most people’s



lives that we tend to create ways to simply cope with the questions, rather than find ways to actually address the human condition. I learned a lot on this point from a presentation made at the installation of Fuller Seminary's president, Mark Labberton.

When President Labberton was inaugurated, he chose to use the occasion as an opportunity to elevate voices that the seminary would not normally hear (“leadership begins with listening”). He invited speakers from around the globe to speak to the seminary about the needs of the moment from their social location. There were speakers from Africa, Asia, South America, and Europe.

One speaker, Aaron Graham from Washington, DC, was asked to speak from the perspective of an urban church planter. His first point fit nicely with what we have said so far. He said the way to grow a church that can transform a city is to begin by listening to the context—to listen to the lives of the people entrusted to the church's care.⁵ Then he went on to describe what his congregation listened for in the lives of the people who began attending his new church. These were people who were, for the most part, young transplants who had come to Washington as idealistic contributors. In terms of longing and loss, they longed to change the world, but they were experiencing the long hours and heavy burdens of their jobs as a tremendous loss.

At this point in his presentation, Graham introduced a device that he learned from activist and Fuller professor Alexia Salvatierra.⁶ Early in the civil rights movement, the leading organizations sent young people into Southern communities and asked them to listen (yet another example that “leadership begins with listening”). They already knew a lot about the

Southern longing for equality and the loss of rights, so they asked their people to listen for what the leaders called the “Big Lie.” They were also tasked with coming up with a spiritual response to that Big Lie. Eventually, these leaders came to codify the Big Lie at the heart of Jim Crow as saying, “Some lives are worth more than others.”⁷ Without that Big Lie, all of Jim Crow’s oppressive system falls apart. And the spiritual response to that lie, they decided, is to say, “Everyone is created in God’s image; therefore, all are equal.”

Graham took inspiration from this cycle of listening and spiritual response and asked his congregation to listen to the people entrusted to their care—these lonely idealists who had come to Washington. And here is how Graham's congregation came to articulate the Big Lie that they heard: Their people believed that "you can change the world apart from community." The people entrusted to Graham's care, he said, were educated but unfulfilled; they had "amazing resumes but felt alone." This lie captured both the longing and the loss that defined Graham's people.⁸ They longed to make a difference, but they felt the acute loss of community. And, of course, the Christian truth that countered the Big Lie is that the Holy Spirit binds Christians together in community. Aaron Graham's ability to minister to the idealistic government workers entrusted to his care turned on his ability to counter the Big Lie that trapped them.

As part of Erica's online preparation to come to the Fuller innovation summit, she listened not only to the longings and losses of her middle-schoolers, she also listened for the Big Lie that was underneath their anxious, busy, and stressed lives. She found that they were constantly asking themselves, "Am I valuable?" which led her to articulate their Big Lie as

saying, “Love is conditional.” Although no one spoke the phrase aloud, the sentiment summarized the conditional acceptance that nagged her young people each day. And she came to see that whatever innovation project she pursued needed to provide a spiritual antidote to that Big Lie. Ultimately, she said, she wanted the project to provide her young people with what she called a “grace-based identity” that would allow them to experience “the authenticity of being known and loved anyway.”

4. HOW DO YOU MAKE SPIRITUAL SENSE OF THOSE LONGINGS AND LOSSES?

Every Christian leader is called to make spiritual sense.⁹ Understanding the longings and losses of the people entrusted to our care is the necessary beginning, but it cannot be all that we do. We Christians will need to make spiritual sense of the longings and losses of the people entrusted to our care, and in doing so, we will join a great cloud of biblical witnesses. Throughout the Bible we see God's appointed leaders explaining the spiritual meaning of the people's common experience.

That is exactly what Erica set out to do once she had recognized that her middle-schoolers believed that “love is conditional.” She wanted to provide them with “an identity found in God, not conditional acceptance”—one that gave them what she called the “liberating sense of being known and loved anyway.” She decided to do this by focusing on the Christian practice of lament.

Christian practices are particularly useful for innovation because they are both new and old at the same time. They are old because each practice has been an essential part of Christianity since its inception. And they are new because the expression of each practice changes drastically over time. But, along the

way, we have forgotten (or neglected) some practices. Recovering those practices can accelerate innovation. As part of the preparation for the innovation summit, we introduced Erica to as many as nine reinvented Christian practices, which included lament. In learning about lament, she was able to imagine ways to use this ancient practice to help her middle-schoolers create a “grace-based identity” that refuted that “conditional acceptance” they experienced every day.

Anyone interested in longing and loss must recognize that the appropriate biblical response to loss is lament. A lament allows the people of God to individually or corporately cry out to God in protest—to say directly to God that things are not how they should be—and to call on God to change whatever is amiss.¹⁰ Laments are often raw with emotion. We Christians can lament both for ourselves and for others, both for individual complaints and for societal concerns. We can do that because our model for lament comes from Scripture, especially the psalms of lament and the book of Lamentations.

About half of the book of Psalms are psalms of lament.¹¹ How do you know which ones are laments? They are the psalms that aren’t often read in our churches. They are the ones that cry out to God in pain and protest. They are perhaps the most honest and raw statements in Scripture. But that is the point. The message of the psalms of lament is that God can handle your honesty, even and especially if you are angry at God.¹²

We need models for lament because it would be easy to draw the wrong conclusion about our complaints by thinking that God is like other authority figures we have in our lives. It is often not safe to speak honestly

to a human authority figure—especially if you want to accuse that authority figure of neglecting their promises. But God invites it. We need so many biblical models of lament because we easily forget that God is not like other authority figures. God’s love is not conditional. For example, we think that if we refrain from speaking about our anger, then God won’t know that we are angry. But that assumes that we can hide our thoughts from God. God invites our honesty because God already knows what is in our hearts. Let me give you a few of the examples that inspired Erica as she learned about lament.

Fuller professor John Goldingay is one of the world’s leading Old Testament scholars, but his encounter with the psalms of lament is intensely personal. He describes how his late wife, Ann, had a debilitating case of multiple sclerosis (MS) and, after many years of deteriorating, became noncommunicative.¹³ John used to push her everywhere in her wheelchair—to class, to faculty meetings at Fuller, to church—even as she became a shell of herself. In the evenings, John would say prayers of lament on her behalf, shaking his fist at God and crying out, “This is not how things should be.” He would hold God to God’s promises for a better world. Eventually, after Ann passed away, John married a woman named Kathleen. Now in the evenings John and Kathleen pray lament for the people suffering in Darfur, where Kathleen’s daughter serves. John prayed lament about an intensely personal situation and now prays about more public concerns. But in either case, he uses lament to speak honestly and, even in anger, directly to God.

The scholar Soong-Chan Rah also uses lament. He wrote a commentary on the book of Lamentations that uses each chapter to

describe the situation in urban America.¹⁴ He has ministered in multiracial settings in Boston and Chicago, and he grew up in urban Baltimore. He uses the language of Lamentations to express the pain of poverty and the outrage of racism in urban America.

Meanwhile, Leslie Allen, senior professor of Old Testament at Fuller, also wrote a Lamentations commentary, this one about his experience volunteering as a hospital chaplain. Each chapter begins and ends with a discussion of a specific situation where someone is suffering in the hospital setting. He then uses the language of Lamentations to express a Christian response to the pain of deteriorating health and the loss that comes with death.

Whether it is intensely personal pain like MS or very public suffering like the African American experience in urban America, whether it is pain across the ocean in Darfur or the plight of the sick in a local hospital, the practice of lament allows people to cry out to God—to say to God that this suffering is not what God intends, and to call on God to do what God has promised: to end suffering and make things right.

The psalms of lament follow a form—a structure—and that structure contains the elements that separate healthy lament from sinful whining. We are all familiar with how the structure of a statement communicates more than just the words. Think of a business letter: If I get a letter from my bank, it starts out, “Dear Scott,” and ends with “Sincerely.” How foolish it would be if I took those words literally, but that familiar business letter structure communicates something about the letter’s message. It is the same with psalms. The structure is a message as much as the words are. These psalms follow a

format and traditionally contain these parts: (a) the opening address, (b) the complaint, (c) the statement of trust, (d) the petition for help, and (e) the vow of praise.

This structure became very important to Erica as she taught lament to middle-schoolers. She wrote a simple lament, using almost a Mad Libs style for each of the components:

God, I don’t understand _____ .

God, please fix _____ .

God, I trust you with my future even if _____ .

God, I will praise you even when _____ .

That structure became the way that she would help her young people make spiritual sense of their anxious, busy, and stressed lives. She believed that if they could express themselves honestly to God it would be “liberating and provide an honest connection” that would rebut the conditional acceptance that filled their lives.

5. HOW DO YOU EXPRESS THAT SPIRITUAL MEANING AS A SHARED STORY OF FUTURE HOPE?

The ultimate goal of Christian innovation is to invite our people into a new story—a communal story, a hopeful story. People do not latch onto a plan, or an abstract statement of doctrine. That does not change them. Instead, people are transformed when they participate in a story—a story that sets them on a trajectory.

Sometimes that transformation can happen when the story finally names the deep difficulty a person feels. I think that, for example,

a significant part of Martin Luther King’s early success was not about offering a plan. It was about naming a dilemma.¹⁵ When he talked about what it meant to be trapped by Jim Crow laws, people recognized themselves in that story. Then, when it came time to offer a plan, that too came in the form of a story. Indeed, his “I Have a Dream” speech was a vision in the form of a story.¹⁶ His audience did not come to some intellectual decision that nonviolence was the best philosophy (although Dr. King himself had done just that).¹⁷ They “bought into” the vision because they could picture it. They could see the story playing out, and they could see themselves in the story. Vision is a shared story of future hope.

We Christians offer something more specific than “future hope.” We offer a hope rooted in the gospel—rooted in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christian hope is different from other kinds of hope. When you hear a person say, “I hope it does not rain,” they are expressing a wish for the future. They may or may not have much reason to believe that their wish will come true, but that is what they want. Christian hope is different. Our hope is not in something (like the weather); our hope is in someone (our Savior). So Christian hope is more like a quiet confidence. It is the sense that all our eggs are in Jesus’ basket, and that is just fine. Christian vision is a shared story of Christian hope. We communicate that hope by inviting people into stories, just as Jesus did. And that is what Erica did with her middle-schoolers.

Erica’s ten-week experiment began with the youth group meeting on a Sunday night. The first week, Erica asked them to come up with lyrics from songs they know that expressed loss, or anger, or whatever else they might be

feeling. The young people pointed to Christian songs and to secular songs. That first week, Erica also brought in a storyteller from the community so that the teens could understand the power of stories—including their own story. The storyteller told them about Psalm 22, Psalm 42, Job, and Lamentations. Then, in the second week, the group listed together issues that they thought were lamentable, then replaced lines from the previous week’s song lyrics in order to express their pain. Starting in the third week, they wrote and recited together a group lament on the topic of their choosing, using Erica’s fill-in-the-blank format. The fifth week’s meeting was Parents’ Night. The parents came to learn about lament and participated as each teen used the lament structure to write about something that was happening with a friend. During the teaching portion of the evening, Erica reminded the parents and teens that sometimes they might want to lament about something for which they themselves were partially responsible. In other words, they might make confession part of lament. In the sixth week, they did a group assessment (more listening) to see how the young people were experiencing the process. Then for the seventh, eighth, and ninth weeks, they asked each young person to write and pray their own lament. Finally, for the tenth week, they wrapped up the experiment. After ten weeks, the middle-schoolers had a habit of lamenting.

The most powerful part of the experience for the young people was writing their own laments. “I used to think we had to be nice to God, but I can come to God when I am sad or mad. I don’t need to sugarcoat what I am feeling,” one of Erica’s students said. “It has created a deeper and stronger, a more honest, relationship with God.” Another said,



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HOPE FOR THE PAIN OF THE KOREAN YOUTH

“It’s hard to see how love and anger can go together.” But she eventually got it: “I now see how trusting someone even in anger makes a deeper relationship.” Likewise, one mom quoted her daughter as saying, “I realized it is okay to go to God with my rough draft; I don’t have to wait for the final draft. My life is not polished but it’s honest.” In fact, lament led some, just as Erica hoped, to confession: “I did not realize my part in [the issue I was lamenting] until I talked it out with God. Then I realized I had a part in creating the problem.”

The experience of lament changed the teens’ view of God and who they were before God. Erica reports, “They can now see how they are God’s beloved and that God is their Abba, Father.” Lament was crucial because in order “to help them understand who God is, it is imperative for them to see that God actually invites their complaints and concerns over what doesn’t seem right in the world.” The project allowed them “to understand who they are in light of who God is” and that “freed them up to be their authentic selves.” The end result was a shared story that created a trajectory of future hope. They could now together say, “God loves us unconditionally. We can bring our honest selves to God.”

The experience even changed the trajectory of the youth group. The young people started inviting their friends. The lament experiment showed the teens that “God can handle whatever they throw at God, and God won’t run away,” said Erica, and that attitude of welcoming love permeated the youth group. She reported on one newcomer in particular: “It never entered my mind that he would come to church because of this experience, but, a year later, he is still a part of the youth

group. He sees it as an open, safe place to say things out loud to his friends and to God that he could not say anywhere else.”

Erica engaged in Christian innovation. She focused on the longings and losses (Q2) of the middle-schoolers entrusted to her care (Q1). She refuted the Big Lie that “love is conditional” (Q3) by allowing them to experience through lament the idea that “God knows you and loves you anyway” (Q4), which created for them a way of narrating their life (Q5) that said that, when they see themselves as God’s beloved, they are free to be their authentic selves. The old model of being church told Erica that the way to minister to middle-schoolers was to teach them to behave. This innovation, instead, allowed her to proclaim that “God can handle whatever they throw at God, and God won’t run away; and that’s our youth group.” ■

ENDNOTES

1. Erica came to Fuller as part of one of three parallel innovation grants at Fuller: Youth Ministry Innovation, Ministry Innovation with Young Adults, and Innovation for Vocation. Together the projects have gathered upwards of 100 congregations to summits at Fuller. Each project followed a similar path: the participants engaged in a five-week online training course before coming to Pasadena (the course guided them through a listening project), a three-day summit at Fuller (that eventuated in a project prototype), and a ten-week congregational experiment (guided by a Fuller coach). The Fuller Youth Institute (and especially Caleb Roose and Steve Argue) have been instrumental in these projects.
2. These questions, and this article, are excerpted from my forthcoming book entitled *The Innovative Church* (Baker Academic, 2020).
3. S. Cormode, “Leadership Begins with Listening,” Fuller’s Max De Pree Center for Leadership, <https://depree.org/leadership-begins-with-listening/>.
4. R. Wuthnow, *The Crisis in the Churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
5. He described the importance of listening to the longings and losses of the people entrusted to your care this way:

“You can preach and lead with greater authority when you know your context; when you know the place and people to whom you minister.” A. Graham, “Windows on the Church: Session II,” presented at Fuller Seminary on the occasion of the Inauguration of Mark Labberton as President (November 6, 2013). Graham’s presentation comes in the video during minutes 15:00-25:00.

6. A.Salvatierra and P. Heltzel, *Faith-Rooted Organizing* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014).
7. It is important to note that people rarely if ever speak this lie out loud. It stands in the background or as the foundation for their actions. But it is never spoken. Indeed, it often loses its power if spoken aloud. Thus, one of the roles of a Christian exercising her vocation is to surface the lies prevalent among the people entrusted to her care so that those lies wither in the light of the truth.
8. Graham, “Windows on the Church,” minute 20:00ff.
9. For a more detailed explanation of this idea, see S. Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006).
10. See <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/tag/lament/>.
11. About 65 of 150 (43%) of the book of Psalms are psalms of lament.
12. The contemporary recovery of lament traces its roots back to an article by Walter Brueggemann, “The Costly Loss of Lament,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36 (1986): 57–71. The best contemporary summary comes from John Witvliet. See J. Witvliet, “What about Liturgical Lament?” (January 17, 2016), http://www.academia.edu/20220148/Reflections_on_Lament_in_Christian_Worship.
13. “John Goldingay on Lament,” FULLER Studio, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXyuLxqAw88>.
14. S.-C. Rah, *Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015); S.-C. Rah, “Let the People Lament,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6-zDbVqF4>.
15. M. L. King, “Address to First Mass Meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association” (December 5, 1955), http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/the_addres_to_the_first_montgomery_improvement_association_mia_mass_meeting/.
16. M. L. King, “I Have a Dream” (August 1963), <https://www.archives.gov/files/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>.
17. On the effects that theological education had on Martin Luther King, and especially on his decisions to pursue nonviolence, see T. Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years* (Simon & Shuster, 1988), 69–104.

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“You know, the best thing that I have done for my daughter so far is that I did not introduce her to church.” This was the very first thing he said as we sat down for coffee. We had not met in a long time, but he did not hesitate to let this word set the tone of our conversation that day. I still vividly remember the conviction with which he spoke.

A PAIN POINT IN THE KOREAN CHURCH TODAY

I am about to name one particular pain that the Korean church has today, fully acknowledging that such an attempt can only be partial and deficient. So I offer it prayerfully: I ask the Lord to help me recognize what I see as clearly as possible, to see my actions (which contribute to our actions) as honestly as possible, to uphold my words as faithfully as possible, and to speak my thoughts as courageously as possible. The whole purpose of doing so is to discern what the Korean church leadership can do to help its congregation remain hopeful of the future while being mindful of the present pain. This painful point in the Korean church that I will address is the overly passive youth.

THINKING MY SEEING AND SEEING MY DOING

When the leaders of the newly planted church that I became a member of asked me to preach for high school students, I readily said yes. Instead of preaching, however, I have been facilitating Lectio Divina.

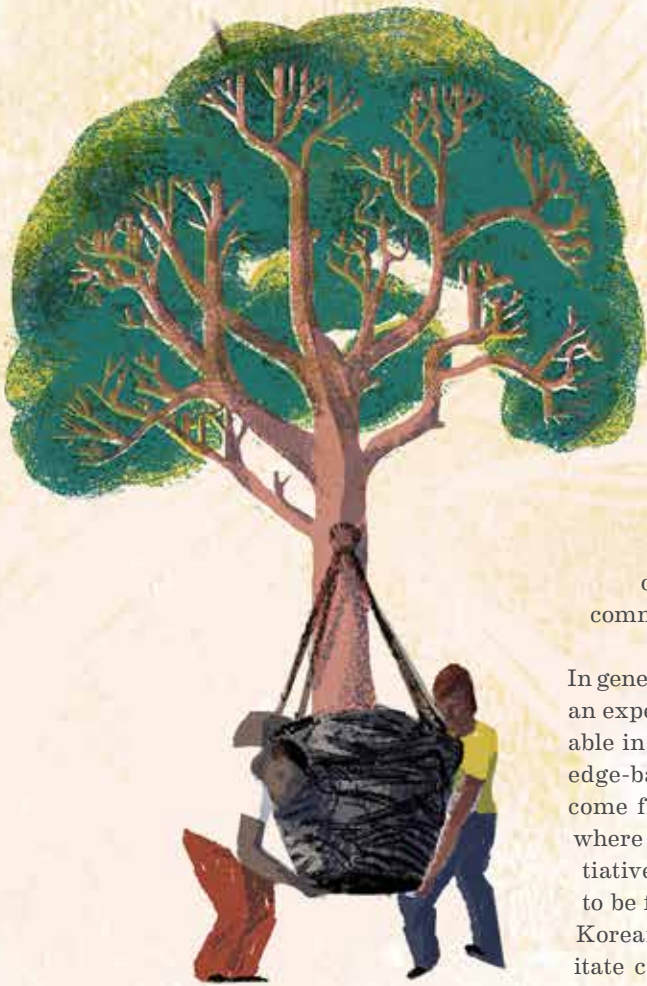
From day one, I have let the students know that we will not have a pastor preach every Sunday. I also let them know that there will not be a typical sermon with clean-cut, take-home lessons prepared in advance for us. Instead, I told them that we will read the Bible together and pay careful attention to see if there is any particular image, word, phrase, color, and/or emotion that stands out, in light

of which we may ask and discern what God is doing in and among us. In other words, I have encouraged them not only to read the text but also to let themselves be read by the Scriptures.

Instead of passively hearing whatever someone else has read, studied, and contemplated for them, I have challenged them to interact with the text and ask the questions themselves. Rather than writing complete sermons, therefore, I spend much of my time and energy during the weekdays on choosing a text, searching for relevant resources, and thinking of questions that can help the students understand and continue to meditate on the text throughout the week.

Such a new and almost “unheard of” attempt was not received with enthusiasm, especially for the first three months: the most popular response was a monotonous and effortless “I don’t know.” Their faces constantly communicated to me, “Just preach to us and give us lessons to take home, so that we can tell our parents when they ask us what we learned today.”

One Sunday, however, there were four completely new faces. For all of them, church was an absolutely novel thing. When Lectio Divina began, we had a dramatically different experience: In the sharpest contrast that one can ever imagine, these four new faces had brightly shining eyes with so much excitement and curiosity. Unlike the rest of the students who sat so lifelessly, these four—who had no idea who Jesus was or what church was about—raised so many questions and responded to every single question that emerged with enthusiasm and passion. They seemed determined not to let any moment pass by meaninglessly.



What has the Korean church done to its youth? The youth within the Korean church have become so passive, unengaged, and reliant on the paid experts to feed them light meals made to fit their Sunday morning appetite. Rather than cultivating an environment where the youth can “participate in the action-reflection cycle”¹ as they are challenged and supported to discern the will and

work of God, the church has made the experts do all the work for the rest, including its youth. Consequently, the youth have grown so used to being fed by those who work on their behalf that they find it overwhelmingly bothersome to do the work themselves. The only thing they are willing to do is to come and sit at the table that is wide open for them and take whatever seems fitting to their taste.

DOING MY SAYING

I teach a course for Korean students that focuses mainly on conducting case studies. Each case is filled with ambiguities and problems for which there are no clear biblical teachings nor simple solutions. For the case study to be done, everyone in the class is challenged to speak up, identify main issues, listen to and question different perspectives that emerge, review all the available resources, understand possible alternatives, and work towards a solution that the group could support. Much of the classroom time is thus spent on communal discussions and reflection.

In general, Korean students naturally expect an expert to talk and fill every minute available in class with a good amount of knowledge-based inputs. This is because they come from a high-power distance culture where teachers are expected to take all initiative and “outline the intellectual paths to be followed.”² It is therefore against the Korean students’ expectations that I facilitate case studies where they themselves have to do the hard work of questioning and processing the issues. Nonetheless, I have

insisted on challenging them to build a hermeneutical community through the case study method. Why?

First, it is to alleviate the students’ exaggerated dependency on one particular authority figure who is expected to offer quick solutions. Second, it is to include everyone in the entire process of cocreating the unique space and time for new learning. Finally, it is to help everyone ask hard questions that they would normally avoid or miss out on. In short, through the case study method, I am giving the work back to the students, for I have said both in and outside the class that “giving the work back to the people”³ is one of the most important tasks of leadership, especially in the Korean church today.

Giving the work back to the students, in both school and church, does not necessarily lessen my work load. On the contrary, it sometimes takes more energy to let the work be shared among students for it is much easier to control than to let go of control. Similarly, speaking less does not necessarily mean doing less. As a matter of fact, it is often easier to speak as much as I want rather than to listen to “the songs beneath their words.”⁴ Encouraging others to partake by allowing them to speak, contribute, and question requires much more energy and competency. Nonetheless, some of the students have mistaken my intentional efforts of giving the work back to them for my incompetency.

Despite such an unpleasant potentiality of being misunderstood, I have tried to give the work back to the students, for I consider it to be a faithful *doing my saying*.

SAYING MY THINKING

Concerning its youth, the Korean church leadership needs to give the work back to them. The church leadership has tried to

be responsible for everything for everyone. Yet it is time for the youth, who have grown so passive, to realize that it is their own responsibility to read, interpret, and apply the Bible to their lives, and to draw attention to the tough questions themselves. The youth should take more responsibility than they are comfortable with. This should be done, however, only at a pace that they can handle.

In retrospect, I can see that it was a critical mistake to announce on my very first day with my church’s youth that we were going to have a change—that there would be no preaching pastor. In so doing, despite my good intentions of putting the work back on the students in order for them to grow and mature, I failed to create “a holding environment”⁵ where they could feel safe enough to try something new.

Most students did not resist the change to Lectio Divina but rather feared not being able to develop a new relationship with a pastor or a pastor-like figure who could take care of them.

NEW LEARNING FOR A COMPLEX CHALLENGE

For the Korean church to be hopeful for the future while remaining mindful of the present pain, its leadership must bring conflicts to the surface. Instead of avoiding the work, which is a very common response to difficult challenges, the Korean church should name and face them.

Most difficult challenges are built on “dynamic complexities,” whose cause and effect are distanced in both time and space, and “social complexities,” products of different views and values. At the core of such challenges could also be “emerging complexities,” whose problems, solutions, or even stakeholders are not clearly known.⁶ The pain of the Korean church, namely the overly passive youth, is impacted by these three

complexities. Hence, they are far from being technical challenges that can be resolved simply by applying well-known technical solutions without learning.⁷

The current pain of the Korean church requires new learning—the past alone is not enough. Therefore, the Korean church leadership has to overcome the temptation of simply reenacting past patterns of thoughts and reproducing familiar rules and values. Divergent views and even disconfirming mental models and data should be welcomed within broadened conversation. Rather than silencing others’ thoughts, guiding others’ assumptions, and blaming others for the current pain, the Korean church leadership has to acknowledge and learn from its own contribution to that pain. More than anything else, it has to learn that the effectiveness of the leadership process should now be viewed “in terms of the level of feelings of significance experienced by people in the community” rather than the level of influence that an individual leader generates.⁸ It is time for the Korean church leadership to give the work back to the body of Christ at a pace that is appropriate so that everyone can feel both challenged and supported to do their own work (Eph 4:16). After all, the members involved in professional ministry, which make up 1 percent of the church, exist to both equip and support the remaining 99 percent—not the other way around.⁹

I have structured this writing in such a way that I could think my seeing, see my doing, do my saying, and say my thinking. I have done this not only for the purpose of discerning the present pain of the Korean church, but in doing so, to also provide hope. God who began a good work in us will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6). ■

ENDNOTES

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한국 청소년들의 아픔에 대한 소망

조은아

“그거 알아요? 지금까지 내 딸을 위해 한 일들 중 가장 잘 한 것은 바로 그 아이에게 교회를 소개해 주지 않았다는 거예요.” 커피를 마시려고 자리 하며 그가 건넌 가장 첫 번째 말이 이것이었다. 참으로 오랜만에 다시 만나는 자리였지만 그는 이 첫 마디로 그날 우리의 대화의 분위기를 정하는 것을 서슴지 않았다. 나는 아직도 그가 얼마나 확신에 차서 이 말을 했는지 생생하게 기억한다.

오늘날 한국 교회의 통점

나는 이제 오늘날 한국 교회가 지닌 특정한 아픔에 대해서 명명하려고 하는데, 이러한 시도는 단지 편파적이고 불완전할 수 밖에 없다는 사실을 충분히 인정한다. 그래서 기도한다. 주님, 내가 보는 것을 최대한 분명하게 인식하고, (‘우리’의 행위들에 기여하는) 나의 행위들을 최대한 정직하게 보며, 나의 말들을 최대한 성실하게 지키고, 나의 생각들을 최대한 용기있게 말할 수 있도록 도와 주시옵소서. 오늘날 한국 교회의 아픔을 명명하는 목적은 교인들이 현재의 아픔을 염두에 두면서도 미래에 대한 소망을 잃지 않을 수 있도록 돕기 위해 한국 교회 리더십이 무엇을 해야 하는 지를 분별하기 위함이다. 내가 논하고자 하는 한국 교회의 통점은 다름 아닌 과도하게 수동적인 청소년이다.

보는 것을 생각하고 행하는 것을 보기

등록 교인이 된 개척 교회 담임 목사님이 내게 중고등학생들을 위한 설교를 부탁했을 때 나는 기꺼이 응했다. 그러나 나는 설교 대신 렉티오 디비나 (Lectio Divina)를 인도해 오고 있다.

첫 날부터 나는 우리에게는 설교하러 오시는 목사님은 없을 것이라고 학생들에게 알려 주었다. 미리 준비 된 명확하고 적용 가능한 교훈들이 담긴 전형적인 설교도 없을 것이라고 알려 주었다. 그 대신, 우리는 함께 성경을 읽을 것이며 우리 안에 그리고 우리 가운데 하나님께서 행하시는 일에 대해 묻고 분별할 수 있는 어떤 심상, 단어, 구절, 색깔, 그리고/또는 감정이 떠오르는 지 보기 위해 집중할 것이라고 말했다. 다시 말해서, 나는 학생들이 자신이 말씀을 읽을 뿐만 아니라 말씀이 그들을 읽어 내도록 격려해 왔다.

다른 사람이 그들을 대신 해서 읽고, 공부하고, 묵상한 바를 수동적으로 듣기만 하는 대신에 나는 그들 스스로가 말씀과 교류하고 스스로 질문을 하도록 도전해 온 것이다.

따라서, 완전한 설교를 준비하는 대신 나는 본문을 선택하고, 본문의 이해를 도울 수 있는 관련 자료들을 찾고, 일주일을 보내는 동안 계속해서 학생들이 그 말씀을 묵상할 수 있도록 도울 수 있는 질문들을 생각해 내는 것에 더 많은 시간을 보낸다.

이렇게 새롭고 거의 “들어보지 못한” 시도는 특별히 처음 3개월 동안은 그다지 달가운 반응을 얻어내지 못하였다: 학생들이 던진 가장 일반적인 반응은 단조롭고 성의 없는 “모르겠는데요” 였다. 청소년들의 얼굴은 끊임없이 내게 이렇게 말했다 - “그냥 설교나 해 주시고, 부모님들이 오늘 무엇을 배웠나 물을 때 답할 수 있게 집에 가지고 갈 교훈이나 하나 주세요.”

그러던 어느 주일, 완전히 새로운 네 명의 얼굴이 나타났다. 그들 모두에게 교회는 절대적으로 새로운 것이었다. 렉티오 디비나가 시작 되었을 때, 우리는 극적으로 색다른 경험을 하게 되었다. 가장 첨예한 대조는 바로 그 네 명의 새로운 아이들의 눈이 흥분과 호기심으로 빛나고 있었다는 것이다. 전혀 생기 없는 얼굴을 하고 앉아있던 나머지 학생들과는 달리, 예수가 누구인지 또는 교회가 어떤 곳인지 전혀 모르는 이 네 명의 청소년들은 너무나 많은 질문들을 던졌고, 하나 하나의 질문에 열의와 열정을 가지고 답하였다. 그들은 한 순간도 의미없게 지나치지 않으려고 작정한 것 같았다.

한국 교회는 청소년들에게 무슨 일을 한 것인가? 한국 교회 안의 청소년들은 너무나 수동적이고, 무관심하며, 월급 받는 전문가들이 주일 아침 그들의 입맛에 맞게 차려주는 가벼운 먹거리를 받아 먹는 의존적 존재가 되어 버렸다. 청소년들 스스로가 하나님의 뜻과 역사하심을 분별하도록 도전 받고 지지 받는 “행동-성찰의 순환에 참여할 수 있는” 환경을 배양해 주기보다 교회는 전문가들이 청소년을 비롯한 나머지 모든 사람들을 위해서 대신 모든 일을 하도록 만들어 왔다. 결과적으로 청소년들은 그들을 대신하여 일해주는 사람들이 먹여주는 것에 너무나도 익숙해져서 그들 스스로 일 하는 것은 압도적으로 성가신 것이라고 느끼게 된 것이다. 그들이 기꺼이 하는 유일한 일은 와서 그들을 위해 활짝 열려있는 테이블에 앉아 입맛에 맞는 무엇인가를 먹는 것 뿐이다.

말한 바를 행하기

사례연구에 주요 초점을 두는 과목을 하나 가르치고

있다. 각각의 사례는 모호함, 그리고 분명한 성경적 가르침이나 단순한 해답이 없는 문제들로 가득차 있다. 사례 연구를 마무리 하기 위해서는 강의실에 있는 모든 학생들이 자신의 생각을 말하고, 주요 관건들을 인식하고, 출현하는 다양한 관점들에 대해서 듣고 질문 하며, 모든 이용 가능한 자원들을 탐색하고, 가능한 대안들을 이해하며, 그룹 전체가 지지할 수 있는 해결책을 찾도록 도전을 받는다. 따라서, 강의실에서의 대부분의 시간은 공동 토의와 반영을 위해서 소요된다.

일반적으로, 한국 학생들은 한 명의 전문가가 가르치며 지식에 근거한 상당한 인풋으로 강의 시간의 대부분을 채워주기를 기대한다. 이는 그들의 대부분이 교사들이 모든 주도권을 가지고 “지적인 행로를 마련하여 따라오게 하는” 권력 거리가 큰 문화권에서 왔기 때문이다. 그러므로, 그들 스스로 관건들에 대해 질문하고 처리해야만 하는 힘든 일이 요구되는 사례 연구를 인도하는 것은 한국 학생들의 기대에 거슬리는 것이다. 그럼에도 불구하고 나는 사례 연구 방법을 통해 해석 공동체를 세워나가도록 도전하는 것을 주장해 왔다. 그 이유는 무엇인가?

첫째로, 이는 신속한 해결책을 제공해 줄 것이라 기대 되는 한 명의 특정한 권위자에 대한 학생들의 지나친 의존감을 경감시키기 위함이다. 둘째로, 새로운 학습을 위한 독특한 장소와 시간을 함께 창조해 내는 전체 과정 안에 모든 사람을 포함하기 위함이다. 마지막으로, 이는 모든 사람들이 평소에는 회피하거나 놓치고 마는 어려운 질문들을 던질 수 있도록 도와주기 위함이다. 짧게 요약하자면, 사례 연구 방법을 통해서 나는 임무를 학생들에게 되돌려 주는 것이다. 나는 강의실 안팎에서 “사람들에게 일을 되돌려 주는 것” 이 특별히 오늘날 한국 교회가 감당해야 할 가장 중요한 리더십의 과제라고 주장해 왔다.

학교와 교회에서 학생들에게 일을 되돌려주는 것은 나의 수고를 필연적으로 줄여주지는 않는다. 오히려 그와는 반대로, 때로는 학생들 간에 임무를 나누어 하도록 하는 것이 훨씬 더 많은 에너지를 요구한다. 이는 제재하는 것이 자유롭게 풀어주는 것보다 때로는 훨씬 더 많은 에너지를 소비하게 만들기 때문이다. 이와 비슷하게, 말을 적게 한다고해서 일을 적게 하는 것도 아니다. 실은, 내가 원하는 만큼 말을 많이 하는 것이 “그들의 말 아래 담긴 노래”를 듣는 것 보다 쉽다. 다른 사람을 격려하여서

말하게 하고 기여하게 하고 질문하여서 참여하게 하는 것은 훨씬 더 많은 힘과 자질을 요구한다. 그럼에도 불구하고 몇몇의 학생들은 그들에게 임무를 돌려주는 나의 의도적인 노력을 자질 부족으로 오해 할 때가 있다.

이렇게 불쾌한 잠재적 가능성에도 불구하고 나는 학생들에게 임무를 돌려주려고 노력해왔다. 그것이 내가 말하는 바를 성실하게 행하는 것이라 여기기 때문이다.

생각하는 바를 말하기

한국 교회 리더십은 청소년들에게 그들의 일을 되돌려 주어야 한다. 교회 리더십은 모든 사람을 위해 모든 것을 책임지려 해왔다. 그러나, 이제는 너무나 수동적이 되어버린 청소년들 스스로가 성경을 읽고, 해석하고, 삶에 적용하고, 어려운 질문에 눈을 돌릴 책임을 져야 할 시간이 왔다. 청소년들은 그들이 편안하게 느끼는 것보다 더 많은 책임을 맡아야 한다. 그러나, 이것은 반드시 그들이 감당할 수 있는 속도로 이루어져야 한다.

돌아보면, 내가 우리 교회의 청소년들과 만난 첫날에 우리에게 변화—설교하는 목회자가 없을 것이라는—가 있을 것이라고 광고했던 것은 중대한 실수였다. 그들의 성장과 성숙을 돕기 위해 그들에게 그들의 일을 되돌려주려는 나의 선한 의도에도 불구하고 나는 그들 스스로가 새로운 것을 시도해 볼 수 있을 만큼 충분히 안전하게 느낄 수 있는 “지탱해 주는 환경”을 만들어 주는 것에 실패했다.

대부분의 학생들은 렉티오 디비나로의 변화에 대해서는 저항하지 않았지만, 그들을 돌보아 줄 수 있는 목회자 또는 목회자와 같은 누군가와와 새로운 관계를 발전시키지 못할 것에 대해서 두려워 했던 것이다.

복잡한 도전을 위한 새로운 학습

한국 교회가 현재의 아픔은 염두에 두되 미래를 소망하기 위해서 교회의 리더십은 갈등을 표면적으로 드러내야 한다. 어려운 도전을 맞이했을 때 매우 혼히 있을 수 있는 반응인 일을 회피함 대신 한국 교회는 그것을 명명하고 직면해야 한다.

가장 어려운 도전은 그 원인과 결과가 시간적 그리고 공간적 거리를 두고 있는 “역동적 복잡성들”과 상이한 견해들과 가치들의 산물인 “사회적 복잡성들”의 기초 위에 세워진다. 이러한 도전들의 핵심에는 또한 문제,

해결 방법, 또는 이해관계자들 조차 분명하지 않는 “출현하는 복잡성들”이 있을 수 있다. 한국 교회의 아픔, 이듬하여 과도하게 수동적인 청소년의 문제는 이 모든 세 가지 복잡성에 의해 영향을 받는다. 그래서, 이것은 학습 없이 이미 잘 알려진 기술적인 해결책만을 단순히 적용함으로써 해결할 수 있는 기술적인 도전들과는 거리가 멀다.

한국 교회의 현재의 아픔은 새로운 학습을 요구한다—과거 하나만으로는 충분하지 않다. 그러므로, 한국 교회 리더십은 단순히 과거의 패턴을 재현하고 익숙한 규칙과 가치관을 재생산하려는 유혹을 이겨내야 한다. 분분한 관점과 심지어 부당성을 증명하는 정신적 모델과 데이터조차도 확대된 대화, 토론의 파트너들과 레퍼토리 안에서 환영받아야 한다. 다른 사람들의 생각들과 그들을 지도하는 가정을 잠잠하게 하고 현재의 아픔에 대해 다른 사람들을 원망하기 보다는 한국 교회 리더십은 그 아픔에 스스로 기여한 바에 대하여 인정하고 그것으로부터 배워야 한다. 다른 그 무엇보다 한국 교회는 리더십 과정의 효력은 이제 어떤 한 개인의 리더가 만들어내는 영향력의 정도보다는 “공동체 안의 사람들이 중요하게 느끼는 감정의 정도”로 측정 되어야 함을 것을 배워야 한다. 한국 교회 리더십은 적절한 속도감을 유지하면서 그리스도의 몸에게 일을 되돌려 줌으로 모든 사람이 각자의 일을 할 수 있도록 도전과 후원을 동시에 제공해야 할 (엡 4:16) 때이다. 결국, 교회의 1퍼센트에 지나지 않는 전문적 사역에 참여하는 멤버들은 나머지 99퍼센트를 구비하고 지지하기 위해서—그 반대가 아니라—존재함을 기억해야 한다.

나는 내가 보는 바를 생각하고, 내가 행하는 것을 보고, 내가 말하는 바를 행하며, 내가 생각하는 바를 말할 수 있도록 이 글을 구성했다. 나는 단지 한국 교회의 현재의 아픔을 분별하기 위해서만이 아니라 그렇게 함으로써 소망도 제공하고자 이 글을 썼다. 우리 속에 착한 일을 시작하신 이가 그리스도 예수의 날까지 이루실 줄을 확신하는 바이다 (빌 1:6). ■





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BLACK AND WHITE

Teesha Hadra and John Hambrick

We are unlikely friends. But that is one of the most important things about our story. Western culture encourages people to insulate themselves from their own pain and from the pain of others, yet this has wreaked havoc on race relations in the United States. We have discovered that friendship between people who don't look like each other can unite what our culture has divided, especially when that division runs along racial lines. Envisioning a future of racial justice that sets aside the pain of people in the name of progress is pure folly. Our friendship has allowed us to envision a better future, one that is rooted in the realities of our common and disparate experiences.

I (Teesha) am a younger Black woman, the child of immigrants. I am from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, a diverse city that seems to encompass the laidback ethos of California, pumped up with Latin and Caribbean flavors and a Northeastern edginess. Although I regularly encountered people of various races and cultures, my race has never been incidental to life as an American. My parents went to great lengths to combat the social scripts that glorify European features as the standard for beauty, teaching my sister and me that our dark skin and kinky hair were beautiful. They also taught me not to open my purse inside a store so that I wouldn't be accused of stealing. Whether in childhood, or later as an adult navigating life in the predominantly white and male field of law, being unconscious of my race was never an option.

I (John), an older white man, was born and raised in Southern California, in a racially isolated family. That changed when I attended Pepperdine University. Their Malibu campus was attractive to those of

us who grew up surfing, and I began to surf with a fellow student named Bobby—the only Black surfer I'd ever met. Our friendship began to open my eyes to the realities of being a Black person in a white-oriented society. After graduating from Pepperdine, I began the MDiv program at Fuller. While there, the influence of professors Paul Jewett and William Pannell (among others) helped me to see that working against racism was indeed part of what it means to follow Jesus.

In 2013, I (Teesha) joined John on the staff of Buckhead Church in Atlanta, Georgia, working in the department John managed. As hoped, we worked well together and developed a sense of mutual trust and respect. A friendship slowly began to grow alongside our working relationship. I actually met my husband, Fred, in John's office. Fred proposed to me in the exact spot where we first met, and a year later John officiated at our wedding.

Over time, our friendship grew as we talked about common interests—movies, theology, popular culture, even college football. Eventually we talked about race. The trust and respect that characterized our friendship up to that point continued to hold as we saw the world through the other's eyes.

As we grew more confident in our ability to have trusting and respectful conversations about race, we tackled riskier topics. We talked about white fragility, Black people's anger, systemic racism, and the intersection of race and poverty.¹ We don't always agree and sometimes an apology is necessary. But our friendship is not fragile. Friendship is an essential part of our journey as we follow Jesus into the messy, painful, and complicated reality that surrounds the 400-year history of racism in our country. That journey

started with a friendship—but that's not where it ends. Being honest about our pain, rather than setting it aside, is part of what sustains us. We've rejected a naïve vision of the future by naming and lamenting the past and present realities of racism in America.

As our conversations continued, we noted that many people hold to a narrow view of racism, one that is exclusively concerned with the conduct of individuals' interactions with one another. From this perspective, a racist is someone who uses racial epithets or advocates violence against people of color. When racism is chiefly concerned with individual actions, we set a low bar for our conduct. We also absolve ourselves of any responsibility for addressing racism in a corporate sense. Our ethical standard becomes, "As long as I do not [insert act of personal racism here], then I am not part of the problem." Part of seeing the future of race relations rightly is to see the present ways that racism manifests beyond personal interactions. We had to look at the ways that racism is embedded in our culture, laws, expectations, and institutions. In other words, we had to see racism as not just personal, but also as systemic, borne out in the racial disparities in life expectancy, wealth, educational opportunities, infant mortality, incarceration, and more.

Some American churches continue to harbor racism. In the midst of the controversy surrounding President Trump's suggestion that certain members of Congress "go back where they came from," the Friendship Baptist Church in Appomattox, Virginia, displayed a sign on their front lawn that read, "America: Love It or Leave It." There are, of course, thousands of churches in the United States that understand the gospel calls for an explicit stance against racism. But there

are still a concerning number that hide racism behind a religious veneer. Perhaps even more concerning are the churches that choose to remain silent on the issue. In doing so they fly in the face of God's call to stand against injustice.

How does one acknowledge the ongoing presence of personal and systemic racism without losing hope? In some corners of Christianity, there is a tendency to avoid expressing pain to God, to one another, and even to ourselves. In the Hebrew scriptures, we find people faced with a crisis of theology and identity. Many of the psalms are written to address the forcible deportation of the people of Israel. This raised questions about Yahweh's power and justice as they tried to make sense of why such a disaster had befallen God's own people. The people of Israel responded through lament. Lament gives us a way to shake our fist at God, to grieve the many things that are not as they should be. I (John) found that as I cultivated a sense of holy discomfort and joined with Teesha in articulating her hurt and anger, the distance between us lessened. Lament can become a connective tissue that binds us to one another as it cultivates empathy.

Just as a clear vision of the future requires space for lament, there must also be room for anger. The summer of 2016 was one that sparked anger in me (Teesha). That summer, graphic video footage flooded social media of the July 6 police shooting of Philando Castile, a Black man, during a traffic stop. The horror of this event was punctuated by the July 5 killing of Alton Sterling, another Black man, at the hands of the police and the July 7 shooting of five Dallas police officers by a Black man in what appeared to be a racially motivated ambush. Anger gets a bad rap in Christian circles and in some senses that

is with good reason. Anger can obscure the true meaning of our words and cause us to prioritize making a point at the expense of our friends’ needs. But righteous anger is appropriate in the face of injustice.

When I shared my anger with John over the deaths of these men, he listened without passing judgment. My openness about my anger and John’s willingness to listen made a way for love and empathy to grow. It helped ensure that our friendship was rooted in authenticity. It strengthened our resolve to experience hope together in the midst of harsh realities.

In a similar fashion, I (John) have had to own the fear that often plagues white people when they consider discussing racism with a Black person. There are sometimes valid reasons for this fear. However, the fact that it is often the default position white people adopt has given rise to the phrase “white fragility.” This phenomenon includes more than a fear

of anger. It also includes a reluctance on the part of white people to accept responsibility for the systemic racism that continues to plague the United States.

My experience with white fragility first occurred in 2007, when I was approached by a Southern Black man to set up a time to talk about racism. As I prepared for that conversation, I worried that I would be verbally attacked, blamed, or that I would say something hurtful. Thankfully, none of these things happened. The man, who became my friend, was honest yet gracious. That day I learned white fragility can only be overcome by choosing to engage in conversation. If you wait for it to go away before talking to people about racism, those conversations will never happen.

As we work to make sense of all the above, another Fuller professor comes to mind. George Eldon Ladd was professor of New Testament theology and exegesis at Fuller for

over 25 years. Among his many important contributions to evangelical scholarship was his framing of the kingdom of God as both a present reality and a future apocalyptic order.² In other words, the kingdom of God is already but not yet. This phrase gives us a way to make sense of the teachings of Jesus about the kingdom of God, but it also sums up the state of racial justice in the United States. It articulates a tension we must preserve. It draws a delicate balance that honors the work already done yet refuses to whitewash the racial dysfunction that continues to plague our country. It provides a place where we can lament without losing hope.

When we are willing to embrace the tension of already but not yet, we are oriented in a way that allows us to participate in what God has already done and yet continues to do. Simply put, the victory against evil—including racial evil—has already been won by Christ’s death and resurrection. But that victory is not yet consummated. Today the kingdom of God is

advancing toward that consummation. That advance is the work of God in the world, often accomplished through human agency. That would be you and me.

I (John) recently asked a Black friend of mine if he thought things were getting better or worse. The friend, who has suffered as a Black man in this country, said that we’ve come a long way, but that we have a long way to go. I asked him what he saw that encouraged him. He said he saw a growing number of white people who were “getting real about racism.” He saw a lot of white people, whom he considers friends, pushing through white fragility into areas of meaningful conversation and action.

As a Black woman and a white man, we have experienced that kind of friendship. It doesn’t create a retreat where we can pretend that things are fine. Rather, it serves as a jumping-off point. Our friendship provides a platform where we can explore how to best

address the personal and systemic racism that seems so deeply entrenched in our culture. In other words, friendship between people who don’t look like each other has the potential to disrupt racism, to create solidarity where there was once division, a common resolve where there was once only fear and anger. It creates a channel through which the kingdom of God can flow relationally, spiritually, and politically.

Friendship is a first step for anyone who wants to join the movement against racial injustice but doesn’t know where to begin. While you’re wondering whether or not you should march in the street, why not march across the street to your neighbor’s house and invite them to share a meal? That’s where it can start. God only knows where it will end. ■

ENDNOTES

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THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN THE MIDST OF PAIN: THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENT-FOCUS ATTENTION

Joey Fung

Joey Fung is an associate professor of psychology at Fuller’s Graduate School of Psychology. Her research interests lie in parenting, parent-child relations, mindfulness and spirituality, and culture and child psychopathology. She is conducting research on school-based mindfulness prevention intervention for ethnic minority youth, spirituality and mindfulness meditation, and identifying nontraditional delivery systems of mental health care in international settings.

We all experience psychological pain—heartache, grief, loneliness, loss, disappointment, sorrow. Some pain may feel large and all-consuming. Broken relationships. Unfulfilled dreams. Dashed hopes. Loss of health.

Pain can also stem from seemingly ordinary and common matters. For me, it came in the form of postpartum depression. I knew parenting would be hard, but I was blindsided by the darkness I felt during the first year of motherhood. Part of the struggle stemmed from my son’s many medical problems. I moved from worrying that something might be wrong with my child, to searching for what was wrong so I could simply fix the problem, to constantly feeling defeated, hopeless, and inadequate as a parent. Most of my energy for the first year was spent worrying rather than enjoying my time with my son.

Regardless of how big or small our pain might seem, most of us have a hard time sitting still and being patient with our pain. We have a knee-jerk reaction to rid ourselves of pain and the associated unpleasant feelings. As a result, we often find our minds traveling to the past or the future. On the one hand, we may indulge in regrets and what-ifs. We replay and analyze our past. Why did this happen to me? What could I have done differently? A clinical term for this is rumination: being entangled in a web of thoughts, replaying past dynamics, conversations, or decisions.¹ While it may create an illusion that we are gaining insight and discovering the root of the “problem,” research shows that rumination is associated with greater depression, anxiety, and stress, and lower life satisfaction.² Rumination paralyzes us. It renders us captive to the past.

On the other hand, our minds may take us

to the future. We may come up with every possible contingency and plan accordingly. We may conjure up the worst-case scenario and find ways to minimize its likelihood. Or, feeling like we are stuck in a perpetual waiting period, we long for this season of pain to end and for things to become “normal” or “right” again. Whenever our mind goes to the past or the future, we are not living in the present moment. Future and past are not antonyms of each other. In fact, the opposite of past and future is the present.

How can we be fully present with pain? Mindfulness offers an alternative approach. Over the past several decades, there has been a proliferation of scientific and media attention on the topic of mindfulness. But what is it, and what does it mean for us as Christ followers?

Mindfulness was primarily introduced to Western health practitioners through Jon Kabat-Zinn in the early ’90s. Kabat-Zinn is a physician at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and a trained Dharma (meaning “suffering”) teacher whose work primarily involves patients with chronic pain. He observes that while having chronic pain is objectively challenging, the desire to get rid of the pain paradoxically causes one to fixate even more on the pain, which in turn magnifies it and exacerbates the negative experience. It is like when we have an itch; the more we scratch, the more it irritates us. Mindfulness introduces a new way of relating to pain.

According to Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment without judgment.³ There are three important components to this definition: (1) attention, (2) present moment, and (3) non-judgmental compassion. First, the synonym

of mindfulness is alertness or awareness. Our minds often function on autopilot. While that can be beneficial, especially in a society that prioritizes efficiency, it comes with a cost. Mindfulness is slowing down and developing greater awareness of one’s internal and external experiences as they unfold. Second, mindfulness focuses on the present moment. It resists the natural temptation to visit the past or future—especially when things are hard. Third, mindfulness replaces judgment with curiosity and compassion. We are to simply observe our feelings and thoughts as they arise without feeling the need to judge or evaluate them. With mindfulness, we create some healthy distance with pain so we can accept and respond with greater thoughtfulness rather than fearing future pain or recalling the memory of past pain.

Given that mindfulness focuses on the present moment, most practices center on the body. The rationale is simple: while our minds and thoughts can easily lead us to the past or future, our bodies are always rooted in the here and the now. Our body anchors us in the present moment. One of the signature mindfulness practices is mindful breathing. It is the practice of resting one’s attention on one’s breath. Usually done sitting still, eyes closed, we turn our attention to our breath as we breathe slowly and naturally. Whenever our mind wanders, rather than actively engaging with the thoughts, we gently but firmly return our attention back to our breath.

Simple attention to the breath can play an important role in Christian contemplative practices that go back many centuries, such as the Jesus Prayer. While the body’s physical stillness acts as an anchor and facilitates inner stillness, the breath can be combined with a word (e.g., “Abba,” “God,” “Father”) or phrase (e.g., “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

have mercy on me”). Father Martin Laird, in *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation*, writes, “Eventually the attention, the breath, and the prayer word will form a unity. This will be your anchor in the present moment, a place of refuge and engaged vigilance.”⁴ St. John of the Cross, Laird points out, takes it one step further: “The soul that is united and transformed in God breathes God in God with the same divine breathing with which God, while in her, breathes her in himself.” As we learn to unite our breath with the constant awareness of God’s presence in our lives, we realize the mystery and power of “praying without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:16). More importantly, our enhanced awareness allows us to more readily meet God in the present moment.

Mindfulness also changes the way we relate to our thoughts. Our minds can be racing with many thoughts in all directions at any given moment. In fact, we are so used to it that we may not even be aware of it. Whenever I lead a mindfulness practice, people are often surprised by how difficult it is to quiet their minds. (You may have experienced your chattering mind when you have trouble falling asleep at night.) It is even more exhausting added to the fact that we tend to place judgments or evaluations on our thoughts. Mindfulness offers a different approach in which we hold an open, curious, and compassionate posture toward our thoughts.

A signature practice is called mindfulness of thoughts. As we sit silently, we pay attention to whatever thoughts come up. Instead of actively engaging with them or judging them as “good” or “bad,” we simply notice them and let them go. We envision our thoughts as clouds moving across the sky, or leaves floating down the stream. We may connect our thoughts with physical sensations we ex-

perience in our bodies. Over time, it allows for the “renewal of our minds” (Rom 12:2).

I would like to offer a few reflections on some implications of mindfulness in the face of pain:

1. *It helps us foster a healthier relationship with our emotions.* Psychological pain often brings forth unpleasant emotions, sometimes leading people to cope in unhelpful ways. We may avoid or suppress them, which may provide short-term relief but harm us in the long run. Or we may get preoccupied by our emotions, which results in more stress. With mindfulness, we learn to celebrate and embrace the fullness of all human emotions. Instead of being terrified by our darker emotions or feeling the need to hide or run away from them, we have the courage to face them and be honest about them before God. Pain encourages us to practice lament, which draws us closer to the very heart of the suffering Christ.
2. *Mindfulness allows us to “be” in the face of someone else’s pain.* There are no quick fixes for pain. As much as we are intelligent or creative problem-solvers, there is no easy solution to racial tension, social injustice, or broken relationships. The “5 steps to success” or “7 effective ways to manage” rarely bring forth true healing and restoration. We are broken people in need of redemption. Mindfulness allows us to see and accept the world with all its beauty and chaos. As we learn to surrender our need to offer solutions, we realize the biggest gift we can offer is our selves.

3. *Mindfulness enhances our prayer life.* Our prayer lives tend to rely more on our intellect and less on our bodies. In C. S. Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape writes to the younger demon-in-training, Wormwood, that humans “can be persuaded that the bodily position makes no difference to their prayers; for they constantly forget . . . whatever their bodies do affects their souls.”⁵ Mindfulness encourages and enhances the experience of ancient spiritual disciplines such as the Prayer of Examen, which cultivates our daily awareness of the presence of God in our daily lives, or the disciplines of solitude and stillness.

4. *Mindfulness creates space within ourselves.* With greater margins in our lives, we are better able to see how our story is held by the larger story of God. It may also mean waiting and learning to be patient with ourselves and with what God is doing in our lives in the midst of pain. We learn to see and accept pain as sacred.

5. *We learn to receive waiting as a gift.* Pain is often associated with waiting, which goes against our culture of productivity and efficiency. Rather than trying to minimize ambiguities, we learn to be more tolerant of them. In the words

of Henri Nouwen in *A Spirituality of Waiting*: “Active waiting means to be present fully to the moment, in the conviction that something is happening . . . Patient living means to live actively in the present and wait there.”

AFTERWORD

Most of this article was written while wearing my second son, whose reflux was worse than that of his older brother (something I didn’t think could be possible). The unexpected and much earlier arrival of my second child, which initially felt like a disruption to my plans (I am a planner!), in many ways proved to be a gift. It was as

though, through writing this article, God was gently reminding me of the importance of turning my head knowledge into heart knowledge. My home for the past four months has become the training ground for me to practice mindfulness and the awareness of God’s presence in the daily diaper changing, burping, and nursing. I practice being mindful and fully present with my son, not just when he is joyful or relaxed, but also when he is in pain or distress (which is often). Whenever I catch myself wondering when he will stop crying and go to sleep so I can get on to my next chore, I practice returning to the present moment, knowing that God is meeting me in this current time and space. I

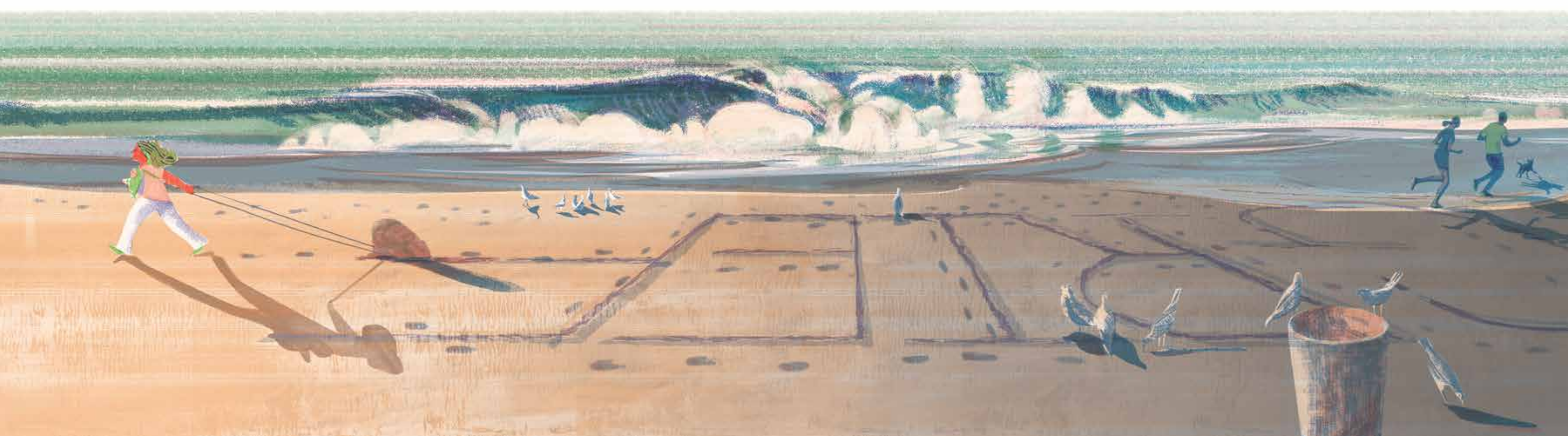
do not want my scurried state to rob me of my encounter with Christ. Some days I am still my usual anxious self, but like with any other spiritual discipline, the key is consistent and persistent practice. ■

ENDNOTES

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MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE: PROPHETIC DRAMA AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Andre Henry

The first task of a prophet is to make the invisible visible. Prophets usually do so through symbolic acts, or what some biblical scholars call “prophetic drama.” For example, God commanded the prophet Isaiah to walk naked for three years “as a sign and portent” of coming judgment (Isa 20). God commanded the prophet Hosea, “Go, marry a prostitute and have children of prostitution, for the people of the land commit great prostitution by deserting the Lord” (Hos 1:2). God commanded the prophet Jeremiah to wear a wooden yoke, like the ones farmers used to control oxen, as he walked through the streets of Jerusalem to show the people that God wanted them to “bow the neck to the king of Babylon” (Jer 27). These are but a few examples of God’s prophets using symbolic actions to reveal to God’s people what they would otherwise not see. To my surprise, God called me to do a similar thing.

In the summer of 2016, a young man named Philando Castile was shot by a local police officer in front of his girlfriend and their four-year-old daughter. This tragic, lethal encounter with police was seen by many as a clear instance of racial profiling. Consequently, it became a national headline, sparking widespread protests against police brutality and reinvigorating the Black Lives Matter movement.

Three weeks after Castile’s death, I had a vision: I was walking past a park in downtown Pasadena, California. From inside the park I could hear a street preacher. My curiosity led me to follow the man’s voice, and when I came to where the messenger was standing, I saw that the street preacher was me. I was standing next to a large, white granite boulder. On the stone was written all types of racial injustices. I was reciting whole passages from Isaiah and Revelation,

announcing a world full of justice and free of racism.

When I came back to myself, alone in my living room again, I began to weep. I was crying because I felt like the vision was an instruction and I did not want to do it. It was a call to engage in prophetic drama.

The next day, I did what the vision commanded; I began pulling the largest boulder I could manage atop a rolling flatbed wagon. On the boulder, I had written the racial injustices that weigh heavily on many Black people every day: police brutality, white fragility, mass incarceration, the names of victims of state violence, and microaggressions, to name just a few.

For the next four months, I dragged that boulder everywhere with me. I took it on job interviews, to class, to work, to dinner with friends. I almost took it on a date, but she ended up just coming to my house for dinner. Some people were proud of me for doing what I felt compelled to do. Some people were upset with me for “stirring up trouble.” I was ambivalent—feeling silly for making a spectacle of myself, but compelled to keep going, and relieved to finally be living honestly. I’d only known the world to be hostile to those who speak up about racial injustice. So, for a long time, my mouth had been sewn shut about such injustice. Carrying the boulder was a way of telling the whole truth with my whole body. It felt good to be honest.

I got a lot of questions about my actions. I eventually learned to tell inquirers that the boulder represents the burden that systemic racism lays on the psyches of many Black Americans. I wanted to make visible the burden that I carry each day, a burden that

many people neither see nor acknowledge.

I eventually posted about the boulder on Facebook, to save myself the energy of repeatedly explaining what I was doing and why. One commenter asked, “What good will it do?” It was a good question. What type of success can one expect by doing things like walking about naked for a few years, marrying a shrine prostitute, wearing an ox yoke, dramatizing a foreign invasion, or lugging a stone around their city to speak truth to power? Can symbolic actions confront social injustice in any meaningful way?

The short answer is yes. But to understand how, one must understand a few things about the anatomy of the struggle for progress.

WINNING THE SYMBOLIC CONTEST

The first thing one must understand is that half the battle for social progress has to do with our common sense. By common sense, I mean the dominant frames that inform the way we think about ourselves and live in the world. The other half of the battle is the institutional structure of our society through which we express our common sense. For example, race apartheid is an institutional expression of a white supremacist common sense.¹ Jonathan Smucker, a scholar-activist and prominent leader of the Occupy Wall Street movement, refers to the battle over a society’s common sense as the “symbolic contest.”²

Symbolic actions don’t have a direct effect on the structure of society. Just as the prophets didn’t stop the exile with any of their prophetic drama, I didn’t convince the Pasadena Police Department to change their policies because I carted a stone around town. Symbolic actions, however, are well-suited

for dealing with the cognitive obstacles to social progress.

Cognitions in general are a source of political power that can be cultivated to support the status quo—or wielded against it. Fear, apathy, and despair are three obvious cognitions that serve to keep people from mobilizing for progress. The task of the activist is to strategically confront those kinds of barriers by inducing what sociologist Doug McAdam calls “cognitive liberation.”³ Cognitive liberation is the process by which people come to see their situation as both unjust and changeable. It is also the path to winning the symbolic contest.

The appropriate methods for this half of the struggle are different from those that effect change on the structural level. Laws can be passed to produce greater social equity, but policy can’t erase the fear of the other. Policy alone can’t transform the myths that distort our society’s imagination with xenophobic visions. The way to convert fear to courage, apathy to love, and despair to hope is through the imagination. And we access the imagination through story, art, and symbol. Two of the most formidable cognitive blocks to progress that must be overcome through the imagination are apathy and cynicism.

CONFRONTING APATHY WITH LAMENT

Activists often find themselves crying, “Where is your outrage?!” at an apparently apathetic society, just as the Old Testament prophets lamented they were preaching to a nation that “doesn’t know how to blush at her sins” (Jer 6:15). The fact that making the invisible visible is an activist’s essential task tells us that many social injustices are difficult to see, especially by those who do not suffer under the weight of them. Social distance and ideology obscure the systemic

violence that marginalized people experience every day.⁴

Some of the big lies in American society that obscure racial problems, for example, are the notions that the Emancipation Proclamation ended racism, that America is the world’s most exceptional democracy, and that racism is largely about personal feelings of emotional hate. These misconceptions are often used to justify inaction on racial issues. In response, a prophet might say that we live in a culture that is reluctant to grieve its racial sins.

Grief, however, is an essential movement toward social progress because we can only change the social problems that we are willing to confess. In making the invisible visible, activists share in the essential prophetic task to engage the community with what theologian Walter Brueggemann calls the “language of grief,” that is, “the rhetoric that engages the community in mourning for a funeral they do not want to admit.”⁵

The biblical name for the language of grief is lament. Lament is unfortunately an underused form of prayer in the North American church that allows the petitioner to name the vicissitudes of life, including social oppression, in the presence of God (see Psalm 137). The Scripture identifies this mode of prayer as the spark that initiates salvation history: YHWH is summoned by the cry of the oppressed Israelites to deliver them from Egyptian bondage (Exod 3:9).

Lament confronts the cultural narratives that obscure social injustice. Lament challenges the ecosystems of apathy and numbness that support oppressive societal arrangements, creating space for people to engage the social injustices that were previously invisible. But



American culture is averse to lamentation.

Many Americans seem to be convinced that talking about racism can only exacerbate racial divisions, that talking about our country’s racist history keeps us living in the past. My experience has been the opposite. Carrying the boulder was an ongoing lament that drew me into deeper community with other racial justice sympathizers and invited them to take action alongside me.

My friend Aaron provided the boulder that I carried around Los Angeles. He had a number of them lodged in his yard. When I came to pick it up, he asked, “When is your Sabbath?”

“Saturday,” I replied.

“Then I’ll come and pick this up from you every Saturday and bring it back to you on Sunday,” he said. He kept his word.

Years later, I posted to Twitter, saying, “White people, tell me of a time when a black person confronted you about racism and you stepped back, considered what they had to say, and made lifestyle changes.” Aaron replied to my post: “You did that for me, Andre.” That is what community shaped by lament should be.

On one occasion, I had arrived at the steps of my home church. I stopped and looked at that staircase for a moment and let out an exhausted sigh, as I realized there was no way I was going to get that wagon up those steps. To my surprise, four other men surrounded the wagon, lifted the boulder up and walked it up the stairs, without my having to ask! Symbolically, this episode demonstrates what can happen when we allow ourselves to lament. Other people can come alongside us—and join the movement toward a remedy—if we’re willing to state the problem, to point it out to them.

There was even one week when local San Gabriel residents signed up for times to come to my house, pick up the boulder, and take it with them to give me a break. Many of those people I had only known through the internet.

A few months later, my neighbor J. R. Thomas, a mentally ill father of eight, was killed by the Pasadena police while having an episode. This was the exact kind of injustice I had been protesting, so I knew that I had to respond. I decided that a memorial should be built for J. R. at the doors of the Pasadena Police Station. And for the year that followed, a group of concerned citizens met at the doors of that police station to hold a vigil in protest of J. R.’s death. Aaron helped organize it, one of the guys that carried the boulder up the church steps was there, and several of my internet friends who carried the boulder to their workplaces and dates became the core team to keep the vigil going.

All of these stories remind me that people are not always inactive due to apathy. Sometimes people care deeply but don’t have the first clue about what they should do. Sometimes people don’t care because they can’t see the injustice. And in those cases where there really is apathy, lament can be a powerful method to induce the type of grief that leads to action.

CONFRONTING CYNICISM WITH HOPE

Movements for social change only happen when people believe that change is possible or that their efforts will be worthwhile. If people believe their votes are useless, extinction is inevitable, or that the authorities will always succeed in squashing a movement’s activity, they are much less likely to mobilize. Only hope can counteract our collective drift toward cynicism.

It is a mistake to limit the task of prophetic drama to expressing grief and pronouncing judgment. Writes Brueggemann, “Alongside this intense preoccupation with the burden and demand of the present, the prophets characteristically anticipate Yahweh’s future; that is, they think eschatologically, and mediate to Israel an imagined possibility willed by Yahweh.”⁶

Hope is about alternativity. At the end of the day, part of what keeps people from pursuing positive social change is the inability to imagine alternatives. Political scientist Gene Sharp puts forth that idea in his essay *Making the Abolition of War a Realistic Goal*. Some creative alternative must be offered to counter the idea that war is inevitable, he argues.⁷ And he takes his own advice by providing a blueprint throughout the rest of the essay, based on years of research, to explain how unarmed, ordinary civilians could ward off a foreign invasion through nonviolent struggle. It sounds unimaginable! But his

ability to envision an alternative to violence has made his work widely used in successfully toppling dictators around the world. We need more prophetic imagination, to envision the unimaginable and break down our mental walls of despair and liberate us to hope.

To confront cynicism, we need to have humility about the future. Months into my protest, a college friend named Paul sent me Rebecca Solnit’s book entitled *Hope in the Dark*. Paul could see that so much time in constant public grief was beginning to consume me alive. Solnit’s writing began to poke holes in my ideas about the nature of hope. “Hope is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists,” she writes. “Optimists think it will all be fine without our involvement; pessimists take the opposite position; both excuse themselves from acting.”⁸ Before reading those words, I felt pressure to hold a kind of certainty about the future. At that time, my idea of being hopeful meant that I could answer that Facebook commenter, the one who asked me what good could dragging a boulder do, with a confident “This will do plenty of good!” Solnit convinced me that “maybe” is actually the language of hope. The truth is that I have no idea if America will become a truly antiracist society. Oftentimes, the injustices we witness, and the systems that make them possible, make certainty about social progress untenable and untrustworthy. But I am confident that it is possible, and that every citizen can play a part in building such a society. It is not inevitable but it is possible, and possibility is what hope is all about.

The prophets tell us about the world God desires to bring about, a world free from all of the fatal phobias and isms of history, a world where tears are obsolete. However,

those visions don’t give us license to wait passively for God to bring that future into fruition. Instead, those visions of a coming age, where God makes all things right, serve as the grounds for summons to live in the world as God always intended in the present. The message is not, “Relax. Everything will be fine,” but rather, “Repent. The reign of God is at hand.”

We have everything to gain from answering the call to grieve the social injustices our society is trying to ignore. The guy walking around with an ox yoke on his shoulders or lugging a boulder around town is trying to reveal more to us than social pain—each is trying to make the road leading to true hope visible for those who can’t yet see it. ■

ENDNOTES

1. This is not to imply that common sense precedes institutional expression. Scholars like Ibram Kendi argue that structural factors, like policy, often precede ideologies that become our common sense.
2. J. M. Smucker, *Hegemony How-to: A Roadmap for Radicals* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017).
3. D. McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
4. N. Bloch, “Make the Invisible Visible,” in *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution*, eds. A. Boyd, D. O. Mitchell (New York: OR Books, 2016).
5. W. Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).
6. W. Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008).
7. G. Sharp, *Making the Abolition of War a Realistic Goal* (Cambridge, MA: Albert Einstein Institution, 1980).
8. R. Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2016).



SPIRIT OUTSIDE THE GATE: IMAGINING A CHURCH WITHOUT BORDERS

✚ *The below is excerpted from Oscar García-Johnson’s Spirit Outside the Gate: Decolonial Pneumatologies of the American Global South (InterVarsity Press, 2019).*

Oscar García-Johnson

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Writing about the direction of Christian theology at the end of the second millennium, Michael Welker wrote:

In many parts of the world, churches deriving from the Reformation and Counter-Reformation seem paralyzed. Bad moods—characterized by helplessness and fatigue—are spreading. Faith seems empty and incapable of articulation. Love is taken back to the private sphere, where it often suffocates in the struggle for self-assertion. Hope has no goal, no clear perspectives, and has even become extinct. Many worship services are sterile, joyless, and poorly attended. Scholarly theology has the reputation of being either elevated and incomprehensible or banal and boring.¹

As you can imagine, the re-formation (the spirit of the Reformation) of the church is far from over. How do we assume our generational task in our own re-formation journey? What should we seek to break free from in our time? And what do the different theologies see on the horizon for the future of the church?

As we ponder these questions I am reminded of an amusing saying, fairly popular among certain academic European Protestant circles, that sums up the progression of theology since Martin Luther with a touch of humor and sarcasm:² Theology was conceived in Germany, corrected in Great Britain, and corrupted in America. If that is so, I wonder, why stop at the last frontier of Europe, the United States? So permit me to expand this summary with like-minded satirical imagination. If indeed theology was conceived in Germany, corrected in Great Britain, and corrupted in America, then it is only reasonable to say that the

“conceived-corrected-corrupted” theology of the West was eventually shipped out to Latin America, Africa, and Asia, which after suffering from malfunctions due to the irregularity of the unknown terrain, was remanufactured on the way at a very low cost and then shipped right back to the United States, Great Britain, and Germany for inspection and recalibration.

But the story does not end there. The Western-conceived-corrected-corrupted and non-Western remanufactured and then Westernly recalibrated theology was then exported back as a final product made in the West for the rest. And yet, believe it or not, there is more to this funny story than meets the eye. In a globalizing world, the Western-conceived-corrected-corrupted and non-Western remanufactured and Westernly recalibrated-finalized-and-exported theology consumed in the former colonies of Europe has migrated (sometimes documented and sometimes undocumented) back up into the United States, Great Britain, and Germany from Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (who joined in the last crusade). As you can imagine, this restless child called theology has become an immigrant; it knows better than to call Christendom home because home for such a child is a church without borders.

This satirical exercise helps to raise the following questions:³

- Has theology taken seriously its task of bringing to people’s attention God’s vitality and love for human beings, God’s creative and delivering power?
- Has it developed forms enabling people of different cultural and social

spheres to organize their various experiences of God into a critical and creative framework?

- Has it released the powers to distinguish between an experience of God and images of idols, between illusions and self-redemption and an orientation toward God’s saving acts?

What seems to be lacking in many Westernized settings today is a broader sense of where theology begins and what it does and can achieve when collaborating with critical communities in the context of world Christianity. The self-understanding of theology as a global creation begins with a recollection and a realization: the recollection of where home is and the realization that what we in the West may have often called home is a delusion.

But this delusion can find its way into reality when the

author and giver of life, the Spirit Outside the Gate, guides our memories and human imagination. This is what I call the re-routing of theology, an understanding that insists we are “otherwise engaged with the Spirit of God from the very first”⁴ in our daily reflected practices, most ambitious research, and unanticipated experiences, from whatever social location we choose to originate the theological process—in, with, and beneath each and every experience of the subaltern communities sharing modern/colonial/imperial subjugations in the Global South. ■

ENDNOTES

1. M. Welker, “Christian Theology: What Direction at the End of the Second Millennium?” in *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jürgen*

Moltmann, ed. M. Volf, C. Krieg, and T. Dörken-Kucharz (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

2. Such a saying is known to have been propagated by the New Testament scholar J. C. O’Neill.
3. Questions directly taken from Welker, “Christian Theology,” 73.
4. D. L. Dabney, “Otherwise Engaged in the Spirit: A First Theology for a Twenty-First Century,” in *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jürgen Moltmann*, ed. M. Volf, C. Krieg, and T. Dörken-Kucharz (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).



SPIRIT OUTSIDE THE GATE: CÓMO IMAGINAR UNA IGLESIA SIN FRONTERAS

+ Lo abajo es extraído del libro de Oscar García-Johnson Spirit Outside the Gate: Decolonial Pneumatologies of the American Global South/Espíritu Sin Fronteras: Pneumatologías Descoloniales del Sur Global Americano (InterVarsity Press, 2019).

Oscar García-Johnson

Al escribir sobre el rumbo de la teología cristiana al final del segundo milenio, Michael Welker sugirió:

En muchas partes del mundo, las iglesias que derivaron de la Reforma y la Contrarreforma parecen paralizadas. Un mal humor, caracterizado por la impotencia y la fatiga, se está extendiendo. La fe parece vacía e incapaz de articulación. El amor es llevado a la esfera privada, donde a menudo se asfixia en la lucha por la autoafirmación. La esperanza no tiene ningún objetivo, ni perspectivas claras, e incluso se ha extinguido. Muchos servicios de adoración son estériles, sin gozo y con poca asistencia. La teología académica tiene la reputación de ser elevada e incomprendible o banal y aburrida.

Como podemos imaginar, la Re-forma de la iglesia (el espíritu de la Reforma) está lejos de su culminación. Entonces nos preguntamos ¿cómo asumimos nuestro rol generacional dentro de nuestra senda de reforma? ¿De qué debemos liberarnos en nuestro tiempo? ¿Y qué ven las diferentes teologías en el horizonte del futuro de la iglesia?

Al reflexionar sobre estas preguntas, recuerdo un dicho divertido, bastante popular entre ciertos círculos académicos protestantes europeos, que resume la progresión de la teología occidental desde Martin Lutero con un toque de humor y sarcasmo: La teología fue concebida en Alemania, corregida en Gran Bretaña y corrompida en América. Si es así, me pregunto, ¿por qué detenerse en la última frontera de Europa, Estados Unidos? Permítanme expandir este resumen con la misma imaginación satírica de ideas afines. Si de hecho la teología fue concebida

en Alemania, corregida en Gran Bretaña y corrompida en América, entonces es razonable decir que la teología de Occidente “concebida, corregida, corrompida” finalmente fue enviada a América Latina, África y Asia, donde, después de sufrir un mal funcionamiento debido a la irregularidad de un terreno desconocido, fue reconstruida en el camino a un costo muy bajo y luego enviado de regreso a los Estados Unidos, Gran Bretaña y Alemania para su inspección y re-calibración.

Pero la historia no termina allí. La teología occidentalmente concebida, corregida, corrompida y no-occidentalmente reconstruida y luego recalibrada en el Occidente fue exportada nuevamente como un producto finalizado del Occidente al resto del mundo. Y, sin embargo, lo crean o no, hay más que contar en esta divertida historia. En un mundo globalizado, la teología occidentalmente concebida, corregida, corrompida y no-occidentalmente reconstruida y occidentalmente recalibrada, finalizada y exportada y consumida en las antiguas colonias de Europa, ha emigrado (a veces con documentos y a veces indocumentadamente) de regreso a los Estados Unidos, Gran Bretaña y Alemania desde América Latina, África, Asia y el Oriente Medio (quien se unió en la última cruzada). Como podemos imaginar, esta niña inquieta llamada teología se ha convertido en una inmigrante con pasaporte mundial. Ella entiende bien que su verdadero hogar no es la cristiandad de antaño forrada de gloria del pasado y sembrada en el privilegio europeo porque el hogar de esta niña inquieta llamada teología es el mundo y su vehículo, la iglesia sin fronteras.

Este ejercicio satírico nos ayuda a plantear

las siguientes preguntas:

- ¿Será que la teología (occidental) ha tomado en serio su tarea de llamar la atención de la gente sobre la vitalidad y el amor de Dios; sobre el poder creativo y liberador de Dios?

- ¿Ha desarrollado formas que permitan a personas de diferentes ámbitos culturales y sociales organizar sus diversas experiencias de Dios en un marco crítico y creativo?

- ¿Ha liberado los poderes para así distinguir entre la experiencia de Dios y las imágenes de los ídolos, entre las ilusiones y una auto-redención y una orientación hacia los actos salvíficos de Dios?

Lo que parece faltar en muchos entornos occidentalizados de hoy en día es un entendimiento amplio de dónde se origina la teología y qué hace y puede lograr al colaborar con comunidades críticas en el contexto del cristianismo mundial. La auto-comprensión de la teología como una criatura global comienza con el acto de recordar y descubrir: recordar dónde se encuentra el hogar y descubrir que lo que en Occidente podríamos haber llamado a menudo hogar es un engaño.

Pero este engaño se sobrepone con la verdad cuando el autor y dador de la vida, el Espíritu Sin Fronteras, orienta nuestros recuerdos e imaginación humana. Esto es lo que yo llamo el cambio de ruta de la teología (re-direccionar), un entendimiento que insiste en que estamos “comprometidos de otra manera con el Espíritu de Dios” en nuestras prácticas diarias, nuestras más ambiciosas investigaciones

y nuestras experiencias más inesperadas, todo ello, desde cualquier espacio de enunciación donde elijamos originar el proceso teológico, en, con y bajo de cada una de las experiencias de las comunidades subalternas que comparten subyugaciones modernas / coloniales / imperiales en el Sur Global. ■

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PASTORING THROUGH POLITICAL DIVISION: PRESERVING THE TIE THAT BINDS

Scott Cormode, Andrés Zelaya, Suzanne Vogel, Phil Allen Jr., Kevin Haah

For many congregations, the coffee hour after church has become like the Thanksgiving dinner episode of a sitcom. Everyone knows that they love each other, but the only way to keep the peace is to make sure no one discusses politics. Many of our churches have good Christians on very different sides of the political issues. And the rhetoric of the time has come to treat politics like a college football rivalry—rooting for my team means booing your team.

According to a recent Pew Research study, 55 percent of Republicans view Democrats as “more immoral” than other Americans, while 47 percent of Democrats say the same about Republicans.¹ We Christians are called to the kind of community that listens intently to one another with love and respect. We are called, at the same time, to engage the world in such a way that we cannot ignore the political sphere—especially since so many of today’s political debates are framed in moral and religious terms.

How, then, do we maintain the bonds of faith in such a divided climate?

We interviewed four pastors who lead at churches with people on both sides of the political divide. We asked them, as they look to the coming election year, four questions about how they think about Christian unity in the midst of political division. Here are their answers.

How do you, as a pastor, help your people remain the community of faith in the midst of these tense times and in this fractious world?

Suzanne Vogel: One of the first questions I have to answer is, “What is our call as a church? What is my call in relationship to the culture and the politics of this moment?

How can we be a prophetic voice?” There are different ways churches can answer that question. Some churches and some pastors are invited by God to be a prophetic voice that calls their congregation into a particular view that leans politically more in one direction or another. Personally for me, and historically for our church, the prophetic voice we’re called to is to actually press against the tribalism of the moment and call the church to lay down our political differences and align with the kingdom first. We are in a culture where we don’t know how to hold covenant anymore. If I disagree with you, I’m out—I unfriend you on Facebook and I mute you on Twitter and I watch only my news shows and I get a divorce and I move towns. It’s systemic. So the most prophetic voice we can have is to actually demonstrate the gospel in the midst of our differences. That’s the kind of discipleship we want to cultivate, that practice of living the character of the gospel, even in our differences.

Phil Allen: I have people who are left. I have people who are center. And I have people who are right. But I ask people to think about where their allegiance is. And why they believe what they believe. It’s about getting people to look at their political allegiances, their cultural allegiances, denominational, what have you, then filtering them through the lens of Scripture. That can be tricky, too, because people are looking for the one-to-one equivalents. The verse that says that thing. So it’s about teaching people to have a biblically informed theological lens, and also an imagination, because you might not find a verse that talks about that thing. Also, it’s about getting people to have conversations within our ministry, giving a space where they can share perspectives, whether they walk away agreeing or not. It’s about having the willingness to sit and hear someone else’s perspective.

Andrés Zelaya: Part of being a pastor is that my people expect me to show them what it means to be a Christ-centered, peaceful, calm, focused presence in their midst. So a big task, for me, is making sure that I choose words carefully, making sure that the way I talk about politics or even certain positions is firm and with conviction, but full of grace. Full of charity toward those who disagree with me. A big part of being a pastor to my community of faith is making sure they have some model or example to show them what it looks like to navigate the tensions that do exist in our country. During lunches or coffee meetings, when somebody inevitably brings up a certain position or candidate, maybe starts describing them in an uncharitable tone, I try shifting the tone of the conversation. Ultimately I want to model Jesus, and that means thinking, how would Jesus respond in this situation? What would he act like? What would he say? I’m trying to think really critically in that moment and just be charitable toward others’ opinions and positions.

Kevin Haah: It’s helped me to teach my congregation about how the gospel has three parts—incarnational, restoration, and atonement—which each has a different understanding of the kingdom of God. The incarnational aspect warns us against making too much of political engagement. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world are different, and Jesus did not focus on overthrowing the kingdom of this world. This aspect of the gospel focuses more on creating a countercultural community that reflects the kingdom of God and loves our neighbors. The restoration aspect of the gospel calls us to a more transformational approach to community and political engagement. We are in what theologians say are the “in-between times.” But Jesus gives

us the end picture of what the kingdom of God looks like—the New Jerusalem. (That’s where our church—New City—got its name.) It is a place where all people from all cultures come together. It is a place where there is no more injustice. No more racism. No more sexism. It is a place where there is no more pollution or decay, and no more poverty or sickness. It is a dwelling place of God. When you know what the kingdom is supposed to look like, you know what you are supposed to do now. So we are called to engage the world and help the poor, marginalized, orphans, widows, immigrants, oppressed, suffering, sick, and otherwise excluded people. Finally, the atonement aspect of the gospel reminds us that it is not just about compassion and helping the needy or social justice. The Bible teaches us that Satan has taken over the world—not just our hearts, but also the systems of this world. The world is broken at all levels. This is why we need the cross. Jesus, by dying on the cross, liberated us from bondage to sin. Grace has the power to change people’s hearts. And it is through changing people’s hearts that we can truly see change in the world.

Are there any political issues that you feel you absolutely must address? Or any political issues you feel like you absolutely must not address?

Phil: There’s no political issue that I feel like I can’t address. There’s none that I won’t address. None I’m afraid to address. I do think the pro-life, pro-choice debate is one that I should address. I don’t even address it to try to convince people anymore. I just address it to try to help people be informed, and to see it through a biblically informed theological lens. Where they land is totally up to them. Also, I think the issue of power, as it relates to race, socioeconomic status, gender—those things have to be talked about.

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Kevin Haah (MDiv ’05) is lead pastor of New City Church of Los Angeles.

Power is the undercurrent to a lot of issues. It's power dynamics. A lot of the time, they are longstanding and they're unchallenged. So, when I get a chance, I'll talk about that to get people to start to see below the surface and reflect more deeply about, what's really happening when this politician says this? Or when this party does this thing, what's really happening? What's at play here?

Andrés: If the kingdom of God is truly here, and if Jesus inaugurated the kingdom and he rules and is sovereign over all things, there's not a single domain, area, or issue in life that Christians are not empowered or called into. Now, as a pastor, as a shepherd who knows my people, it requires wisdom and discernment to know how to talk about certain issues in a way that makes sense, that's contextualized, that's graceful, that's truthful and honest. For us here, being the fourth-largest city in America, issues around the economy must absolutely be addressed. Issues around racial segregation, sure. Issues around social class dynamics, yeah. Issues around immigration and diversity, absolutely. I think those have to be addressed. Now, do they necessarily have to be addressed from the pulpit, or with the same level of force or intention? Not necessarily. That's where tact and wisdom, just trying to be a good shepherd to my people, comes in.

Suzanne: We try to preach the Scripture and let the issues come out of it, rather than bringing the issue to the Scripture. I think that keeps us from being reactive and it allows us to respond over time. And the truth is, if you spend much time in the Bible, there are issues that get raised all over the place. Where things get tripped up in the congregation is if they feel like we're bringing an agenda to the Scripture. However, I would say issues of race and racism are pretty important to us because we're an interracial body. We're for sure trying to address that and touch it and deal with it. The hard part right now is that you could be reacting every single Sunday. Every single Sunday, you could be reacting to something and commenting on something that's happened. I just feel like the culture's baiting us into that all the time.

Kevin: I don't want to be afraid to speak up prophetically on issues that affect the least among us. If we don't stand with the oppressed, who will? If we don't stand with the refugees, who will? If we don't stand with those who are victimized, who will?

We have to live in the tension between two competing biblical principles: first, that Jesus did not seek to change the world through grabbing the power of this world, even when there was a lot of evil going on from the government; and second, when we truly love people who are oppressed, we are called to find the source of the problem and address it. If people are pushing people off the roof of a building, we can't just take care of the people who are pushed off. We have to address the issue of the people who are pushing people off. We sometimes need to get the police to go up there and stop the pushers. Or maybe we have to make sure the government policy is not what is pushing people off the building. It's important not to get pegged into liberal or conservative mode and instead think about the kingdom of God. What does that look like? It may look like a combination of policies supported by Democrats and Republicans or Libertarians.

Are there any role models that you look to? A person who you think is navigating this well?

Suzanne: I think about Eugene Peterson. I've realized that I need to be really aware of my own political convictions and desires, and what sparked that for me was in Eugene Peterson's book *Under the Unpredictable Plant*. He talks about how one of the temptations of ministry is that we occasionally speak for God, and then we start thinking we always speak for God—or even that we are God. So I have to manage my own humility. Just because I'm the pastor and I happen to have the platform doesn't mean I get to always speak what I think. I have a position of authority and power that I have to steward carefully.

Andrés: Tim Keller. As far as I've seen, he has done a really great job, especially being from a large urban center like New York City. I imagine, being in ministry for almost 30 years there, he's had tons of these conversations. From the '80s when he started his congregation, there's been a ton of different parties, whether it's in Congress or the presidency or local elections. I've really appreciated his tact.

Phil: I really have to go back to Obama. I'm not saying I agree with all of Obama's policies, but the man that he is, the person he has shown himself to be—I liked the way he carried himself. The way he speaks is

calming; it brings people down to think and reflect, and not act so emotionally.

Kevin: I think a good example is Martin Luther King Jr. He didn't seek to change society through the power of the sword. He sought to change society by demonstrating enemy love, even when they were beaten or blasted with a water cannon.

Are there any Scriptures that call out to you in this moment?

Phil: The first that comes to mind is Ephesians 2. Christ brought the Gentiles and Jews together, reconciled them in his body. I use that when we talk about race, but I think the principle can apply to any division, any divisiveness, that's going on. Before there's a reconciliation, there's a solidarity. His body represents solidarity. He gave of himself on behalf of—for—others. I try to get people to come back to a place of humbly submitting ourselves to listening to the other person, the willingness to be in solidarity with, so that we can be reconciled—so that we can do things together.

Andrés: Recently, the Psalms have allowed me to give language to the different tensions that I often feel in my heart. Whenever there's an issue or a politician who says something that rubs me the wrong way, to know that you can come before God and there's nothing that can, or should, remain hidden or veiled. To know that I can, when I see an injustice, speak to God about it and wrestle with it honestly. Even in the midst of my doubts and my questions and my anger. Like Psalm 58, it's the Psalmist railing against unjust politicians and how they take bribes or how they ignore the cry of the poor. And the cry of the Psalmist is—I mean, we want to label it righteous anger, and it is, but it's anger nevertheless. The Psalmist is going to God and saying, “God, may they become like the snails who melt under the sun. May they be like a baby who never saw the light.” It's very strong language. When you're living in this tension, to know I don't have all the answers, but I need to have somewhere to bring them to, that's the Psalms for me. I need to have somewhere to vent my anger, my stress, my sadness, my questions. And to know that God is there, listening.

Kevin: One of the first things Jesus said in public was this, in Mark 1:15: “The time has

come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the gospel.” Then he went on to demonstrate the power of the kingdom by healing the sick and casting out demons, to teach us what this kingdom was like. It is a place where things are upside-down. The marginalized are elevated. The poor, blind, and oppressed are freed. Sinners are forgiven and embraced. Even enemies are loved. They assumed that the kingdom of God would overpower the kingdom of this world immediately. But Jesus said, no. He said in John 18:36 when he was conversing with Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.” We need the kingdom of this world. We need our police, courts, judges, legislators, governors, and military. But what happens when the church, the visible presence of the kingdom of God on earth, tries to take over the kingdom of this world or to fuse the two kingdoms? Every time we have done that, we have created a huge mess. Christianity has a bad history because it started to wield the power of the sword, the power of the kingdom of this world. But the incarnational aspect of the gospel tells us that we have to be very careful when the church starts to make winning political battles and gaining political power its focus.

Suzanne: Ephesians 3 is all about how Christ, in himself, tears down the dividing wall of hostility. Then, chapter 4 pivots and talks about, “As a prisoner of the Lord, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you've received.” Most of us would think, well, that life looks like a life of huge sacrifice, maybe, or radical generosity, or mission work in some other part of the country. But then he says, “Okay, this is what it looks like: Be completely humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” So that's the rubric I think about a lot and talk about a lot. This is what in Ephesians is defined as a life worthy of the calling we have received. ■

ENDNOTES

1. Pew Research Center, “Partisan Antipathy: More Intense, More Personal,” October 10, 2019, <https://www.pew-research.org/2019/10/10/partisan-antipathy-more-intense-more-personal/>.





TEARS

by Dea Jenkins

*Tears like waterfalls
Like I'm dreaming*

*Tears fall like waterfalls
Am I dreaming?*

✚ Erasure Series: Blue by Dea Jenkins. Watercolor on paper, 16" x 20", 2018. Find details about the artist on p. 3, and more of her artwork and poetry on pp. 11 and 98–99.



VOICES ON

Rest

“Sabbath rest is not simply the religious equivalent of a day off from work. The very notion of a day off is a negative one, suggesting the need to escape our brick-making for the sake of our sanity. If we have the means, we vacate, we get away, and then we return to the same job perhaps slightly better rested but with the same attitude. This is not Sabbath rest. We may enjoy leisure activities on the Sabbath, but Sabbath rest is not to be identified with leisure. It’s not simply an opportunity to get away from work, to do things to recharge our batteries, but to cultivate a right relationship to our work. It’s an opportunity to remember who we are: the beloved children of a God who blesses the poor in spirit, who feeds those who wander in the desert. We need to be secure in that identity in order to be rightly related to our work. Toward that end, Abraham Heschel insists that the Sabbath ‘is a day in which we abandon our plebeian pursuits and reclaim our authentic state, in which we may partake of a blessedness in which we are what we are, regardless of whether we are learned or not, of whether our career is a success or a failure. It is a day of independence of social conditions.’

As Christians we need more than just escape or distraction. More than just a day of vacation or binge watching on Netflix. Sabbath rest is not simply about forgetting work but about remembering who God is and who we are as a consequence. We need a regular discipline that will help us to remember that our worth is not defined by our work, that our value is not measured by our productivity.”

+ Cameron Lee, professor of marriage and family studies, in “FULLER dialogues: Therapy as Peacemaking,” originally delivered at the 2018 Integration Symposium

+ Visit this Voice section on Fuller.edu/Studio for links to full videos, articles, and more.





“As ministry leaders, we do a good job of caring for others but often we do not extend the same care to ourselves. The work is challenging, and the seemingly endless demands of preaching, counseling, and visioning keep us busy. Perfectionism, productivity, and exhaustion can often become symbols of our dedication and the measure of our self-worth. And though we comfort ourselves with the belief that all this is necessary for the kingdom, we struggle with fatigue, anxiety, and discouragement. We grapple with the growing incongruity between how we present ourselves to others and what we may be experiencing on the inside.

A friend of mine charged with the care of pastors in the Evangelical Covenant Church shared a formula for unhealthy ministry: depletion + isolation + conflict = significant trouble. We know that conflicts and challenges in ministry are inevitable! But when conflict encounters a leader’s untended depletion and isolation, trouble is also inevitable. If we are not careful, busyness can kill us—emotionally, spiritually, relationally, and physically.

Perhaps it’s time to stop and reevaluate the rhythms of our work and rest. It goes without saying that we need to work hard, to be faithful and fruitful in our work. Still, a Sabbath lifestyle is fundamental: living and working out of a place of quietness before the Lord. In a culture that values speed and productivity, Jesus shows us another way. In the midst of busyness, he took Sabbath, stepped away, went to a solitary place, and prayed. When we choose this kind of Sabbath lifestyle, we are confessing that we want our identity to align with the radical and subversive example of Christ.”

+ Kurt Fredrickson, associate dean for the Doctor of Ministry and continuing education and associate professor of pastoral ministry, in “Rhythms of Work and Rest for Ministry Leaders” on FULLER studio

“A Sabbath lifestyle is fundamental: living and working out of a place of quietness before the Lord.”

—KURT FREDRICKSON

“When we are unable to stop or say no to the requests of others, we may be acting as rescuers rather than as coworkers with the one true Savior who redeems us for shalom. The messiah complex prevents us from realizing our own need for transformation, instead seeing transformation as something that needs to be accomplished ‘out there’ and not ‘in here.’ The principle of Sabbath is one way to regain perspective on our identity and role in our work. Sabbath means not only resting but ceasing, including ceasing to try to be God. On the Sabbath, ‘we do nothing to create our own way. We abstain from work, from our incessant need to produce and accomplish. . . . The result is that we can let God be God in our lives.’¹ When we remember who God is in our lives, we are reminded of our role and God’s role; we can refrain from the temptation to be God in the lives of those for whom we feel responsible.

Sabbath creates a time and space in which shalom relationships are lived out and marred relationships are made whole. The accurate ‘I’ view of the self is deepened as we experience God in the keeping of the Sabbath and Sabbath rest. Exhaustion is not the mark of spirituality. Sabbath is not only about personal time with God, or a personal time of rest, but also the place in which social support can be encouraged. Sabbath is a communal event that is best and most fully shared with others. Once Sabbath thus alters our orientation, it is not so much an isolated day as an atmosphere, a climate in which we live all our days. Sabbath offers a foretaste of what is to come, when all will live in shalom.”

1. Marva Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

+ Cynthia Eriksson, associate professor of psychology, Jude Tiersma Watson, associate professor of urban mission, and Ashley Wilkins (PhD ’16) in “Caring for Practitioners: Relationships, Burnout, and Sustainability” in FULLER magazine issue #5

“Evil is pervasive and seemingly ever-present. How can humans avoid evil and find holiness when we are so fragile and full of sin? There are those who seek justice by keeping the law and showing their good deeds as a sign of holiness—salvation by works. The heart of the law, however, makes this evident: We pursue holiness when we take 24 hours every week for personal rest as an act of worship to God. Even from the time of the Old Testament, the key to holiness was not salvation by works but, instead, was made clear in a commandment to rest in God.

The fourth commandment demands that we include all family members in this rest, but it does not stop there. We are also required to seek out our neighbors, to embrace the employees under our care in this rest and, in addition, to be ecologically minded and include the natural world in this rest with God!

We must make it a priority in our lives to keep the Sabbath, and in so doing, to seek holiness through rest and restoration.”

+ Johnny Ramírez-Johnson, professor of anthropology and profesor del Centro Latino, in “Sabbath as Model for Restoration” in FULLER magazine issue #6



*“Each time I give myself
over to rest, I find it a
mode of resistance*



*for the myth that I can
and should do it all.”*

—MICHAELA O'DONNELL LONG



“I think I can do it all. But, nearly every day for the last six months, God has shown me that I simply cannot do all that I have promised I will do. My job at Fuller requires a lot. The company I own is busy and flourishing. My daughter is an energetic toddler. And as much as I’ve tried to just muscle through it all by forgoing my own rest, it hasn’t worked. I’ve dropped balls in my work, failed in moments with my kid, and disappointed people I care about. I’ve come face to face with the reality that, when it comes to doing it all, I am not enough.

In other words, I am coming to grips with my own humanity. God is making it clear that I am not enough to do all of these things—but also mercifully showing me that because God is the great I AM, I am enough to just be with God.

God is guiding me in my dysfunction—mostly toward rest and play. Having a kid makes the play part pretty doable. When I walk in the door to my kid’s room, I can’t help but be whisked away by her desires to make Play-Doh pizza or to play school with her stuffed animals. And I find that when I give myself over to her sense of whimsy, I am also being with God. Through play, I am able to sense that I am enough.

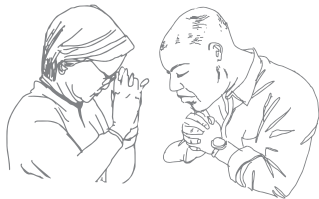
Rest is a little harder for me to submit myself to. But opportunities for small doses of quietness seem to keep presenting themselves. Rest is vulnerable in that I mostly have to be alone with myself and with God. I’ve been in such a pattern of doing that I fear I’ve forgotten how to fully be. But, each time I give over to rest, I find it a mode of resistance for the myth that I can and should do it all.”

+ Michaela O'Donnell Long (PhD '18), senior director of Fuller's De Pree Center, in “Rest, Play, and the Costs of Believing ‘I Can Do It All’” on the De Pree Center's blog

“The world says that if we do a certain thing, we will have peace—or identify in a certain way, we will have peace. And maybe we will, for a moment. Then there’s something else after that, and onward we go away from true peace—the peace that surpasses all understanding—never whole, never settled, propelled back into desperation and division. Reality becomes unmanageable and untenable even as we may hold onto words about Christ.

In contrast to the peace of the world or the narrowed peace offered by a religious demographic, the peace Christ gives us in the Spirit is a transforming peace. It is the Spirit who awakens our self-imagination. Someone who is free in the Spirit, who has peace in the renewing life of Jesus, ‘knows himself in his spiritual essence,’ as Anthony the Great once wrote, ‘for he who knows himself also knows the dispensations of his Creator, and what he does for his creatures.’ This knowledge is given by the Spirit, and as we participate with the Spirit, we are given discernment about ‘all things,’ even our own self. Sometimes this Spirit says go and sometimes this Spirit says stop, enabling a life-giving rhythm in our lives instead of exhaustion. The Spirit of holiness is also the Spirit of Sabbath. I’ve had to remind myself of this again and again.”

+ Patrick Oden, visiting assistant professor of theology and church history, in “Passing the Peace: A Pneumatology of Shalom” in FULLER magazine issue #9



VOICES ON
Repentance

+ In the following, Fuller faculty reflect on the church’s practice of repentance from various perspectives. For a continued exploration of articles, videos, and podcasts on spiritual life and practice, visit Fuller.edu/Studio.



REPENTANCE ACROSS HISTORY

A decade ago, I investigated the practices of confession and reconciliation in evangelical churches.¹ While Christian churches have always held that confession of sin is central to entering into and maintaining new life in Christ, they have not always agreed on what confession entails, or how central it is to our faith practices. Arising from the Jewish faith, the church inherited a rich tradition of penitential piety and practices. Given the covenant God established with Israel and the law that maintained it, practices such as fasting, sackcloth and ashes, and supplication—often accompanied by sacrifice—were common, both individually and corporately. At the core of these practices was the belief that a price must be paid for wrongdoing, and that the act of penance must demonstrate a change of heart.

We find the first evidence of rites of penance in the church around 200 CE. Up to this point it was assumed that you had confessed your sins before baptism, where those sins were then washed away (Acts 22:16). But African theologian Tertullian, in his treatise *On Repentance*, describes baptism and repentance (or penance) as two planks to which a person clings—to survive the shipwreck of sin and to arrive at the port of God’s forgiveness. Tertullian uses the term *exomologesis*, or public penance (or confession).

Further, the Lord’s Supper maintained one’s state of grace, as the Table was seen as reestablishing a right relationship with God and healing us from our sins. The “kiss of peace” which often preceded the Lord’s Supper was also seen as an agent of reconciliation. This actual kiss, mouth on mouth, was seen as the sharing of the Spirit (breath) between sisters and brothers in Christ. These practices brought those who had sinned back into communion with God and the church.

But these were practices for “ordinary” sins. Extraordinary sins—murder, denying one’s faith, or adultery—required more rigorous cleansing. Tertullian describes a more public, and often humiliating, penance. These penitents were excluded from the Lord’s Supper (excommunicated) and denied its healing effects until they demonstrated genuine contrition. This public (canonical) penance was considered a second conversion and, like baptism, was only practiced once in one’s lifetime—two strikes and you’re out. This is reflected in that a single word in Greek, *metanoia*, is translated both as conversion and repentance (literally “change of mind”).

These public practices slowly gave way to more private practices in Western medieval churches. Here monks, nuns, and priests prescribed acts of contrition for individuals to pay the price for their sins. These practices were not imposed on the people but were actually sought by the laity. Over time private penance overtook public penance as the norm, and its practice and meaning continued to evolve. Eventually “confession” was declared one of the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. Penance also became less personal, as people were allowed to recruit others to perform the prescribed acts of contrition with them, to share the cost of their sin. (The practice of indulgences, where one paid to have masses said on their or another’s behalf—living or dead—emerged during this time and became a touchstone of the Reformation.)

One can see both continuity and discontinuity in these practices over the past four centuries across Christian churches. Much has remained in current Catholic piety and practice, although in the 1970s, the Roman Catholic Church officially replaced language of “confession” with “reconciliation.” While frequently in evangelical churches, confession or penance is given little emphasis in ritual life. Few practice any expression of confession corporately, and then only occasionally. However, the research I alluded to at the beginning of this essay does offer examples that prove the rule, such as evangelical churches with various kinds of ministries of reconciliation. Whether through one church’s offering guidance on conflict resolution or another church’s ministry to sex workers—which offered hope through new life in Christ and new identity in society—different expressions of the need for *metanoia* in the Christian life continue to show themselves in the church.

It is the nature of human rituals to change in both their execution and interpretation over time. But the history of our faith asks if we still believe in the necessity of *metanoia*, and if so, how do we invite people to express that belief and participate in practices that form them into that understanding? If we take seriously the vocation we have been given in our baptism to be both reconciled to God and others and to be ambassadors of that reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18), then that should inform our personal and corporate practices of our faith.

1. Todd E. Johnson, “Ambassadors of Reconciliation? Observations and Lessons Learned from Evangelical Churches,” *Liturgy* 23, no. 4 (2008): 19–25.

+ Todd Johnson, William K. and Delores S. Brehm Associate Professor of Worship, Theology, and the Arts



OUR CULTURAL SINS

Even though I have been studying and thinking about culture for more than three decades, I am still constantly amazed to witness how culture all around us—locally and globally—changes so rapidly and impacts people’s lives so greatly. Most individuals I see in private practice or in ministry struggle with problems stemming from cultural conflicts—whether dealing with romantic partners, family, church, or work settings. I anticipate problems will only intensify in the future unless people learn to tackle the clash of cultures and underlying confusion of values.

Because culture largely operates implicitly, I believe it is important to raise awareness—whether I am counseling, teaching, or speaking publicly—in order to help people explore the underlying issues. On a variety of matters, people in conflict frequently ask me which side is right or wrong. Expecting to hear politically correct, neutral responses, they are quite surprised to hear me say both sides may be wrong. This is not a ploy to simply gain attention, but to encourage critical examination of sin and dysfunction not only at the individual and family level but also on a cultural and societal level. As much as there are strengths and riches to celebrate in many traditions, there are also shortcomings and ills.

Cultural sin is not popular to discuss. However, what is considered to be culturally normative may not reflect values consistent with God’s kingdom. There are many sins of culture that could be named, but one that poses the greatest threat to the church today, I believe, is individualism. The culture of individualism, where people come to expect their desires to be catered to and their personal preferences to be put above others, has resulted in the erosion of community. As Robert Bellah and his colleagues have described in the *Habits of the Heart*, since the modernist movement, the traditional religious community has been swept by the tide of private lifestyles and faith. The church needs to repent for conforming to the world more than transforming to reflect what Christ’s sacrificial love has done for us and is calling us to be as a caring community.



+ Jenny Pak, associate professor of psychology



REPENTING OF COLONIALISM AND RACISM IN MISSION



Before the church can move forward with the mandate to make disciples of all nations, it must confront its past record of mission in the context of colonialism and racism. When it does so honestly, it will find cause for repentance before it can more rightly witness to Christ to the ends of the earth.

The churches of the West have claimed great success in world evangelization through a global missionary movement over five centuries. This initiative was inextricably linked with the expansion of Europe from 1492 when Columbus arrived in the Americas. Successive European empires—Dutch, French, and British—followed Spain and Portugal until Europe destroyed itself. The US—also led by people of European descent—then emerged as the global superpower. This is not to say that contemporary world Christianity is the direct result of the Western colonial enterprise—that would denigrate the faith of Christians in other parts of the world, ignore local Christian movements, and neglect precolonial forms of Christianity. However, we cannot ignore the complicity of mission with colonialism and the spirit of that age. This was not a secret: the landmark World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 took for granted that there was a hierarchy of races, and it published an extensive report on the relations between missions and imperial governments. Few missionaries in the colonial period challenged racism and white supremacy. Still fewer criticized the colonial project in which the land, bodies, and resources of other peoples were appropriated by Europeans.

Western Christians today do not yet fully acknowledge the extent of the harm done to colonized peoples and to the name of Christ by this complicity. Or the Western Church insulates itself from the past and avoids repentance by

disowning the colonial missionary enterprise. But even though churches admit their agents made mistakes then, they may fail to recognize that the sin that caused this complicity also infects their church life and theology today.

The continuity between the world of today and the European imperial period is often denied because the US supported decolonization and development after World War II. But that does not necessarily mean today's Western missionaries are free of the paternalistic and racist attitudes that infused colonial mission. Today Western Christians still build schools, serve in hospitals, and offer other forms of help to poorer Christians without always considering the colonial baggage of these activities or the reasons why those Christians are poor in the first place. While its churches are for the most part racially segregated, US missions will continue to be tainted by racism, which is the most insidious aspect of the complicity of missions with European colonialism.

We live in a wounded world, and much of that hurt has been inflicted by predominantly Christian nations with powerful churches. Before we imagine a hopeful future, white Christians must examine the past and repent because churches celebrated evangelistic success without challenging injustice. We must repent of the sin of imagining the kingdom of God as the outworking of European supremacy. And we must examine our theology to root out the wrong attitudes to people of other races, ethnicities, traditions, cultures, and religions that are embedded within it, asking the Lord, crucified and risen, for forgiveness.

+ Kirsteen Kim, professor of theology and world Christianity and associate dean for the Center for Missiological Research

CHOCOLATE AND CORPORATE REPENTANCE

Understanding repentance as a corporate experience of faith is a necessary aspect of daily spirituality. For instance, when observing what I understand of the evangelical church in the world throughout its history, I see many things to celebrate, but I also feel deep regrets. And the urgent and proper response seems penitence—on my own behalf and on behalf of many that have come before me.

As I teach about Christian responses to global issues of concern related to children, my students are often surprised to discover that repentance is a first step. We naturally expect that changing the evils of the world is an outward-facing, finger-pointing exercise. Instead, I’ve found that effective responses only come when we first humbly deal with our individual and corporate culpability. For example, a global concern I am passionate about is the problem of child labor—specifically in the chocolate industry.

What many in Europe and North America don’t know is that much of the cocoa used in our chocolate is produced by child labor—often involving children working as slaves. In worst cases, children are trafficked across borders in West Africa to work during cacao harvesting season, when they toil many hours, using dangerous equipment, isolated from family and friends, and are fed only the most meager rations. Many never taste the chocolate their work produces. And most have little chance of getting a better job with decent pay at any point in the future.¹

This isn’t new news. It’s been an open secret for decades. Almost 20 years ago, the largest manufacturers (Hershey, Mars, and Nestle) committed to eliminating the worst forms of child labor in their production efforts, but all failed to fulfill those pledges.² They claimed it too difficult to accomplish the controls necessary. Yet during that period they saw no reduction in profit margins. In short, there is no progress without incentive to change.

Here’s where we come in. It’s easy to point fingers. Why have the chocolate companies or

Western governments not corrected this injustice? But this isn’t how capitalism works. No matter how badly we want the right thing done, ethical practices will not be ensured without significant financial pressure. So we need to start pointing at ourselves. What have we done to change our consumption patterns to impact this evil? Have we lulled ourselves into thinking this problem has been solved? Our urgent response must be to confess—to confess our apathy and complicity in a system that freely abuses children. And we must repent.



For starters, we might consider buying only Fair Trade Certified chocolate. No longer exclusive to specialty stores, Fair Trade chocolate is now widely available. It may be more expensive, but given that increased prices help ensure that living wages are paid to adult harvesters, we might consider that small cost a donation to the lives of West African children.

Or perhaps we can—and I know this sounds extreme—stop consuming chocolate entirely. Why not consider giving up chocolate as an expression of repentance until the chocolate companies fulfill their promises? While a handful of Christians making this choice is unlikely to make a difference, I wonder whether a larger body of us might see it as a necessary step in pursuing justice for the least of these, and as a righteous expression of shared, corporate repentance.

1. Food Empowerment Project, “Child Labor and Slavery in the Chocolate Industry—Food Empowerment Project,” 2019, <https://foodispower.org/human-labor-slavery/slavery-chocolate/>.
2. P. Whoriskey and R. Siegel, “Hershey, Nestle and Mars Broke Their Pledges to End Child Labor in Chocolate Production,” *Washington Post* (June 5, 2019), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/business/hershey-nestle-mars-chocolate-child-labor-west-africa/>.

+ David Scott, assistant professor of intercultural studies and children at risk, and associate dean of the School of Theology and the School of Intercultural Studies

COMMITTING TO JESUS, AGAINST FALSE BINARIES

God is good, all the time. For me, this is a truth worth turning to my neighbor to say—especially when I’m burdened by ways that the church has defamed the name of Jesus. Repentance is a core biblical theme. The first imperative uttered by Jesus in the Gospels was “repent” (Mark 1:15). We as the church have much to repent of: racism, misogyny, homophobia, xenophobia, imperialism, colonialism, materialism, and triumphalism—to name a few. Thankfully, there have been significant movements within progressive evangelical contexts to denounce many of these idols and call the church to biblical repentance. But speaking as a Christian significantly formed by left-leaning evangelicalism, I sense a growing need for repentance in our tribe as well.

There is a continuously growing constituency that claims the name “Christian” yet denies that the Bible is God’s divinely inspired Word, perfect in all that it teaches, and that Jesus is the only way, truth, and life. From a historical perspective, the phenomenon of people claiming to be Christian yet viewing the Bible as fallible and espousing a pluralistic view of salvation is a 19th-century, Western innovation, alien to the majority of Christian history. While so many of these people are characterized by a deeply Christlike concern for justice for those on the margins—one of the



core biblical traits often lacking in many conservative evangelicals—it is sad that a love of justice in many cases is drawing people away from Jesus. To illustrate this problem: the list of Christians in my life

who would join me both to protest the acquittal of police officers who killed unarmed Black people and to go out in the streets to evangelize is growing rapidly smaller. Typically, Christians who are down with one aren’t down with the other. We’ve either reduced Christian witness to a false binary between truth and justice, or we rationalize our neglect of one due to examples of poor implementation by others.

We must not empower colonial, patriarchal, and imperialist aberrations of Christianity to the point of allowing them to ruin Jesus for us. God is good, all the time. The church isn’t, but God is. The Samaritan woman at the well had been burned by organized religion, yet she was able to push through false binaries in order to repent from her sin and testify to the gospel of Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth (John 4:1–42). African slaves who were stolen and tormented in the name of American Christianity yet understood the distinctiveness of the true gospel as they sang, “Old Satan’s church is here below; up to God’s free church I hope to go.” Our pursuit of justice and human dignity should not weaken our commitment to scriptural authority, theological orthodoxy, and spiritual piety—indeed, these things are inseparable. As we continue to repent of our complicity with systemic oppression, let us also repent of our pluralistic humanism that has placed the flourishing of people as the end in and of itself of our theology, worship, and ministry. Jesus is the author of justice, the only name under heaven by which people can be healed, our ever-present help in times of trouble, and is worthy of all praise, honor, and glory.

+ Vince Bantu, assistant professor of church history and Black church studies

“God is good, all the time.

The church isn’t, but God is.”

—VINCE BANTU

HOMECOMING, AN ONGOING PRACTICE

오전6시50분. 여전히 졸린 눈으로 연구실 책상 앞에 앉아 저를 응시하고 있는 두 그림을 바라봅니다. 하나는 마틴 손가우어의 안토니의 유혹이고, 다른 하나는 램브란트의 탕자의 귀환 입니다. 분주한 하루를 시작하기 전, 이 두 그림은 저를 회개하는 삶의 리듬에 주목하도록 이끎니다.

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해 주고 있지만, 거기에는 좀처럼 죄의 고백을 위한 자리를 찾아보기 어렵습니다. 죄의 고백은 종종 생략되거나, 기껏해야 다음으로 이어질 순서들을 위한 기계적 절차에 불과합니다. 죄인됨과 참회는 이제 먼지 묻은 상품이 돼버렸습니다.

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다. 회개는 소소한 나의 죄악들에 양심의 가책을 느끼는 일에 매몰되어 사회적 악과 불의에 눈멀게 하지 않습니다. 회개하는 삶은 나의 시대의 죄악들에 깨어 더 민감하게 함으로, 이 시대의 구조적 악과 거기에 고통받는 약자들을 더 선명히 바라볼 수 있게 합니다.

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터 지지를 받는 것을 기뻐하기보다 골방에 들어가 나의 죄악된 마음, 생각들, 말, 행위들을 하나 둘 하나님 앞에 내려놓는 일이 오늘 나의 삶에서 필요합니다. 죄악과 분투하는 안토니와 남루한 모습으로 아버지 품에 안긴 탕자의 뒷모습이 이 글을 쓰는 저의 시선을 다시금 사로 잡습니다.

+ Euiwan Cho, associate professor of Christian spirituality and ministry and chair of the Korean Doctor of Ministry program

“Repentance is
the answer to
God’s passion for
humanity.”

—EUIWAN CHO

HOMECOMING, AN ONGOING PRACTICE



6:50 a.m. As I sit at my office desk with sleepy eyes, two pictures stare at me: One is Martin Schon-gauer’s *Temptation of Antony* and the other is Rembrandt’s *The*

Return of the Prodigal Son. Before starting my busy day, these two pictures lead me to pay attention to the rhythm of repenting life.

People living in the 21st century seem rather reluctant to use the word “sin.” In a secular society, the word, which is often replaced by such words as weakness, crisis, or error, is just a juridical term. Unfortunately, the same phenomenon is seen in our churches today. Emotional enthusiasm and sophistication of multimedia make modern worship much more dynamic, but there is not much place for confession of sin. Confession of sin is frequently omitted, or at best, is a mechanical procedure for the orders that follow. Sinfulness and penitence are becoming obsolete products.

If the essential problem of spirituality is the problem of sin, repentance is at the heart of Christian spirituality. Repentance is homecoming. It is a return to God (Deut 4:29-31, Matt 4:17). Repentance is not human effort to obtain the fruits of salvation. The initiative of repentance rests entirely upon God. Repentance is the answer to God’s passion for humanity. Just as the true protagonist of the prodigal son’s parable is the waiting father, the generous embrace of God’s grace leads our homecoming.

Repentance is not a one-time event but rather an ongoing practice of an entire life. Repentance is not just a regretful feeling. It is about a change of mind and perspective. Living a repentant life opens my eyes to the fact that the world is no longer centered around me. It leads me to a life centered around God and neighbor. When I focus on my grievous sins, not my glorious achievements, it does not mean degeneration. My present and future are renewed by reclaiming myself as a part of God’s story through repentance. Repentance is not a narrow act that only opens my eyes to personal transgressions, and as a result blinds me to social injustice. Rather, a repentant life awakens me to be more sensitive to the sins of my generation, giving me a clearer view of structural sin and those who are suffering.

I do not look outside of myself for the best material for repentance. Because if I look closely, I will see it is all inside of me. Walking down a corner of modern society, immersed in religious consumerism and narcissism, I effortlessly find myself with amnesia, forgetting that I am a sinner. In that sense, it is important to reflect on myself in daily life. Instead of seeking gratification, to feel the affirmation of the crowd on social media, it is necessary for me to regularly go into my “cell” and lay down my sinful mind, thoughts, words, and deeds one by one before God. As I write this, Antony’s struggling with sin and the back of the prodigal son in his father’s arms capture my attention again.



The Future of Fuller

REIMAGINING FULLER SEMINARY IN PASADENA

As you know, in May 2018, the Board of Trustees voted to sell Fuller’s Pasadena campus and relocate the institution to Pomona. However, for a variety of reasons, primary among them restrictions on our Pasadena property and escalating construction costs in Pomona, in October 2019 our Board of Trustees unanimously affirmed that Fuller will remain in Pasadena. This means reembracing our home in Pasadena, a place we love and want to serve, even as we feel nothing but gratitude for the support and welcome we had felt from the city of Pomona.

+ Read more about the decision to stay in Pasadena at Fuller.edu/Future



UNLOCKING THE DOORS OF THE ACADEMY: A NEW ERA FOR FULLER

In 1947, when Charles Fuller’s *Old Fashioned Revival Hour* was one of the farthest-reaching radio broadcasts in the world, the evangelist longed to form and train leaders for the church he was helping to grow. Responding to the need to counter fundamentalist trends toward isolationism and anti-intellectualism, he built Fuller Theological Seminary in the shadow of Pasadena’s City Hall. The seminary’s aspiration to be “the Caltech of the evangelical world” telegraphed the discipline to which prospective students from around the globe were invited as they stepped into Christian leadership.

Since then, more than 44,000 students and a legacy of world-class faculty have firmly established Fuller among the world’s leading seminaries, with an ethos that prizes inquiry, dialogue, and hospitality. A global, diverse Christian learning community, the Fuller of 2019 continues to strike a balance of rigorous scholarship with practical application and a distinct reputation that is solidified in the minds of a global audience.

While rapid changes have reshaped the landscape around seminary life, with external realities creating an urgency unmatched since our founding days, the core focus of Fuller remains unwavering: we are committed to forming global leaders for Christian vocations. This vision is ever more necessary as culture in the West is experiencing a resurgence of the fundamentalist leanings toward segregationism, anti-intellectualism, and nationalism cautioned against by Fuller’s founders, and at the same time an exploding evangelical church in the Global South calls for the formational education in which Fuller specializes.

All the work over the past year to streamline, simplify, and make more efficient our education offerings is, at the core, a commitment to make Fuller scholarship available to leaders in communities that need it most—making more widely available the knowledge that is still so vital to the life of the church. Recreating our structures and programs will unlock the doors of the academy to individuals and groups, students and learners, churches and organizations across the globe. We must pivot from a stance that says “Come and be a part of us here” to “How can we join you there?”

While we will continue offering both residential and online educational programs—marked by the academic rigor that lies in the very DNA of Fuller—we are committed to reimagining what a responsive, formational education looks like for current and future students and practitioners. After seven decades of remarkable growth at Fuller, widespread disruption has prompted the opportunity to reconstruct what we offer and how we offer it to a world still in need of Christ’s redemptive love. In this way, we can better address and equip a church that matters in the 21st century.

Mark Labberton

LET
US
PRAY
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The year 2020 will be a significant one for both Fuller and the United States. In such an important time in Fuller’s ongoing season of strategic planning and implementation, and in the midst of a particularly divided season in the US, President Mark Labberton has called the Fuller community to dedicate themselves to prayer in a significant way. “The invitation and urging to pray is one of the great themes of the Bible,” he says. “It underscores a call to a life of dependence on God, a life of communion with God and with God’s people.” Let Us Pray 2020 is a special chance for the Fuller community, gathered and scattered, to live out our response to God’s invitation to pray in this season of need.

The Future of Fuller
STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING
COMMITTEE

In order to reimagine Fuller and unlock the doors of the academy for this new era in the life of our institution, we will increase access to online programs, maximize our Houston campus, and strengthen our Arizona Marriage and Family Therapy program. Additionally, a strategic plan has been formulated to frame our most important work and focus our energy as we move into this critical season. For any institution developing a strategic plan, it is important to obtain accurate representation in order to create a framework that will address the needs of all stakeholders. The individuals pictured here comprise Fuller’s Strategic Planning Steering Committee.



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STUDENT



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CONSULTANT

RECENT FACULTY BOOKS

Authentic Human Sexuality, 3rd edition
Judith K. Balswick and Jack O. Balswick (IVP Academic, 2019)

Translating Empire: Tell Fekheriyeh, Deuteronomy, and the Akkadian Treaty Tradition
Carly L. Crouch and Jeremy M. Hutton (Mohr Siebeck, 2019)

Daniel, revised edition
John Goldingay (Zondervan Academic, 2019)

Doing the Work of Comparative Theology: A Primer for Christians
Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Eerdmans, 2020)

The Arts as Witness in Multifaith Contexts
edited by Roberta R. King and William A. Dyrness (IVP Academic, 2019)

Preaching God’s Grand Drama: A Biblical-Theological Approach
Ahmi Lee (Baker Academic, 2019)

Hope for the Oppressor: Discovering Freedom through Transformative Community
Patrick Oden (Fortress Academic, 2019)

Unmasking the Male Soul: Power and Gender Trap for Women in Leadership
Wilmer G. Villacorta (Wipf and Stock, 2019)

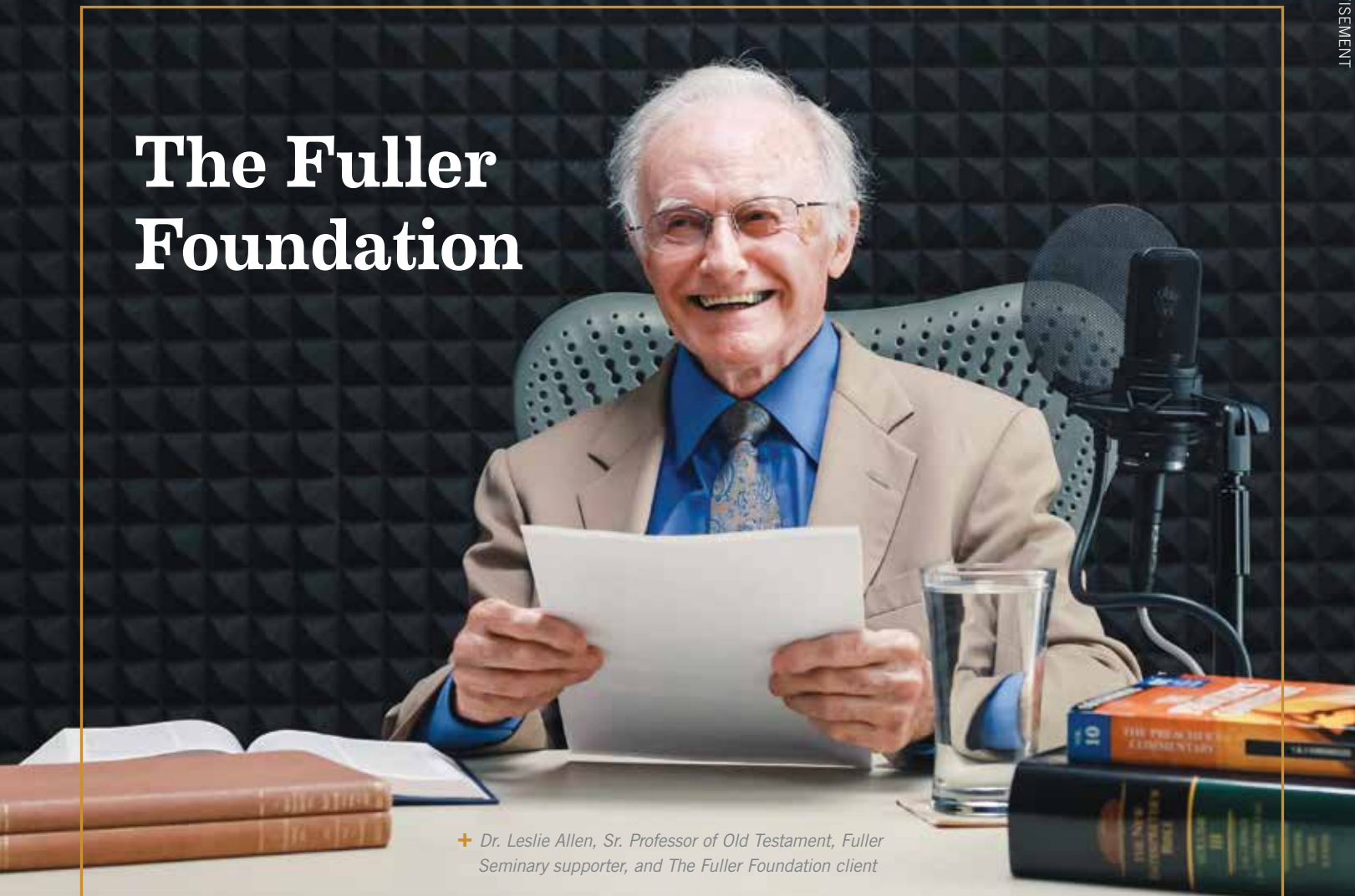
Pentecostal Theology and Jonathan Edwards
edited by Amos Yong and Steven M. Studebaker (T & T Clark, 2019)

RECENT FACULTY ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

ALEXIS D. ABERNETHY, with G. D. Grannum and D. F. Allen, “Spirituality and Transformation in a Community-Based Group in the Bahamas,” *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 22, no. 3 (June 2019): 227–243; with J. M. Currier, J. D. Foster, et al., “Spiritual Struggles and Mental Health Outcomes in a Spiritually Integrated Inpatient Program,” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 249 (April 2019): 127–135; with S. A. Schnitker, D. B. Ro, et al., “Patient Patients: Increased Patience Associated with Decreased Depressive Symptoms in Psychiatric Treatment,” *The Journal of Positive Psychology* (May 2019); with S.-H. Kim, “The Spiritual Transcendence Index: An Item Response Theory Analysis,” *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 28, no. 4 (August 2018): 240–256. **JUSTIN L. BARRETT**, with J. B. Wigger and E. R. R. Burdett, “The Minds of Gods, Mortals, and In-Betweens: Children’s Developing Understanding of Extraordinary and Ordinary Minds across Four Cultures,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (September 2019); with S. A. Schnitker, J. Ratchford, and R. A. Emmons, “High Goal Conflict and Low Goal Meaning Predict Increased Likelihood of Spiritual Transformation in Adolescents,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 80 (June 2019): 38–42; with R. D. Shaw, J. Pfeiffer, and J. Grimes, “Where the Gods Dwell: A Research Report,” *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 19, no. 1–2 (May 2019): 131–146; with R. D. Shaw, J. Pfeiffer, J. Grimes, and G. Foley, “Good Gods Almighty: A Report Concerning Divine Attributes from a Global Sample,” *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 19, no. 1–2 (May 2019): 273–290. **JEFFREY P. BJORCK**, with M. E. Laffey and J. M. Currier, “Coping and Quality of Life in Veterans with Chronic Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” *Traumatology* 25, (2019); with J. Torrecillas, S. V. Kamble, and R. L. Gorsuch, “Religious Support and Emotional Functioning in India across Three Major Religions,” *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* (May 2019). **ALVIN C. DUECK**, with M. Marossy, “A Future for Indigenous Psychology of Spirituality?” *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 39, no. 2 (2019): 120–126. **ROBERT K. JOHNSTON**, “Peacemaking and Reconciliation in and through Film: The Case Study of Rwanda,” in *Peacebuilding and the Arts*, eds. J. Mitchell, G. Vincett, T. Hawksley, and H. Culbertson (Palgrave MacMillan, 2019). **ENOCH JINSIK KIM**, “Current Trends in Uyghur in China and Its Relationship to Mission in Islamic World: Special Reference to Cultural Theme Study for Contextualization (최근 위그루족 상황과 이슬람선교의 관계: 상황화를 위한 문화적 주제에 관한 연구),” *Muslim-Christian Encounter* 12, no.

2 (2019). **PAMELA E. KING**, with Y. Yoo, J. M. Vaughn, et al., “Refining the Measure of Diverse Adolescent Spirituality in Samples of Mexican and Salvadoran Youth,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (2019); with J. M. Tirell, E. M. Dowling, et al., “Toward a Measure for Assessing Features of Effective Youth Development Programs: Contextual Safety and the ‘Big Three’ Components of Positive Youth Development Programs in Rwanda,” *Child & Youth Care Forum* (September 2019); with S. Hardy, “Processes of Religious and Spiritual Influence in Adolescence: Introduction to a Special Section,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 29, no. 2 (June 2019): 244–253; with S. Hardy, J. Nelson, and J. Moore, “Processes of Religious and Spiritual Influence in Adolescence: A Systematic Review of 30 Years of Research,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 29, no. 2 (June 2019): 254–275; with S. A. Schnitker and B. Houlteberg, “Religion, Spirituality, and Thriving: Transcendent Narrative, Virtue, and Telos,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 29, no. 2 (June 2019): 276–290. **PETER L. LIM**, with Scott W. Sunquist, “Presbyterians in Asia,” in *Oxford Handbook of Presbyterianism*, eds. P. C. Kemeny and G. S. Smith (Oxford University Press, 2019). **BRAD D. STRAWN**, “Natural-Born Christian Cyborgs,” *Grace and Peace* 20 (Spring 2019). **SIANG-YANG TAN**, “The Holy Spirit and Positive Psychology in Spiritual Formation,” in *Tending Soul, Mind and Body: The Art and Science of Spiritual Formation*, eds. G. Hiestand and T. Wilson (IVP Academic, 2019). **WILMER G. VILLACORTA**, “Practical and Missiological Implications for the Transformation of Machismo,” in *Devoted to Christ: Missiological Reflections in Honor of Sherwood G. Lingenfelter*, ed. C. Flanders (Pickwick Publications, 2019). **KENNETH T. WANG**, with L. Wang, J. J. Bordon, and J. G. Yeung, “Acculturation, Enculturation, Perceived Discrimination, and Well-Being: A Comparison between U.S. Raised and Non-U.S. Raised Asian Students,” *Asian American Journal of Psychology* 10, no. 1 (2019): 22–32; with J. Wang and T. Li, “Patience as a Mediator Between the Dark Triad and Meaning in Life,” *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 14, no. 2 (April 2019): 527–543; with Z. Y. Xie, A. M. Johnson, Y. M. Cao, L. Zhang, and A. C. Parsley, “Attitudes Toward Religion Scale: Development and Initial Psychometric Evaluation among Chinese College Students,” *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 40, no. 1 (2019): 104–121; with M. S. Sheveleva and T. M. Permyakova, “Imposter Syndrome among Russian Students: The Link between Perfectionism and Psychological Distress,” *Personality and Individual Differences*, 143 (2019): 1–6.

The Fuller Foundation



+ Dr. Leslie Allen, Sr. Professor of Old Testament, Fuller Seminary supporter, and The Fuller Foundation client

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*For a free consultation contact Todd Derrick at **626.765.8414** or **tderrick@fullerinvesting.com**.*

FULLER.EDU/FOUNDATION

LET THE BUILDINGS SPEAK

As we enter into a season of renewed commitment to the city of Pasadena, Fuller alumni share some of their fondest memories from the seven decades we've spent in the buildings that make up the Pasadena campus. See more reflections and photos, and share your own stories, at Fuller.edu/Building.

“

I took a long road trip from Memphis to Pasadena in late spring 2010 to start the MAT program at Fuller. Nine years later, the Pasadena campus holds countless memories—but perhaps the most significant ones occurred in the environs of the David Allan Hubbard Library. It was on the steps just outside the library that I first laid eyes on one David Hunsicker. Sporting a baseball cap and a crossbody Patagonia bag, he was entering the library to finish a paper for his PhD seminar that quarter.

*Fast forward a few months: After class, I found myself locked out of my Fuller apartment, so I plopped down on the wooden bench outside the library. A couple minutes later, lo and behold, there was David Hunsicker again, walking down the library steps and suggesting we go grab dinner. Having nowhere else to go, I (happily) obliged. As silly as it may sound, I still get butterflies in my stomach when I recall him exiting the library and giving me a sweet smile as he invited me to eat with him. David's preferred study spot in the library was the first floor reading room, so as we began to spend more time together, I would often find him there. I have a distinct memory of him reading Stanley Hauerwas's theological memoir, *Hannah's Child*, in that room and using a silver chewing gum wrapper as a makeshift bookmark.*

David Hunsicker has now been my husband for six years, and in 2018 we welcomed our daughter, Felicity, into the world. Last year, David's first book was published—with a foreword by none other than Stanley Hauerwas. I suppose I will have to find a silver gum wrapper to use as a bookmark as I read his book, in homage to the many memories made at the Hubbard Library.

—Barbara Hunsicker (MAT '13)

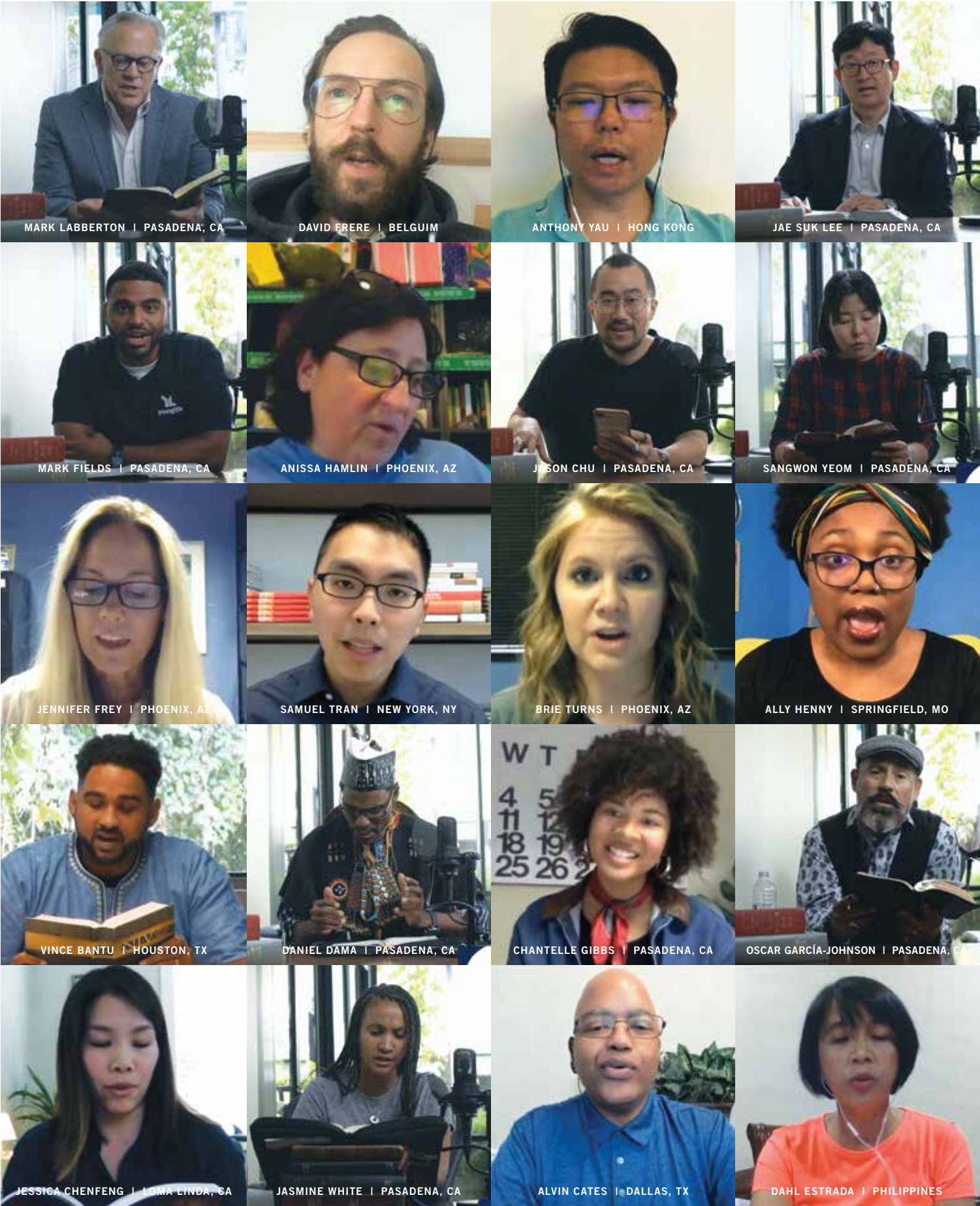
“

In June 1973 I arrived on campus ready to take summer Greek with Dr. William LaSor. I hadn't given it much thought, but I would be one of 12 women students living on campus that year. Being the first to arrive well before the Fall Quarter, I had my choice of rooms in Mary Slessor Hall. I chose the room facing front with the bay window on the second floor, with a view of workers tearing up Oakland Avenue in order to create a lovely mall for students to walk without traffic streaming right through the middle of campus.

The room had a visible layer of dust and dirt, and since I had the time, I started washing and eventually painting the walls a lovely sage green. Then I convinced a local store to give me a remnant of bright turquoise carpet for the floor. It was the '70s—crazy colors were still acceptable. There were no cooking facilities in Slessor; I was given a key to Payton Hall so that I could store and prepare some food if need be. I was thrilled when the refectory opened in the fall.

I felt quite resourceful about making my room at Slessor feel like home. We eventually had more women move in to the building and enjoyed good fellowship there. We were a mere dozen single ladies among the 800 male students. We would prank each other quite a bit. My claim to fame was organizing a break-in through a first-story window of a guy friend's room across Oakland Avenue, and moving his furniture to the locked foyer of Payton Hall. That key came in very handy! I can still see his face when he saw his bed, nightstand, and chest of drawers on display like an IKEA setup under the spotlights.

—Luisa Segato Johnson (MAT '77, PhD '82)



BENEDICTION: Acts that Speak the Good Word

Benediction means “good word.” Usually this part of the magazine shares an inspiring story of our commitment to turn words into action. Last September 11, 2019, that action was a unique communal reading of the Good Word itself.

We had just released the first collection in a video series, *Introductions to the Books of the Bible*, for which we have happily partnered with the Grace and Mercy Foundation as part of the Communal Reading of Scripture project. People from the Fuller community read through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—with four video introductions by Tommy Givens, Marianne Meye Thompson, Joel Green, and Ahmi Lee. We live streamed 36 readers in 8 languages from cities around the world—including Dahl Estrada in Tagalog from Manila, online student Anthony Yau in Cantonese from Hong Kong at midnight, and David Frere as he sat up in bed in Belgium, reading in French. Even after nine hours straight, it was invigorating.

While we were reading, a city of Pasadena sidewalk worker came in to tell us that there was “nothing more important we could be doing on 9-11 than reading the Gospels.” Dean Ted Cosse said that even though he read through his part the night before, there was something unexpectedly moving about reading it aloud, together, in a long stream of students and alumni and coworkers. And though we anticipated that friends and family might tune in, we didn’t expect 8,000 other people to join throughout the day, or for Bible Gateway and *RELEVANT* magazine to mention it to their Twitter followers, or for more than 2,000 others to watch after it was over. One of those was preaching professor Ahmi Lee, who told me that she clicked through just to see how it turned out and found herself strangely moved to tears.

So. By May of 2020 we will release all the *Introductions to the Books of the Bible* videos, and to celebrate that, we’re going to read the entire Bible. Live. Uninterrupted. 90 hours. There are strategic reasons for that and then there’s the real reason. Strategically, it is an elegant way to promote Fuller faculty and attract prospective students. It will appeal to donors, and trustees, and alumni, and students, and staff, and others who might wonder if Fuller is committed to the Bible. We are.

But the real reason is closer to the mystery that moved Ahmi Lee (and me) to tears. The Gospels reading reminded us in a visceral way why we’re here. It was the same thing that prompted FULLER studio editor Patrick Duff’s four-year-old, Declan, to say to his mother, after Ted Cosse finished reading John 14, “That’s all true, isn’t it?” Yes, Declan, it is.

+ Lauralee Farrer, chief storyteller and VP of communications. Join us at Fuller.edu/Studio/Watch May 19–23 for a live reading of the entire Scriptures. The complete *Introductions to the Books of the Bible* series, available at Fuller.edu/Studio, will include more than 100 videos available in 5 languages, free to anyone who wants to use them.

+ Don’t Miss

- Integration Symposium
February 19–21, 2020
- Payton Lectures
April 1–2, 2020
- Last Lecture: Alexis Abernethy
April 23, 2020
- Introductions to the Books of the Bible
Live Stream
May 19–23, 2020
- Commencement
June 13, 2020

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Who Is Fuller?

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

Fuller offers 15 master’s and advanced degree programs—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through its Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as rich and varied forms of support for the broader church. Nearly 3,500 students from 73 countries and 111 denominations enroll in Fuller’s degree programs annually, and our 44,000 alumni serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businesspersons, and in a variety of other vocations around the world.

¿Quién es Fuller?

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

Fuller ofrece 15 programas de maestría y de grado avanzado—con opciones en español, coreano y en línea—a través de sus escuelas de Teología, Psicología y Estudios Interculturales, así como formas ricas y variadas de apoyo para la iglesia más amplia. Cerca de 3,500 estudiantes de 73 países y 111 denominaciones se inscriben en los programas de estudios de Fuller anualmente, y nuestros 44,000 ex-alumnos sirven como ministros, consejeros, maestros, artistas, líderes en organizaciones sin fines de lucro, empresarios, y en una variedad de otras vocaciones alrededor del mundo.

풀러 신학대학원은?

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

풀러는 신학, 심리학, 선교학과와 –스페인어, 한국어, 온라인 옵션 선택 가능한– 15개의 석사 및 박사 학위 과정을 통해 교회를 위한 풍부하고도 다양한 지원을 제공하고 있습니다. 73 국가, 111교파에서 온 약 3,500명의 학생들이 매년 풀러에 등록하며 44,000 명의 졸업생들이 전 세계에 흩어져 목사, 상담사, 교사, 예술가, 비영리 지도자, 사업가, 그리고 다양한 일터의 현장에서 일하고 있습니다.



SAND
by Dea Jenkins

I don't feel I've disappeared

*Just withered away
Like loosely held specks of sand
that one cups in the palm of your hand*

*Sneaking life from the beach
as if it were yours to keep
even if only for seconds at a time*

*The ocean will wash it away
Much like the swelling of tears
will wash every crevice of pain clean*

+ Sand by Dea Jenkins. Oil on canvas, 10" x 20", 2019. Find details about the artist on p. 3, and more of her artwork and poetry on pp. 11 and 74–75.

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+ *Ezer Kang (PhD '99). Read his story on p. 12.*

