

ISSUE #24 | RENEWING THE CHURCH

FULLER



STORY Der Lor, pictured above, shares about his journey of engaging in the challenging yet beautiful work of multiethnic ministry *p. 10*

THEOLOGY Scholars and practitioners, in a series of articles curated by Alexia Salvatierra, reflect with hope on the renewal of the church *p. 32*

VOICE Leading Christian voices discuss new paths of ministry as they look to the church's future and its emerging generations *p. 70*



✦ Paper River, Blow in the Desert (at Joshua Tree National Park, California) by Young-Ly Hong Chandra. Mixed media on hanji, 2021.

Of her Paper Stained Glass series, visual artist Young-Ly Hong Chandra writes: "The great expressionist artist Marc Chagall has said that 'For me, a stained glass window is a transparent partition between my heart and the heart of the world.' ... Working with semi-transparent material has allowed me to witness colors transformed by bright sun and has reminded me of

the sacred experience of being in stained glass cathedrals, with the presence of the Holy. I work with thin mulberry paper, which is highly absorbent but very fragile at the same time. Traditionally, mulberry paper was used for windows and doors in Korea and amazingly could last over hundreds of years despite the fragility of the paper...[With it] I create pieces like icons in a cathedral that are used for communal



liturgy... Here, I say, 'For me, a paper stained glass transcends myself, receiving God's glory and sending it to the world.'" Of her Let the River Flow series, she writes: "While creating paper stained glass, I envisioned a river flowing. It began at the center of the wooden frame of the balcony window and soon it spilled out of the space.... The vision of the river bringing healing and renewal, and

reflecting the glory of God clear as crystal came to me and healed me.... I am a small river bearer who's conveying the big vision of the river flow to give life to many and will reflect the glory of God clear as crystal."

Young-Ly Hong Chandra is a visual artist, working primarily with paper, fabric, and found objects. She earned her BFA in Fine Arts and BA in Arts Education from Korea University, Seoul. She is a Brehm Residency artist and facilitator.

Learn more about her work at younglyhongchandra.com. And see more of her art in the closing cover and on pp. 3, 9, 68–69 and 84–85.

FULLER

ISSUE #24 | RENEWING THE CHURCH

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+ Editor's Note

There's a memory I often return to: two dozen of us, from all around the world, sitting in a room of a church, eating pizza and digestive biscuits after diving into Scripture and worshipping together. That was many years ago, when I spent some time with a church plant in Manchester, England. The church was led by a pastor from Peru and a pastor from Brazil, and it prioritized creating a community for immigrants, asylum seekers, and international students in the heart of the city. At the Saturday evening gatherings, I made friends from Argentina, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Spain, Jordan—many were Christians, some were not. When I try to envision God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven, I think of these meetings of dinner and worship. A small preview of the Revelation 7 image of people from every nation worshipping the Lord.

I think of those times especially on days when I struggle to believe in the church—as an institution, as a community, as Christ's body. These days, especially in the United States, we're very often reminded of the church's shortcomings, of great sins committed in Jesus' name, of the failures of God's people to reflect God's kingdom, of the harm the church has inflicted on others and on us. Today's accusations against the church, sometimes divinely righteous and sometimes unfair, can be discouraging and disheartening. Yet there also exist the holy reminders that the Spirit is indeed doing good work through her people in this world. A sacred moment in a Manchester church is only one example of a fallible but faithful community striving to walk the way of Jesus.

While discussing this magazine issue with guest editor Alexia Salvatierra, I was moved by her reasoning for the particular wording of our theme, "*Renewing* the Church." She told me that we're often too fixated on our criticisms of the church and on her flaws, to a point that prevents us from seeing and celebrating the many ways God is using the church as God makes all things new in this world. In this way, we often set to the margins of our imagination already oft-marginalized Christian communities—like many churches in the Global South or even the immigrant churches right down the street in Pasadena—where the Spirit's movement is actually as evident as a joyful song and a lively dance.

This issue of *FULLER* magazine hopes to witness to this sacred movement, happening in the church all over the globe. Without shying away from the church's need for reform, and actually leaning into its constant task of renewal, the stories, articles, and interviews in these pages seek to point to a God who continues to bring forth a new and good reality, day by day.

In this issue, Der Lor shares about the messy and beautiful journey of multicultural ministry. Grace and Yosam Manafa reflect on how our theology touches every aspect of our lives, in every context, from Uganda to the United States. Oscar García-Johnson and Marcos Canales recount a recent experience that opened their eyes to new frontiers of mission and ministry. Scott Cormode offers an evergreen reminder of the centrality of grace to Christian practice. Sebastian Kim draws lessons from Korean church history to help us navigate the tensions of today. Elizabeth Tamez Méndez explains how a holistic



approach to ministry blesses the emerging generation. And in a farewell benediction, Mark Labberton reflects with hope on the church's role as a credible witness.



As Bishop Kenneth Ulmer says beautifully in his interview (which you can read on p. 72), "God is pouring out a fresh anointing." May we be faithful receivers of this anointing. May we be faithful witnesses to it.

JEROME BLANCO
Editor in Chief

+ Paper River, Flow in the Neighborhood (at Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, California) by Young-Ly Hong Chandra. Mixed Media on hanji, 2021. See more of Young-Ly Hong Chandra's art in the opening and closing covers and on pp. 9, 68–69, and 84–85.

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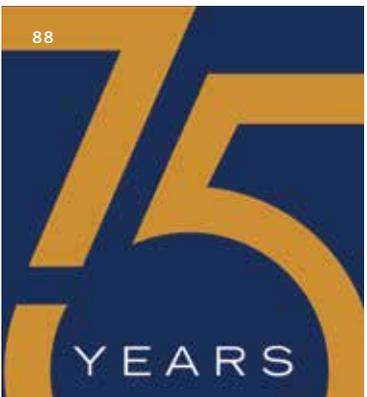
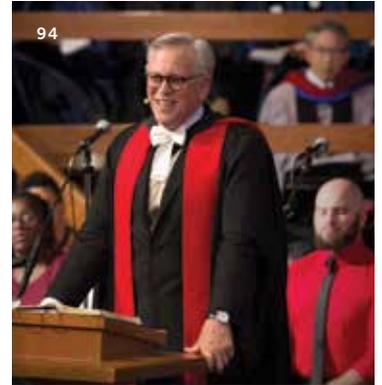
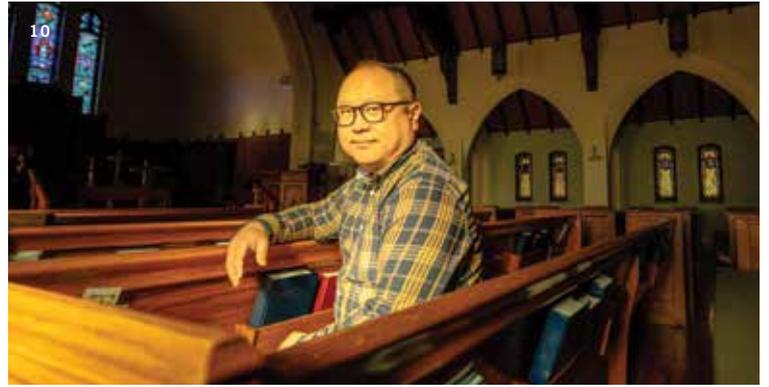
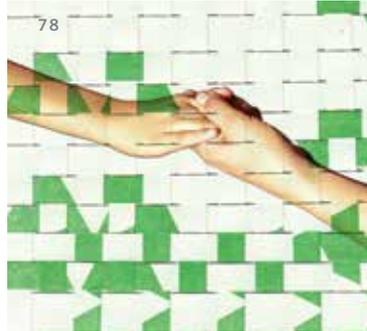
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Living Christian Identity

From Mark Labberton, President

Viviendo la Identidad Cristiana

Por Mark Labberton

살아있는 기독교 정체성

마크 래버튼 (Mark Labberton)

In my 2009 interview with a Fuller faculty selection committee, charged with filling a new faculty chair, I expressed my uncertainties about joining a theological faculty since it meant stepping away from the front line of pastoral ministry. For several decades, the beautiful, funky, complex, and unfolding realities of shepherding a communion of ordinary (and peculiar!) people had grabbed my sense of urgency

and greatly expanded my wonderment and awe over God's strategy and faithfulness. Bemusedly, one of the committee members said, "Oh, this is the frontline!" My eyes widened and then were relieved when laughter filled the room.

When I came to Fuller as a professor, and later on as president, the church and the world for which it is meant have been

En el 2009, durante mi entrevista con el comité seleccionador de profesores/as de Fuller para obtener una nueva cátedra en la facultad, expresé mis dudas en cuanto a unirme a una facultad de teología, y de cómo esto significaba alejarme de la "primera línea" del ministerio pastoral. Durante varias décadas, las hermosas, curiosas, complejas y siempre-cambiantes realidades de pastorear una comunión de personas ordinarias (¡y peculiares!) habían capturado mi sentido de urgencia, y habían ampliado mi asombro y admiración hacia la estrategia y fidelidad

de Dios. Uno de los miembros del comité, confundido me respondió : "Oh, esta es la primera línea". Mis ojos se abrieron de par en par de los nervios, pero luego me sentí aliviado cuando las risas llenaron el salón.

Cuando llegué a Fuller como profesor, y más tarde como presidente, la iglesia y el mundo para los cuales el seminario está destinado han sido centrales en mi pensamiento. Cuando el desmoronamiento del evangelicalismo blanco empezó a dejar al descubierto los ídolos controladores del

2009년 풀러 교수 선발 위원회와의 인터뷰를 할 당시 저는 새 교수직을 맡는 것은 목회 사역의 최전선에서 물러나는 것을 의미하기 때문에 신학 교수진에 합류하는 것에 대해서 확실하게 답을 하지 못했습니다. 수십 년 동안 목회의 최전선에서 평범하면서도 또한 독특한 사람들의 보살피는 사역을 통해서 아름답고 파격적이고 복잡하고 계속 전개되는 현실이 내게 긴박감을 불어넣었고, 하나님의 전략과 신실하심에 대한 경이와 경외심을 내게 크게 불러일으켰기 때문입니다. 그런데 선발위원회의 위원

중 한 명이 "아, 여기가 최전선입니다!"라고 말했습니다. 저는 이에 대해서 놀랐다가 웃음이 방을 채웠을 때 안도했습니다.

제가 교수로, 그리고 나중에 총장으로 풀러에 왔을 때 교회와 교회가 뜻하는 세계는 제 마음의 중심이었습니다. 백인 복음주의의 몰락을 통해서 수백만명의 사람들을 사로잡은 권력과 이념의 지배적인 우상들을 드러내기 시작했을 때 저는 비통함과 한탄에 빠졌습니다. 예수의

central in my mind. When the meltdown of White evangelicalism began to lay bare the controlling idols of power and ideology that captured millions and millions of people, I was thrown into grief and lament. The name of Jesus was being desecrated by people who used him in a political shell game. And many claimed to do so as his disciples.

Jesus said that many would cry, “Lord, Lord!” and fail to do what he had commanded. In the fullest sense, that is true of all who have called him Lord. Yet, the point is that Jesus’ lordship bestows a new identity which is meant to be lived in real time and space.

We live in an era when it is unclear whether those who call Jesus Lord are interested, willing, or able to live their identity as

disciples. It is not for a failure to see some who do, but across the political and social spectrum, across all denominational or nondenominational lines, in families and neighborhoods, in cities and schools, following Jesus seems to have been taken hostage to other competing and distracting powers and authorities. Fear is perhaps the most pervasive factor—paired with a desperation for safety, attached to specific

poder y la ideología que capturan a millones y millones de personas, me sumí en dolor y lamento. El nombre de Jesús estaba siendo profanado por personas que lo utilizaban para un juego político. Y muchos decían hacerlo como sus discípulos.

Jesús dijo que muchos clamarían “¡Señor, Señor!” y no harían lo que él había mandado. En el sentido más amplio, eso es cierto para todos los que le han llamado Señor. Sin embargo, la cuestión es que el señorío de Jesús confiere una nueva identidad que está

destinada a ser vivida en un tiempo y un espacio concretos.

Vivimos en una época en la que no está claro si los que llaman a Jesús Señor están interesados, dispuestos o si son capaces de vivir su identidad como discípulos. No es que no haya algunos que lo hagan, sin embargo, pareciera que a través de todo el espectro político y social, de todas las líneas denominacionales y no-denominacionales, de las familias y los barrios, de las ciudades y las escuelas, el seguimiento de Jesús ha sido

secuestrado por otros poderes y autoridades que compiten y distraen. El miedo es tal vez el factor más dominante, junto con la desesperación por la seguridad, unido a peligros y amenazas específicas, junto con las voces y fuerzas que la gente cree que les protegerán. En los Estados Unidos, y en muchos lugares del mundo, el vivir la identidad cristiana está alejado de lo que más ocupa al pueblo de Dios.

Por todo esto y más es por lo que el plan estratégico de Fuller, FULLER NEXT, hace

이름은 정치적인 배타적 게임에서 예수를 사용하는 사람들에 의해 모독되고 있었습니다. 그리고 많은 사람들이 그분의 제자로서 그렇게 했다고 주장했습니다.

예수께서는 많은 사람들이 “주여, 주여!” 하고 부르짖을 것이나 그가 명령한 일을 하지 못할 거라고 말씀하셨습니다. 완전한 의미에서 그것은 예수를 주님이라고 부르는 모든 사람들에게 해당됩니다. 그러나 중요한 것은 예수님이 주가 되신다는 의미는 우리에게

실제 시 공간에서 어떻게 살아야 되는가 하는 새로운 정체성을 부여받는다는 것입니다.

우리는 예수를 주님이라고 부르는 사람들이 주님의 제자로서의 정체성에 맞게 사는 것에 대해 관심이 있는지, 의지가 있는지, 그렇게 살 수 있는지 여부가 불확실한 시대에 살고 있습니다. 그렇게 사는 어떤 사람들을 보지 못한다는 것이 아니라 정치적, 사회적 스펙트럼 전반에 걸쳐, 모든 종파적이든 비종파적 노선에서, 가족과 이웃,

도시와 학교에서 예수를 따른다는 것이 다른 경쟁력 있고 주의를 산만하게 하는 권력자와 권위자들에게 우위를 내준 것 같다는 것입니다. 두려움이 아마도 가장 만연한 요인일 것입니다. 그 두려움은 안전에 대한 절망과 짝을 이루며, 특정한 위협과 위협과 맞닿아 있으며, 사람들이 자신을 보호할 것이라고 믿는 목소리와 힘과 나란히 함께 합니다. 미국 전역과 전 세계 많은 곳에서 생활하는 기독교인의 정체성은 하나님의 백성으로서의 요구되는 점과 거리가 먼 것이 현실입니다.

dangers and threats, along with the voices and forces people believe will protect them. Around the United States, and in many places around the world, living Christian identity is far from what most occupies God's people.

All of this and more is why Fuller's strategic plan, FULLER NEXT, makes our first priority "Listening Afresh to God, to the Church, and to the World," and our second priority "Rethinking Church in the 21st Century." When the people of God, and the institutions of church, show as many points

of historical brokenness regarding race and gender and as many contemporary crises as Christian nationalism and ideologies of power, we have to pray and think, act and reform, in order for God's church to reflect the love, justice, and mercy of our one hope, protector, and Lord.

Fuller is earnestly seeking to hear afresh how God may be speaking in this time, how the church in pain and struggle needs to be renewed, and how the world that longs to be free from violence and to live with justice and love might find it. This is

what our School of Mission and Theology, our School of Psychology & Marriage and Family Therapy, our ethnic centers, and our Leadership Formation Division are committed to engage. This is an era in which the church urgently and humbly needs to find and live its identity anew. As I step down as president, I give great thanks that our new president, David Emmanuel Goatley, a man of the church and the world, will assume that mantle and move Fuller's response forward with wisdom, courage, and faithfulness.

que nuestra primera prioridad sea "Escuchar de nuevo a Dios, a la Iglesia y al mundo", y nuestra segunda prioridad "Repensar la Iglesia en el siglo XXI". Cuando el pueblo de Dios, y las instituciones de la iglesia, muestran tantos puntos de quebrantos históricos en relación con la raza y el género y tantas crisis contemporáneas como el nacionalismo cristiano y las ideologías del poder, necesitamos orar y pensar, actuar y reformar, para que la iglesia de Dios refleje el amor, la justicia y la misericordia de nuestra única esperanza, protector y Señor.

Fuller está comprometidamente buscando escuchar de nuevo cómo Dios esta hablando en este tiempo, cómo la iglesia que está en dolor y en lucha necesita ser renovada, y cómo el mundo que anhela ser libre de la violencia y vivir con justicia y amor podría encontrarlo. Esto es lo que se han comprometido hacer nuestra Escuela de Misión y Teología, nuestra Escuela de Psicología y Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar, nuestros centros étnicos y nuestra división de Formación de Líderes. Esta es una época en la que la iglesia necesita urgente y

humildemente encontrar y vivir de nuevo su identidad. Al dejar mi cargo de presidente, doy gracias porque nuestro nuevo presidente, el Dr. David Emmanuel Goatley, un hombre de la iglesia y del mundo, asumirá ese manto y hará avanzar la respuesta de Fuller con sabiduría, valor y fidelidad.

이 모든 것이 풀러의 전략 계획인 FULLER NEXT가 우리의 첫번째 우선순위를 "새롭게 하나님과 교회와 세상에 귀 기울이는 것"을, 두번째 우선순위를 "21세기에 교회를 다시 생각하기"으로 설정한 이유입니다. 하나님의 백성과 교회의 기관들이 인종과 젠더에 관한 역사적 단절과 기독교 민족주의와 권력 이념 같은 동시대의 위기를 많이 드러낼 때 우리는 기도하고 생각하고 행동하고 개혁해야 합니다. 하나님의 교회가 우리의 한

소망, 보호자, 주님의 사랑과 정의와 자비를 반영하기 위해서입니다.

풀러는 이 시대에 하나님이 어떻게 말씀하실지, 고통과 분쟁 속에 있는 교회가 어떻게 새롭게 되어야 하는지, 폭력에서 벗어나 정의와 사랑으로 살기를 갈망하는 세상이 그것을 어떻게 찾을 수 있는지를 새롭게 듣고자 간절히 구하고 있습니다. 이것이 우리의 선교와 신학학부,

심리학과 결혼 및 가족 치료학부, 민족 센터들, 리더십 형성 부서가 참여하기 위해 헌신하는 것입니다. 교회가 자신의 정체성을 새롭게 찾고 그 정체성으로 살아가기를 시급히 그리고 간절히 간구해야 하는 시대입니다. 제가 총장직에서 물러나면서 교회와 세상의 사람인 David Emmanuel Goatley 박사가 그 역할을 맡아 지혜와 용기, 신실함으로써 풀러의 대응을 앞으로 이끌어 갈 것에 대해 큰 감사를 드립니다.

+ We Flow Together (Paper Stained Glass as a part of Paper River Currents) by Young-Ly Hong Chandra. Mixed media on hanji, 2021. See more of Young-Ly Hong Chandra's art in the opening and closing covers and on pp. 3, 68–69, and 84–85.







Our Many Particularities, Our One Church

As he explores the many ways our particular stories shape our faith, Der Lor engages in the challenging yet beautiful work of multiethnic ministry.

Written by **JEROME BLANCO**

Photographed by **NATE HARRISON**

Der Lor (MAT '17) will be the first to tell you that doing church is messy work. When it comes to ministry—particularly in multicultural contexts—he understands there is no formula for having everything figured out. But Der also trusts that God is present and active in the mess.

These days, Der serves as a pastor in Minneapolis, but his own journey of faith and ministry has been anything but straightforward. Der grew up in a first-generation Hmong American family in a small, White, Midwestern town—he and his siblings were the first people of color to enroll in their school. Religiously, his family were Hmong Shaman. So when Der became a Christian in his early 20s, his conversion was inevitably tangled up in knotted threads of family, culture, race, and religion.

“That my family is Shaman was constantly on the backburner,” Der says. “It created this tension that never went away.” Being a minority in a predominantly White church environment added layers to that tension, which accompanied him as he grew in his faith.

As Der stepped into ministry roles and pursued a call to pastoring, he grappled more intentionally with his identity—along with how this identity tied into his theological understanding. Through this exploration, Der learned about the importance of context and culture as vehicles of theology. He learned about colonial religious approaches across history that continue to impact the church—and his life—today. He learned about both intergenerational trauma and the blessings his specific culture brings to the Lord’s body. He learned that it mattered that he was Hmong, it mattered that his family was Shaman, and it also mattered that he was formed in a predominantly White evangelical church.



“MY HOPE IS THAT THE MANNER IN WHICH I PASTOR AND LEAD WOULD INVITE EACH AND ALL OF US TO HOLD ALL OUR PARTICULARITIES EVEN AS WE ARE ONE BODY UNDER CHRIST.”



“So much of my backstory is rediscovering Hmong ethnic identity within predominantly White evangelical spaces and trying to detangle some of that and decolonize my own faith,” he shares. “And aside from my ethnic heritage, what is a part of my Christian faith that is true to who I am? That’s what I’m exploring.”

His exploration—a key component of his journey as a minister—took Der to Fuller, where he says Professor Daniel D. Lee and the Asian American Initiative (now the Asian American Center) played a helpful part. Der learned to more deeply interrogate the things that have shaped him and to scrutinize the many parts of his story. However, he’s also learning about the necessary and fruitful work of putting the pieces back together, with the Spirit’s guidance. “All my life, I’ve been living into this. The name of the game is to decolonize. But then what’s left of me? That was kind of an existential crisis,” he says. “Now, with new relationships and with new mentors and with God, I’m trying to be more constructive.”

Shortly before graduating from Fuller, Der received an invitation from a second-generation Hmong American church to serve as a bivocational pastor—a very rare opportunity as there are fewer than 10 second-generation Hmong American churches in the entire country. “This church reached out to me and asked if I’d be interested in launching their second campus,” he says. “It seemed like the stars had aligned.”

Der would be able to live out his call to ministry while leaning into his identity as a Hmong American, putting into practice what he’d been learning. “I said yes to the opportunity and moved to the Twin Cities for the church,” he says. “After six months on the ground, it was clear it wouldn’t work.”

Differences in recognizing power imbalances in the church—and the ministry practices that resulted from this dissonance—made the season short lived. He understood there would have to be a longer and messier road ahead when it came to reconstructing faith and integrating what he’d learned about identity, context, and ministry.

Next along that road came a brief but fruitful season at a small, multiethnic church plant. Der was a pastoral resident alongside a married couple, a role that stretched and grew him in new ways. “She was Black and her husband was White,” he says. “We learned what it was like to share power. There were so many levels of intersectionality.” Being a team of Asian, Black, and White meant learning dynamics of leadership, race, gender, and power in new ways. Der also shares that he had to grow in his awareness of his own male privilege and of what he knew of male normativity. Although he ultimately had to move on in order to find financially sustainable employment (another element of the messy reality of ministry), Der says, “It was a really positive experience.”

Today, Der is a pastor at Bethlehem Covenant Church, a congregation with largely Swedish roots. It’s another experience from which Der is continuing to grow—another context where he’s been reconstructing his theological understanding. He’s found that with all of his training and experience, he has much to offer the church, while the church at the same time has much to offer him. A big lesson he has learned is that this is what the church is really about: “They shape me, and I shape them.”

During this season, Der has learned a great deal about worship and community and discipleship, but the congregation has also shared much with him about Swedish culture and

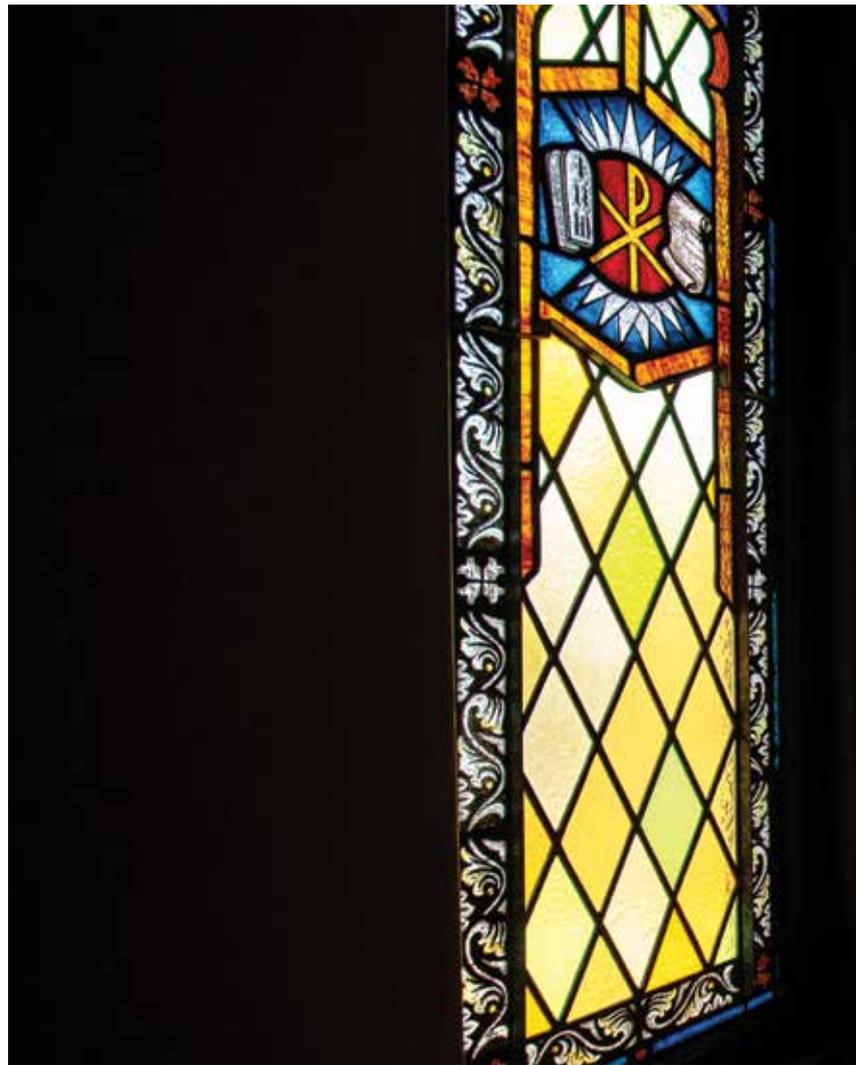
traditions, some of which even have similarities to Hmong traditions. “For those who are open to sharing traditions with me,” Der says, “it is likewise a gift to the community when I exchange Hmong American or Asian American traditions and experiences with them.”

Now, as Der continues his own formation—pursuing a ThM focused on Asian American theologies and cohosting the *Hmong American Christian Podcast*—he is dedicated to not only share what he’s learning with Hmong American communities but also to invite those in other communities into their own exploration and appreciation of their unique stories. He says, “My hope is that the manner in which I pastor and lead would invite each and all of us to hold all our particularities even as we are one body under Christ.”

Der says, “I’ve had to let go of essentialist assumptions. We’re all porous, hybridic people. I’m learning about theology and culture, and about how God transcends culture yet God’s revelation can only come to us through cultural mediums. And it’s cool to take doctrines of revelation and allow myself to be a medium for God through these different communities.”

When asked the question of what an ideal multicultural church looks like, in light of his experiences, Der actually says such a question isn’t one that can be answered. Church isn’t formulaic, he explains. Instead, it’s organic and highly dependent on context—on who and when and where. “It’s never fixed. It can’t be. It’s an economy. It would involve every group—and every faction would be confronted with their own particularity. Every group would need to renegotiate who they are in light of the other. Which is what I see Jews and Gentiles doing in the New Testament.”

Der says, “Multiethnic ministry is really hard. It isn’t glamorous. It’s messy.” But Der understands that this mess is the way God has chosen for the church to be the church. It’s a body of different people, constantly changing as individuals and as communities. He says, “The thing the local church needs is for different people to rub off on one another, while knowing that none of us are essential, static people.” And here Der points to the glorious picture depicted in Revelation 7: “A great multitude ... from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” ■



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A Safe Place

As he directs the counseling center of Pasadena's Lake Avenue Church, Tsega Worku strives to create a space of healing and restoration for the hurting.

Written by YOLANDA "YO" MILLER

Photographed by NATE HARRISON

When Tsega Worku (MSMFT '97) immigrated to the United States from Ethiopia at age 19 and enrolled as a student at Citrus College, he first thought he would study engineering, but God had other plans. He says, "During my last semester, I took a psychology class and I thought, 'Hmm. This is interesting.'" This class led him to switch his major to psychology at Cal Poly Pomona and begin working at Sycamores, a residential facility for emotionally disturbed youth. But as a committed Christian, he struggled to reconcile his faith with psychology and wondered if they were compatible.

Shortly after arriving in Pasadena, he began attending a small Ethiopian church pastored by a Fuller doctoral student, Alemayehu Mekonnen. "His sermons were very powerful, so impactful that they bothered me the whole week," Tsega says. "It was the first time I heard that kind of challenging message, so I took time to think about it and to process it. Then I started reading the Bible carefully, trying to figure out the foundation of our faith, while studying psychology as an undergraduate student."

One day, while browsing at the Lighthouse Christian Bookstore in Pasadena, he came across a book that was authored by a Christian psychologist. Amazed that such a thing as a Christian psychologist even existed, he initiated a hunt for a theology degree to pair with his psychology degree.

When he called Fuller, he was disappointed to discover that they did not have undergraduate degrees in theology. But his heart leapt when he was told they had a graduate school of psychology. When he learned that applications for the upcoming school year were due that very day, he immediately applied.

In fact, Tsega was so excited about the *idea* that the Christian faith could be compatible with psychology, he forgot to ask

about the cost of tuition. This became a problem, given that he was an immigrant with no Green Card, meaning he was ineligible for financial assistance. When he was accepted to Fuller's School of Psychology, he went to the registrar's office, where they informed him of the price tag for his first quarter. He almost fainted.

As Tsega turned to leave, the registrar took pity and allowed him to register for one quarter of classes, with a warning to discontinue if he could not develop a plan to meet his financial needs. "I was barely making rent, but I said, 'Okay, I just want to give it a try.' I remember, on the first day of class, when the professor started the class with a prayer. That was it. I got my answer: You *can* keep your faith and be a professor of psychology! So for me, just knowing that was enough."

When it was time to enroll for the next quarter, the registrar couldn't resist giving Tsega one more chance. Miraculously, halfway through his second quarter, Tsega received a long-awaited letter from immigration, notifying him that he had won the lottery for his Green Card. Tsega's dogged determination and faith (and that of the registrar) had paid off. With the Green Card, he was able to gain the student loan he needed to complete his degree.

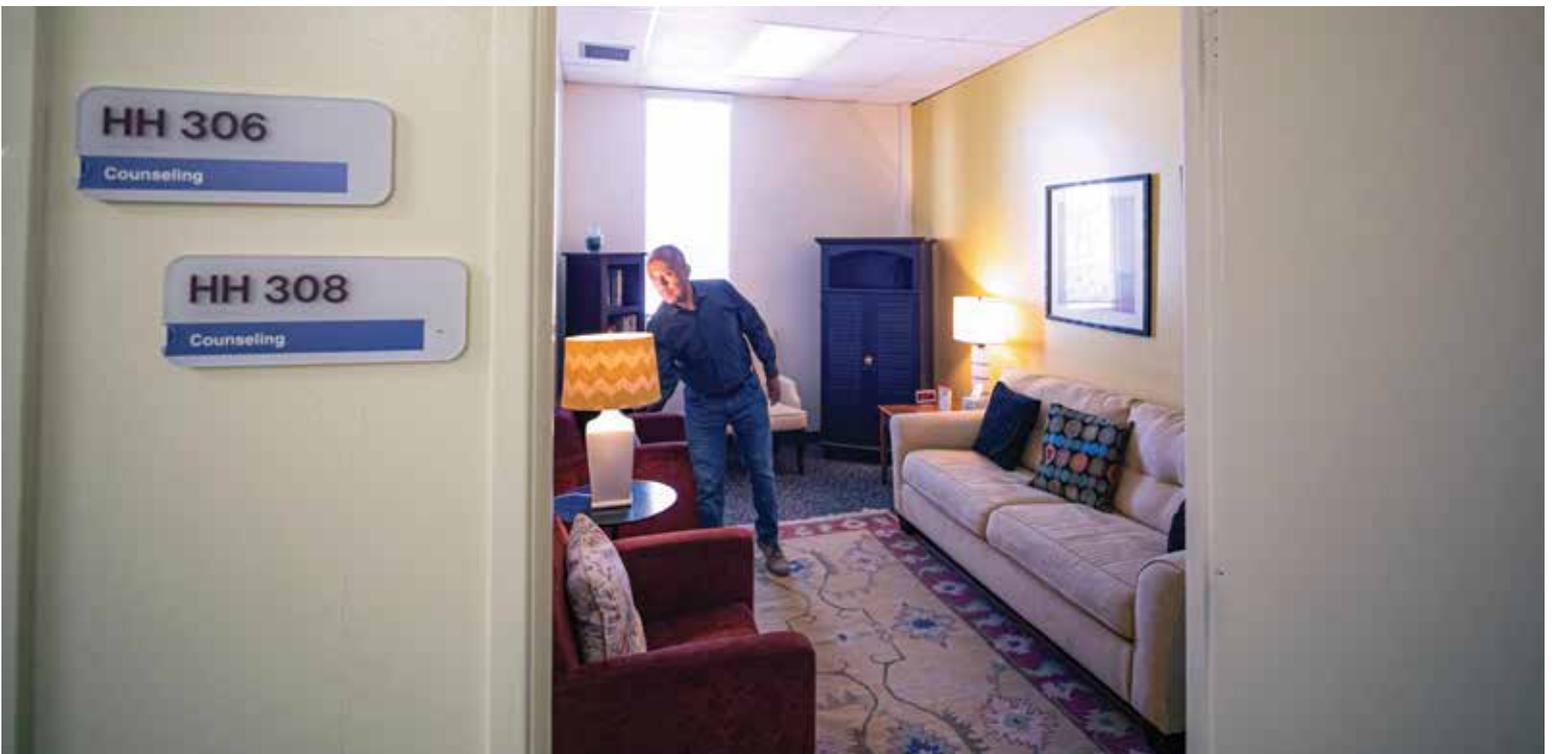
By 2003, Tsega had worked his way up to assistant director at Sycamores, but he felt something was missing. "It wasn't feeding my soul. It was a lot of paperwork, a lot of bureaucratic stuff that is necessary—but it took away the joy I have working with people."

That, coupled with him wanting to better prioritize time with his family, led him to make some radical vocational shifts. He decided to only work part-time positions at a local college and school district. He also began a part-time private practice





“THE CHURCH NEEDS TO BE ... A CATALYST FOR RESTORATION AND HEALING.”



during the day in order to keep his evenings free for his family. And he started volunteering as a clinical supervisor at the counseling center at Lake Avenue Church, where he had been attending after the Ethiopian congregation he'd joined moved to Los Angeles.

When the director of Lake Avenue's counseling center left in 2010, the staff pressed Tsega to apply. Fearful of getting pulled back into the isolation of administration, he declined. But when the executive pastor at that time, Chuck Olson, asked him to apply, he couldn't refuse. He agreed on the condition that he would work part time.

Tsega's limited schedule forced him to creatively reimagine how the counseling center could function effectively. Rather than viewing himself as the lead service provider, he reinvented his role and became an overseer, building on the existing model of volunteerism, partnership, and relying on outside resources.

Tsega expanded the partnership with Fuller's School of Psychology faculty and students. The counseling center became not only a service provider but also a training ground for future therapists. He staffed the center with MFT trainees who gained valuable hours of experience working with clients, while receiving supervision and practicum training from Fuller professors like Terry Hargrave, Miyoung Yoon Hammer, as well as other volunteer professionals. He also recruited qualified volunteers to lead marriage seminars and other support groups, such as grief care, anger management, forgiveness, and addiction recovery at the church and the counseling center.

Tsega realized that some of the church members who came to the center for donation-based services actually qualified for services covered by their insurance or other existing counseling providers in the community. They began referring these clients out to their eligible providers and mainly offered services on a sliding scale basis to the wider community who did not have access to counseling.

These strategies ended up scaling back the operating costs of the center, while expanding the reach of its ministry by serving not only the clients but also the existing counseling providers in the community. This revisioning of the relationship between church and therapy led Tsega to consult for several other churches seeking similar innovative partnerships.

In this work, Tsega especially loves to consult with pastors. "I say, if you don't have members struggling with mental illness in your church, it's really a social club. It's not the real church, you know? The question is, what do you do with those people? Seven or eight percent of our church family members may need professional care to really manage

and deal with life challenges. Then there will be two or three percent who need extra grace. For those, you just have to accept them, come alongside them, and wrap them with love and grace."

Tsega recognizes that without guidance and support, just a few of these members can quickly deplete a pastor's resources. "This kind of stuff excites me—consulting with pastors, helping them keep healthy boundaries and pointing them to resources in the community. By creating healthy boundaries, you're actually helping the struggling person know what they can and cannot expect from their pastors and lay leaders. At the same time, this helps pastors be more available to the rest of the congregation."

Like the relationship between Lake Avenue Church and the counseling center, he views this work with pastors as a partnership. Like any well-trained therapist, his goal is to help pastors discover effective approaches when dealing with people's problems rather than giving them solutions. "I am very mindful that my role is not to solve problems but to help them process and to discover the solution together," he says. "When someone calls and says, 'We have this person in our group that we are struggling with, can you please take care of them?' They know the answer is, 'No, but I can talk to you. And maybe together we can find a way to manage whatever challenge you have.'"

Tsega has come to a place where the truth of theology has met the lovingkindness of psychology: "They don't clash. If anything, they complement one another. As Christian therapists, it can sometimes be difficult to integrate our faith with our work, but it's a beautiful thing to be able to do this integration freely at a church. If we are brave and courageous enough to address both the theological and psychological issues of life, we will discover that they can complement each other in leading people to freedom and truth in Christ Jesus."

He continues, "In the old days when people had problems, the first place they would go to is their church. After prayer and good advice, they would go out to get help from doctors, financial advisors, etc. Unfortunately, now, when people have problems—especially mental health challenges—the first place they *stop* going to is the church. The church needs to be the safe place where we can bring all our struggles and to be a catalyst for restoration and healing. The church needs to go back to what it used to be for families and the community. The church has to be a safe place where hurt people go." ■

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Faith in Context

Returning to Uganda after their time in seminary, Grace and Yosam Manafa walk alongside others as they ask together what it looks like to live out our theology in every area of our lives.

Written by JEROME BLANCO

Photographed by MUHAMMAD ALI KANCH

After six years in the United States, Grace (MAT '20) and Yosam Manafa (MAICS '18) returned to Uganda with seminary degrees, many lessons learned, and hope for the possibilities of ministry back home. “We had the rare opportunity to attend Fuller and get a world class education,” says Yosam. “The question is, how do we then give back what has been given to us to our local community?”

At Fuller, Grace and Yosam grew in their knowledge of the Bible, theology, missiology, and ministry in ways they hoped for and in other ways they hadn't anticipated. “Fuller changes you,” says Grace. Their studies opened their eyes to see the wider ways faith and theology actually intersect with every area of life—including culture, politics, justice, race, economics, and the like. At the same time, becoming parents to their two children and living through the tumultuous and divisive post-2016 United States added another layer of perceptive-shifting formation during those years. Yosam says that while the level of transformation they experienced wasn't what they expected, it has proved to be a good thing. “Fuller reshaped the things I am most passionate about and aligned them with my faith,” he says. “Seminary shifts you, and you begin to think about things differently.”

Coming back to Uganda afterwards hasn't been without its challenges. After their years away, the Manafas admit to experiencing a little bit of reverse culture shock. Grace says their return home has required a period of adjustment, not only because of the transformation they experienced in the States but also because of the ways Uganda—which has gone through its own continued political uncertainty—had transformed in that time. Not to mention the fact that they returned in 2020, during the height of the pandemic. “Coming back to the place you're from is not necessarily coming back





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to the place where you were,” explains Yosam. “Honestly, I don’t think we left the country this way when we left six years ago.”

In part, this meant finding out that their theological formation had shifted their relationships to their faith communities back home, in ways that would require some recalibration. Grace puts it plainly, saying many see her as having attended “a liberal seminary.” Yosam adds, “I knew that the kind of theological reflection we were doing might be uncommon in the church. So how could we bring home what we’ve studied and translate it to serve our community?”

For Grace and Yosam, contextualization has been key.

A starting point for their ministry has been thinking through the ways faithful formation and practiced theology occur in a specific time and place—a specific context. This shapes their work in a twofold way: On one level, they must contextualize what they’ve learned in the States for ministry in Uganda. On another level, they have made it central to their ministry to help others contextualize their faith for their own everyday contexts. The Manafas are now helping others put feet to their theology and live out their Christianity in the midst of their lived experiences.

Grace shares some of the big questions that drove their approach to shaping their ministry: “Uganda is 84 percent Christian, but why is it that we still see so much corruption? So much injustice?” They asked, “What does it really mean to be a Christian in the marketplace? To be a Christian in the public space?” They reflected on the rates of poverty, the ongoing discrimination against religious minorities, and the continuous human rights violations. Now, Grace and Yosam are engaging with these issues in a few ways.

They founded Missio Uganda, an organization whose central focus is the intersection of faith and public life. Instead of working directly in church ministry, the Manafas are integrating their backgrounds in business administration and strategic management with their theological education to train and consult with churches, who in turn might shape their own congregations for faithful work in their respective contexts.

Missio Uganda focuses on three primary areas. “Faith in the Marketplace” aims to help Christians understand their vocation in light of God’s mission. “Faith and Politics” considers how Christians might embody faith in the political realm in a pluralistic world. “Faith and Social Justice Advocacy” reflects on peacemaking and the movement against oppressive systems in culture and society.

Outside of Missio Uganda, Yosam volunteers at a local seminary, teaching classes on missiology as well as

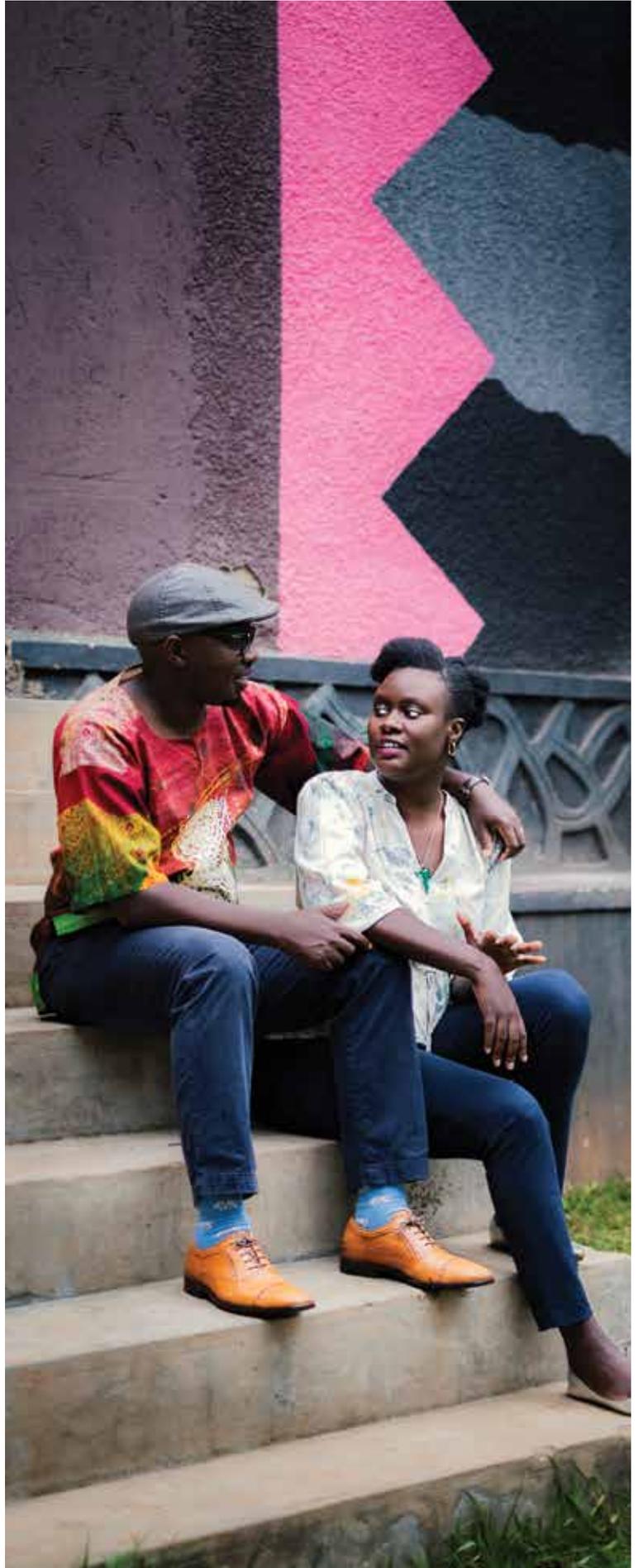
introductory classes on Islam. He’s been invited by organizations, both Christian and Muslim, to speak and teach on the state of religion in Uganda, including topics like interfaith relations and religious-related human rights violations.

This work goes hand in hand with his current research, as Yosam is continuing his Fuller studies in the PhD in Intercultural Studies program, researching dual religious families. He’s been largely driven by his own dual religious experience, having grown up in such a home. “My dad was Muslim. My mom is a Pentecostal Christian,” he shares. “I was born in that context, of both of them practicing their faith. I would go to the mosque on Friday and the church on Sunday.”

In addition, Grace works with an organization called Interface: Institute of Religion, Faith, and Culture in Public Life. Interface “uses the power of conversation to bring people together, to know each other’s stories, and to understand and know people’s worldviews.” Grace says, “We focus on conversations that are usually difficult for young people to have because they are polarizing, too complex, or associated with some social stigma.” The organization hosts events called “Baraza by the Fire”—“baraza” being the Swahili word for “conversation”—which are formatted in line with a traditional African practice of using fireside spaces for conversation, learning, resolving conflict, and passing on traditions. By creating inviting and safe spaces, Interface facilitates dialogue on contemporary topics impacting Uganda and the world. Grace says, “We have people from all walks of life sit together, with a cup of tea, and talk about whatever specific issue is affecting the country at the time. We hear from all these really different voices, and we’ve found that it has this amazing power to connect people and to heal divides.”

Interface has hosted events on themes ranging from pandemic policy to the current political climate and interfaith issues. Grace says these conversations have helped people gain an awareness of their own stories, identities, and privileges, as well as the stories and realities of others—marginalized voices in particular.

The excitement and interest from these events have also overflowed beyond the formal conversations themselves, with participants expressing a desire to host dialogue spaces in their own communities. One woman excitedly shared about her hope to host a similar event tailored for children in particular. Another event for faith leaders on mental health left participants longing for more, so much so that Interface eventually published a free handbook to help equip pastors, imams, and other leaders on engaging with mental health issues in their work.





The couple's different endeavors have been fruitful avenues for ministry. Yet the work is ongoing, and so are the challenges. The Manafas are continuing to learn in the process.

Grace shares a story where reverse culture shock played a part. Following a terrorist attack in Kampala, she had the idea for an Interface event discussing the political and social impact of the bombing. Her colleagues had to remind her about the many ways hosting such an event wouldn't be safe. "Freedom of speech is taken for granted in the States!" she shares with a bit of a laugh—another lesson in context.

Additionally, theological tensions are a reality the Manafas continue to face, as Grace shares that many in their church networks hold different views of what ministry ought to be. Some are "not open to interreligious spaces or spaces formally outside of the church." She says, "A lot of people have challenged me, saying, 'What are you doing? If you aren't telling people to repent or be baptized then what are you doing there at all?' I didn't expect to have to explain myself so many times."

Still, the work goes on, and the Spirit continues to pave the way for these new ventures in ministry. Yosam says it's been helpful to remind himself that, at the end of the day, "This is God's church. It's made of fallible people, but it's God's church."

For them, this is the reality of ministry. "Full redemption has not yet happened," Yosam says—their own formation included. But Grace and Yosam hope that they are playing a helpful part in the kingdom work. Whether in the States or in Uganda, in the marketplace or in politics, in the church or outside of it, they'll keep on asking what our Christian faith could look like in our lived experience, a faith with feet on the ground.¹ ■

¹ At the time of publication, the Manafas have recently returned to the US temporarily, as Yosam completes his PhD program at Fuller. At the same time, they continue to be involved and invested in their work in Uganda, and their ministries are ongoing.

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MUHAMMAD ALI KANCH is an award-winning documentary photographer based in Kampala, Uganda. See his work at mkanch.com.

Creativity in Crisis

Amidst a trying season for All Angels' Episcopal Church, Seth Little demonstrates how the creative arts can be a source of beauty and sustenance through disruption.

Written by ERIC VANVALIN

Photographed by KATY COOK

Seth Little (MAT '17) first visited All Angels' Episcopal Church in New York City during his final year at Fuller. He and his wife, Emily, attended an evening service particularly connected with the church's ministry to the poor, and which incorporated jazz and gospel in worship, with less need for liturgical literacy to participate. "That's the first service I came to, and I loved the church," Seth says. "It just felt wild. There was an argument with the pastor during announcements. The music was so fun. Half a children's service, half a grown-up's service, kind of Anglican. The priest was barefoot."

Seth and Emily were connected to All Angels' by the Brehm Center's Maria Fee, who helped facilitate the Littles' exploratory trip to New York City. Seth, who originally arrived at Fuller as an experienced worship leader looking to become a "traditional" pastor, was nearing graduation and discerning his next steps. He'd had his horizons expanded at Fuller, and through significant influence from the Brehm Center, had begun to shape a vision of a pastoral vocation that wove worship, music, and art together. At Fuller, he'd also experienced theological and personal growth—alongside his wife Emily—in developing an orthopraxy around standing in solidarity with one's approximate neighbors. "We became really conscious of our privilege, and our Whiteness, and our relative affluence in the world. And we wanted to integrate a responsibility toward that awareness in our future ministry and vocation." They wanted the same for their children as well. Alongside discerning a role for Seth that leaned into all these areas, the family wanted to pursue work in a city that would continue to provide their children with proximity to diversity and multicultural experiences.

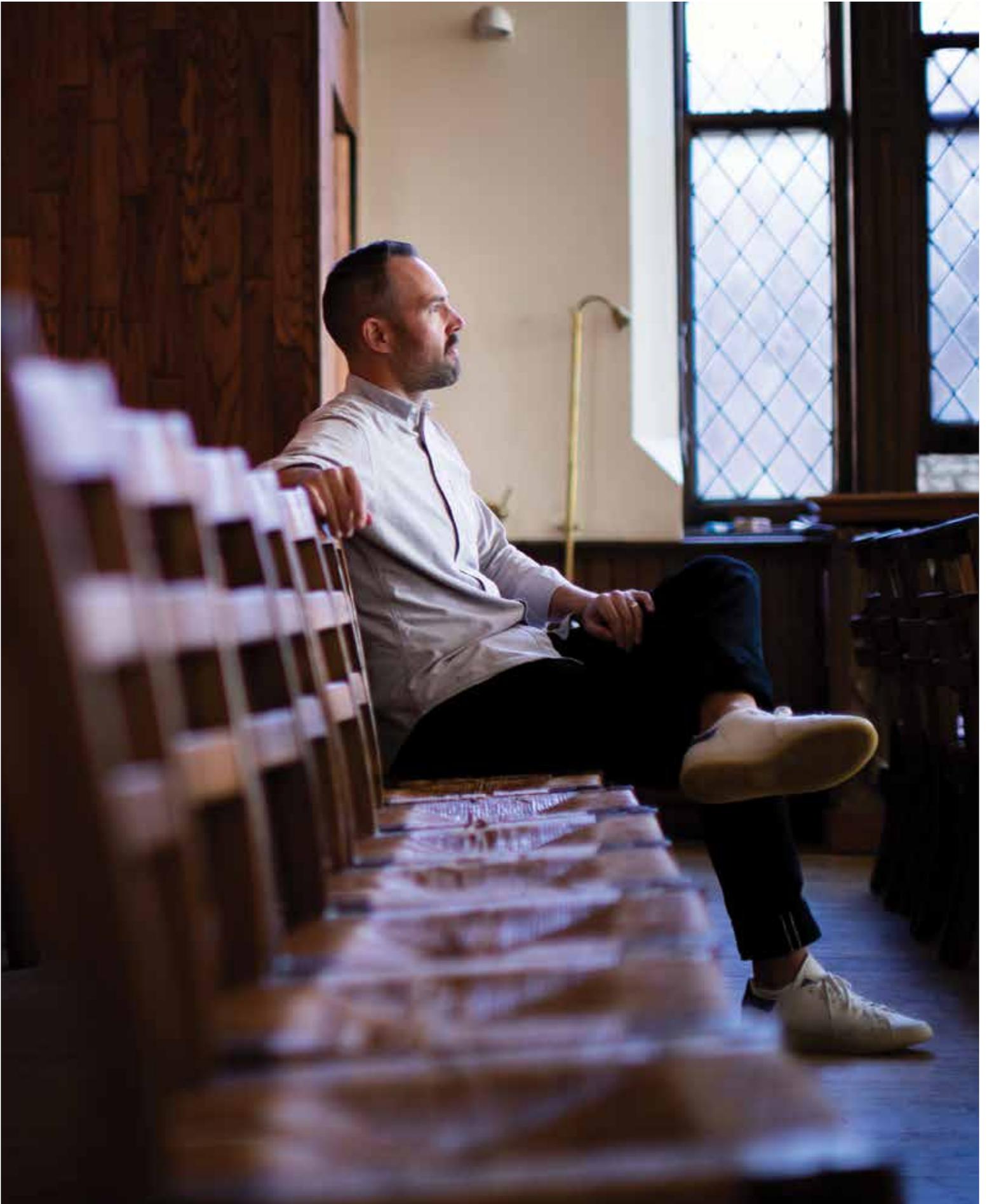
An Episcopal parish founded in the 1840s and marked by its resilient 150 years of existence, All Angels' attracted the Littles with its core characteristics of serving the poor, deeply appreciating the arts, and bringing together parishioners

seemingly divided by cultural and socioeconomic barriers to worship under the same roof. When the position of director of music and arts became available shortly after their visit, Seth applied, got the job, and then moved across the country following graduation.

Unfortunately, what greeted Seth in 2017 was a church in crisis, as the previous pastor of 16 years had been recently removed due to a moral failure. This would be the first of several leadership transitions, culminating in a season of unrest in which the church would have five different pastors in five years. On top of this, the pandemic struck in 2020 and especially ravaged New York City. Seth found himself not only in a position of helping to pastor a church, but doing so amidst great disruption.

Despite the church's challenges, Seth is quick to acknowledge the resilient spirit of the parishioners. "One of the things that was especially significant in my first two years or so is that the church didn't collapse when the senior leader left," Seth says. "There really is a throughline of a lot of people who have been committed for a long time, and I saw a glimpse of how the church had survived—and maybe even thrived a bit—in the wake of that last pastor's departure. When the pandemic hit, the church still had that sort of grit that allowed it to do pretty well even in the circumstances. There were some serious losses and serious challenges, but the main strength of this church is that it doesn't really have a hyper emphasis on a single leader. There's a lot of shared leadership."

At All Angels', Seth's own leadership has been proven by his sustaining pastoral and creative influence. In his role, he organizes music and arts for worship services, leads worship on Sundays, hosts jam nights, and rallies the parish for a variety of art-oriented projects. Seth values the All Angels' tradition of embracing and valuing art created for and by the church. It's





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been a safe space for artists, evidenced perhaps most notably by the fact that Madeleine L'Engle chose to worship at All Angels' in the final years of her life. Here, Seth has used a core framework—which he credits to friend and *FULLER* editor Jerome Blanco—for a way of integrating arts into church ministry. “Jerome wrote a little document that I brought with me from California that outlined an arts ministry in church serving three functions—for the worship life of the church, for the formational life of the church, and for the evangelistic and outreach life of the church.”

Seth has led in these areas of the arts and worship, all in addition to the traditional pastoral roles he fills in the church. “I definitely get to wear the pastoral hat,” he says. Seth regularly meets with people for pastoral care and visits with those who are sick or grieving. “It is expected for me to be making relationships, taking people to coffee, praying with every possible person. Which is really fulfilling to me. I love that.”

Seth is proud of the fact that, through the pandemic, the church maintained its drop-in programs to those in insecure housing situations and found ways to broadcast weekly services to its parishioners. As New York imposed strict lockdown measures in March 2020, Seth was deemed an essential worker and was able to enter the church building and formulate a plan for virtual worship. He had an understanding of music production from his undergraduate education and was able to pull together the equipment and resources to stream video of himself on his acoustic guitar. It proved a short-term solution because, as he put it, leading solo “gets old really fast.”

Looking for alternatives, Seth realized several of the church's musicians had the equipment to record at home. Together they began virtually piecing together songs from a full band, complete with harmonies, that could be broadcast out to members on Sunday mornings. Several songs were inspired by specific Psalms or canticles from the Book of Common Prayer that offered fresh settings to the church's liturgies. All in all, they recorded over 60 pieces of music while in the various stages of “stay at home.” Seth says, “It was a way to say ‘Hey, there's still space for the gifts of the church to be employed for the benefit of the church, unto the Lord.’ We built new relationships. It was almost like a wartime rally—to execute on a vision together under dire circumstances.”

Visual arts also played an important role in sustaining the life of the church during the pandemic. Looking for a way to foster relational connections through art, Seth and an intern filmed a short documentary featuring the work of an artist in the church. “Really just to celebrate a church member and say ‘We're in this together;’” Seth explains. “Here's a little portrait of someone who's doing the work, who happens to be doing creative work. They're surviving in the pandemic. They're a member of this community we love. Let's have a look in their world.”

In the summer of 2021, as the church began regathering in person, Seth and his intern facilitated a project that provided cameras to 12 participants of the church's drop-in program and invited them to snap photos of their life over a two-week period. Seth sees the role of this type of art project as a way to “help us to both be honest about what is true for us and also redress some of the problems we see.” A show was curated from the photo submissions which were displayed prominently in the church.¹

The ways All Angels' persevered through this season reminds Seth how the church has navigated past crises. To this day, staff will occasionally recirculate a memo that Madeleine L'Engle wrote around 1999, a time when the church was in real conflict over the topic of Young Earth creationism. The church was divided down the middle on the issue, to the point that a church split seemed possible. L'Engle wrote a short memo to the lay leaders which said, in effect, “It seems to me that it's to our strength, not to our weakness, that we don't agree on these things and yet we're together.”

Seth agrees. “I think some of that DNA has preserved this church through crisis. It says, ‘You know what? We have a way to be together through disagreement and through challenges. That doesn't always protect us, but a lot of times it does.’”

As the church transitions out of the most challenging years of the pandemic, there are new insights and priorities that were formed out of necessity that Seth hopes will continue. “Our church has a history of being innovative and taking risks,” he says. “But at the same time, we're human, and we've always got our habits that we think are unchangeable. The pandemic brought a kind of disruption that even shakes the sacred foundations.” With this openness, Seth looks hopefully to the ways the role of the creative arts might continue to bring life to the church going forward. He says, “This habit of nurturing the created life and engaging with art in an integrative fashion—that's part of what makes us whole, makes us adaptable, and it points to the abundant life that Jesus promised his people.” ■

¹ Select photos from this project were featured in *FULLER* magazine issue #23.

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AFFLICTED NOT CRUSHED, PERPLEXED NOT DESPAIRING

by Alexia Salvatierra

AFLIGIDOS PERO NO AGOBIADOS, PERPLEJOS PERO NO DESESPERADOS

Por Alexia Salvatierra

우려쌘을 당하여도 싸이지 아니하며 답답한 일을 당하여도 낙심하지 아니하며

드와이트 래드클리프

We all have the temptation to see the early church with rose-colored glasses. They did not need renewal; they were the powerhouse that turned Christian faith from a private heresy in a geographic backwater to a mighty water that took over much of the world. Reading 2 Corinthians with a beginner's mind, we see a different picture. It was never easy to be the church. The health and vitality—even the mere continuance—of the church was fragile, threatened from within and without. Yet both images are true. The early church was a treasure in a clay jar, led by people with feet of clay but ultimately led by Christus Victor, the one who triumphed over sin, death, and the devil.

The articles in this issue reflect that reality in the contemporary world, in this kairos moment. Each author sees the church from their own vantage point, through the prism of their own academic discipline and personal experience.

Tod Bolsinger reminds us that we are in a time of profound transition in which the leaders of the church need to take advantage of the disciplines of spiritual formation and adaptive leadership, remembering all that has carried us through the difficult transitions of the past. Robert Chao Romero names the current threats to the survival and growth of the church but also reminds us of the gifts that are currently emerging into global view—the contributions of the Brown Church, the church of the Global South, the immigrant church—to the broader

Todos tenemos la tentación de ver a la iglesia primitiva con lentes de color rosa. Ellos no tenían necesidad de un avivamiento; eran una fuerza poderosa que transformó la fe Cristiana de una herejía en una ciudad pequeña a un movimiento que cambió el mundo. Leyendo el libro de 2 de Corintios a un nivel inicial, podemos ver un panorama distinto. Nunca fue fácil ser la iglesia. La salud y la vitalidad—y aun la simple continuación—de la iglesia era algo frágil, algo que fue amenazado por fuerzas dentro y fuera de la iglesia. Pero aun así, estas dos imágenes son ciertas. La iglesia era un tesoro en vasos de barro, dirigida por personas con pies de barro, pero sobre todo era dirigida por Christus Victor, el que triunfó sobre el pecado, la muerte, y el diablo.

Los artículos en esta edición reflejan esta realidad de este momento kairós en nuestro mundo contemporáneo. Cada autor ve a la iglesia desde su propio punto de vista, a través de la perspectiva de su disciplina académica y su experiencia personal.

Tod Bolsinger nos recuerda que estamos en un tiempo de transición profunda en el cual los líderes de la iglesia deben aprovechar de la disciplinas de la formación espiritual y el liderazgo adaptativo, recordando todo lo que nos ha llevado a superar las transiciones difíciles del pasado. Robert Chao Romero nombra las amenazas actuales a la sobrevivencia y el crecimiento de la iglesia, pero también nos recuerda que hay dones que actualmente están emergiendo en el panorama global—las contribuciones de la iglesia marrón, la iglesia del

우리 모두는 장미빛 안경을 쓰고 초대교회를 보고 싶은 유혹이 있습니다. 그들에게는 갱신이 필요하지 않았습니다. 그들은 기독교 신앙을 지리적 오지에 있는 미미한 소수단체에서 세계의 많은 부분을 차지하는 거대한 운동으로 변화시킨 공동체 였습니다. 초심자의 마음으로 고린도후서를 읽으면 다른 그림이 보입니다. 교회가 되는 것은 결코 쉬운 일이 아니었습니다. 교회의 건강과 활력은 비록 단기간을 보아서도 연약했고 내부와 외부로부터 위협을 받고 있었습니다. 그러나 두 이미지는 모두 사실입니다. 초대 교회는 진흙 항아리에 담긴 보배였으며, 진흙과 같은 이들에 의해 이끌어졌지만, 궁극적으로 죄와 사망과 마귀를 이기신 승리자이신 그리스도 에 의해 이끌어졌습니다.

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Christian community. I flesh out some of the same concepts in stories from the front lines of church renewal. Inés Velásquez-McBryde and Bobby Harrison give us a peek into church renewal on the ground in Southern California, describing a multiculturally led church plant during the pandemic. Marcos Canales and Oscar García-Johnson describe a trip to Chiapas in which they gain a new understanding of transnational mission partnership with indigenous communities, compelling them to change their local church practices to better advocate for the family of God in these communities.

Sebastian Kim takes us to Korea, describing the development of uniquely Korean revival and protest theologies and asserting their creative tension and mutual influence in building Korean churches and society. Cameron Lee focuses on those he calls “ministry refugees,” providing advice for how to help them negotiate through damaging experiences and draw from the expertise born from them. Scott Cormode offers tools for how to move each of us and our churches into a spiritual place that lays

a foundation for renewal—immersed in grace, responding with gratitude, generosity, and hospitality. Lastly, Kirsten Sonkyo Oh relates the current moment in church renewal to Advent, noting that awareness of our transgressions is evidence of the Holy Spirit’s movement and has the potential to guide us toward hope-filled restoration.

In the end, this issue is about hope. Realistic hope, grounded hope, unshakeable hope in the promise Jesus made to Peter: The gates of hell itself cannot stand against the power of the treasure that we carry in our earthen vessels. A philanthropic leader told me at a recent American Academy of Religion conference that he was sick and tired of hearing that the church is dying. The church may be dying, but if so, the church is also rising. As Bishop Desmond Tutu said in an interview that I attended several years ago, “We are resurrection people.” This issue reveals the seeds of resurrection in the midst of our current crisis. Read and rejoice!

sur global, la iglesia inmigrante—hacia la comunidad Cristiana más amplia. Yo desarrollo los mismos conceptos mediante historias desde el frente de batalla del avivamiento de la iglesia. Inés Velásquez-McBryde y Bobby Harrison nos dan un vistazo al avivamiento de la iglesia en el Sur de California, describiendo una iglesia que fue multiculturalmente dirigida a lo largo de la pandemia. Marcos Canales y Oscar García-Johnson describen su viaje a Oaxaca en el cual obtuvieron un nuevo entendimiento de la colaboración transnacional misionera con comunidades indígenas, animándoles a que cambien sus prácticas en la iglesia local para mejor abogar por la familia de Dios en sus comunidades. Sebastian Kim nos lleva a Corea, describiendo el desarrollo de un avivamiento únicamente coreano y las teologías de protesta que reafirman la tensión creativa e influencia mutua al construir iglesia y sociedad coreana. Cameron Lee se enfoca en los que él llama "refugiados del ministerio," aconsejándoles cómo negociar a través experiencias dañinas y extraer capacidad de estas experiencias. Scott Cormode nos da las herramientas necesarias para movernos y mover nuestras iglesias hacia un lugar espiritual que crea la base para el avivamiento—

inmersos en gracia, respondiendo con gratitud, generosidad, y hospitalidad. Finalmente, Kirsten Sonkyo Oh compara el momento actual de avivamiento al Adviento, notando que estar consciente de nuestras transgresiones es evidencia del mover del Espíritu Santo y esto tiene el potencial de movernos hacia una restauración llena de esperanza.

Al final de todo, esta edición se trata de la esperanza. Una esperanza realista, esperanza cimentada y esperanza inmóvil en la promesa que Jesús le hizo a Pedro: que las puertas del infierno mismo no podrán enfrentarse al poder del tesoro que llevamos en nuestras vasijas terrenales. Un líder filantrópico me dijo recientemente en la conferencia American Academy of Religion que él estaba cansado de escuchar que la iglesia estaba moribunda. Quizás la iglesia se está muriendo, pero si este es el caso también está levantándose de nuevo. Como el Obispo Desmond Tutu dijo en una entrevista hace varios años, “Nosotros somos gente de resurrección“. Esta edición revela las semillas de la resurrección que se encuentran en medio de nuestra crisis actual. Lean y regocíjense.

Inés Velásquez-McBryde와 Bobby Harrison은 팬데믹 기간 동안 다문화가 주도한 교회 개혁에 대해 묘사하면서 남부 캘리포니아의 교회 쇠신을 엿볼 수 있게 했습니다. Marcos Canales와 Oscar García-Johnson은 토착 공동체와의 초국가적 선교 파트너십에 대한 새로운 이해를 얻고 이 공동체들에서 하나님의 가족을 더 잘 옹호하기 위해 지역 교회 관행을 바꾸게 만드는 오약사카 여행을 설명합니다. Sebastian Kim은 우리를 한국으로 데려가 독특한 한국 부흥과 저항 신학의 발전을 설명하고 한국 교회와 사회를 건설하는 데 있어 그들의 창조적 긴장과 상호 영향력을 주장합니다. Cameron Lee는 자신이 “사역 난민”이라고 부르는 사람들에게 초점을 맞추며, 그들이 해로운 경험을 통해 협상하고 그러한 경험에서 나오는 전문 지식을 끌어낼 수 있도록 돕는 방법에 대한 조언을 제공합니다. Scott Cormode는 우리 각자와 교회를 갱신의 토대를 마련하는 영적 장소로 옮기는 방법에 대한 모든 도구를 제공합니다. 그곳에서 은혜에 잠기고 감사와 관대함과 환대로 응답하는 것입니다. 마지막으로 Kirsten Sonkyo Oh는 교회 갱신의 현재 순간을 대립결과 관련시키며, 우리의 범법을 자각하는 것은 성령의 움직임의 증거이며 소망으로 가득 찬 회복으로 우리를 움직일 잠재력이 있음을 지적합니다.

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THE RENEWING CHURCH

Alexia Salvatierra

The great motto of the Reformation was “ecclesia semper reformanda” (church always reforming). When I think about the renewal of the church, I have a flood of images from stories and experiences of churches experiencing renewal in various forms. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the church is renewing. However, that good news is invisible to many church authorities, perhaps because it is happening primarily on the margins of institutional and established churches. The margins are wide; they include swaths of the Global South as well as communities of color in the US. Some of these renewing churches are small, without the energy to publicize and document their work. Others are not small but are relatively uninterested in reporting their achievements to traditional channels. What does a renewing church look like? What are the marks of a renewing church?

My daughter, a typical millennial in many ways, came back to Christian faith one summer in college when she started attending a Pentecostal Hispanic church in the barrio led by a second-generation former gang member. She visited the church one day because she was interested in an internship with a group doing activist community art. The church was known for inviting local graffiti artists to paint graffiti on its walls. In fact, they had put up additional walls to make room for all the graffiti. The church had also initiated a project involving local youth and church members to redo a street mural which had been defaced. The pastor told my daughter that she was welcome to intern but that she had to become part of the life of the church. She started regularly attending services and experienced that, on a regular basis, someone came to Christ out of the gangs—with great tears and laughter, and with

much joy for the whole community. She saw people healed after years of addiction and hopelessness. She also saw these renewed people engage in bringing new life to their community through programs for children, partnerships with neighbors in projects to improve their community, and participation in anti-gentrification campaigns and police dialogues. The crowning moment was when her trans friend came out to the pastor and was fully welcomed—in spite of the fact that some of the church leaders disagreed. The pastor said, “We are all family in Christ, forgiven beyond anything we deserve or could have hoped for. We have to learn to love each other.”

When my daughter went back to school in Western Massachusetts, she looked for a church. She called me one Sunday afternoon, sad and confused. She said, “Mommy, we went to a church with a rainbow flag in the window, but it was just a political club for old White people. No one talked personally about Jesus, and no one got healed. If I want a political club, I can find one with young brown people at school.” I dare say that if she had gone to a church that was a different kind of political club, she would also have been equally disappointed. We know what a renewing church does not look like.

Another story: a Hispanic immigrant church during the pandemic. The rules for COVID assistance for small businesses excluded anyone with an undocumented family member. Many undocumented workers also lost their jobs and did not have any access to unemployment benefits. Each citizen family at this church took responsibility to care for a family who couldn't get help. Some of these citizen families were also economically struggling; it was not

a wealthy church. Can you smell the aroma of Christ? People who experience new life in Christ brought new life and hope to others.

Daniel Rodriguez, in *A Future for the Latino Church*, describes the immigrant churches he researched who are attracting and engaging the second generation.¹ It is not surprising that these churches are vital on multiple levels; a church that is attracting young people is likely to keep going and growing for years to come. The common characteristics of these churches include:

- Full commitment to meet emerging generations where they are—offering bilingual and bicultural services and activities.
- Identification, by pastors, of potential young leaders who then receive ongoing whole-life and whole-family mentoring from the pastors.
- Apprenticeship—young leaders accompanying pastors while they lead, leading under the pastors' supervision, taking on gradually increasing responsibilities (culminating in planting a satellite church).
- Cell groups—small home Bible studies that encourage participants to apply the Scriptures to their daily lives and develop deep relationships of mutual care and concern. These groups offer young leaders a ground-level opportunity to share their gifts.
- Vibrant worship that includes leadership by young second-generation members and a variety of music.
- Regular training in consecrated teams, which provides character development, spiritual formation, and ministry skills. In these teams, young leaders practice habits of fervent prayer, intentional relationship with the Holy Spirit, offering sincere personal testimony, and developing an unswerving faith in the power of God to break the cycle of sin, suffering, and death.
- Active community ministries that impact the lives of neighbors, increase the well-being of the whole community, and support a more equitable society.
- Intensive long-term residential training programs for mission experience.

None of this can happen without significant and ongoing investment of energy, enthusiasm, dedication, and discipline. Churches that are renewing are passionate places, full of people to whom the church matters, not for its own sake alone but for the sake of a hurting world that needs the holistic redemption of the whole gospel. They are places where people depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out and sustain their work and where people experience that their trust is well-placed.

Rev. Brandon Wrencher and I recently completed our book, *Buried Seeds: Learning from the Vibrant Resilience of Marginalized Christian Communities*.² In it, we study two renewal movements that were led by poor and marginalized people: the base Christian community movement in Latin America and the Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s and the hush harbors, the independent slave churches in the United States. These small Christian communities

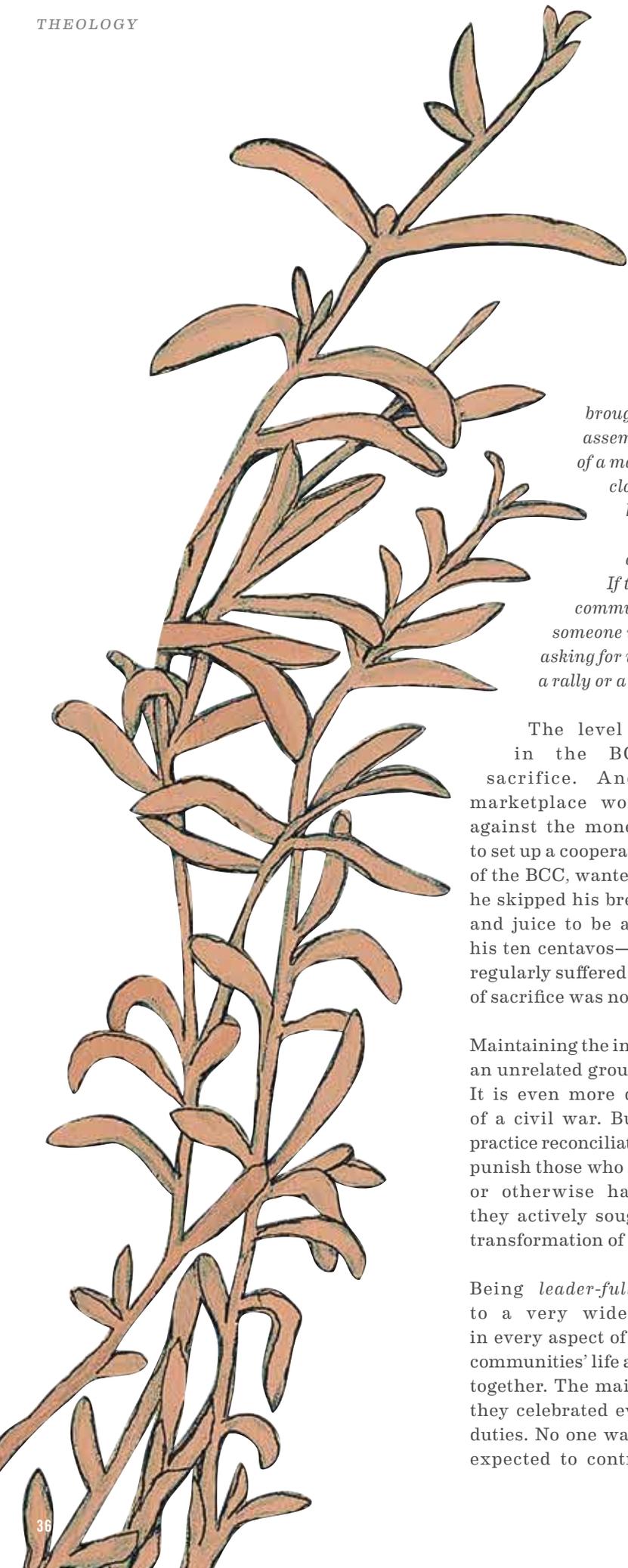
shared much in common with the churches described by Rodriguez. We identified a list of five common characteristics shared by the two movements:

- Kinship
- Leader-full
- Consciousness
- Spirit-uality
- Faithful Organizing

Kinship refers to the profound sense of being part of a healthy extended family in which people care for one another on every level, even when it is not easy to do so. In the base Christian community (BCC) movement, they moved their weekly gatherings from one home to another. When a family could not receive the community because the roof needed repair, they all fixed the roof. When members joined a march to support neighbors fighting to save their small plots of land from land grabs by the powerful, other members took responsibility for their children so that they could take the risk without fear. The following quote from the Philippines says it well:

Each community saw itself as a sharing community responsible for the sick, the oppressed, the lonely, the dying, the children in their community. When they prayed together on Sunday, they brought these concerns vividly into the prayer of the community. When they left the chapel, it was frequently straight to tackle some new problem that had been





brought to their notice at the assembly: to help plow the field of a man who had TB, to collect clothes for a family whose house had been burned, to investigate rumors of a child being maltreated.

If there was another community with a problem, someone would be reporting and asking for volunteers to help in a rally or a long walk.³

The level of kinship practiced in the BCCs often required sacrifice. Another example: The marketplace women were organizing against the moneylenders and working to set up a cooperative. Salvador, a member of the BCC, wanted to help. For all of Lent, he skipped his breakfast of a hard biscuit and juice to be able to give the women his ten centavos—even though his family regularly suffered from hunger.⁴ This kind of sacrifice was not an unusual occurrence.

Maintaining the intimacy of kinship among an unrelated group of people is never easy. It is even more difficult in the context of a civil war. But the BCCs learned to practice reconciliation. Instead of seeking to punish those who betrayed the community or otherwise harmed the community, they actively sought the repentance and transformation of the offender.

Being *leader-full*—sharing leadership to a very wide extent—was evident in every aspect of both the base Christian communities' life and the hush harbors' life together. The main positions rotated, and they celebrated everyday tasks as sacred duties. No one was left out; everyone was expected to contribute their gifts. This

was founded on a fierce belief in the equal value of every person—in direct contrast to the messages that they were given by their societies. It was underscored by shared decision-making practices involving all members of the group.

Consciousness (conscientizacion) meant intentional awareness of all aspects of the daily reality experienced by members of the group—including the sociopolitical and economic realities of their lives and the roots of the problems that they faced. It also involved the practice of seeing these realities through the lens of the liberating Word, of the Scripture read from the perspective of the marginalized. The Magnificat, Mary's poem in Luke 1:46–55, speaks differently to those who live under a form of feudalism dating back to the Spanish conquest than it does to an upper-middle-class North American. Does God really mean to give food to the hungry and send the rich away empty? Is there hope that the people who are taking the lion's share of the produce of their small farms will stop and let the farmers feed their children well? That is truly good news, almost too good to be true. The members of the hush harbor also faced the realities of their lives as slaves in the light of the Word; they took the Exodus story as their own.

The thorough commitment to the horizontal application of the Word did not lessen their vertical connection and commitment. Both the BCCs and the hush harbors were known for their experience of the joy, peace, and healing power of the Holy Spirit. *Spirit-uality* is a spirituality full of the Spirit. Ana, a base ecclesial community (BEC) leader from El Salvador, tells the story of her initial encounter with a BEC

as a college student. “What drew you to come back?” I asked her. “The joy,” she answered. “People were so full of joy, so excited. You could feel the Holy Spirit in the room, moving us, everyone hoping for a great change.”⁵ The hush harbors were also powered by mystical experience: “The prayer warriors of hush harbors were prophetic contemplatives, those who saw moments of stillness as a chance to encounter the sacred, to be set free, and for the experience of that spiritual freedom to invoke their deepest conviction in a liberated world.”⁶

Lastly, the combination of their analysis of their reality and their experience of the power of the Spirit led to liberating action, to *faith-full organizing*. They fought for a better life, for a more abundant life, for all. They did not place artificial limits on the realm or call of God. Their faith made a difference not only for themselves as individuals but also for their communities and societies. The phrase from *Gaudium et Spes* (the 1965 document on the church produced in relationship to the Second Vatican Council) for the church is “soul and yeast of the society.” The base Christian community movement took that seriously.

When my daughter was in high school, she brought a friend to the house who had grown up in a family with no religious tradition or commitment. She said to me, “I am kinda interested in Jesus but only if he actually changes the world.” I was struck by the extent to which that is the heart cry of many millennials (and in a slightly different voice, Generation Z). These new generations that are leaving the church in the West by droves are interested in Jesus. However, they are only interested

in a Jesus who actually makes a difference in our daily lives and in our hurting communities, a Jesus who actually changes the world. The base Christian community movement and the hush harbors changed the lives of those who participated, giving them healing, strength, and hope. Those who received these gifts seamlessly moved into action to change their communities toward the greater availability of abundant life for all. Their leadership by marginalized, poor people of color is a testimony to the reality of the God revealed in 1 Corinthians 1:26–29: “Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential, not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him.”

The experience and quality of the base Christian communities and the hush harbors continue to exist in the lives of Christian communities led by a wide variety of pastors of color and their extended families all over the world. Iglesia de Restauracion in Los Angeles, for example, is led by Rev. Rene Molina Sr. and his millennial son, Rene Jr., along with the rest of their extended family. The two Rene Molinas love and respect each other, working together to serve the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking congregations within their several thousand-member church in a low-income area of South Los Angeles. They each bring their respective gifts and capacities, typical of the gifts of their respective generations to a ministry that integrates evangelism

and community development. The church is known for the Spirit-filled love for God and each other that pervades all their activities. Iglesia de Restauracion does not show up on any denominational scoreboard; it has not been part of any formal studies. It is emblematic of signs of renewal throughout the larger church.

The percentage of Christians in the world (about one-third of the global population) is holding steady. The composition has changed, with the bulk of Christians now coming from or living in the Global South and East. Those who decry the death of the church often miss the new life bursting through. The church is dying; the church is rising. The church is being renewed. Praise be to God! ■

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WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING

Tod Bolsinger

This essay starts with a most troubling question: How do we participate in God's renewal of the church if we can't quite see where God is taking the church and how God is renewing it? When the present has been so disrupted that we both deeply long for the familiar past and at the same time sense the necessity of change, what do we do?

**“Skate to where the puck is going.”
—Wayne Gretzky**

The above is an often-shared bit of leadership wisdom by the one who is widely considered the GOAT (greatest of all time) of hockey. The key, Wayne Gretzky's father taught him, was not to skate to where the puck is but to where the puck is going to be. Anticipate the direction and speed of the puck and get there first. Jump ahead of the competition by learning to see the trajectory of the puck and predict where you need to be for optimal results. That is the key to success in both hockey and, well, everything else too, right? (Gretzky retired with 61 records, 9 MVP trophies, and 4 Stanley Cups.) This little saying has been repeated by Steve Jobs and Warren Buffett about business, and by countless others about leadership and politics.

Gretzky played in the 1980s and 1990s, a time when there were certainly leadership challenges facing leaders in every field. But without question, the speed of change and the disruption of the first two decades of the 21st century could not have been imagined back then. During the most intense days of the COVID-19 pandemic, I often had to remind leaders that while there may have been worse days to be a faith leader, the circumstances of our day were unprecedented in their complexity. As one

person reminded me, it was like we were in 1918 (a health crisis), 1929 (a financial crisis), and 1968 (a crisis of social injustice that led to deep political and social division) all at the same time. As I write this, the world is also watching on in horror as a massive superpower has invaded a neighboring country, so we might add 1939 to the table of disturbing dates above.

After two decades of technological acceleration, globalization, health crises, geopolitical turmoil, racial turmoil, and deep cultural division, most leaders would admit that skating to where the puck is going feels pretty impossible—the game now seems to have fourteen pucks going in fourteen different directions.

How do you lead when you cannot understand the present moment, let alone predict the future?

For Christians who pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,” believing that God is always at work in both the world and in the church for the world, there is little solace. Many of us have been shaped by teachers who told us that the most important thing was not our own wills but God's will (and that is good indeed), and further, that the goal of Christian organizational strategic planning was not to make *our* plans and ask God to bless them but instead to “watch to see where God is working and join *Him* [sic].”¹ So, this present day of disruption and lack of foresight is even more troubling. We begin to wonder, If I can't see where God is working, is God even here? If I can't see where God is going, am I lost?



“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” —Proverbs 29:18

In her book *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*, Susan Beaumont introduces the concept of liminal space on the very first page. Liminal space, according to Beaumont, is a way of understanding the seasons of disruption that make it impossible to truly see the way forward. Liminal space is the “threshold between an ending and a new beginning,” Beaumont writes.² It is the period of uncertainty when we are caught in such personal, communal, or even global transition that we feel like we are at the moment of sunrise and our eyes haven't yet adjusted to the light.

Drawing from experiences as wide-ranging in their capacity for emotional disruption as pregnancy, gardening, organizational crisis, and Israel's exodus experience in the wilderness, Beaumont describes what

has become an all too familiar reality for so many faith leaders in this lingering pandemic and in this globalized, digitally connected, politically divided, and deeply confusing world of ambivalent religious identity and waning congregational commitment: disorientation.

In liminal space, a group of people have experienced a disruption that has led to a feeling of deep disconnection from the practices, rituals, traditions, and even identities of the past. Some of these moments of disconnection are celebrated with great rejoicing. But even that celebration is fraught with the uncertainty of unknowing. Whether it is a gender reveal party for a couple that has longed for the news that they are going to become parents,

or the people of God who are celebrating with songs the vanquishing of their Egyptian enslavers in the waters of the Red Sea, liminality—that “wilderness” experience of now but not yet—is a time of in-betweenness that defies descriptions of identity. For the nervous couple are now parents, right? Or will they be once the child is born? The formerly enslaved Hebrews are now a new nation, Israel, right? So why will it take a generation of wandering in the wilderness and multiple battles to become a people who can set up as a new nation in a new land?

When we find ourselves on this liminal threshold between past familiar terrain and the new

unfamiliar way ahead, how do we lead in this “uncharted territory”?³ How might the best leadership principles help us face the unknown of a rapidly changing world? Even more, how might people of faith—long-believing that our leaders are gifted with vision and discernment to guide us—step ahead faithfully if we are still in the dark?

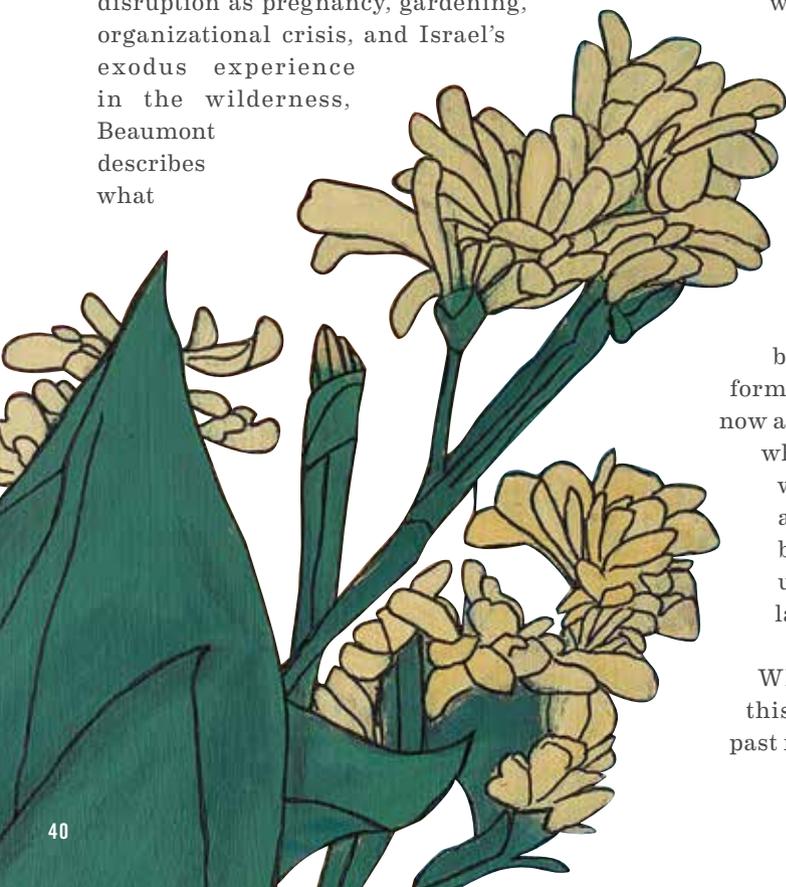
Or to make an even finer, more anxiety-producing point: What do we do when we don't really know where God is leading us?

“We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” —2 Chronicles 20:12

In 2 Chronicles, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, gets word that an immense army made up of three enemies is amassing against him. He gathers the families of Judah together in assembly, and they cry out to God for help. The story of God's miraculous display of power in giving Judah victory is often and rightly told to assure the faithful that the biggest battles of life are “not yours but God's.” But what is most instructive for us is what Jehoshaphat did *before* the battle, when the news was so frightening and the future so daunting. What Jehoshaphat does at that moment is breathtaking for its bold vulnerability.

He stands before his people and admits that he doesn't know what to do.

When the future is unknown and the way is uncharted, leaders are required to use a different kind of leadership. In their book *Leadership on the Line*, Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky describe this leadership as facing *adaptive challenges*.⁴ When there is no known fix to a problem, when “best practices” are irrelevant, when there is no “expertise” at hand, no personal experience



to draw on that is relevant to the challenge of the moment, the leader is not the expert but the chief learner—not the experienced commander but the humble, vulnerable collaborator whose leadership begins when she acknowledges that there really is no clear way ahead and so the people must find their way together.

Instead of a single leader offering a stirring vision to inspire people to venture forth, Jehoshaphat demonstrates that the truly visionary leader brings the whole people together to look not to a wishful future but to God who will make us fit for the challenge.

We Come Together and Look to God to Form Us

Standing in front of 250,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. addressed a throng of people who had also gathered in the face of a daunting future that—if past history was any indicator—was to be little different than the despair of the past. They had come in church buses and in their Sunday best to draw attention to the painful reality that even a full century after the passing of the Emancipation Proclamation, promises of civil rights, equality, and justice had gone ignored and unfulfilled.

When the prepared remarks that he had worked on until 4:00 am that morning fell a bit flat, Dr. King went off script. At the urging of gospel singer Mahalia Jackson (“Tell ’em about the dream, Martin. Tell ’em about the dream!” she said from behind him), Dr. King drew on the imagery of Isaiah to remind those who had come from the front lines of the Civil Rights movement that their 400-year-old struggle against

injustice was not devoid of the presence of nor beyond the power of God.

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”

“With this faith,” Dr. King declared—with this faith that the God who has been present to the oppressed down through the ages will someday redeem the earth down to the dirt—“With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.”⁵

Notice that Dr. King doesn’t look at the mountain of despair—the long, long struggle for justice—and offer a plan. Instead, he shares a perspective of shared life and witness lived in patient hope of what God will do. As Dr. King would later reinforce at the National Cathedral nearly four years later, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”⁶

In his speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. King was not only harkening back to the prophets but drawing from the wisdom of the first four centuries of the church’s life. Under the oppression of the Roman Empire, in a world marked with constant plagues and wars and brutality,

a tiny community slowly grew into what would become the largest religious movement in the world. When we ask how they did this, it is natural to assume that they focused on church planting, evangelism, and mission work. That is how the church grows, right?

Wrong. At least not then. And not during times of deep uncertainty, disruption, and oppression. According to Alan Kreider, the early church grew into the most substantive religion in the world by the early fifth century because it spent centuries focused on *their thinking, their character, and their habits of living*. They literally *came together* (in worship and catechesis) and *looked to God* in ways that would form them into a people who would attract others to their church because of their remarkable lives.

The churches grew in many places, taking varied forms. They proliferated because the faith that these fishers and hunters embodied was attractive to people who were dissatisfied with their old cultural and religious habits, who felt pushed to explore new possibilities, and who then encountered Christians who embodied a new manner of life that pulled them toward what the Christians called “rebirth” into a new life.⁷

This focus on forming a demonstrable quality of life was also at the center of the vision of Dr. King and the leaders of the Civil Rights movement. For them, it was not enough to be actively demonstrating, protesting, and marching, but to do so in a manner that appealed to the consciences of oppressors and call them to a moral life of beauty and love that they actually deeply long to live.⁸ In order to do so, however, those who were protesting needed themselves to

be formed into people who could respond to brutal injustices with nonviolence and love. This led Dr. King to insist that each person who participated in the movement sign a commitment card for taking on daily practices that would help shape their internal attitudes and external habits in the ways and manner of love and nonviolence.⁹

This attention to formation became a way of focusing the energy and developing the capacity for faithful witness even in the liminality of an unknown future.

We Listen to the Pain of Our Neighbors and Ask God to Help Us Love Them Well

While strengthening communal practices and forming their lives to be exemplary and attractive to outsiders were parts of both the early church and the Civil Rights movement in times of great uncertainty, historian Rodney Stark reminds us that Christians did not turn inward in those times, even in their “coming together” and “looking to God.” Their formation was not a focus on self-care or self-improvement but instead a formation for the sake of loving others.

Indeed, in times of great uncertainty, perhaps more than other times, those of deepest faith find themselves refocused on that which is most foundational—and that is not our own surviving and thriving. As C. S. Lewis wrote in the throes of World War II, “Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.”¹⁰

In the vulnerability of the earliest centuries of the Christian movement, in times of great global despair, and in the midst of a long

struggle for freedom, the most profoundly Christian instinct is to reach out in love, care, and hospitality to others. Their love of God is inextricably tied to Jesus’ co-priority of loving one’s neighbor (Mark 12:28–34)—and right at the point of deepest pain and need.¹¹

When the church had little power, existed only at the margins (and precariously at that), and was intentional “competition” for other social groups or religious institutions, it grew because it developed what Martyn Lloyd-Jones declared as critical to the witness of the church almost 70 years ago, “a type and order of life that is quite exceptional.”¹² It did so both by focusing more on formation and on displaying that formation in acts of love, kindness, hospitality, and care toward their neighbor in need, thus reinforcing Jesus’ own instruction that the love of God and love of neighbor be considered the essential practices of the followers of Jesus.

In essence, the uncertainty of our times should take us back to that which we know to be foundational to our faith. The liminality of the moment should lead us forward in simple acts of community, formation, and love. When we are unsure where God is taking the church, we can be confident that God is leading us to see our neighbor and respond to our neighbor in need (James 2:8).

When we don’t know what to do, we can always do what we have been taught to *always* do. Come together. Be formed for the challenge. Listen for the pain of our neighbors. Love them well. ■

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EMBRACING THE “MINISTRY REFUGEES” IN OUR MIDST

Cameron Lee

We are, and always have been, a world at war, and the casualties are not only lives lost, but lives upended. Ongoing crises in Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and other countries have displaced millions from the land of their birth. Refugees face an uncertain future as they struggle to find not only what they need to survive but also acceptance, belonging, and a reconstructed identity.

In a metaphorical sense—with no intention to minimize the lived realities of those named above—many contemporary Christians are also “refugees” from their home churches and traditions, displaced by conflict. This includes disillusioned believers who have served on pastoral staffs or who grew up in pastors’ families. Their experiences range from disappointment to outright trauma. Often, they’ve had enough of the church. Hopefully, through it all, they’ve retained their faith in God. Some even come to seminary, searching and questioning, or they may even still be exploring a call to ministry.

Take pastors’ kids (PKs) as an example. Many years ago, in a committee meeting, I mentioned the research I was doing on PKs. One of the committee members, a trustee, spontaneously voiced what he thought the typical PK might say: “I want to be in ministry, just like my parents!” He smiled as if expecting my confirmation. I paused before responding, “Actually, for many, it’s more like, ‘I want to be in ministry, but not like my parents.’”

The truth of most PKs is that they’ve seen both the best and the worst of congregations, an insider’s view of a drama to which few are privy. On one hand, they’ve witnessed phenomenal acts of love and compassion. On the other, they’ve also witnessed pettiness and politics, manipulation and maneuvering. Some PKs have been inspired by their parents’ commitment to Christ and his body. But they may also have struggled with feelings of jealousy when they only received the dregs of their parents’ time and attention. They’ve internalized the expectations of others, sometimes to the point of feeling unknown and unseen. And they’ve watched their parents prayerfully strive to remain faithful in an environment where ministers were habitually overworked and underappreciated.

Not all seminary students have been seen as much of the inner workings of congregational leadership, and some seem naïve to the pressures. I remember one student who attended a seminar I was teaching. As I told stories about the expected but intrusive demands clergy face, his eyes widened and he sat back in his chair, as if to distance himself from what I was saying. At one point, he raised his hand and said in a tremulous voice, “You’re freaking me out right now.”

By contrast, many seminary students either are on staff at a church or have been. They may have witnessed senseless battles or served in a system where boundaries were vague and power was used in oppressive ways. These students have suffered what has come to be known generally as “church hurt,” or at the extremes, spiritual abuse. In recent years, I’ve begun calling these students “ministry refugees.” Some students have found that the term validates the sense of displacement that comes from leaving a conflict-ridden congregation. On the one hand,

their very presence in seminary is a sign of their resilience. But on the other hand, if we are to preserve their unique potential for leadership, that resilience must be nurtured.

The academic study of theology can deconstruct students’ existing thought-worlds. While this can serve worthy ends, it can also leave seminarians feeling rootless, and the risk may be more acute for ministry refugees. What they need is a theological education that makes sense of past pain and helps them navigate the social dynamics of the congregations that lie in their future.

At a minimum, this would entail that they internalize both a realistic ecclesiology and a robust eschatology. By the first, I mean a clear-eyed biblical realism about both the potential and the pitfalls intrinsic to ministry. We may idealize the post-Pentecost euphoria of Acts 2, reading the story through the lenses of our longing for community, and downplaying the ethnic tension that led to problems as early as Acts 6. Even when we intellectually acknowledge such tensions, we may still privately harbor our own wish to someday find “the right church” to lead or join. It’s the ecclesial analog to searching for your soulmate: looking for a congregation that has all the warmth of Philippi without the internal strife of Corinth or the theological confusion of the churches in Galatia.

Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, however, teach a different lesson. The Corinthians were a confused, emotionally reactive, and fractious bunch. But Paul was still certain that the Spirit was active among them, and even dared to refer to them as “Christ’s letter” (2 Cor 3:3, CEB). Such a realistic ecclesiology can help ministry refugees come to terms with a complicated truth: For all its brokenness, a contentious

congregation is still a local manifestation of God’s church.

Such an ecclesiology, however, needs its hopeful twin: a robust eschatology. It’s one thing to accept that we all, individually and corporately, have a long way to go to reach the “fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13). But it’s another to intentionally attune to the signs of future glory that come alive even in the chaos and conflict of the present. There are moments of selflessness even in the most selfish of congregations, and times of integrity, compassion, and justice in the midst of hypocrisy, indifference, and injustice. Such moments can be read sardonically as mere happenstances. Or they can be seen as signs of hope that the Holy Spirit is alive and well.

People who have been hurt by the church may need help envisioning the role they may yet play in the life of a congregation. In organizational terms, it’s less a matter of positional power than of influence. They don’t have to be pastors to make a difference. Instead, with the wise hindsight of their experience, they can discover creative and courageous ways to nudge Christian communities toward shalom.



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COMPAS EN MISIÓN: RE-LOCATION AS CHURCH RENEWAL

Oscar García-Johnson and Marcos Canales

The issue seems to me to be not whether the church is growing, but whether it is authentically engaged in the mission of the triune God in its concrete socio-historical situations. It is a matter of efficacious participation in the ongoing life struggles of society in a total witnessing engagement, which, more than a program or a method, is a lifestyle. For when this happens, the church is turned upside-down [a living organism] ... [and] inside-out [at the service of the kingdom].¹

We had read each other's work, shared lectures in our classrooms, walked the streets of Los Angeles together as Christian activists, and influenced each other through our sermons in the church we both belong to. Then an opportunity presented itself to travel together to a place radically different from our familiar contexts. The trip promised to challenge our theological presuppositions and pastoral praxis. So, we went—to the memorable colonial city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico.

On our trip, we (Marcos and Oscar) were joined by Dr. Robert Chao Romero, associate professor of Chicana/o studies at UCLA and director of the Brown Church Institute. We were not sure of what to expect in Chiapas. But we knew that San Cristóbal de Las Casas has been known as the hub of colonial resistance since the time of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (16th c.). We also knew that Chiapas was the home of the Zapatista movement, solidified in 1994 to resist ethnic oppression, extractivist corporative agendas, and political corruption.

The trip had at least two goals. Marcos and Robert were looking for the legacy of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, to deepen their historical knowledge of him and his impact on society as part of their continued reflection in their recently published book.² Oscar was looking for the Zapatista movement, to gain knowledge of their ethnopolitical project toward self-sustainability and its impact on marginalized communities around the world. We all found something that we were originally curious about. We were surrounded by historical colonial artifacts, as the city itself is a walking archive. We also engaged in discussions about the effects of the Zapatista dictum, “a world in which many worlds fit,” beyond their caracol³ communities. But we also found much more.

The Collective Behind Each Agent of Change

We learned that San Cristóbal is a hub for thousands of NGOs with all kinds of agendas. Many have their headquarters abroad, are financially stable, and have many of their leaders only temporarily assigned to specific projects (with the possibility of relocation at any time). They have little alignment and intersectionality with local organizations, specifically with long-term advocacy, so the organizations' self-centered projects often compete with the often less-consulted local organizations and the indigenous communities' priorities. So while the colonial and tourist-lined streets intended to present a certain face of San Cristóbal, we found that indigenous communities continue to be in the struggle for land, water, and human dignity.

Ramona, an indigenous activist and faith-rooted collective (community) organizer, showed us the variety of local faces that embodied the longings and losses of indigenous communities within and around San Cristóbal. Ramona⁴ connected us to a rich web of other agents of transformation: indigenous Christian leaders, activists, human rights workers, and lay Christian leaders doing amazing work with minimal to no financial and church support. Ramona's accompaniment of local activists, entrepreneurial skills to train small business owners, and theological commitment to justice as God's work introduced us to models of church renewal and community transformation. We went to San Cristóbal de Las Casas looking for Bartolomé de Las Casas and the Zapatista project, and instead we met and were transformed by Ramona, our "Lidia of Chiapas" (Acts 16:11-15). We also learned from Itzel, a locally trained anthropologist who started a small collective of women taxi drivers in response to the sexual assault, harassment, and violence that local women and young girls experience as they try to get around the city.⁵ Elvira and Moisés expanded our imagination on how "another world is possible" through social-conscience illustrations, art as resistance, sustainable gardening and farming practices, bartering markets, and the usage of an alternative currency, túmin.⁶ Elvira and Moisés, through their collective *Alter Nativas*, coordinate *tianguis*⁷ where túmin is accepted and where neighbors become partners instead of clients.

When Social Location Changes Christian Vocation: The Case for Reverse Conversion

I (Oscar) was deeply impressed by the stories of conversion to the indigenous

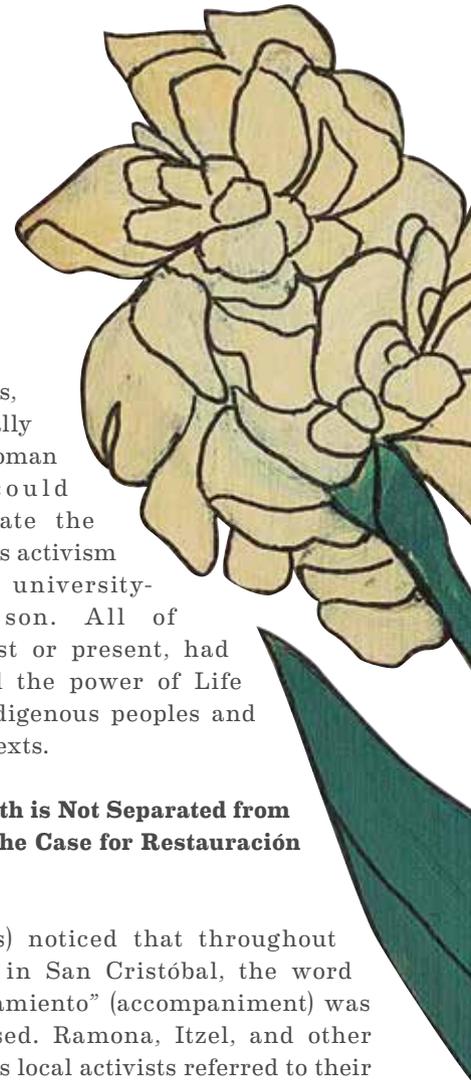
peoples, histories, cultures, and struggles. To be clear, I am not referring to the indigenous conversion to Christianity but the opposite. I am referring to the power of reverse Christian conversion: how influential Christian leaders—from Las Casas (16th c.) to jTatik Samuel Ruíz García (1924-2011) to Father Marcelo Pérez Pérez⁸ (in the present)—have been converted to the indigenous peoples, their contexts, and struggles. This seems to be connected to one of the theological insights gained in Vatican II by committed Latin American pastoral agents such as jTatik⁹ Samuel Ruíz García: the evangelical understanding that their Christian vocation has changed location, from the metropolitan urban center of Westernized life to the marginal indigenous and impoverished back alleys of the city. Hence, the so-called preferential option for the poor, in jTatik's context, translates into a total commitment to the indigenous peoples deemed as the unwanted of society. These fathers and mothers of the Latin American church have learned to love God in the indigenous other and love the indigenous other in God. They have learned their languages and embraced their struggles. They have committed to advocate on their behalf and fought next to them in their revolutions.

I was also impressed by how even atheist political intellectuals, such as Subcomandante Marcos, were equally converted to the indigenous peoples to the point of delinking from their Westernized political ideologies and adopting the indigenous cosmologies of liberation. I was deeply impressed by our hosts, a family of indigenous descent who were members of a historic Protestant denomination until they could no longer continue their membership because the synod would not ordain an

indigenous, theologically trained woman and could not tolerate the indigenous activism of their university-trained son. All of them, past or present, had witnessed the power of Life in the indigenous peoples and their contexts.

When Faith is Not Separated from Justice: The Case for *Restauración Integral*

I (Marcos) noticed that throughout our time in San Cristóbal, the word "acompañamiento" (accompaniment) was widely used. Ramona, Itzel, and other indigenous local activists referred to their work as coming alongside the concerns of their communities. "Acompañar los procesos y las personas"¹⁰ point to the attentiveness and embodied presence that these leaders model in the midst of *lo cotidiano* and *las luchas*.¹¹ To practice *acompañamiento*, proximity is necessary. Proximity clarifies the causes and the policies behind *las luchas*, and it continues to assess one's temptations with power: the power to dictate change, finance change, or even lead change. These indigenous leaders' proximity to their communities generated a sensitivity toward seeing the face of Christ in the plights of their neighbors and ancestors. San Cristóbal de Las Casas holds lived memories, ongoing systemic racism, exclusionary government policies, forced displacement from ancestral lands, and the complicit relationship of institutionalized religion in the erasure of indigenous cultures and languages. Hence, the process



of accompaniment does not allow for these realities to go unnoticed or unattended; you can't stay on the sidelines when proximity to indigenous communities reveals God's heart for justice, dignity, and liberty. This is where jTatik Samuel Ruíz García brings forth a prophetic-pastoral model for the integration of faith and justice.

In his process of accompaniment with indigenous communities as the bishop of the dioceses of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, jTatik Samuel listened. Escuchando—listening and continually listening—became distinctive of his pastoral work.¹² As one of his biographers recounts, jTatik Samuel witnessed a heated fight between two Tzotzils¹³ in San Cristóbal's plaza, and he heard how what escalated this brawl was the insult, “¡sos un indio!”¹⁴ The presence of internalized racism in this account as well as the colonial heritage of the sistemas de castas¹⁵ (which prevented indigenous communities from owning and benefiting from their ancestral lands) converted jTatik Samuel toward a more participatory and inclusive pastoral en conjunto. jTatik Samuel recognized that due to the complexity of social issues in Chiapas, “Jamás se podría tener un plan de pastoral adecuado sin la participación de aquellas personas que están cerca de estos problemas.”¹⁶ It is precisely the participation, the voice, and the inclusion of indigenous communities that energized action groups that weaved together the Word of God with the work of God. Indigenous community members, pastoral lay agents, and clergy all collaborated in the discernment and mobilizing processes towards the pursuit of restauración integral.¹⁷

And this transformed pastoral leadership toward commitments and action—specifically towards the restoration of indigenous communities' access to and caring of land and the restoration of a right relationship with la Madre Tierra¹⁸ as caretakers and not peons. A holistic restoration of one's dignity concerning community and land were ancestral values that echoed reign of God values, a connection that emerged when the Word questioned present realities of injustice and also announced liberating processes of justice and redemption in the life and ministry of Jesus. Here is where a pastoral en conjunto¹⁹ emerged—the weaving of the

work and Word of God to infuse the pursuit of restauración integral and to encourage the collective participation of the priesthood of all believers.

Evangel-Rooted Neutrality: The Case for Obedient Leadership Over Tyrant Power

On the basis of a chiapaneco ecumenical activism, the pursuit of pastoral en conjunto in San Cristóbal transversed faith traditions, affecting even those with no religious affiliation. Everyone knew that jTatik Samuel's unwavering faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God mobilized his commitments. They also acknowledged how the Word of God from the hermeneutics of indigenous communities, indigenous women, and Guatemalan immigrants (taking refuge in his parish during the 1990s) reshaped his concept of power. That is, church power as service rather than domination on the basis of evangelical neutrality. But here, evangelical neutrality does not translate into politics of silence or complicity, but instead, “Evangelical neutrality is on the side of justice, on the side of truth, and not on the side of partialities that would want to pull truth or justice to their own polarizing and self-benefiting interpretations.”²⁰ This evangelical neutrality led jTatik Samuel to facilitate social healing by mediating peace talks successfully and supporting the autonomy of indigenous territories in Chiapas.²¹ As the Zapatista usually put it: The key is to lead by obeying, instead of to lead by dictating.

Compas en Misión (Companions in Mission)

As we think of the lessons that our compas en misión in San Cristóbal de Las Casas have shared with us, allow us to point to some rumbos (routes) that are paradigmatic when it comes to church renewal.

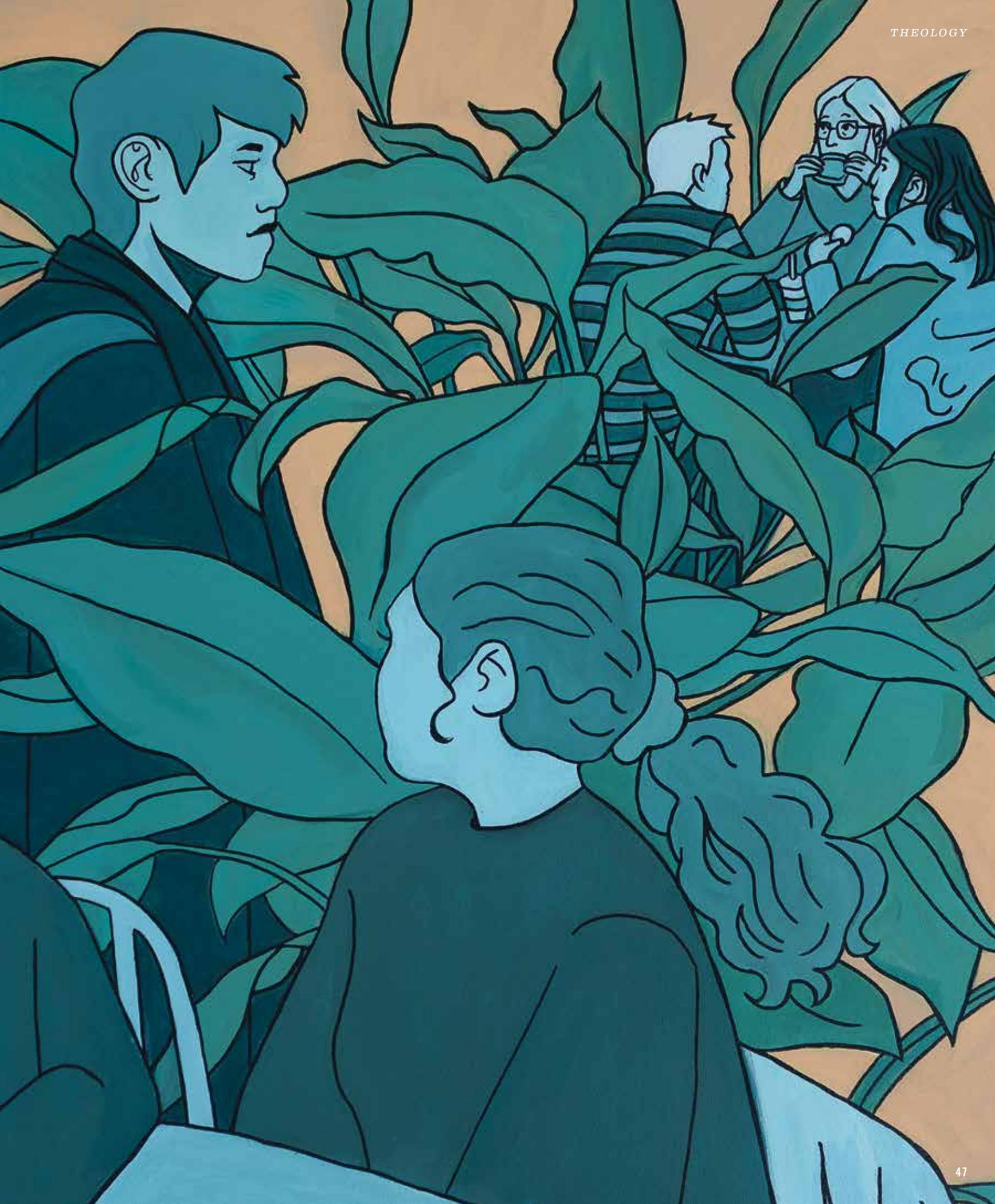
The Legacy of Violent Theologies

Joining the Spirit in local contexts reminds us that we are not the bringers of the good news to a specific group of people. The Spirit is at work in specific localities being the good news, and our role of discerning the Spirit in such lived realities convicts the church of its own need for evangelization. In addition, we are

not innocently sharing our portion of the good news with unreached or unchurched populations, for we Westernized Christians carry a wounded Christian imagination with traces of colonial history and methods. The colonial matrix of power that supported the genocide and conquest of indigenous communities throughout this continent revolved around the domination of land, bodies, and knowledge. This domination needed a violent theology to legitimize itself: At first, it was expressed as a doctrine of discovery²² and more recently as a doctrine of salvation through the apparatus of Western development and capitalism. Identifying the legacy and rhetoric of such violent theologies in our midst is one of the most urgent tasks for the renewal of the church. These violent theologies have infiltrated our understanding of church planting, evangelism, pastoral leadership, and organizational structures. Lament-repentance practices of complicity in these theologies and delinking from such genocidal doctrines are the first steps toward evangel-rooted church renewal and a reconciliación integral that integrates the Word and work of God in concrete justice-seeking processes of accompaniment and transformation.

Re-Imagining Missional Models Transnationally

Another route that the Spirit invites us to join is the “leavening” of our imagination regarding missional initiatives. Our mission theology must take seriously our first point—the legacy of violent theologies—and the fact that our role is to follow the lead of the Spirit as incarnated in the very communities we are called to partner with. Perhaps this means becoming the passengers rather than the drivers of missions and supporting indigenous and local leaders from the place of participatory kinship. Put simply, transnational missional models push against our concepts of borders (national, institutional, budgetary, and denominational) and facilitate a communion-based hermandad (kinship). Echoing Jesus' words of inclusive, participatory kinship (Mark 3:31–35), an hermandad of equals embodying the Word and work of God strengthens our familial vínculos (bonds). These bonds enliven our commitment to faith-rooted justice work in



San Cristóbal and Pasadena. This releases tremendous self-renewing energy to the church.

“Another Church is Possible”

We are part of the same local church, La Fuente Ministries, in Pasadena, California. Part of our task in reflecting on church renewal is considering these routes in our particular church context. For example, violent theologies have led us to see how often we prioritize our self-identification as Latina/o/x mestizas/os (bilingual, intercultural, multiethnic, etc.). This mestizaje, while helpful to express the hybridity of races, cultures, and ethnicities, may also tend to make invisible the presence and gift of our indigenous roots. As a diasporic church, with a predominantly Latina/o/x presence, we are tempted to speak of marginality and solidarity about our own immigrant experience while simultaneously ignoring the varying levels of marginality that others experience. For example, the lack of land acknowledgment toward the Tongva indigenous community upon this land that we now call Pasadena. Or the continuous obstacles that Protestant denominations impose upon indigenous women in the Global South who pursue ordination. Or the complicit attitude of many local churches in Pasadena to establish private Christian schools in response to a desegregated public school system.

This reroutes our hermeneutical practices concerning Scripture. As a congregation, we already practice congregational Lectio Divina twice a quarter. This practice moves toward a more interpretive community of Scripture resembling a pastoral en conjunto, where one interpretive voice (often of a male preacher) is replaced by the multidimensional move of the Spirit within and across generations, cultures, genders, and ethnicities. Congregational

Lectio Divina already forms us as a people that seek to pay attention to the Spirit, each other, and our contexts. Yet after our experience in San Cristóbal, it has become more urgent to lean into this practice, as we need to constantly unearth our violent theologies that have shaped many of our Christian experiences.

The possibility of transnational missional models (reciprocal kinship) has strengthened our hermandad between the indigenous leaders in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and our local church in Pasadena. As compas en misión, in Pasadena and San Cristóbal, our hermandad reveals how our right-relatedness to land, bodies, and knowledge are spaces of renewal and hope. We are being reinstructed by our indigenous sisters and brothers as to the ties between discipleship and creation care, alternative jubilee economics, and the Spirit-filled wisdom of el buen vivir.²³ Our bonds in Christ, through the Word and work of God, renew our imaginations on how to embody the love of God and our neighbor. We mutually encourage and reenvision alternatives in las luchas and in lo cotidiano, a Spirit-filled invitation to be compas en misión so that another world—and church—is possible. ■

ENDNOTES

1. O. E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982), 54.
2. R. Chao Romero and M. Canales, *Las Casas on Faithful Witness* (Wichita: TUMI Press, 2022).
3. Caracol communities are a means of self-governing framework that the Zapatistas created in order to have participatory, collective, and consensus decision-making processes for the well-being of entire communities. In fact, the name caracol is also the Spanish word for a snail—symbolizing the patience and time needed to make decisions as well as the circular and collective nature of participatory (versus representative) politics. For a more detailed explanation of the processes, concepts, and lived practices of the caracol communities, see M. Mora, *Kuxlejal Politics: Indigenous Autonomy, Race, and Decolonizing Research in Zapatista Communities* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017).
4. Names have been changed for privacy.
5. Itzel and her collective are a group of six women taxi drivers in a city where 1,200 taxi drivers are men.
6. This alternative currency, started in 2010 and currently adopted in over 24 Mexican states, promotes just prices for local products and revalues producers' labor and time versus letting supply and demand dictate prices and values, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/tumin-mexico-alternative-local-currency-rebuilding-community/>.
7. Open-air markets and bazaars where local producers can sell, trade, and promote their articles.
8. Note that many of these leaders are Spanish or mestizo (the descendants of the violent encounter between Spanish and indigenous populations). Hence, they enjoyed a power differential in a context where European “superiority” over indigenous communities was considered the norm. Their conversion to the indigenous communities reveals an epistemological turn of God’s revelation for these leaders.
9. In Tzotzil language, “our father.” The Tzotzil language belongs to Tzotzil indigenous Maya people in the central Chiapas highlands of southern Mexico.
10. “To accompany processes [of change] and people.”
11. “Everyday experiences” and “life struggles.” “Lo cotidiano” within Latina theology is considered a locus of theological reflection, while “las luchas” are a locus of action, new knowledge, resistance, and justice-oriented praxis. Reflection-action-reflection (thinking-doing and doing-thinking) processes are interrelated and often bring about concrete engagement in historical located situations and contexts.
12. J. M. Hurtado López, compiler, *Don Samuel Profeta y Pastor* (Mexico, D.F.: Castellanos Editores, 2016), 84–87.
13. Name used to identify descendants of the Tzotzil Mayan community in the highlands of Chiapas, Southern Mexico.
14. “You are an Indian!”
15. “Caste system.” During the 16th century, the Spanish colonial project in the Americas created over 16 different castes to name the varieties of racial categories that emerged from the violent domination of indigenous, African, and Asian bodies by Spanish landowners and conquistadores.
16. “A pastoral action plan could never be conceived without the participation of those persons who are the closest to these problems” (translation ours). J. Santiago, *La Búsqueda de la Libertad: Entrevista a Monsenor Samuel Ruiz* (Museo iTatik Samuel: San Cristóbal de Las Casas, 2018), 63.
17. Holistic restoration.
18. Mother Earth.
19. A collaborative, participatory, and group-owned pastoral ministry.
20. “La neutralidad evangélica es la que está de parte de la justicia, de parte de la verdad y no de las parcialidades que quisieran jalar la verdad o la justicia a la interpretación a su propio modo.” Santiago, 62.
21. In 1994, amid the armed conflict between the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional and the Mexican political party Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)—who had governed Mexico for 70 years—he was called upon to be a trusted mediator.
22. M. Charles and S.-C. Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2019).
23. “Sumak kawsay” (quechua) and “suma qamaña” (aymara), here used to indicate the fullness of life in right-relatedness with God, creation, and neighbor.

THE “BROWNING CHURCH” AND GOD’S RENEWAL

Robert Chao Romero

As a Latino growing up as the son of an undocumented pastor, my experience was very different from those who surrounded me. I felt that I could not identify with my peers, and I always felt out of place. My White peers accepted me, in a way, by my being [part of their denomination], but I was not accepted because of my skin color, my race, or my father’s undocumented status. I wanted to believe in what my family and church taught me as truth, but I slowly drifted away from my beliefs as a result of the testimony I received from the Anglo church and their members....I find myself conflicted with my identity.

This note was written to me by a student in a religious studies course on the history of the Brown Church. His conflict of cultural and religious identity presages the future of Christianity in the United States. As the North American church has diversified through immigration from Latin America, Asia, and Africa in recent years, a reactionary movement of White Christian nationalism has arisen, which conflates the church with US civil religion and rejects immigrant Christians as undesirable newcomers and even illegitimate believers. The result is that millions of Latina/o young adults, as well as millennials and Gen Zers of all cultural backgrounds, are fleeing the church, repelled by the increasingly explicit equation of Christianity with White nationalism. At the same time, however, the opposite pole of progressive Euro-American Christianity is likewise experiencing strong downturn. Some elements of this politically progressive expression of Christianity limit faith to social activism, while de-emphasizing

personal transformation and deep spiritual encounter with the Holy Spirit. The fundamentalist-modernist debates of a century ago seem to have reached the end of a road as their contemporary denominational progenies do not seem to possess within themselves what is required to successfully address the pressing problems and spiritual hunger of our current day. New wineskins are needed. As in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, however, hope sometimes springs from unexpected and forsaken places, such as Galilee of the Gentiles, and the rapidly growing immigrant church holds much promise for the future revitalization of Christianity in North America.

At the same time that the United States is experiencing such a marked collapse in formal religious identification, it is also experiencing a diversity explosion, reminiscent of John’s vision of the New Jerusalem with people from every language, tongue, tribe, and nation. The United States is in the early stages of a profound racial and ethnic “mestizaje,” or cultural mixture, in which cultural groups from every continent on the globe are freely mixing in a historically unprecedented way. This rapid trend toward cultural diversity is also reflected in the changing demographics of the US church. The North American church is “browning,” as Caucasian representation is in decline and as all other ethnic groups are together increasing.¹ Immigration from places such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia is fueling this rapid ecclesial change, and today, one in three American evangelicals is a person of color. As part of these rapid changes, grassroots expressions of church are gradually replacing the formal structures and practices of Euro-American Christendom. These domestic trends coincide with the fact that the global pendulum of Christianity has already swung in the direction of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The expression

that Christianity is a “White man’s religion” is already not true. The present and future face of the church of Jesus of Nazareth is “brown,” and Christianity is returning to its historical origins as a faith of the marginalized born in the Near East.

In order to participate in the coming renewal, we must together prayerfully discern the new wineskins that God is creating. Christian sisters and brothers from the Majority World bring with them a vibrant personal faith driven by radical dependence on Jesus made necessary by suffering and the struggle to survive. There’s an “abuelita faith” that has been tested and purified by many testimonies of God’s faithfulness and passed down to successive generations.² As part of these new wineskins, Christian immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia are redefining the US church in practice, polity, and theology. Global theologians also bring distinct perspectives that have the potential to address many of the burning spiritual and social questions facing the North American church. A related question for exploration is how these immigrant churches will learn from, and relate to, both the Black and Native American churches that have borne the racial burden and heat of the day for people of color throughout the history of the United States.

At the same time, it is important to note that although immigrant churches represent much hope for the revitalization of the US church, they also possess ticking time bombs that, if left unchecked, might also sabotage the long-term revival of the US church. Examples include the prosperity gospel and Christian nationalism, which were exported from the US church in recent years, and which many immigrants bring with them. Some immigrants also carry beliefs and practices which have yet to be decolonized, and it is all

too easy for some to assimilate dangerous US theologies through denominational and social ties. Moreover, like every other ethnic group, our immigrant communities possess cultural sins which require the sanctification of Jesus.

Such potential pitfalls notwithstanding, a sense of hope quickly rises when one imagines the diverse “glory and honor” or cultural treasure of the Global South as metaphorical jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, jacinth, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, gold, and silver (Rev 21:26). Ecclesial hope springs from the diversity explosion which will increasingly define North American church life and society. Christian immigrants from Africa, Latin America, and Asia possess thriving faith and vast treasures of community cultural wealth, which hold promise to revive the church of North America and address the most divisive cultural and political issues of our day.

ENDNOTES

1. A. Yong, *Renewing the Church by the Spirit: Theological Education after Pentecost* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 24.
2. K. Armas, *Abuelita Faith: What Women on the Margins Teach Us about Wisdom, Persistence, and Strength* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2021).



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한국교회의 갱신을 추구하며: 부흥적 신학과 저항적 신학의 연관성 시도

김창환교수

김창환교수는 로버트 와일리 공공신학 석좌교수이자 코리안 센터의 학장입니다. 그는 영국과 인도를 포함한 전 세계의 대학과 신학교에서 폭넓은 강의 경험을 가지고 있으며 Royal Asiatic Society의 펠로우, Global Network for Public Theology의 집행위원, Society for the Study of Theology의 회원입니다. 김 박사는 공공신학, 세계기독교, 아시아신학, 신학과 평화구축과 같은 주제에 대해 폭넓게 저술과 출판에 해왔다. 그는 『한국 기독교의 역사』와 『세계 종교로서의 기독교』를 비롯한 여러 권의 책을 저술하고 공동 저술했습니다.

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한국 개신교의 도래와 성장은 한국 근대사에서 가장 격동이 심했던 한 시기에 일어났다. 이 기간 중 여러 가지 주요한 정치적 위기들이 있었는데, 갑신정변(1884), 청일전쟁(1894-5), 러일전쟁(1904-5), 일제의 한일합방(1910-45), 6.25 전쟁(1950-53), 그리고 민주화 운동(1970, 80년대)이 그것들이다. 이러한 불확실성과 혼돈의 이 시기에 사람들은 필사적으로 안정과 안전을 회구했고 기독교는 영적이고 종교적인 이유들 뿐만 아니라, 사회-정치적 변화의 수단으로서 많은 이들에게 수용되었다. 한반도에 기독교(1)의 유입은 한국의 역사에 상당히 큰 영향력을 주게 되었고, 또한 한국의 기독교는 한국인들 자신들에 의해 독특한 양상을 갖추며 발전했다. 기독교에 대한 이해, 즉 이데올로기, 조직, 사회 및 정치와의 관계 등은 외국 선교사들의 영향을 지대하게 받았다. 그러나 더 중요한 것은 기독교를 수용하고 그것을 자신의 목적과 필요에 맞게 해석한 한국인들에 의해 선택되고 형성되어졌다는 사실이다. 다시 말해 기독교의 가르침과 실천들에 대해 선택과 재해석의 과정이 계속 있었고, 이런 과정을 통해서 독특성을 지닌 한국 특유의 기독교를 만들었다.(2)

한 민족에게 기독교의 수용은 개종의 동기와 과정 그리고 지역교회의 설립과 발전에 대한 연구는 복합적인 사회-정치적 종교적 요인들로 인해 단순하지 않다. 한국 기독교의 경우, 한편으로는 종교적으로, 영적으로 과거의 개념에서 획기적인 영적 전환을 동반하는 성경의 가르침에 대한 매력이 있었고, 다른 한편에는, 한국 사회의 사회-경제적 진보와 정치 권한을 위해 민족적 위기에 대응하기 위한 하나의 촉매제로 기독교를 활용하려는 열망이 있었다. 즉, 한국의 경우, 전통적 신앙으로 부터의 단절과 새로운 종교-문화적 전환의 메시지인, “복음”을 수용한 측면이 있었고, 또 한편으로 나라의 지속적인 사회-정치적 개혁과 근대화의 일환으로 자치와 독립을 추구하는 의미에서 신앙적인 혹은 개념적인 연속성을 유지하며 기독교를 그 요구에 도움이 되는 도구로서 수용하려는 의

미가 있었다. 기독교에 대한 “영적”이고 “세속적”인 이해는 초기 한국 기독교인들에 의해 모두 받아들여졌다. 초창기 북미에서 온 개신교 선교사들은 대부분 복음주의 부흥의 산물이었고 교회와 국가 사이에 분리(정교분리)에 대한 이해를 갖고 있었다. 그럼에도 불구하고, 한국인들은 기독교가 그들의 탐색에 영적, 정치적 자원들을 제공할 것이라고 보았다. 이는 성장과 부흥의 핵심 토대였던 성경을 수용하고 한편 3·1일 운동을 주도한 사회개혁 운동과 정치적 독립을 위한 자원으로 기독교를 수용한 데서 입증된다.

필자가 보는 바에는 한국에서 형성되어 온 독특한 신학은 5가지로 구분할 수 있는데, 그것은: 성경에 의거하는 신앙; 부흥운동을 통한 전인적 축복의 추구; 가난한자와 억압받는 자에 대한 정의의 실현; 한국의 문화와 접목하는 신앙; 그리고 남북한의 화해를 추구하는 평화의 신학이다. (3) 이 글에서는 그것을 압축해서 한국교회의 신학의 특성을 “부흥적 신학”(revival theology)과 “저항적 신학”(protest theology)로 구분한다. 부흥적 신학은 성경에 대한 열렬한 헌신과 영적 체험의 추구를 강조했는데, 이는 성경공부와 부흥운동으로 맥락을 가지며 한국교회의 특성을 형성하게 된다. 한편 교육, 사회-정치 조직 같은 개혁적인 활동들과 공적 참여인데, 이는 개화 운동과 3·1 운동, 민주화 운동으로 표출되었다. 이 두 가지 특성들은 한쪽은 영적이고 내향적이며, 다른 한쪽은 사회적이고 외향적인 것으로 구분할 수 있으며, 교단적으로 혹은 교회적으로 보수적, 진보적으로 구분이 되기도 한다. 저자가 이 글에서 주장하는 것은 이 두 가지 특성들이 표면적으로 뚜렷한 차이점을 보이지만, 실제로 두 신학은 각자의 공동체 내에서 계속 공존하게 되며, 서로 영향을 주며, 끊임없이 맥락을 유지하고 있다는 점이며, 오늘날 교회 내의 진정한 갱신(renewal)을 위해서는 이 두 가지의 신학이 각 공동체 내에서 보다 더 창조적인 긴장을 갖도록 하는 것이 중요하다고 하는 것이다. 우리는 먼저 두 가지 신학에 대해서 다루기로 한다.

사경회와 전도를 통한 부흥적 신학

세계선교 역사에서 예외적은 아니지만, 한국 기독교는 독특하게 성경을 강조하게 된다. 정식 선교사가 한국에 도착하기 전에 신약성경이 이미 선교사와 한인 개종자에 의해서 중국과 일본에서 번역이 되어서 한국에서 배포되었으며, 성경 번역과 배포를 주도한 한국인에 의해서 개신교회가 최초로 설립되었다는 것은 시사하는 바가 크다. 초기 한국의 기독교인들이 성경의 중요성을 인지하고 적극적으로 번역과 보급에 참여하게 되었으며 더욱이, 그런 배경에서 현지의 기독교인들이 성경과 상호작용하는 방식을 통해서 기독교의 한국적 특별한 성격을 낳게 되었다. 이런 의미에서 성경은 기독교인들의 삶과 한국 기독교의 형성에 핵심적인 역할을 했다. 한국에 있어서 성경의 도입은 선교사들의 지대한 노고가 있었지만, 한국 기독교인들은 성경을 주도적으로 수용하고 한 걸음 더 나아가 성경을 일상 활동에 적용하고 기독교인의 생활에 열쇠로 만들었다. 특히 권서인들은 쪽 복음서와 신약성서를 들고 마을을 돌아다니며 한국 뿐만 아니라, 만주와 일본에 있는 한국인들에게도 배포했다. 한국의 초기 기독교인들의 활동들이 갖는 의미는 그들이 중국과 한반도에 있는 동포들에게 기독교의 메시지를 설교하는 동기를 부여 받았고, 성경이 그들 활동에 핵심 매체였다는 점이다. 한국 교회의 성장은 19세기 후반 한반도의 사회-정치적, 문화-종교적 상황에 비추어 다양하게 이해되어야 하지만, 성경이 한국어 문자로 번역되어 여자들과 민중들이 널리 이용 가능했기 때문에 성경이 널리 보급되고 그에 따라서 성경공부가 한국 교회의 특성과 부흥에 기여했던 것은 분명하다. 실제로, 성경공부 혹은 사경회의 전통은 초기 한국 기독교의 가장 전형적인 특징이어서 어느 한 선교사는 한국교회를 “성경 기독교 (Bible Christianity)” 라고 불렀다. (4)

성경의 가르침에 담긴 열망은 한국 기독교인들에게 깊은 영향을 주어 이들은 이 복음을 그들의 사적 공적 생활에서 영적, 도덕적, 그리고 윤리적 행동의 주요 지침으로 다른 사

람들에게 전파했다. 그 영향은 한국인들에게 근대 시기로 진입할 준비를 시키고, 사회-정치적 위기에 대응할 수 있도록 문어, 문해력, 여성교육, 그리고 정의, 화해, 희망, 평등의 메시지들 같은 광범위한 분야들을 받아들인 것에서 입증되었다. 특히 기독교인이 된 한국 여성들은 성경을 접하면서 많은 변화를 겪게 되었으며 더 나아가 사회적 변화를 시도하게 되었다. 그들은 성경 읽기를 배우도록 기대되었고, 또한 글을 읽고 신문도 읽을 수 있게 되었고 남성들의 공적 세계를 접하게 되었다. 여성 교육은 가부장제의 형식들과 이성간 도덕성의 이중 잣대들에 의문을 제기함에 따라 전통적인 경직된 유교 질서를 도전하는 요인들 중에 하나였다. (5) 기독교는 여성들에게 교회 안에서 새롭고 보다 강력한 연결망으로 끌어들이었다. 그들은 문맹퇴치 캠페인을 벌이고, 금주 운동을 시작하고, 그리고 축첩제도에 반대하는 시위를 벌였다. (6) 남성과 여성의 세계 사이에 구획은 기독교의 메시지가 공적 생활에 대한 고려에 방해 받지 않고 여성들 사이에서 확산될 수 있게 해주었다. 여성들은 지역 기도모임이나 가정에서 드리는 “가정예배”의 리더들이었다. 개종자들은 다른 여성들에게 신앙간증을 하고 그들에게 교회에 나가도록 이끌었다.

이러한 성경에 대한 열정은 사경회(Bible-study meeting)를 통해서 부흥회(revival meeting)로 연결이 되었다. 부흥은 한국교회의 주요한 특징으로 알려져 왔으며, 한국교회를 이해하고자 하는 사람이라면 한국교회의 부흥을 이해해야 한다. 20세기 초부터 한국교회 지도자들이 주도했던 일련의 부흥들은 한국 기독교인들이 진정한 회개와 용서를 체험하는 한국교회의 관행에 몇 가지 역동성을 가져왔고, 이것이 그들에게 어려운 시절에도 복음을 전하고 믿음을 지킬 수 있는 자신감을 주었다. 부흥회는 죄사함, 개인과 민족의 구원 같은 축복을 구했고, 설교자들의 메시지와 회중들의 기대는 이 세상 너머에 그 무언가로 향했다. 1903-1907년의 한국의 대부흥 운동은 성결운동에서 비롯되어 확산된 19세기 말과 20세기 초에 있었던

전세계적인 부흥 현상의 일부였는데, 이것은 또한 오늘날 오순절운동과 카리스마적 형태의 기독교를 낳은 것으로도 보인다. (7) 그러나 전세계적인 운동에 속한다 할지라도, 한국의 부흥은 20세기 초 민족적 위기 대한 영적 문화적 반응으로 이해되어야 한다.

한국인들에게 부흥은 일본이 나라를 점령하는 가운데 한반도에 도래하는 고통과 공포를 쏟아낼 수 있는 카타르시스의 기회가 되었지만, 그것은 또한 네 가지 이유에서 큰 의미가 있었다. 첫째, 그것을 통해 교회는 두드러지게 한국적이 되었기 때문이다. 여러 면에서 대부흥은 한국 교회와 한국 교회의 종교적 관행들을 형성시킨 것은 “한국의 오순절”이었으며, 선교적 복음주의 전통과 한국교회를 민족종교로 주도하는 민족 구원을 향한 한국인의 희망의 융합이었다. (8) 둘째, 부흥은 다른 종교들과 가톨릭이 할 수 없었던 방식으로 시대정신의 어떤 것을 포착했고 한국 문화와 연결시켰기 때문인데, 이런 점이 기독교에 대해 대중적인 호소력을 가져다 주었다. 부흥을 통해, 기독교는 지적이고 사회적인 개혁운동일 뿐만 아니라, 영적으로 또한 감성적으로 깊이 표현하는 종교운동으로 드러났다. (9) 구약과 복음서의 언어는 억압 가운데 있는 한국의 대중들에게 호소력이 있었고 기독교가 대중 언어인 한글을 사용하는 것은 대중적인 믿음과의 연속성을 용이하게 했다. 더욱이, 부흥회의 영성은 공동 노래, 황홀한 기도, 일상의 기도 형식 그리고 금주와 같은 전통적인 문화적 형태들과 연결되었다. (10) 셋째, 부흥회는 서로 다른 배경을 가진 한국인들을 하나로 끌어 모았다. 유교 엘리트들이 생각하는 종교의 개념에서는 신앙의 뜨거움을 경험하는 부흥은 생각하지 못하였는데 부흥을 통해 유교를 믿는 이들은 물론, 불교, 전통 종교 그리고 새로운 종교 운동들의 배경을 가진 사람들과의 교차를 가능하게 했다. (11) 부흥운동은 단지 감성에 호소하는 일시적인 현상이기 보다는 이로 인해서 성경을 더 깊이 접하게 되고 개인의 윤리적 변화, 사회적 책임을 동반하는 영향을 끼치게 된다. 이런 점에서, 기독교는 이전에 한국

에서 서로 다른 종교들과 철학들로 분리되어 있었던 것을 하나의 운동 속으로 끌어들이고 민족을 하나로 통합하는 세력이었다. 대부흥은 서양인들과 아시아인들에게 종교가 다르다는 인식을 무너뜨렸고, 한국인의 지도력에 대해 선교사들의 신뢰와 진정한 상호관계를 구축하는데 기여했다. 넷째, 영성과 고백이 표면적으로는 고백하는 이들의 부도덕한 행위에 국한되었다 할지라도, 개인적인 회개와 의는 신학적으로 민족의 재난과 정의를 위한 투쟁과 연결되었다. 대부흥회는 그런 상황에서 자연스럽게 천국에 대한 단순히 영적인 면만이 아닌 보다 폭넓은 희망을 장려하게 되었다.

부흥에 대한 추구하고 개신교회의 성장은 해방 후 계속되었다. 그리고 이것은 각 교회의 부흥회 뿐 아니라 대형 부흥 집회를 통해



서 또한 초대형교회의 확산으로 인해서 부흥은 한국교회의 특징으로 자리잡게 된다. (12) 그러나 성장 위주의 부흥운동은 1980년 대 이후로 교회 안팎으로 비판을 받게 되고 사회에서의 교회의 공공성과 신뢰성에 대해서 활발하게 토의하게 된다. 이에 대해서 한국교회의 다른 한 면인 저항을 추구하는 운동에 대해서 다루기로 한다.

사회개혁과 사회-정치 참여를 통한 저항적 신학

초기 개신교 선교사들의 신학적 이해는 경건한 생활방식으로 보수적이라는 것이 기정사실이었지만, 그들의 사역은 교육, 의료사업, 청년사업, 여성단체들, 그리고 가난한 사람들을 위한 사회복지도 두루 망라했다. 이러한 폭넓은 사역들은 주로 그들의 선교사업에 있어서의 제약들로 인해서 또한 일반 대중에게 비교적 쉽게 접근할 수 있고 정치 지도층들 사이에서 호의를 얻어야 할 필요성에서 비롯되었다. 선교사들이 한국에 입국하자, 한국의 엘리트들과 교육받은 개혁자들은 기독교를 서양식의 학교, 병원, 신문 그리고 출판물을 통해 한국을 근대화 할 수 있는 수단으로 보았고, 그래서 적극적으로 선교사들에게 호의적인 대우를 해주었고 필요한 허가들을 승인해주었다. 많은 저명한 개혁가들과 정치 지도자들이 기독교인이 되었고, 지식인들과 일반인들 속에서도 기독교의 수용과 정치적 독립 및 사회개혁의 추구 사이에 깊은 연관성을 가지게 되었는데, 이들은 억압적인 통치 계급과 외세로부터 어떤 보호를 받기를 원했다. 개종자 중에 사회지도자들은 기독교의 메시지를 중국과 유교적 전통에 대한 의존이 종식된 지금 한국을 재건하려는 사회개혁의 하나로, “준-정치적 교리”로 이해했다. 진보주의자들은 자립이라는 의미에서 “독립”을 주된 목표로 옹호하며 외세에 대한 한국의 전반적인 의존성에 대해서 이의를 제기했고 기독교 지도자들은 이제 폭력에 의지하지 않고 교회, 학교, 언론을 통해 서구적 가치들과 사회적 책임에 관한 자유로운 발언

과 교육으로 사람들을 각성시켜 근대적인 민족국가를 가져오는 것이 바람직하고, 또 그 가능성을 엿보았다. (13)

사회 계급이 어떠한든, 개종자들은 기독교의 메시지를 개인적 변화 뿐만 아니라, 사회개혁의 하나로 이해했고 이를 바탕으로 기독교는 여러 면에서 근대화에 기여했다고 말할 수 있다. 첫째, 기독교는 특히 개종, 개인적 양심 그리고 개인적 책임을 강조하여 기독교인들은 출생에 의해 결정된 인생의 신분을 받아들이기 보다는 개인의 인생에서 다시 태어나 선을 행하고 발전하도록 권장되었다. 더군다나, 장로교의 정치는 한국 민주주의의 토대를 놓았다. 둘째, 선교사들과 기독교 지도자들은 한국사회의 엄격한 위계와 군주에 대한 절대 복종에 대안을 제시하게 된다. 예를 들면 기독교의 의료시설은 부자도 가난한 자도 모두 다 치료해주었다. 초기가 톨릭처럼, 개신교 또한 천민들을 해방시키려고 시도했는데, 사회에서 받아들여지지 않는 그들의 신분은 1895년의 개혁으로 폐지되었다. 셋째, 학교의 설립과 한글의 진흥을 통해 여성을 포함한 문맹자와 이전에 학력이 부족한 사람들이 그들의 문화, 역사, 글씨를 알게 해주었는데, 이는 교육 뿐만 아니라 민족의 자부심에도 기여했다. 이런 식으로, 기독교는 정치적이고 교육적인 활동들에 깊은 영향을 미쳤다. 넷째, 교회를 통해 제공되는 광범위한 교육, 기독교 기관들 그리고 신문들은 서양의 과학기술 지식, 역사의식 그리고 도덕성을 전달해주었고, 유교적 아카데미를 지배하는 경직되고 관료적인 사회보다는 무한이 열린 탐구를 장려하고, 미신을 무너뜨리고, 전통 의식에 대해 의문을 제기하고, 또 사회 개선을 위한 사회적 양심과 운동들의 성장으로 이어지는 인간의 자유와 사회정의에 대한 사상을 발전시켰다. 정치적 상황이 급속히 변하는 와중에, 교회들은 근대적 생활 방식과 규율의 형태, 조직과 회계 시스템, 그리고 토론방식들을 도입함으로써 근대화로의 이행에 하나의 촉매제로서 작용했다. 기독교의 성장은 또한 학교의 성장을 의미했고 곧 현대식 교육의 길로 이끌었다. 교회는 새

로운 시민사회의 한 요소를 형성했고 학교는 함께 네트워크로 연결된 새로운 엘리트의 형성을 촉진하게 되었다. 민족의 위기 때, 한국인들은 기독교를 어려움을 극복하는 하나의 축매체로 보았고 근대화 개혁을 지원하기 위해 받아들였고, 또 민족-건설의 명분으로 기독교를 구체화했다.

이러한 사회, 정치, 경제, 문화적 갱신의 촉매제(catalyst)로서 기독교의 역할이 범 국민적인 정치적인 운동으로 표출된 것은 3.1 독립운동이었다. 1905년 일본이 한국을 일제의 보호국으로 만들었을 때, 한국 기독교인들은 일제의 진출에 반대하는 운동에 관여했다. 즉 민족을 위한 구국 기도회를 조직하고, 그 조약에 반대하는 시위를 조직하고, 심지어 항거의 표시로 자결까지 하고, 일본과 한국 관리들의 암살을 시도하고, 일본 군대에 맞서 싸울 수 있는 군대를 조직하고, 총독부가 징수하는 세금에 대해 방해공작을 벌이고, 정당들과 사회집단들을 결성했다. 3.1 운동은 종교운동은 아니었지만, 관련된 주요 단체들이 종교단체들, 주로 기독교와 천도교였음은 의심의 여지가 없으며 통계를 통해서 기독교인들이 민족의 독립운동과 독립 투쟁에 많은 기여를 했음을 알 수 있다.

3.1 독립 운동은 주로 해외 민족주의자들의 독려를 받아 한국의 학생들, 교육자들 그리고 종교 지도자들이 조직했고, 기독교인들이 주요 선동자들 가운데 들어있었다. 청소년, 학생들, 교사들, 도시 노동자들 그리고 상인들은 몇 주 동안 시위를 계속했고 귀가한 후에도 곧바로 그 운동을 도시로부터 농촌지역까지 퍼뜨려서 3.1 운동을 진정한 전국적인 규모로 만들었다. 전국적인 기독교 네트워크는 확산에 중요한 역할을 했다. 비록 교회들이 제도적으로 관여하지는 않았다고 해도, 교회 재산이 시위를 위해 빈번히 사용되었다. (14) 체포된 489명의 성직자 중 절반이 기독교 목사였다. 서울과 평양의 거의 모든 목사들이 투옥되었고, 다른 많은 교회 사역자들도 투옥되었다. (15) 독립운동의 가장 놀라운 양상들 중에 하나는 여성들과 소녀들

이 주도적인 역할을 했다는 점이다. 기독교인의 수가 겨우 전체 인구의 1.3%에 불과한 20만 명에 불과할 때 기독교인들의 참여는 매우 높았으며, 특히 기독교 여성은 체포된 471명 중 60%를 차지했고 이 운동에서 가장 두드러진 여성들 지도자들은 대부분 기독교인이었다. 선교사 교장은 이들이 학교를 떠나는 것을 막으려 했지만, 이화학고 학생들은 서울에서 벌어졌던 행렬의 맨 앞에서 행진했고, 여러 명이 사망하고, 부상당하고 투옥되었다.(16)

이러한 저항 운동은 해방 후 계속해서 민중 운동 그리고 민주화 운동으로 연결되었다. 1960대 이후 한국의 경제는 급속도로 성장을 하게 되는데 한편으로 그 결과 공장 노동자들에 대한 노동 조건과 임금에 대한 심각한 착취가 있었다. 이러한 맥락에서 일부 기독교 지도자들은 경쟁이 치열한 자본주의 시장의 희생양이 된 도시 빈민들의 필요를 충족시키기 위해 새로운 신학 패러다임이 필요하다는 것을 깨달았다. 가난한 사람들은 물질적인 것이 부족할 뿐만 아니라 착취당하고 부당한 대우를 받고 있으며, 빈부 격차, 고용인과 고용주의 격차가 점점 벌어지고 있음을 인지하게 되었다. 민중 운동은 1970년 11월 전태일 이 공장 동료 착취에 항의해 스스로 목숨을 끊으면서 촉발됐다. 이 사건은 나라를 뒤흔들었고 곧 사회적으로 관심이 있는 일부 기독교 지도자들은 이것을 주요 문제로 받아들이고 가난한 사람들과 착취당하는 사람들의 편에 서게 되었다.

민중 신학자들은 사람들의 상상력을 사로잡아 빈곤과 착취 문제를 교회에 가져왔다. 여기에서 우리는 민중 신학을 불의와 착취에 반대 하는 민중 을 대표하는 “저항”의 신학으로 본다. 그들의 주된 관심은 개별 가난한 사람들을 대하는 것이 아니라 민중이 그들의 불행에서 벗어나지 못하게 하는 사회적 과정과 시스템에 관한 것이었다. 이런 점에서 민중 신학자들은 경제적, 정치적 불의를 다루려고 함에 따라 민중 자신 보다 반 민중 의 무엇에 더 관심을 갖는다. 민중 신학은 해방과

정의의 복음을 재발견하여 한국교회와 사회에 지대한 공헌을 하였고, 가난하고 억압받는 자들과 그들이 착취의 대상이 아니며 착취의 대상이 되어도 안되며 그들의 항의가 정당한 것임을 보여주었다. 민중 신학은 가난한 자에게 희소식이었고 전인적 축복의 복음처럼 가난한 자를 위로하기 위한 것이었다. 그러나 문제를 식별하고 처리하는 방법에서 후자와 크게 다르다. 전반적으로 민중 신학은 사회경제적, 정치적 부정의 문제를 해결하기 위해 교회와 사회에 도전 했고, 1980년대 후반 한국에 민주주의를 이룩했으며, 한국 역사에서 “예언적” 역할을 담당하게 된다. 하지만 계몽운동, 3.1운동, 민주화 운동 등으로 표현되는 저항적인 신학은 한국교회의 주류를 형성하기 보다는 주로 진보적인 교단과 교회를 통해서 한국교회와 사회에 도전적인 메시지를 주고있다.

한국교회에서의 부흥적 신학과 저항적 신학의 만남

위의 두 신학적 전통을 다루면서 일반적으로 토론되는 견해는 이 두가지 전통을 지나치게 양분화하는 경향이 있다. 즉 진보적인 교단과 보수적인 교단이나 교회를 양분화 하여 이해하고, 보다 건전하고 성숙한 교회를 이루기 위해서 상호 대화와 상호 이해를 가져야 한다고 학자들이 주장한다. 그러나 저자는 이 글에서 각자의 전통 내에서 다양한 신학이 공존하며, 지속 가능한 갱신을 위해서는 그러한 다양한 신학이 각 전통에 내부에 깊이 자리하고 있는 것을 인지하고, 재해석하고, 그것을 회복하는 것이 시급한 과제라고 본다. 이에 대해서 필자는 위에서 다룬 부흥회와 3.1운동을 재 조명하기로 한다.

한국의 부흥운동에 대해서 비정치적이거나 현실로부터의 도피라는 비판은 역사가들 사이에서 충분히 논의되었다. 그러나 한편 성경 공부와 대 부흥회를 경험한 교인들이 몇 년 후에 있는 3.1 독립운동을 비롯한 민족적 투쟁에 적극적으로 참여한 것에 대해서 우리는 대부흥의 경과가 단지 영적이라고만 볼 수 없다. 오히려 내면의 영적, 윤리적 쇄신을 강

조하고, 신앙에 대한 이원론적 접근을 극복하고, 그리고 한국 기독교의 지도력을 강화함으로써, 전인적 신앙을 유지하는 등 기독교가 성숙하는 과정에 촉매제가 되었다고 본다. 필자는 기독교 메시지의 내용, 특히 이스라엘 백성 이야기와 예수님의 말씀과 사역이 지혜와 영감을 주었기 때문에 공적 생활에서 기독교인의 공적 생활의 토대를 마련했다고 주장한다. 20세기 초, 한국인들에게 천국은 하나님 나라의 도래 안에서 민족의 회복이었다. 비록 부흥은 교회를 현실도피적으로 유도한 경향이 있었지만, 중요한 것은 부흥은 기독교의 민족화를 초래한 것 뿐 아니라 민족에 대한 영적 의미를 부여함으로써 민족주의와 깊이 있게 연결시켰다.

부흥운동은 단지 현상적인 상황변화에서 떠나서 전체적으로 기독교의 한국적 수용과정으로 이해할 필요가 있다. 즉 영적-문화적이기도 하고 사회-정치적이기도 하며, 또 “저 세상적(내세적)”이기도 하고 “이 세상적(세속적)”인 적용이 모두 들어있는 기독교의 전체론적 차원을 구현하면서 복합적으로 이해되어야 한다. 필자는 당시 초기 기독교인들이 성경을 받아들인 것은 기독교인들의 삶의 영적이고 종교적인 영역에만 국한된 것이 아니라, 오히려 그것이 그들의 공적 생활의 토대를 제공했다고 주장한다. 부흥운동은 표면적으로 기독교 생활의 영적, 종말론적 차원에 머무는 것으로 보였지만, 기독교 진리를 받아들이고 성장하는 기독교 공동체로서의 빛과 소금의 역할을 담당하는 토대를 마련하였다고 본다. 특히 3·1 운동 기간에 참여한 여러 지도자들이 부흥운동을 주도하였고, 이 운동의 기본을 이루는 비폭력 운동도 기독교가 그리스도의 가르침에 의해서 지켜온 평화적인 데모를 이끌어 온 면이라고 보겠다. 부흥운동은 비정치적 도피주의가 아니라 괴로움을 당하는 민족 안에서 개인 또는 공동체라는 자아 정체성을 찾기 위한 민족적 투쟁의 일부로 이해되어야 한다. 절망적인 상황에서 이스라엘을 인도 하였던 야훼 하나님에게 절대적인 갈망을 표현하고 신앙적인 도움을 구하는 표현으로 보아야 할 것이다.

이와 같은 맥락에서 3.1 독립운동을 재 조명

한다면, 이것은 적어도 기독교인들에게는 많은 사람들이 생각하는 것처럼 순전히 정치적 운동은 아니며, 이것은 기독교 공동체로서 기독교 복음을 따르는 것이 무엇을 의미하는지에 대한 가시적인 표현이었다. 겉으로 보기에 “독립선언문”에 표면적으로 드러나는 기독교 메시지가 없었기 때문에 기독교인들의 참여가 매우 “세속적”으로 보일 수 있지만, 공적 담론을 위한 기독교 신앙의 비전을 통합적으로 표현한 것으로 간주되어야 한다. 그런 의미에서 3·1 독립선언문은 한국 역사 속에서 기독교의 공적 선언이라고 볼 수 있다. 그 분수령이었던 3·1 운동 시위 이후, 실제 항거 활동은 약화되었지만, 억압과 불의에 도전하는 정신은 기독교의 전통에서 계속 구현되었고 그 후로도 한국의 역사에서 수시로 표면화 되는 것을 잘 알 수 있다.

마찬가지로 1970-80년대 민주화 운동도 표면적으로는 급진적이고 세속적으로 보여지지만 그 내면에서 성경에서 강조하는 정의와 공평, 그리고 평화를 추구하는 복음의 가치를 깊이 인식하는 가운데 이 운동이 전개되게 되었다. 사회의 격동기에, 한국 기독교는 정치적, 경제적, 민족적 갱신 뿐만 아니라, 그 지역에서 일어나는 문화적, 이데올로기적 변화에도 적극적으로 기여했다. 이런 영향은 의미 있는 삶에 대한 한국인의 영적인 추구를 만족시키고, 윤리적이고 도덕적인 행위에 대한 영감과, 존엄성과 자유를 위한 투쟁의 촉매제의 원천으로 기독교를 주로 수용했기 때문에 가능했다. 그러므로 3·1 운동과 민주화 운동은 단순히 정치적 행동주의가 아니라 성경의 가르침에 따라 말씀과 행동으로 진정한 신자의 삶을 받아들이기 위한 깊은 열망의 표현으로 바라보아야 할 것이다.

기독교는 한국의 역사에서 가장 격동의 시기 동안에 교회지도자들을 배출 했을 뿐만 아니라, 개혁운동의 수많은 핵심 지도자들에게 강한 영향력을 끼쳤으며 그들로 인해서 독특한 한국교회를 형성하게 되었다. 한국의 기독교는 한편으로, 성경에 대한 열렬한 헌신과 영적 체험을 갈망하면서, 다른 한편으로, 불의와 억압 속에서도 회복력과 항거를 그 특징으로 한다. 기독교인들이 자신감을 갖게

되면서, 그 다음엔 민족에 대한 그들 나름의 기독교적 이해를 바탕으로 한국사회에 기여했다. 앞에서 보았듯이, 한국교회에는 정치적 개혁과 영적-문화적 전환이라는 이 두 가지 외견상 상반되는 차원들이 초창기 기독교 역사로 부터 현재까지 실제로 깊이 연관성을 갖고 서로 수용과 갈등을 겪으며 공존한다고 본다.

한국의 기독교는 마치 이념적 신학적인 차이들로 인해 분리된 것처럼 보여지고, 때로는 너무 급진적이고 진보적이거나, 아니면 너무 보수적이고 근본주의 적이라고 비판을 받고 있지만, 대다수의 초기 한국 기독교인들은 민족의 위기 속에서 이 두 가지 차원의 기독교 신앙을 함께 유지하려고 노력했다. 특히 초기 한국 기독교인들은 격동의 시대를 지내면서, 그들의 모든 부족함, 실패, 그리고 약점에도 불구하고 새로 받아들인 종교인 기독교를 나름대로 온전하게, 신실하게, 그리고 깊은 헌신을 통해서 기독교가 한반도에 자리잡는데 기여하게 된다.

결론적으로, 한국의 기독교에서 부흥적 기독교와 저항적 기독교 정신이 뚜렷이 그 맥락을 이어가고 있는데 중요한 것은 이 두가지가 항상 창조적 긴장을 갖추어야 한다고 본다. 이것은 어떤 중도의 신학을 추구하자는 제안은 아니다. 교회 공동체나 개인이 항상 중도를 지향할 수 없으며 각자의 신학에서 강조점을 가지는 것은 당연하고 또한 바람직하다. 저자가 주장하는 것은 각 교회공동체가 각자의 신학적인 강조점을 유지하면서 다른 성향의 신학을 인정하고 비평적으로 수용해야 한다는 점이다. 위에서 대부흥운동과 독립운동에서 다른 데로, 깊이 있게 관찰하게 되면 내면에 흐르는 양면성이 있는 것을 본다. 이를 위해서 이 두 전통이 서로 대화를 통해서 보다 성숙한 한국의 교회를 형성해 나가는 것도 중요하지만, 교회의 보다 지속 가능한 갱신(sustainable church renewal)을 위해서는 무엇보다도 각자의 전통 내에서 존재하고 있는 다른 신학적 성향 - 부흥(revival)과 저항(protest) - 에 대해서 보다 더 진지하게 인식하며 또한 비평적으로 수용하는 것이 필요한 것이다. ■

TOWARDS THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH IN KOREA: INTERACTION BETWEEN REVIVAL AND PROTEST THEOLOGIES

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The advent and growth of Protestant Christianity in Korea occurred during one of the most turbulent times in Korean modern history. Several major political crises occurred during this period, including the Gapshin Coup (1884), the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), the Japanese annexation of Korea (1910–45), the Korean War (1950–1953), and the struggle for democracy of the 1970s and 1980s. Amidst uncertainty and chaos, people desperately sought stability and security, and Christianity was accepted by many, not only for spiritual and religious reasons but also as a means of sociopolitical change. The introduction of Christianity to the Korean peninsula¹ had a significant impact on Korean history, and Korean Christianity was developed in a unique way by Koreans themselves. While foreign missionaries did greatly influence the Korean understanding of Christianity—in ideology, church polity, society, and politics—more importantly, Christianity was formed by Koreans who accepted and interpreted it according to their own purposes and needs. In other words, there was a process of selection and reinterpretation of Christian teachings and practices, and through this, Korea’s unique Christianity was created.²

On the one hand, religiously and spiritually, there was a fascination with the Bible’s teachings that accompanied a groundbreaking spiritual transformation from notions of the past. On the other hand, Christianity became a catalyst in response to a national crisis, to bring socioeconomic progress and restore Korean political authority. That is, there was an aspect of severance from traditional beliefs and acceptance of the “gospel,” a message of a new religio-cultural transformation. In

pursuing autonomy and independence as part of the country’s continuous sociopolitical reform and modernization, there was also a need to maintain religious or conceptual continuity and to accept Christianity as a tool toward those ends. Early Korean Christians embraced both “spiritual” and “secular” understandings of Christianity.

In my view, the unique theology that was formed in Korea can be divided into five categories: commitment to Scripture, the gospel of holistic blessing, justice for the poor and oppressed, integration of the gospel with culture, and the reconciliation of a divided Korea.³ In this article, the above characteristics of the Korean church’s theology are condensed and divided into “revival theology” and “protest theology.” Revival theology stressed an ardent devotion to the Bible and the pursuit of spiritual experience, in the context of Bible studies and revival meetings that formed the Korean church. Reform activities—such as education, formation of sociopolitical organizations, and participation in public life—were expressed in the Korean enlightenment movement, the March First Movement, and later, the democratization movement. These two theologies have been classified as spiritual and introverted on the one side, and social and extroverted on the other. From denominational or ecclesiastical perspectives, they have been divided into “conservative” and “progressive.” But, in this article, I show that while these two theologies have superficial differences, in reality, both theologies continue to coexist within their respective communities and they continue to influence each other. For the sake of authentic renewal in the church today, it is important that these

two theologies are held in creative tension, and each community needs to recognize the diversity within itself. First, we will discuss the two theologies.

Revival Theology through Bible Study and Evangelism

Although not exceptional in the global history of Christianity, Korean Christianity particularly emphasizes the Bible. Before official missionaries arrived in Korea, the New Testament had already been translated in China and Japan by missionaries and Korean converts and distributed in Korea. The first Protestant church was founded by Koreans who took the lead in Bible translation, and the way local Christians interacted with the Bible in this context gave birth to the unique Korean character of Christianity. In fact, the tradition of Bible study, or *sagyeunghoe*, was the most typical characteristic of early Korean Christianity, so much so that one missionary called Korean Christianity “Bible Christianity.”⁴

The Bible profoundly influenced Korean Christians to spread this gospel to others as a major guide to spiritual, moral, and ethical conduct in their private and public lives. It made an impact in preparing Koreans for entry into the modern era and to embrace such broad fields as literacy, women’s education, justice, reconciliation, hope, and equality to respond to sociopolitical crises. In particular, Korean women who became Christians experienced many positive life changes when they came into contact with the Bible and, in turn, attempted to bring about social change. Since they were expected to learn to read the Bible, they could then read newspapers, giving them access to the public world of men. Women’s education was one of the factors challenging the traditional rigid Confucian

order by questioning the double standards of patriarchal forms and heterosexual morality.⁵ Christianity drew women into new and stronger networks within the church. They campaigned for literacy, started a sobriety movement, and protested against concubinage.⁶ The gospel spread among women, who were the leaders of local prayer groups held at home. Converts testified of their faith to other women and led them to church.

This passion for the Bible led to the revival meetings. A series of revivals led by Korean church leaders from the beginning of the 20th century brought a dynamism through which Korean Christians experienced true repentance and forgiveness, which then made it possible for them to confidently spread the gospel and keep their faith even in difficult times. The revival meetings asked for forgiveness of sins and salvation for individuals and nations. The messages of the preachers and the expectations of the congregations were directed toward something beyond this world. Korea’s great revival movement of 1903–1907 was part of the global revival phenomenon that originated from the Holiness movement in the late 19th century, which also gave rise to today’s Pentecostal movement and charismatic Christianity.⁷ However, although belonging to a global movement, Korea’s revival should be uniquely understood as a spiritual and cultural response to the national crisis of the early 20th century.

For Koreans, revival was a cathartic opportunity to express pain amid Japan’s control over the country. But it was also significant for four other reasons. First, it made the church remarkably Korean. In many ways, the Great Revival was the “Korean Pentecost,” which shaped the

Korean church and its practices. The fusion of the missionary evangelical tradition and the Korean hope for national salvation molded the Korean church into a national religion.⁸ Second, the revival captured something of the *zeitgeist* and connected it with Korean culture in a way that other religions and Catholic Christianity could not, giving Protestantism a popular appeal. Through the revival, Christianity was revealed to be not only an intellectual and social reform movement but also a spiritual and emotional religious movement.⁹ The language of the Old Testament and the Gospels appealed to the Korean public under oppression, and Christianity’s use of Hangeul, the popular language, facilitated continuity with popular beliefs. Third, revival meetings brought together Koreans from different backgrounds.¹⁰ The Confucian elites did not conceive of religion as having such passion and emotion. However, through the revival, Christianity intersected with those who believed in Confucianism, as well as with those from backgrounds of Buddhism, traditional religion, and new religious movements.¹¹ Fourth, although spirituality and confession were ostensibly limited to the immoral acts of the confessors, personal repentance and righteousness were theologically linked to the national disaster and the struggle for justice. Under such circumstances, the Great Revival naturally encouraged a broader hope for heaven, beyond the spiritual aspects of religion.

The pursuit of revival and the growth of Protestant churches continued after liberation. Revival has become characteristic of Korean churches.¹² However, the growth-oriented revival movement has been criticized since the 1980s, and the credibility and reliability of the church in society have been questioned.

In this regard, this article will deal with another aspect of the Korean church: the movement seeking resistance.

Protest Theology Through Social Transformation and Sociopolitical Participation

Although the theology of the early Protestant missionaries was known as conservative and pietistic, their ministry encompassed education, health care, youth work, women's organizations, and social welfare for the poor. These wide-ranging ministries stemmed initially from restrictions on their missionary work and the missionaries' need for relatively easy access to the general public and favor among political leaders. When missionaries arrived, the Korean elite and educated reformers saw Christianity as a means to modernize Korea through Western-style schools, hospitals, newspapers, and publications. Many prominent reformers and political leaders became Christians, and among intellectuals and the common people, there was a deep connection between the acceptance of Christianity and the pursuit of political independence and social reform. Among the converts, social leaders understood the Christian message as a "quasi-political doctrine" similar to earlier social reforms to rebuild Korea after its dependence on China and Confucian traditions. Christian leaders saw the potential and sought to bring about a modern nation-state by awakening people through free speech, through education in Western values and social responsibility, and through churches, schools, and media, instead of relying on violence.¹³

Because of this, Christianity contributed to modernization in many ways. First, Christianity emphasized conversion,

personal conscience, and personal responsibility, encouraging Christians to be reborn, do good, and develop their individual life rather than accepting a life status determined by birth. Moreover, the polity of the Presbyterian Church laid the foundation for Korean democratic processes. Second, Christian leaders and missionaries presented an alternative to the strict hierarchy and absolute obedience to the monarch in Korean society. For example, medical facilities tended to both the rich and the poor. Third, through the establishment of schools and the promotion of Hangeul, illiterate people—including women and those lacking education—were made aware of their culture, history, and language, which also contributed to a sense of national pride. Fourth, Christian education and institutions imparted Western scientific and technological knowledge, historical consciousness, and morality, encouraging open-ended inquiry rather than the rigid and bureaucratic approach under the dominant Confucian academies. They dispelled superstitions, questioned traditional rituals, and developed ideas about human freedom and social justice, which led to the growth of social conscience and social improvement.

It was in the March First Independence Movement where Christianity played a nationwide role as a catalyst for social, political, economic, and cultural renewal. When Japan made Korea a protectorate of the Japanese Empire in 1905, Korean Christians participated in the movement against Japanese colonial rule. They organized prayer groups for national salvation, planned protests against the treaty (even committing suicide in protest), attempted to assassinate Japanese and Korean officials, organized an army to fight the Japanese army, sabotaged the taxes

levied by the governor-general, and formed political parties and social groups.

The March First Independence Movement was organized mainly by students, educators, and religious leaders, with the encouragement of foreign nationalists, and Christians were among the main instigators. Although churches were not institutionally involved, church property was frequently used for demonstrations.¹⁴ Of the 489 religious leaders arrested, half were Christian ministers. Almost all pastors in Seoul and Pyongyang—and many other church ministers—were imprisoned.¹⁵ Women and girls also played a leading role. Christian women in particular accounted for 60 percent of the 471 arrests, and a majority of the prominent female leaders in the movement were Christians.¹⁶

These resistance movements laid foundations for the people's movement and democratization movement after liberation from Japan in 1945. From the 1960s, Korea's economy grew rapidly; however, factory workers were seriously exploited through their working conditions and wages. In this context, some Christian leaders realized that a new theological paradigm was necessary to meet the needs of the urban poor who had become victims of the highly competitive capitalist market. The People's Movement was sparked in November 1970 when Jeon Tae-il took his own life to protest the exploitation of his colleagues in a clothing factory. The incident shook the country, and socially concerned Christians treated it as a major issue, taking the side of the poor and exploited.

These minjung theologians (theologians for the masses) captured people's imaginations and raised issues of poverty and exploitation in the church. Minjung

theology was a “theology of protest” and made a great contribution to the Korean church and society by rediscovering the gospel of liberation and justice. Minjung theology was good news for the poor and, like the gospel of holistic blessing of the popular revivals, it was meant to address the problems of the poor. However, it differed significantly from the former in how it dealt with economic issues. Overall, minjung theology challenged the church and society to solve issues of socioeconomic and political injustice, helped to achieve democracy in Korea, and played a prophetic role in Korean history. However, rather than forming the mainstream Korean church, protest theology was expressed by progressive churches in these historic movements and has mainly provided a challenging message to the church and society.

Interaction Between Revival and Protest Theologies in Korean Christianity

Predominant views tend to polarize these two traditions. Scholars regard the progressive and conservative denominations and churches as separate and monolithic. They argue that there should be dialogue and mutual understanding between the two in order to achieve a healthier and more mature church. However, I argue that it is an urgent task for sustainable church renewal to recognize that both theologies coexist within each tradition, to reinterpret their relationship, and to discover the commonality deeply embedded within each. In this regard, I will reexamine the Great Revival and the March First Movement discussed above.

Many historians have criticized the Korean Revival as being apolitical, an escape from reality. On the contrary, we cannot see the

Great Revival as only spiritual because church members who participated in Bible studies and revival meetings also actively participated in the national struggle, including the March First Independence Movement a few years later. I hold that by emphasizing inner spiritual and ethical renewal, overcoming the dualistic approach to faith, and strengthening the leadership of Korean Christianity, the revival was a catalyst of Christian maturation that included developing a holistic faith. The content of the Christian message, especially the story of the Israelites and the words and ministry of Jesus, laid the foundations for Christian engagement in public life. In the early 20th century, for Koreans, heaven was the restoration of the nation in the coming of the kingdom of God.

Christians were embodying a holistic Christianity that included spiritual-cultural, sociopolitical, otherworldly (sacred), and this-worldly (secular) applications. Although the revival movement was superficially seen as focused on spiritual and eternal dimensions, in fact, it laid the foundation for growing the Christian community in playing the role of salt and light in society. In particular, the March First Movement was a nonviolent movement resulting from the participation of several leaders of the Great Revival and their interpretation of the teachings of Christ. The Great Revival should not be understood as nonpolitical escapism but as a part of the national struggle to find individual or communal identity within the suffering nation.

Similarly, revisiting the March First Independence Movement in this context, it was not a purely political movement as many think. At least for Christians, it was a visible expression of what it means to

follow the Christian gospel as a community. Although Christian participation may seem very secular because of the seeming absence of the Christian message in the Declaration of Independence, the declaration should be viewed as an integrated expression of the Christian vision within public discourse. In that sense, the March First Declaration of Independence can be seen as a public declaration of Christianity in Korean history.

In the same way, the democratization movement of the 1970s and 1980s appeared secular on the surface but was, inside, deeply spiritual in that it was based on the values of justice, equality, and peace, as emphasized in the Bible. In a period of turbulence in society, Korean Christianity actively contributed not only to political, economic, and ethical renewal but also to cultural and ideological changes. This influence was possible mainly because of society's acceptance of Christianity as a source of inspiration for ethical and moral conduct and as a catalyst for the struggle for dignity and freedom, satisfying Koreans' spiritual quest for a meaningful life.

In conclusion, in the Korean church, the two seemingly contradictory dimensions of political reform and spiritual-cultural transformation are in fact deeply related from its early Christian history to the present. The spirits of revival Christianity and protest Christianity clearly continue, coexisting through mutual recognition and maintain a creative tension. This is not a suggestion to pursue any centrist theology. It is only natural and desirable that ecclesial communities or individuals cannot always be oriented towards the middle, and it is natural and desirable to have particularities in one's own theology. As discussed above, when looking closely

at the Great Revival Movement and the March First Independence Movement, you will see that seemingly opposite theological positions are entwined within them. What I argue is that each church community should acknowledge and critically accept different tendencies of theology while maintaining its own theological emphasis. To this end, it is important for these two traditions to form a more mature Korean church through dialogue with each other. However, and more importantly, an internal dialogue needs to take place within each tradition to recognize and critically accept its diverse theological tendencies, for sustainable church renewal. ■

ENDNOTES

1. 이 논문에서 특별한 언급이 없으면, 기독교(Christianity)와 개신교(Protestant Christianity)는 동의어 사용한다. Unless otherwise indicated, the terms "Christianity," "Protestant Christianity," and "the Korean church" are used synonymously.
2. S. Kim and K. Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (CUP, 2015).
3. S. Kim, "The Word and the Spirit: Overcoming Poverty, Injustice and Division in Korea" in Sebastian C.H. Kim (ed.), *Christian Theology in Asia* (CUP, 2008), 129–53.
4. *Report of British and Foreign Bible Society* (1907), 70.
5. H.-W. Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (UC Berkeley Press, 2009), 179–82.
6. Y.-O. Lee, *100 Years of the National Organization of the Korean Presbyterian Women*, trans. M.-W. Park and J.-Y. Hong (PCK, 2011), 42–54.
7. A. Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (CUP, 2004), 136–39.
8. W. Blair and B. Hunt, *The Korean Pentecost and the Suffering which Followed* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1977).
9. K.-B. Min, 'National Identity in the History of the Korean Church', in Chai-shin Yu (ed.), *Korea and Christianity* (Korean Scholar Press, 1996), 130.
10. L.-G. Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832–1910*, 2nd edition (Yonsei University Press, 1970 [1929]), 367–78, 420–21.
11. K. M. Wells, *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896–1937* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 25–26, 35–37.
12. See S. Kim, "Mega-Churches in Korean Christianity" in *A Moving Faith: 'Southern' Christianity*, ed. J. James (Sage, 2014), 85–105.
13. 독립선언문 서명자 33인 중에 16인이 기독교인이었고, 그 운동을 준비한 48인 중에 24인이 기독교인이었다. 투옥된 수감자 9,458인 중에 2,087인이 기독교인이었다 (22%)—그 당시 기독교인(200,000명)은 전체 인구의 1.3%였다. Among the 33 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 16 were Christians, and among the 48 who prepared the movement, 24 were Christians. Of the 9,458 people imprisoned, 2,087 were Christians (22 percent)—Christians at that time (200,000) accounted for 1.3 percent of the total population.
14. M.-G. Kang, *A History of Contemporary Korea* (Global Oriental, 2005), 157.
15. H. H.-W. Cynn, *The Rebirth of Korea: The Awakening of the People, Its Causes, and the Outlook* (Abingdon Press, 1920), 178–80.
16. T. Lee, *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea* (University of Hawaii Press, 2010), 43.



A BELOVED COMMUNITY MOVED BY THE SPIRIT

Bobby Harrison &
Inés Velásquez McBryde

“Renewal” is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, “the replacing or repair of something that is worn out, run down, or broken.” Thinking about the current state of the church in these United States, I (Inés) have often said in the past several years that it is a church that is broken, bandaged, and bruised. The church has not been a credible witness of the reconciling power of Christ purchased at the cross. She has not lived up to the liberating power of the gospel of a brown, Palestinian Jesus. Could there be hope for renewal at such a time as this?

When we ponder about the church of Jesus needing renewal, the first word that comes to mind is “healing.” The church needs healing. Her people need healing. Creation and our bodies groan in lament waiting for our redemption. If justice begins with repair, then first we must repair our bodies. Different bodies bear different burdens.

We planted The Church We Hope For in 2020, in the midst of the pandemic. We had to learn to be the body of Christ without a building—a brutal blessing that forced us to be attentive to our isolated bodies in need of repair. That’s where the wind of the Spirit rushed in and we began to hope for healing. And would you believe it? We began to see the work of healing among us! Healing work was holy work. Our bodies began to be re-membered. The Spirit was bringing us back to ourselves, back to God, and back to one another.

The Spirit was reconstructing our fragmented selves and less-than-faithful theologies to the new thing God was doing among us.

Like those in the Spirit-led days of Acts 2, we now stand in awe at the church our God has knit together among us. Younger and older. Brown, Black, Asian, and White. Peacemakers, reconcilers, hope bringers. Those with deep, rooted faith. Those with hard, lingering doubts. People rooted in their local communities. People who’ve ventured from far away to call this place home. All coming together to embody the goodness of the good news.

The Church We Hope For is “a beloved community moved by the Spirit to follow the life, love, and justice of Jesus.” This is not only our vision; it’s also been our reality. And what a beauty it’s been to behold the dream Dr. King hoped for, as it comes to life through this body of Christ.

As our church plant first shared tables in January 2020, Nicaraguan black bean soup among us, we didn’t know that just two months later a global pandemic would quarantine us apart. And yet we sensed this church could be a healing place for the hurting. Our model of shared leadership—a brown, Latina, Nicaraguan, immigrant pastora co-leading in equity alongside a White, US-born, man from the Bible Belt South—both married but not to one another—had drawn skepticism, suspicion, and shame in some circles, for this is surely not what church leadership traditionally looks like! But we sensed the Spirit shaping a Kingdom-calling in us, to pursue oneness where there instead has long been division.

We bear witness to a Christ who still draws us together across lines that have painfully separated. And we behold this as the movement of the border-crossing God and

boundary-breaking Spirit. This is slow moving, table-sharing, paradigm-shifting kind of work. And this is the ministry of Jesus among us.

“Come to me,” our Christ calls. “All who are weary and burdened,” he welcomes. “And I will give you rest,” he promises.

This invitation and declaration always felt so personal to me (Bobby). An intimate moment where my Jesus locks eyes with me and offers deep peace and presence for my life. But what if this tender, healing pronouncement of solidarity by the Son of God was also always communal? What if the “come to me” was also always about coming to the Body of Christ? What if this divine assurance of “rest” could be found in Christ’s body as the church? And not just the church-at-large, but what about discovering such shalom in a particular church body, in real time alongside real people?

The renewal we’ve seen as pastors of a local church at such a time as this has come from those we have walked alongside in our young, beautiful, imperfect, but totally tangible community. It’s people with real testimonios and real pain and real rejoicing. Each of us a physical representation of the Imago Dei with us. Immanuel in real time. The belonging we’ve all sought can be found in a body: Christ’s body. Christ, one to another. Christ, together.



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Scott Cormode is the Hugh De Pree Professor of Leadership Development in the School of Mission and Theology. With significant leadership and teaching experience, Dr. Cormode also founded the Academy of Religious Leadership, an organization for professors who teach leadership in seminaries, and created the *Journal of Religious Leadership*, for which he acts as editor. His writing on leadership, organization, and technology have been published widely, and he is the author of *Making Spiritual Sense: Theological Interpretation as Christian Leadership*.

GRACE IN DAILY LIFE: GRATITUDE, GENEROSITY, AND HOSPITALITY

Scott Cormode

God has already given us what we need to renew the church. The renewal of the church will come when we learn to embody God's grace.

The problem, of course, is that the church often stands for the opposite of grace. If you ask people who are not Christians to describe the Christian church in one word, the same word comes up again and again: "judgmental."¹ The renewal of the church will come when we become known for the welcoming grace of Jesus rather than the condemning judgment of the Pharisees.

Throughout Christian history, there have been at least three ways to embody God's grace: gratitude, generosity, and hospitality. And together, they will transform our churches.

Gratitude and Generosity

Let us discuss gratitude and generosity together because they are two sides of the same coin. *Gratitude is about choosing to remember the gift of God's grace.* "For by grace you have been saved, through faith. It is the free gift of God, lest anyone should boast" (Eph 2:8-9). Gratitude is choosing to remember that God has given me a gift. I did not get what I deserve. If I got what I deserved, it would not be a gift. It would be something I earned. If I got what I deserve, I would receive death because of my sin (Rom 3:23, 6:23). But instead of death, God "lavished" an "inheritance" on me at the cost of his own Son (Eph 1). Gratitude is not looking at the bright side. *Gratitude is acknowledging that God's gift is much brighter than anything I ever deserved.*

Of course, the Pharisees thought grace was not fair, but Jesus did not always

think things should be "fair." He thought the last should be first. In Matthew 20, he tells a story to describe what grace means. If we could learn to internalize this story, it would transform our churches because it would change how we see the free gift of God's grace. In this story, a farmer owns a vineyard. He hires some workers for his vineyard and agrees to pay them a denarius, a day's wage. After all, that's fair. But then, around 9:00 am, the farmer sees some idle workers in the village, so he hires them, saying, "I will pay you what is right." The same scene plays out at noon, at three, and even just before quitting time. Then at the end of the day, when it is time to settle accounts, he gives everyone a full day's wage. When I teach that story in churches, Christians of all ages have the same reaction: "That's not fair!" And they are right. If things are fair, that means you get what you deserve. That's when the next question comes. Do you really want God to give you what you deserve? Do you want to set that precedent? What do you and I deserve? If you and I get what we deserve, we get death. *You don't want things to be fair. You want grace.*

Grace means that we receive more than we deserve, and we get it because Christ paid a price we could not pay. It is an undeserved gift. Grace is not fair. And that's the whole point. Jesus' message in the parable is that the last shall be first. That's not fair. You and I, we want to act like we were the workers who came first thing in the morning. But that would mean that we had earned our salvation and that we had lived the sinless life that the Law demands. But none of us can live up to that standard. So, we act like Pharisees, looking down on other people. "I may not have worked all day," we say to ourselves, "but I worked longer and harder

than *they* did” (whoever “they” are). We try to convince ourselves that others deserve judgment but we—we—deserve the reward that cost Jesus his life. We want to pretend that things should be fair, but if we get what we deserve, we get death. You don’t want things to be fair. You want grace.

Some people tend to spiritualize this parable, saying that anyone who accepts Christ on their deathbed will still get into heaven. And that’s true. But that’s not the only point Jesus set out to make. Grace is not just something we receive from God. We are supposed to *practice grace*. “Judge not, lest you be judged,” he warned (Matt 7:1). “Let anyone who is without sin cast the first stone” (John 8:7). Don’t just be fair; show grace. And that requires generosity.

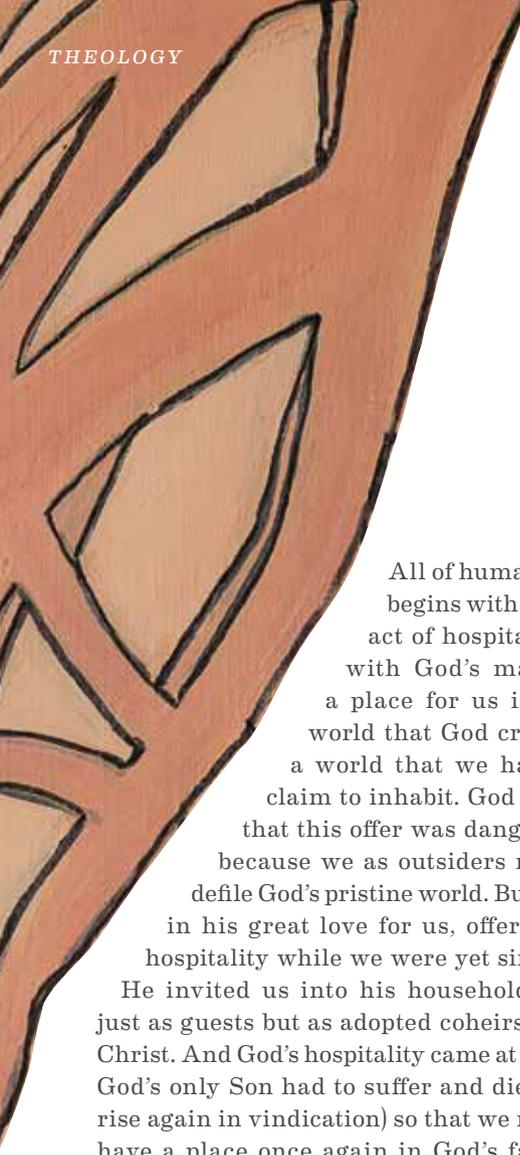
Grace unites gratitude and generosity because gratitude is not complete until it becomes generosity. *Generosity is choosing to practice grace with others, even and especially when they don’t deserve it.* Generosity is not (just) about money. It is about a generous spirit—a willingness to give others the benefit of the doubt. Jesus told many parables about the dangers that come when gratitude does not lead to generosity. For example, in Matthew 18, Peter asks Jesus how often he should forgive a brother or sister. And, in response, Jesus tells the story of a man who is forgiven a large debt by the king. The man then chooses not to forgive a much smaller debt from a friend. He wants grace for himself, but he wants to be “fair” with the man who owes something to him. He wants to receive generosity, but he does not want to practice it. That is what Jesus condemns.

Hospitality

If we want to embody the grace that God has shown to us, our generosity must particularly transform the ways that we treat strangers. And that will require us to recover the Christian practice of hospitality because *hospitality is extending grace across difference.*

Hospitality is a Christian practice that extends all the way back to the book of Genesis. Although, in the contemporary United States, people use the term to mean catering a meal or putting on a party, hospitality means far more as a Christian practice. How might we recover the Christian practice of hospitality, especially in a way that brings the wholeness of the biblical practice into contemporary life?

Hospitality is the offer to extend the privileges of community² to those who do not have the standing to expect it, especially those who are vulnerable because they are strangers. Hospitality often involves sharing meals, but hospitality is about more than eating. Eating is, for example, one of the privileges of being in my family. My kids have the right to expect to be fed every single night. When I share a meal with them, it is not an act of kindness. I owe it to them. When I share such a meal with an outsider, I invite them into my family for that brief period. *Hospitality is an offer to identify with outsiders and to treat them like insiders.* Hospitality is extending privilege across difference. It is the offer to give outsiders what they do not deserve, just as God has given us the grace that we do not deserve.



All of human life begins with God's act of hospitality—with God's making a place for us in the world that God created, a world that we had no claim to inhabit. God knew that this offer was dangerous because we as outsiders might defile God's pristine world. But God, in his great love for us, offered us hospitality while we were yet sinners. He invited us into his household, not just as guests but as adopted coheirs with Christ. And God's hospitality came at a cost. God's only Son had to suffer and die (and rise again in vindication) so that we might have a place once again in God's family. Hospitality is at the core of the Christian experience. "Having been embraced by God," Miroslav Volf says, "we must make space for others and invite them in—even our enemies."³ *Hospitality is treating outsiders like insiders, just as God treated us.*

Hospitality is integral to the earliest biblical stories. God welcomed Adam into the Garden of Eden. Hospitality is a significant part of Abraham's story in Genesis 12, 14, 18, and 19. Each of these stories turn on the proper (and improper) way to treat a stranger. Later in the Old Testament, Rahab welcomes the Hebrew spies, Elijah receives the hospitality of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17–18), and Elisha is hosted by the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4). God expands the notion of hospitality to include more than meals. It becomes central to the very identity of what it means to be the people of God. "Treat the foreign-born the way you treat the native-born," says Leviticus (19:34). "Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners

in Egypt. I am the Lord your God." Later in the Old Testament, God's prophets remind Israel and Judah that God will judge them based on how they care for the widow, the orphan, and the alien in their midst (e.g., Jer 7:6)—that is, by the degree to which they provide outsiders with the privileges that automatically come to those who are part of the community. Of course, these outsiders do not deserve the privileges reserved for insiders. That is the whole point. God calls us to give to others what they do not deserve because God has given us a priceless gift that we did not deserve. And this has been true since the dawn of Christianity.

One of the primary reasons why the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire was that the Christians practiced a different kind of hospitality.⁴ Ancient Romans typically practiced hospitality only for important people—that is, only for people who could give them something in return. But the Christians became noted for extending hospitality to all, even the least of these. This was a significant part of how the early church developed a reputation of love.⁵ The early church loved outsiders as if they belonged.

In the same way, hospitality is often the first experience outsiders have with God's people (and the loving God we represent). Outsiders measure "warmth" by hospitality—by the degree to which insiders treat outsiders like they belong.⁶ *That means that hospitality must adapt to the experience of the outsider.* Perhaps I have a friend who is a vegetarian. When my wife and I invite her to dinner, we don't serve steak. That would be rude. Part of being friends with her is our knowing that she is a vegetarian. We have listened to her long enough to know how she sees the world. So, we accommodate ourselves to her

experiences. Accommodation is different from assimilation.⁷ In assimilation, the burden is on you, the outsider, to change if you and I are going to share a culture. In accommodation, the burden is for me, the insider, to change. We in the church know the right way to treat friends: We accommodate ourselves to their needs. Yet somehow, when we deal with those outside the church, we often have the attitude that they should be grateful for whatever we offer and that they should change. But, *if hospitality is treating strangers as part of the community, then I owe them the same obligations that I owe my friends.*

It is easy to think about hospitality in terms of what food we might offer at a dinner. It is far more difficult (and far more important) to think about what it means to accommodate a stranger when it comes to the things we do as the people of God. We, the church insiders, have things just the way we like them. We selected a congregation that sings the songs we like, that meets at the time that works for us, and that has sermons on the things we think are important. But if we are going to welcome outsiders, then we bear an obligation to listen to those people who are not like us and then to change our music, our services, and our sermons so that they reflect the tastes of those we intend to welcome. *Hospitality will cost us.*

What about the "bad guest"? Doesn't hospitality leave us open to exploitation? Don't good guests have an obligation to be grateful? Our worries about good hosts and bad guests depend on whether we see ourselves as the hosts or as the guests. We practice hospitality because God practices hospitality. God invited us humans into this earth, which God created. Yet we were (and are) bad guests. We messed up the Garden

of Eden, and we continue to treat each other poorly. We do not show gratitude to God. Yet God keeps offering us hospitality. The only way we can ask about the “bad guest” is if we see ourselves as only being the good host—that is, if we forget that we are the ungrateful guests at God’s table. *We must treat other people the same way we want God to treat us.*

If hospitality is extending privilege across difference, then it will change the ways we invite people to participate in our community. For example, Reuben and Sonja were a homeless couple in their twenties. They showed up at a church office on a Friday, asking for help with food. They were living with their infant in a van. The congregational coordinator, Carol, obtained food vouchers and arranged temporary housing for them. But Carol did something more. In talking with Reuben, she discovered that he played the bass guitar; she saw it in the van. So, she invited him to come back in two days to play with the worship band on Sunday morning. Carol did not ask if he was a good musician and did not even ask if he was a good Christian. She simply welcomed him in Jesus’ name. And now, years later, Reuben and Sonja (and their child) are regular members of that church.

How is that a story about hospitality? Let us say that we had a twenty-five-year-old bass player who was a child of the church. Would the praise band welcome him? Of course. Not only that, they would recruit him. Carol extended to Reuben the privileges that any member of the congregation would have expected. She treated an outsider like an insider. Because of that, he became an insider. That is the Christian practice of hospitality.

And that takes us all the way back to the renewal of the church. If I think that “other people” need to change before the church will be renewed, then I am part of the problem. I am the one who has to change. I have to stop acting like a judgmental Pharisee and learn to embody God’s welcoming grace. And, to do that, I might focus on three ancient Christian practices. Gratitude is choosing to remember the gift of God’s grace. Generosity is choosing to practice grace with others, even and especially when they don’t deserve it. And hospitality is extending grace across difference; it is treating outsiders like insiders, just as God treats me. If each of us can embrace and embody these manifestations of grace, then we will be transformed and the church will see renewal. ■

ENDNOTES

1. There are many instances of this finding. See, for example, a Barna poll of Millennial non-Christians in 2015 (<https://www.barna.com/research/what-millennials-want-when-they-visit-church/>), or a 2017 Lifeway study of young adults who had stopped attending church (<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2021/06/29/american-christians-turning-people-off-church-bethany-christian-services/5370555001/>), or, just this year, an Episcopal poll on “non-religious Americans” in 2022 (<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/18-march/news/world/american-christians-seen-as-hypocritical-and-judgemental-study-suggests>).
2. The phrase “privileges of community” is just a way of saying the things that any insider deserves simply because they are a member of the community. “Privilege,” here, means getting what an “insider” deserves.
3. M. Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 129.
4. H. Rhee, *Loving the Poor, Saving the Rich: Wealth Poverty, and Early Christian Formation*, esp. “Wealth, Poverty, and Koinonia” (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 103–38.
5. C. D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 17–19; C. D. Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 159–76.
6. The Fuller Youth Institute found that this experience of “warm community” was integral to churches that are growing young. K. Powell, J. Mulder, and B. Griffin, *Growing Young* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 163–195.
7. I have been particularly influenced on this topic by a wonderful overview essay that, although older now, provides a progression for how scholars have discussed assimilation. R. Kazal, “Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History,” *American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (April 1995), 437–71.

ADVENT PEOPLE: SEEKING THE SPIRIT IN A TIME OF SCHISM

Kirsten Sonkyo Oh

An interview with Kirsten Sonkyo Oh, ecclesiastical associate professor of United Methodist Studies and Fuller's United Methodist Church liaison, by FULLER Editor in Chief Jerome Blanco.

JEROME BLANCO: How do you see God renewing the church in this present season?

KIRSTEN SONKYO OH: In a church history class during college, our professor drew several diagrams and asked how we saw the trajectory of the church throughout her history. I remember combining two of those diagrams: the pendulum and a straight central line. Prompted by the professor, I explained that the church seems to swing from one extreme to the other, yet God is sovereign, and God's grace is wide enough to sustain these swings and still be about the work of renewing the church.

Truth be told, I see the church today and have difficulty seeing God's work of renewal in it. The rising Christian nationalism, the ongoing racial strife, the exponential trauma caused by our church structures and leadership, the intrapolarity between the so-called "traditional" versus the so-called "liberal" Christians point to the extreme pendulum swings of our time. We seem to be in a space and time where the ways in which the church condones or participates in certain systems, principalities, and structures damages the witness of Jesus and shrouds God's renewal work.

Yet we are advent people. We are called to participate with God by not only waiting for the coming of Jesus with hope, peace, love, and joy. We live in the now as we anticipate and prepare for the revealing of God by embodying these aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, especially in the midst of disappointments, precisely because we have seen God renewing the church throughout history with the transformative work of the Spirit. In other words, the very awareness of our transgressions and the realization of our lacunae that cause us discomfort are

the work of God's renewal—the beginning point of our repentance and hope-filled restoration.

JB: How are you seeing the Spirit at work in this way in the United Methodist Church in particular?

KSO: When we immigrated to the US, I was nine years old. In a land where everything was strange, the cross on buildings provided a sense of safe familiarity. Every time we saw a cross in this unfamiliar land, my family pointed to it in unison and said, "There's a church!" When we saw churches with the cross and the flame, a symbol for the United Methodist Church (UMC), we exclaimed, "There's our church!" While this sense of belonging to the people called the Methodists feels tenuous at this time of intense in-fighting and division, I believe the Spirit of God is at work in the UMC.

Currently, the UMC dominates the religion news sector with the continually slow, ever-contentious schism over the years-long, vigorous debate about the ordination and marriage of its LGBTQ members within the global denomination. The Global Methodist Church (GMC) has commenced as a newly formed denomination, and many UMC churches have joined or plan to join the GMC by disaffiliating from the UMC. The last few decades of grappling within the global church have been painful to both sides of the church, and the "United Methodist" name has been teased to mean "Untied Methodists" due to this schism.

On the divide, William Willimon has written:

In his stemwinder sermon "On Schism," John Wesley begged those thinking about church divorce to stay and fight. Schism is always counter to the togetherness produced by Christ: "Separation is evil in itself, being a breach of brotherly love, so it brings forth evil fruit ... the most mischievous consequences. It opens a door to all unkind tempers, both in ourselves and others."¹

Even Scripture pronounces divorce as an objectionable act (Mal 2:16). Yet, in our earthly life, divorce is at times urgent and necessary. I wonder if the schism is the stirring of the Spirit. Is the Spirit at work here? Would the dross of what is superfluous to our identity as the children of God, the toxicity of decades of "unkind tempers," and the tainted witness of God's compassion to the vulnerable persons in our communities be ameliorated as the UMC endures this painful divorce?

United Methodists observe a communion table where all are invited to participate because of the belief that the Spirit of God is at work throughout all lives through prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. For generations, the UMC has struggled with what it means to practice this open communion with all persons. I believe that the kairos moment has come to clarify what that belief means for the church when it comes to certain human identities, social locations, and the resultant practices. The Spirit has stirred our hearts in new ways through the sanctifying grace, the refiner's fire.

JB: How do we participate more fully in what God is doing in this regard?

KSO: I see God calling all of God's children to ask critical questions about the world around us as the Spirit is shining a light on the significant ways in which the church has struggled with its identity/ies and its witness in the world. Perhaps we can participate with God by lamenting the normative ways in which US-centric polity and US-national identity have been woven into Christianity. God is inviting us to reimagine what it means to be church together—collaborate, co-labor, co-create the vision of God as the children of God. As fiercely faithful followers of Jesus the Christ, we are called out of tribal box denominations and into new paradigms of ministry within and without.

Alan Roxburgh, in *Introducing the Missional Church*, advocates that the word "missional" is not about the church but about God being up to something in the world that is bigger than the church. In addition, Rowan Williams writes, "It is not the church of God that has a mission. It's the God of mission that has a church." God is at work in the world to redeem creation, and God invites us to participate in this mission.² Contextuality matters as we tarry

desperately for new models of living within the global diversity of peoples and opinions and for authentic unity (not uniformity) in these new models for which Jesus prayed (John 17). I suggest the basics of the prophetic and missional vision of God's work in the world through a more expansive vision of God's visible and invisible church through missional and eschatological imaginations—an explicit sensitivity toward alterity.

Missional imagination invites us to integrate more clearly the liminal spaces of the church as already but not yet—the world as is and the world to come—as human beings in its midst. And it allows us to seek the Spirit of Christ to see where God's Spirit is at work in order to seek the coming kingdom, an eschatological vision of the basileia: "[A] great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, [and I dare to add theological persuasions, cultural valuations, diverse human orientations, and other social locations] standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands" (Rev 7:9). This basileia of God bursts out of the narrow containment of human capacities.

Nevertheless, in a National Council of Churches document, I have asserted human responsibility in this process: "The love of God and the love of neighbor for God's sake is in itself an adequate hermeneutical key to all Scriptures as well as the telos of the transformed life. God's justice and grace require human responsiveness and responsibility so that while God initiates and completes the work of justice and grace, human persons need to take agency in that process."³ So when Jesus says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever" in John 14, I believe Jesus is promising the Spirit of

truth who resides with us and teaches us to enact God's work among us.

God's Spirit is calling us to critical conversations, prayerful discussions, prayerful discernment, and processed communion. God is at work birthing a hopeful way forward to think missionally about how we incarnate Christ in our midst by being, hearing, and doing what the Spirit is saying to us individually and corporately.

JB: What is a prayer you have for the church in this time of transformation?

KSO: I want to harken to Jesus' prayer for his disciples in John 17. I pray with Jesus for the genuine unity of Jesus' followers. I believe that, within Christian practices of lament, responsible hope is inherent and embedded. This is not to say that the feelings of dissonance and utter disappointments can or should be evaded. In fact, these feelings need to be acknowledged and attended to.

O God, help us to hear what the Spirit is saying and doing in our midst. Help us to inhabit the transitions with grace and humility. Lord, have mercy. Because "even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you." (Psalm 139:12) Help us, O God. We want to be known as your disciples by our love for one another (John 13:35).

ENDNOTES

1. W. H. Willimon, "The United Methodist Divorce is a Mistake: Caucusing is Easy. Church is Hard," *Christian Century*, August 17, 2022, <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/opinion/united-methodist-divorce-mistake>.
2. A. Roxburgh, *Introducing the Missional Church: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Become One* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 20.
3. Faith and Order Commission, National Council of Churches, "A Journey to Open Up Other Journeys: Justice and Salvation," (2012).



Kirsten Sonkyo Oh is professor of practical theology at Azusa Pacific University and ecclesiastical associate professor of United Methodist Studies at Fuller Seminary. She is an ordained elder in full connection in the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and represents the United Methodist Church at the National Council of Churches of Christ Faith and Order Commission. Dr. Oh has served as a pastor in several United Methodist Churches in Southern California and continues to speak and preach in various contexts.

+ Invocation, Paper Stained Glass by Young-Ly Hong Chandra. Mixed media on hanji, 2021. See more of Young-Ly Hong Chandra's art in the opening and closing covers and on pp. 3, 9, and 84-85.





Church By Design

WITH DAVE GIBBONS



*Dave Gibbons is an advisor, speaker, and author. He is the lead pastor of Newsong in Santa Ana, California, and founder of X, a global network of leaders whose mission is to help people discover purpose and meaning. He is the author of several books, including most recently *Xealots: Defying the Gravity of Normality*.*

JOY NETANYA THOMPSON: You've been described as a futurist, and I'm eager to hear what you think about the future of the church. It seems like we're at a historical, threshold moment in the church, where it's obvious something must change but the "whether" and the "how" are not quite as obvious. For this issue of *FULLER* magazine, we've been framing the question about the future of the church with the words "renewing the church." To start us off, what comes to your mind or your gut immediately when you hear the phrase "renewing the church"?

DAVE GIBBONS: My gut says it's renewable *and*. Renewal is not enough. There needs to be an overhaul, a systemic transformation of the church. Right now there's a huge reckoning occurring that's bringing attention to things that should have been noted decades before. But it was difficult because of the success that the church had, especially the evangelical church, in reaching a homogeneous crowd. Illusions were created from our success in growing our churches numerically. But the reality is that the church was becoming more distant from the culture. More out of touch. Our language, metrics, analogies, processes, priorities were misaligned to what originally was the purpose of the church. I think the pandemic exposed our weaknesses—that our metrics were awry, and our hierarchicalism, our patriarchy, our racism, our misogyny ... everything is being exposed. And that's why this generation doesn't want anything to do with the church. Not only are they leaving and not interested in the church because of these things but some also think about who Jesus is and don't see what the church does as matching up. Like for example, loving the other or the misfit. We say we love the most marginalized—embodied today in refugees, immigrants, the undocumented, people of color, women, and the LGBTQ+ community—but we have internal gates so they really don't have access to all the resources of the church; they are not seen as equals.

JNT: Speaking of the pandemic, you've said before that your church, Newsong, had an easier time pivoting when the pandemic hit than some

other churches. You credit this to a major value shift that happened 10 or 15 years ago, when you stopped focusing on the growth of the church and started focusing on the metrics of how you could change the community around you. It sounds like you were ahead of the curve, in terms of how the church must change to renew itself for today's world. Tell me more about the shift that happened at Newsong.

DG: What I realized is that the emphasis on the church was so much on hardware, on the size of churches—small, big, micro, multisite, whatever it is—when really it's an operating system, specifically in how it relates to serving people and the unique dreams God has given them. It's about culture, leadership, values, beliefs, authentic local outcomes, language, and access to resources. The ecosystem is also about easy user access, simplicity, elegance, and beauty. It's democratic in a way that the people can engage with it. There are no hierarchies. It's different from the empire mindset of conquest, which was rooted in previous Christian organizations after World War II. Not to demean what they each did; perhaps it fit the cultural moment. But if you look at Christ's way of working with people, he led with gentleness, humility, and love.

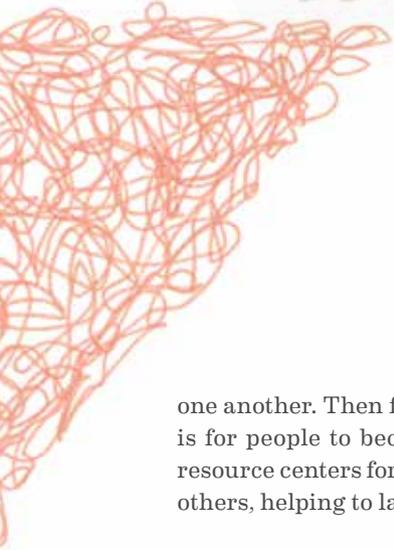
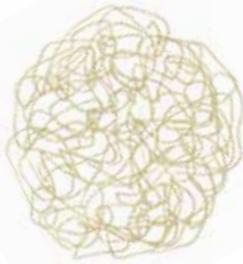
And then with this new operating system, the metrics of our church were different. While God loves the whole world, he showed us how to love the one. The way to reach the many is through the one. Instead of a self-contained destination center to keep people from cradle to grave, we were called to be more like a boutique school launching people into the world. Newsong started shifting from the Disneyland model of church to more of a practitioner academy model. The processes that we created focused on the development and dreams of the individual congregant or the community, versus just the dream of senior leadership. We flipped the focus from people serving the senior leadership's vision to senior leadership serving others' dreams. So our classes and training, our culture, and our teachings started revolving around the

question, “how do we help sufficiently equip you into your dreams?” versus, “come join us in our dream to impact the city and the world.”

JNT: I really see how that fits into the culture right now, at least in the US, with design principles driving so many successful initiatives and products, and also the booming coaching industry. Have you had any pushback about how individualist this framework is?

DG: It starts with your intrinsic need as an individual. Usually that’s why you’re coming for the experience or the church. You have this desperation or are on this journey to figure out why you’re here in the world. But in order to be healthy and even to gain clarity of your own individual vision, you have to be in community. So what does community look like? It may not look like the typical church that we know today. We call our community groups ‘havens’ because I wanted a word that would transfer into the marketplace. A haven is a group that’s committed to do life together and it’s centered around three aspects: eating together, which is like communion; meaningful conversations; and play, which could also be working together. Eat, talk, and play. This focus on relationships in community also needs that very practical training of how to relate to one another through conflict, mistakes, hurts, and betrayals. Even people who disagree with you theologically. How do we become a third way group where we can have a different set of interpretations but still be civil and caring? We can’t be what we need to be without





*Ask yourself, who's the outsider in your neighborhood?
Who is the one that nobody loves, the outcast?
That's where you start. Not with the empire approach,
but with the approach to love unconditionally.*

one another. Then from being an individual haven, the goal is for people to become reproducing hubs where they are resource centers for others focused on loving and developing others, helping to launch people into their dreams.

JNT: I read that a strength of yours is to descend into a chaotic environment, and see patterns and solutions there. The past few years could certainly be described as chaotic for the world and for the church. What patterns or solutions are you seeing, especially in terms of the church?

DG: What's becoming clear to me in the midst of the chaos is that we have to be governed more by design principles than by rigid rules and laws. It's like the way Jesus ruled his life. It wasn't so much by the law as it was by the ethic, you know, the Matthew 5-7 ethic, which takes a little bit more complexity of thought because it's more integrative. You're not going to be black and white with everything. So Jesus broke the Sabbath, and he would heal and touch people that he wasn't supposed to touch. To me, it's seeing that it's not just about the laws that we declare that make us feel more holy or astute because we have exegeted a text. Instead, it's about understanding the higher ethic Jesus lived his life by, which was love. There's so much emphasis on these dividing lines, when Jesus was much more embracing. I don't agree with a lot of the thoughts coming from the more rigid evangelical subculture, but I want to be able to sit at the table with them. That's what I call the third way. It's the approach where you may be vehemently against me on how I think about guns or I may be against you on how I think about sexuality and gender, but can we still sit together and respect each other, can we still work together for the common good, treat each other like we are still children of God?

The third way is not about "either/or" but "and." It's about loving and allowing mystery to exist. Much like in our marriages and any healthy relationship.

JNT: Are you seeing any examples of renewing the church that are happening now?

DG: I'm seeing some really exciting stuff happening in pockets throughout South America. The future leaders and culture setters will be from the East and South of our world. Asia has been on the rise and will continue to produce new and exciting innovations around design, art, culture, community, and even spirituality. And much of the creativity is happening in the margins of these places. Not just in primary cities but secondary cities. Renewal is not happening in the central empire structures, because currently they are in survival and preservation mode focused on resurrecting old culture, forms, and metrics that don't work today. But a new creative class, a new generation is emerging. I see it in the creative class of young people, the artists I see, the music I see in the fringe cultures in Asia and South America. We're currently in the Dark Ages right before the Renaissance. The shift is seeing this moment as an opportunity. The same energy that it takes to worry and be stressed out can be turned into fuel to pursue the new opportunities that have emerged.

Specifically, I see this with some leaders I'm working with in the creative class. Several of the companies I'm working with are creating cultures of love and people development, not just profit generation. They are triple bottom line companies that care about profit, making a difference, and stewarding the earth. They function like a church community in that they are equipping people but are taking away the religious language and are transparent about how and what they do with resources. And now what's cool is these leaders have also personally embraced the deep change needed in their own lives and families. They've become better parents, better leaders at home—leaders who are loving, listening, and understanding.

One company, which is a leading financial firm in Silicon Valley, has added a value of justice. What successful company do you know that adds a value of justice? And this company is now building an incubator of leaders, which are essentially like rabbinical schools or residency programs that we would

have in our churches or in our academies, but done within a corporate structure.

One of these companies also has concierge services, which are essentially like pastors who are resourcing leaders to fulfill their dreams. But they're using a language that allows them to meet people where they are, and then provoking those they work with to think about the deeper questions of life. I've had more spiritual conversations than ever before in these companies. "Spiritual" meaning not so much "religious" but transcendence, purpose, meaning, and significance. I'm seeing how one leader, one company, can have more influence than multiple megachurches—especially if they think about how to care for their employees, customers, and their local environment. Literally, one company I've seen is influencing hundreds of millions of people. Again, not that large numbers are more important, but if you are looking at numbers, then this is the way. Love one well and equip them to love others in the ecosystem God has placed them in. What if our leaders could use what we called "discipleship" in the church and see it as people development unleashed in the workplace? The very people we're trying to get into our churches we now have access to, but we have to develop a normal language and move away from bait and switch approaches, where we care for people regardless of their belief or resistance.

JNT: Last question: If you could change one thing about the church right now, where every single church—let's say in the US—would make this change, what would it be?

DG: I would say for churches to learn to love the outsider. I was introduced to this leader in New York at a special event. I noticed her interest in what I do and an openness to talk about things that were meaningful. When she asked me if I could help her and her company, internally I asked God how I could help her. In the past, I would think of some way for her to accept Christ and then eventually

maneuver her somehow into my Christian orbit. But I've always felt like this way was disingenuous. Asking God what to do, I thought I heard an answer: "Find out what her dream is and help her to achieve it." The answer seemed to be from God because I think that's what God would do. Jesus only did what he saw his Father doing. His life was a life responding to the Father's initiative, not making things happen. He led with love.

Practically, today, ask yourself, who's the outsider in your neighborhood? Who is the one that nobody loves, the outcast? That's where you start. Not with the empire approach, but with the approach to love unconditionally. It's a love imbued with gentleness and humility. Being bold is not standing up against the government but more about being bold in love, serving others with no agenda. Go with that honest intent, not to somehow woo them into your church orbit. Go spend time with that person and learn how to love them by listening to them, understanding them. If you can make that your main ambition, then you probably will really get to know God and experience a life that is filled with joy and a wonderful flourishing no matter how hard life is around you. ■

*This interview has been edited and condensed.

JOY NETANYA THOMPSON (MAT '12) is Fuller's editorial director and senior writer.

A Fresh Anointing

WITH KENNETH C. ULMER



Kenneth C. Ulmer has been senior pastor of Faithful Central Bible Church in Los Angeles since 1982. He was formerly the president of The King's University in Los Angeles, and he is currently senior advisor to the president of Biola University on community reconciliation as well as the presiding bishop over Macedonia International Bible Fellowship, based in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is the author of several books, including his most recent, Walls Can Fall: Race, Reconciliation & Righteousness in a Divided World.

JEROME BLANCO: There are many conversations these days about the change the church needs to undergo amidst the changes the world is undergoing. I'm curious about what you—with all of your experience—have witnessed and might consider the most impactful changes the church is engaging with. What do you think the biggest matters are that the church needs to reckon with today?

KENNETH C. ULMER: I think about a couple of things. I think we're in a season that the church has been in many times before. That's the first thing. It's nothing new historically. If I were to try to gather a biblical picture, it's like when the gospel went from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the world—a time very similar to the Book of Acts, to the growth of the church in the first century. We have come into a new culture, and that's my point.

When Jesus said, "Go. You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world," each one of those assignments crosses boundaries. You're going to get out of your comfort zone. Crossing geographical boundaries, crossing ethnic and racial boundaries. You're going to go from the homogeneous context of Jerusalem into a land that is not only geographically different but sociologically different and ethnically different. And then to the remote parts of the world—which means there are no boundaries. So, we're in a biblical pattern. The culture has shifted. We've shifted from a "Judeo-Christian culture"—in quotes, and that's a whole other conversation—to a more ecumenical, a more global, a more multidimensional culture.

So, first of all, this is nothing new. But I don't know if we know how to do it. I think the jury's still out as to what degree the church is prepared to expand its assignment—to go beyond a culture of homogeneity. When Paul comes along, he takes the gospel to what many call pagan cultures and others call world cultures or global cultures. That's where the church is right now. But I don't know if we know how to do it.

You know, Paul didn't have the Internet. Paul didn't have, as my friend calls it, the TGIF culture—Twitter, Google, Instagram, Facebook. That's new. And then you add the COVID dimension. There's a learning curve we're going to have to get on. How do we make disciples in this new global culture?

JB: On one hand, we've been through this before, and on the other hand, we face these new challenges. If the trajectory we're on isn't new to the church, are there lessons we're able to draw from the past that can help us meet these new issues?

KU: There's a passage in Psalm 92 that says "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." I think that there is a fresh anointing that God is releasing into the church today. God is going to do something new and do something fresh. I think for us, contemporarily, God is pouring out a fresh anointing on his body. And this fresh anointing does not mean that the old anointing was a bad anointing. The old anointing was the right anointing for the old assignment. But in this new assignment, in this new culture, our assignment is different and the dimensions of our call are different. The message stays the same, but the techniques and methods that we use are totally, totally new. And that's the connection—things are changing, yet God has not changed. God is still equipping this church. The power of the Holy Spirit is in his church. Therein lies the continuity.

In Isaiah, God says, "Behold, I'm doing a new thing." Then he says—and I love the way Eugene Peterson says it in *The Message*—"Don't you see it?" What God is doing in this fresh anointing is saying, "I'm going to call you to a new level of imagination, a new level of creativity. Don't miss this thing." There's a phrase in the African American tradition, in an old song, that says, "Now let us all go back to the old landmark." In this new season, God is saying, "No, we're not going back to the landmark." Nobody is going back. If you go back there, you'll miss it.



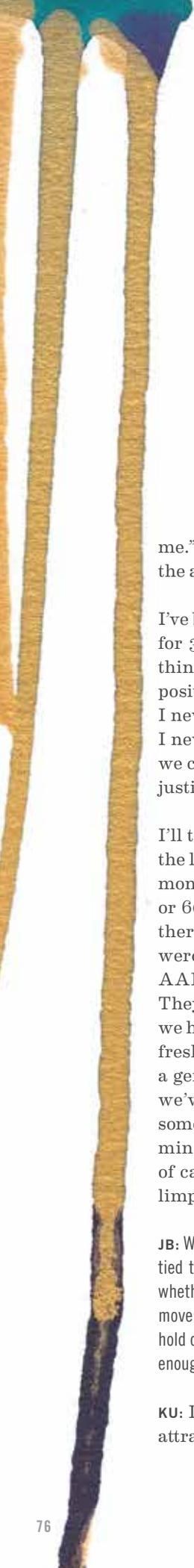
You never want to be where God was. For those of us who want to go back, we're going to miss him.

JB: I'm curious how you've witnessed this new anointing. You questioned earlier how prepared the church is. Yet I imagine that you've also seen this new thing that God is doing—moments of breakthrough, where the church is following the Spirit's lead. Can you share some ways you've seen this?

KU: I know there have been so-called "liberal" theologies and so-called "liberal" churches that have been "accused"—I'm using these terms in quotes—of being more justice-minded and liberation-minded. And I get all that. But I see God doing some things now in the so-called evangelical, the so-called nondenominational, the so-called charismatic groupings, where God is showing us and equipping us to be more inclusive. But what we are including has been there all along—it's a shift in emphasis. For example: I'm 74 years old now. I didn't know until I was about 31 that there were people of color in the Bible. And no, it's like I tell my White friends, we're not talking about putting us in there. We've been in there all along. Nobody told us. Everybody thought it was okay not to tell us. So, I think that there is a reexamining of the text that reveals both a broader appeal and a broader inclusion. That's a part of this new thing that God is doing.

I don't know that we will ever be effective in this new season—this new generation, new culture—until we do even more of what Paul says, when he says, "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." There's that justice dynamic, an inclusive dynamic, a diversity dynamic that the church has not historically emphasized in what God is doing. How do we go into all the world and make disciples? It really means all areas of the world, all areas of the culture and society.

I've been amazed at how many young people have also said, "Wow, I didn't know we were in there. I didn't know we were included." I'm seeing generations of younger kids in our church who are saying, "Wow, that's me. That includes



me.” Look at the power of God—the identity, the inclusion, the affirmation.

I’ve been in ministry now for over 40 years. I’ll bet I preached for 30 years without having any significant emphasis on things like justice and diversity. My tradition, my theological position, my ecclesiastical position just did not include that. I never heard it. I grew up in the Black Baptist church and I never heard it. Yet now, going forward, I don’t know how we can proclaim the whole counsel of God without issues of justice, diversity, and inclusion. And that’s new.

I’ll tell you what the most encouraging thing I’ve seen is in the last ten years. I was invited to speak at a conference four months ago. And I almost wept. There must have been 500 or 600 pastors and leaders, and if there were 20 people in there under 50, I’ll eat my hat. These were seniors. These were people who were my age and older. It looked like an AARP convention. And you know what they were saying? They were saying, “Hey, look, we’re not done yet. How can we have a fresh approach to the gospel? Why don’t we have a fresh approach to the church?” And that blessed me. Here’s a generation who says, “We’re not done yet, but we realize we’ve got to retool some things. We’ve got to restructure some things. We’ve got to reimagine some things.” It blew my mind. There were a couple of walkers in there and a couple of canes in there. And I’m saying, “Wow, these people are limping their way right into the power of God.”

JB: What would you say to folks who might affirm this idea of a new movement tied to the same lasting mission of God, who might ask, “How do we know whether we’re being swept away by the new way God is moving or by the movement of the wider culture?” How do we discern that? And how do we hold on to the things of God we have to hold on to while opening up our hands enough for God to change us?

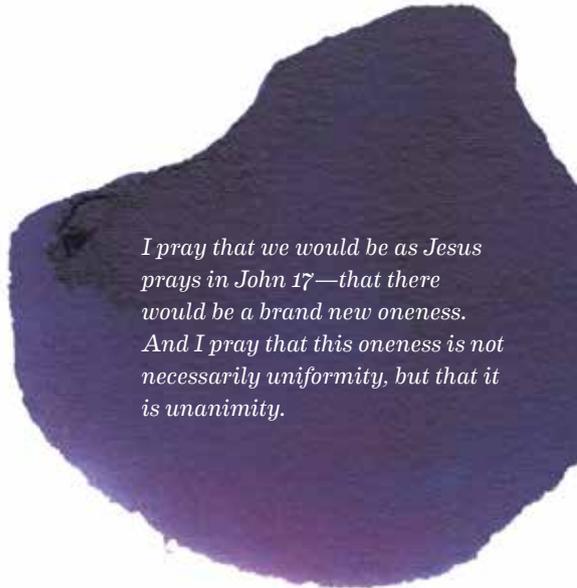
KU: I think we must stand in the tension of authenticity and attraction. Remember when Jesus said, “I am the way, the

truth, and the life”? And then he said this: “If I be lifted up ...I will draw all people unto me.” If we put emphasis on I—on Jesus—that’s the authenticity of the gospel. In this new culture, in this new dimension, we cannot back off from the authenticity of the gospel—a Christocentric declaration of the gospel. We can’t back off of that. We can’t be ashamed of that.

But Jesus says, “I will draw.” You lift me up, and I will draw them unto me. Look at our role. We’re not the one being lifted up, and we’re not the one doing the drawing. We must present Christ in the authenticity and majesty of who he is, and do it in such a way that he becomes the magnet. Here’s the temptation, going back to your question: I think most of us will struggle with the tension of leaning more one way or the other. On the one hand, many of us will lean to being so authentic, so orthodox, so dogmatic in our declaration that we are unattractive to this crazy, changing, shifting world. We’re almost drawing our little circle, and the marginalized are marginalized. We package Jesus, the gospel, the church, salvation, in such a way that they become exclusive. If our orthodoxy is overemphasized beyond our orthopraxy, we will be minimally successful.

The other tension will be if we lean too much to the attraction side, and we look for gimmicks and fleeting trends, and we want to commercialize it. We get bells and whistles, so much that the very Christ we speak of is camouflaged and the authenticity of the gospel is missed. We send Christ, the church, the gospel into the dressing room, and we call hair and makeup and wardrobe. We dress them up so much that nobody can see Jesus. The challenge is how we remain in the tension of being authentic and attractive that we don’t lean so much on commercialism and hype, that somebody will say “Where’s Jesus in this thing?”

JB: It’s work that involves ongoing discernment—something we have to help each other with as the church.



I pray that we would be as Jesus prays in John 17—that there would be a brand new oneness. And I pray that this oneness is not necessarily uniformity, but that it is unanimity.

KU: It's ongoing. And again, I don't know how we can go forward without a broader, inclusive, diverse, and global emphasis of the power of the gospel. If we stay in our little cultures, we're going to miss it.

JB: I also appreciate what you said about Jesus being the one to draw people to himself. I think of how, in the imagery of the fresh anointing, it's God doing the anointing. The church is the one being anointed. It's God acting.

KU: Right, right. And in Psalm 133, it's a picture of the oil being poured over the head of Aaron. It flows down past his beard—symbolizing wisdom. I think God's going to pour out a fresh anointing of wisdom and discernment. But watch this, it flows down, down, down “to the hem of the garment.” The lowest part of the garment. And it gathers.

This anointing is like oil that flows down over the head—over the leaders—but it's dynamic. It flows down. Therein lies the appeal to the least, the lost, the marginalized, the ostracized. And at the lowest point, that's where the power gathers. That's where God releases that power. The oil starts at the top, and it's not like you wipe it off with a rag. You let it flow to the humblest parts. Therein lies the concentration of the gospel, the concentration of the power of God.

JB: What's a prayer then that you might have for the church today, as it engages in the work of the gospel? In light of all this and in light of what is before us?

KU: I pray that we would be as Jesus prays in John 17—that there would be a brand new oneness. And I pray that this oneness is not necessarily uniformity, but that it is unanimity. I think that oneness is a declaration and affirmation of the power of God. I also pray that we would recognize that God is doing a new thing. And that God wants to use you. I'm seeking a fresh outpouring of God. I would pray for this fresh outpouring, this fresh anointing. ■

JEROME BLANCO (MDiv '16) is editor in chief of FULLER magazine and FULLER studio.

Holistic Ministry in Intergenerational Community

WITH ELIZABETH TAMEZ MÉNDEZ



Elizabeth Tamez Méndez is the founder and executive director of New Generation3 (NG3), an international consulting organization dedicated to producing resources, training leaders, and conducting research to help youth and adults connect. She also serves as a research team member at Fuller Youth Institute. Learn more at newgeneration3.com.

MICHAEL WRIGHT: I'd like to talk about your experience and work in ministry with young people—how you got there and what you've learned about the church along the way. But to begin, I wonder if you can share about the particular work you're doing right now. Can you tell us about the mission of New Generation3 and the communities you serve?

ELIZABETH TAMEZ MÉNDEZ: At NG3, we are “connecting people, expanding perspectives, and shaping the future.” Our work in the Latina community helps youth and adults connect and promotes the importance of learning from each other and shaping the future. We support churches in finding practical ways to build intergenerational and holistic spaces where faith and leadership are nurtured. Working together across generations expands our perspectives about who we are and what is possible. We also collaborate with other organizations to grow their strategies in reaching communities of color by offering consulting, training, evaluation, and research services. Thanks to a subgrant from Fuller Youth Institute and the Templeton Foundation, we are soon launching a bilingual resource series called JUNTOS (together). It's designed with practical tools and a digital platform to help congregations discern their role in reaching the new generations and help nurture the character development of youth that shapes their destino—their destiny.

MW: I'm inspired by this holistic approach to engaging young people, and I wonder if we could explore where those passions came from for you. Can you also share a memory of when you felt supported and empowered by an older member of the church?

ETM: My pathway to ministry and leadership in the church has not been traditional. My first career was as a high-rise architect, and I have a PhD in Leadership,

which focuses on human development. My educational formation is transdisciplinary, and the faith community has played an intricate formative role in discerning how God wants to use me and these gifts. My parents were pastors, and I grew up in the church both in Mexico and the US. My maternal grandmother was a missionary from Michigan who ended up in Mexico and established an orphanage. So that influence for involvement in ministry and community empowerment was always there. Over time, I came to sense God's calling to reach the new Latino generations, and this entails a holistic approach—what René Padilla calls “misión integral.” I am passionate about seeing youth thrive!

One transformational instance when I felt supported and empowered by an older member of the church was at our first church in the US. Like many other Latino churches, it was a place where everyone in the congregation was needed, involved, and contributing to making things happen. The community was interconnected, and we all supported and looked out for each other. It was there where I started teaching Sunday school when I was 12 years old. An elder in the church recognized I had the gift of teaching. So, she approached me and asked, why don't you start helping me teach on Sundays? She took me under her wing. Every Saturday, we would get together, and she would walk me through all the teaching materials and show me how to prepare a lesson and learning activities. She made sure to create spaces where I was able to exercise the spiritual gifts of teaching and leadership, and she mentored me along the way.

The way this congregation invested in each other and intentionally nurtured young people wasn't just a result





of different times; it was a different way of thinking, understanding, and exercising their role in reaching the new generations.

MW: It seems like an intergenerational context where you had the emotional, physical, and spiritual support where you could really thrive. And now you're sharing with leaders how to create those same contexts that empowered you so that the young people in their community can learn to speak with their own voice.

ETM: Exactly. My church community was always there every step of the way. They were always asking, what do you need right now? How can we be there for you? Often, they had a better sense of what I needed than I did. They were committed, not just then but throughout my life, whether I moved to Mexico for college or Spain to do my master's degree. Wherever I went, they were always present in one way or another. This is the church context where I began to understand human developmental theories—this is precisely what makes a difference in a person's life as they're growing and developing. These types of healthy and close-knit intergenerational relationships help strengthen each other's faith. They are indicators of a healthy church.

MW: You haven't had a straight road from being a volunteer at church to full-time ministry. You mentioned your background in architecture, so can you tell me more about that moment when this shift toward full-time ministry began for you?

ETM: Looking back, I see God weaving these stories, experiences, and education together as I've shifted my skills from designing buildings to helping design the structures of ministry and communities. The shift started for me in the early 2000s when my parents were pastoring a Latina church in East Texas, and I was visiting on occasion. That was the first time I was involved with an underserved immigrant community. Many church members worked in the rose fields or unloading trucks at a supermarket chain. Our family's migration story was different from theirs as we came to the US

so my father could attend seminary after closing his own architectural firm in Mexico. So, I had so much to learn from this community about how life looks from their perspective. I had to strip away any notion that I knew what to do.

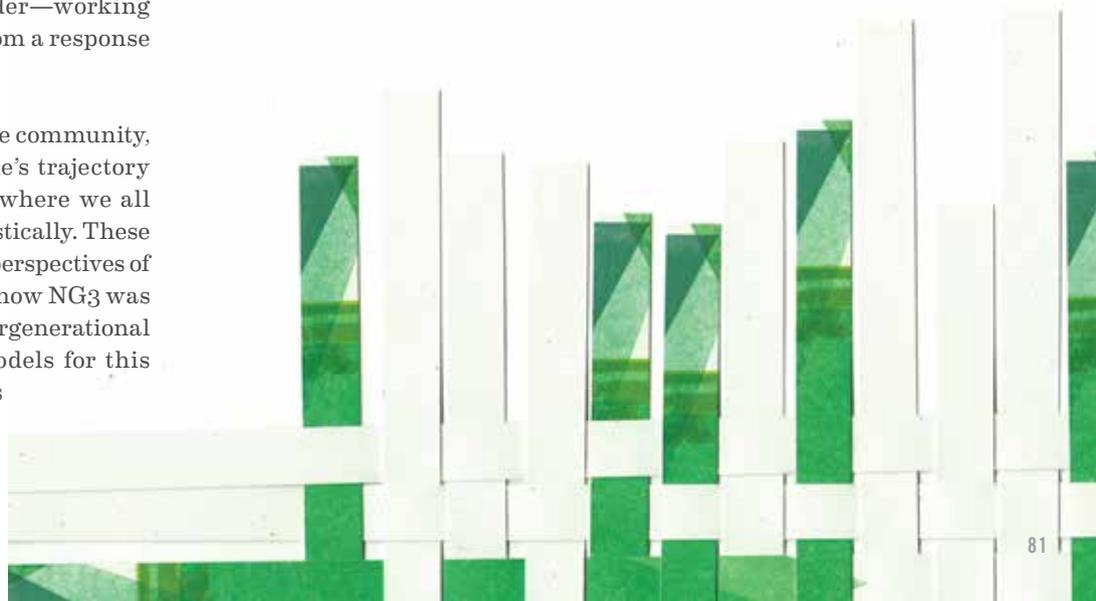
Over time, I realized that the youth in this church did not have the same kind of support I had when I was a kid. Most of their parents had a third or fourth grade education, and they were raising their children in a country without knowing the language, culture, or how to navigate the social systems. The situation created so many hurdles for the families. They wanted to see their children thrive, have an education, and get good jobs, but they didn't know how to help them to do so.

One of the big issues in this community were the hurdles for educational attainment. Kids were dropping out of school or getting dead-end jobs after high school. The education system was failing them. Parents didn't know how to guide their children to overcome this challenge. So, the Holy Spirit used this situation to kickstart a new phase for me in ministry and to transform the congregation and community in ways we had never imagined! Parents approached me because they felt that, as an architect, I should be able to help their kids, right? I had no idea what to do, and that was a big advantage, because it then took all of us—young and older—working together to find the answers. It all unfolded from a response to a community voicing they had a need.

God captured my heart through the needs of the community, the ministry kept growing, and young people's trajectory changed. The congregation became a space where we all worked together and supported each other holistically. These dynamics for connecting people expanded our perspectives of what church and ministry looked like. This is how NG3 was born. Nowadays everyone's talking about "intergenerational ministry," but back then, we didn't have models for this way of doing ministry and connecting across generations in the church as one.

It got to a point where working at the architectural firm and doing ministry during my free time wasn't sustainable anymore. I remember one night, I was working at the drafting table, and I heard an audible voice: *Whatever you choose, I will bless you.* I could sense the Holy Spirit saying, *You have always sought to follow my will for your life, so you decide: You can keep building your career, and I will bless you. Or you can follow me down this new path of adventure in ministry, and I will bless you. But I will show you what to do, one step at a time.*

That night, I chose the adventure and soon after left my work at the architectural firm. Now, 18 years later, the kids we worked with have graduated from college, are married, have professional jobs, and the trajectory of their generation, and others to come, has been positively impacted with new opportunities. Many of the youth are involved in leadership positions at that church. One even became the pastor! They're still involved, because they learned from the get-go that they have a role here and that they have skills and abilities that can be integrated into everything that happens in the church. They too are the body of Christ.



MW: What do you think the connection is today between developing young people and the need for church renewal?

ETM: This is the current tension the church at large is facing, right? We need renewed focus and new ecclesial models—and the leadership development to go with it. At our church in East Texas, there came a point where ministry wasn't structured into categories like "children's ministry" and "youth ministry" and "women's ministry." Those ministry models would segregate us by age, and our community was all about collaboration, so that wasn't going to work for us. Those models also did not reflect how life is lived in our immigrant community. Our Latina immigrant community is collectivistic. We rely on each other. This is how life works for us everywhere we go, so it has to work this way in the church too.

People in the community started seeing our congregation as a source of support and guidance, and it grew. Other leaders started asking, what's the secret sauce? How are you doing this? That's when

I saw how important it was to support other pastors and leaders, emphasize a holistic and interdisciplinary approach, and teach them how to discern what ministry needs to look like in their context. This is what brings renewal to the church: having a close pulse on peoples' needs and working together—across generations—to build solutions. In our case, how can I tell a young person in my congregation that Jesus loves them when the education system is failing them and they're dropping out of school and their dreams are stunted? It is in this intersection of life, faith, community empowerment, and ministry models that align with our values that we find depth of

understanding of Christ's redemption in practical ways and the reason why we gather as a faith family to worship together.

MW: Do you have a specific memory that comes to mind when a young person has felt supported by the communities you work with?

ETM: Yes! I remember visiting a congregation, and there was a young African American guy in the audio-visual room. He certainly stood out among all the Latina families—most of whom didn't speak English. I asked him if he spoke Spanish, and he said no! He couldn't understand what was being said in the worship service, but that didn't matter to him. He told me he had been attending the church for a few years now, and they were his family. One day he was looking over the fence at church where all the families and the children were playing, and the kids invited him over to play. Afterward, they invited him to dinner, and over time, he found a family in them. Sometime later, since he had abilities with technology, leaders in the church mentored him so he could oversee the equipment. He told me, "I don't understand what they are saying, but I understand this: In this church, I'm loved." That's it! No matter what the context is or how the community looks, our most basic need is always the same: to be loved. Is your church a space where people feel loved?

MW: What an image to receive an invitation from the other side of a fence. Come join us! Come play, come eat, come be a part of our feasting.

ETM: And come be a leader—we have something for you to be part of. Years later, I learned that although he no longer attends the church, members are still messaging him on social media and saying *we're praying for you*. And when his mother passed away, the whole congregation was at the funeral. It's a form of deep commitment. You're not just someone who is here for a season. We're here for you, regardless of where you go, what you do, or what your faith journey is. We are here with you.

MW: What I hear in what you've shared is that young people aren't problems to solve. They're gifts to the church as they are right now.



ETM: And that's where the theories of positive youth development (PYD) have really helped me articulate the concepts. These congregations were thriving, but couldn't fully say why exactly things were working. Yet they practiced the concept central to PYD theories—youth are assets to be developed, not problems to be managed. In our work at NG3, we try to help leaders be more aware of the impact their investments in youth will make. We show them the research and tell the stories so that they're encouraged that they're going down the right path. It's not always the results we've imagined, but that's precisely the work of the Holy Spirit saying follow me. It's like that passage in Luke 5 where the disciples are casting their nets over and over. That feeling of tiredness and discouragement as they keep working all night long with no results. They want to go home, and Jesus has the audacity to tell them to cast their nets again. They might mumble, "You grew up as a carpenter, Jesus. What do you know about fishing!" But that's faith. That's ministry. To be audacious and to respond to Jesus' audacious instructions. To say, "Okay, Lord, I've listened to your voice and to your invitation, so we'll keep casting our nets." And when their nets are full, it's because of their obedience and commitment. This is how I see renewal in the church. Yes, there are messes, and it's tiring, and it looks like nothing is working, but we keep listening to the Holy Spirit and asking, what's the next step?

MW: What a beautiful reminder that renewal is not something that happens overnight or by following the right steps. It's something that requires faith and obedience, to keep casting our nets.

ETM: Yes, and that's our approach at NG3 with our research and training. We don't have any special formulas. There aren't ten steps to a successful church or a secret recipe to bring in all the young people.

MW: Yes, all good research begins with humility. We don't know.

ETM: So let's go learn together! We don't know, because how can we claim to know? Life is constantly changing and evolving, so how can I claim as a pastor or leader that I've figured out what people need? In this new generation, there's the constant exhaustion of having to make decisions, and there's fatigue, isolation, and a hunger for direction. So as the church, how do we respond to this particular context and need? How do we offer direction and support and create spaces for young people to sort life's challenges out? This kind of support is irresistible. Because it goes back to our need for love. Young people are not an accessory to the church. They have so much to bring. I don't see anywhere in the Bible where spiritual gifts are limited based on a person's age. I could tell you so many stories from our work at NG3 where the young people taught their congregations important lessons in crucial, pivotal moments. They're the ones teaching us about how to take the next step forward in the church at large, and if we can honor that, amazing things will happen. But are we listening? ■

MICHAEL WRIGHT (MAT '12) is a writer and educator living in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

+ Wherever the River Flows, Paper Currents (at Doheny State Beach, California) by Young-Ly Hong Chandra. Mixed media on hanji, 2021. See more of Young-Ly Hong Chandra's art in the opening and closing covers and on pp. 3, 9, and 68–69.





Introducing Fuller Seminary's Sixth President, David Emmanuel Goatley

Fuller Seminary is proud to introduce David Emmanuel Goatley, an accomplished theologian, missiologist, and academic administrator, as the seminary's sixth president. The Board of Trustees unanimously selected Dr. Goatley from a considerable pool of highly qualified candidates, with enthusiastic confidence in his ability to lead the seminary into the future based on his impressive career that uniquely reflects Fuller's values and major fields of study, as well as his proven ability to execute strategic plans as a leader in both higher education and other organizations.

"I rejoice that the Lord has called me to join this community of theological education and vocational formation at Fuller Seminary. It is a distinct honor to be part of this family and to succeed distinguished predecessors in service as the sixth president," Goatley says. "Innovation and imagination are no strangers at Fuller, and I am thrilled to follow the Spirit's lead into a new era of teaching, learning, and serving the church and the world."

Prior to his appointment as president, Goatley served Duke Divinity School as the associate dean for academic and vocational formation, Ruth W. and A. Morris Williams Jr. Research Professor of Theology and Christian Ministry, and director of the Office of Black Church Studies. For nearly four decades he has served in leadership roles in organizations dedicated to justice advocacy, Christian mission, and global ecumenism. He earned his BS in Guidance and Counseling from the University of Louisville and holds two degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: an MDiv with an emphasis in pastoral care and counseling and a PhD in Theology.

A constructive theologian and globally recognized missiologist with a background in pastoral counseling, Goatley brings a unique blend of experience and expertise that aligns with Fuller's major disciplines of theology, missiology, and the psychological sciences. Having studied or worked in more than 35 countries, he brings a global perspective to his leadership and vision for Fuller, believing the gospel of the kingdom is truly good news and hope for all of the world, transcending politics, denominations, and single nations. For more than 20 years (1997–2018), he served as CEO of Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society, where he led the organization's efforts to sustain mission partnerships in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America. He is passionate about justice and advocacy as reflections of God's desire to offer flourishing to the whole creation. As such, he has been both a thought leader and an activist in addressing the issues of genocide, poverty, racism, hunger, and inequality, serving in leadership capacities for organizations including Kids Against Hunger, the Save Darfur Coalition, and the NAACP. Ordained in the National Baptist Convention, USA, he served as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Campbellville, Kentucky, for nine years (1986–1995).

"Blessed with an extraordinary collection of life experiences, healthy drive, innovative spirit, and relevant capabilities all seasoned with wisdom, Dr. Goatley brings a track record of building up diverse leaders for Jesus across the globe," says Santiago "Jimmy" Mellado, a Fuller trustee and chair of the Transition Discernment Team. "He stands uniquely prepared to further propel Fuller's mission right into the heart of the opportunity our present reality demands."

LEARN MORE ABOUT PRESIDENT GOATLEY AT [FULLER.EDU/PRESIDENT](https://fuller.edu/president)







Faithfully Forward: Fuller Celebrates 75 Years

For 75 years, Fuller Seminary has been a center for innovative theological training and world-class scholarship and a leading voice in the evangelical movement. This academic year, Fuller is celebrating this milestone anniversary, centered on the theme “Faithfully Forward.”

“Fuller Seminary at 75 years old remains vitally alive for the sake of the church and the world in the 21st century,” said Mark Labberton Fuller’s fifth president. “In the beauty and pain, hope and crises, love and division of these years, I am so thankful for Fuller’s distinctive contributions. As we celebrate God’s faithfulness toward us in the past and present, so we lean faithfully forward into our next 25 years.”

As part of this year’s 75th anniversary celebration, visitors to Fuller’s main campus in the Pasadena Playhouse Village District can enjoy a self-guided audio walking tour of the seminary’s historic buildings. Those interested in learning more about the history of Fuller can listen to a new podcast series, *FULLER curated: Faithfully Forward*, featuring sermons, speeches, and lectures drawn from the archives and spanning Fuller’s history. Merchandise bearing the 75th anniversary logo will be available for a limited time in the online Fuller Store. And a commissioned art installation by visual artist and Fuller alum Olga Lah will be in the foyer of Travis Auditorium for the entire academic year.

Chief Academic Officer Alexis Abernethy, who also serves as professor of psychology, says, “I am so thankful to the Lord for the work and ministry that he has accomplished through Fuller Seminary over the past 75 years. I am deeply grateful to the students, staff, faculty, administration, Board of Trustees, alumni, donors, and every friend of Fuller who have contributed to Fuller’s mission. As we continue in our work, we will build on the strength of our past and move forward to innovate for the future.”

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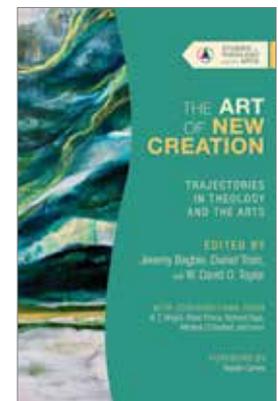
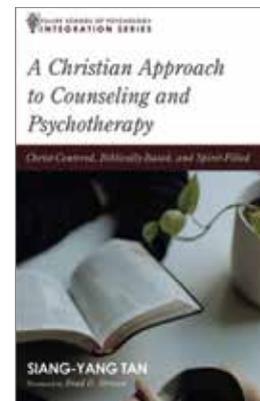
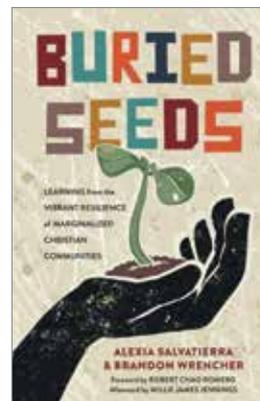
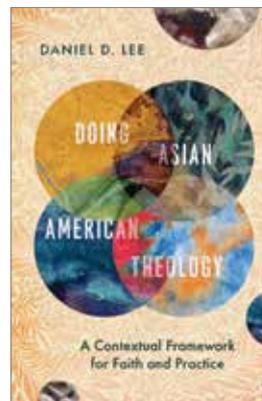
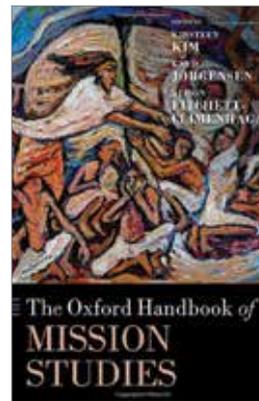
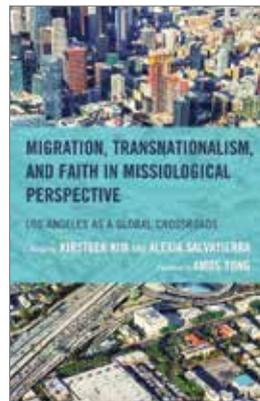
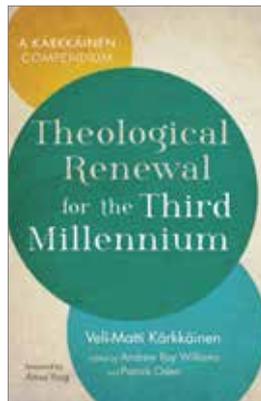
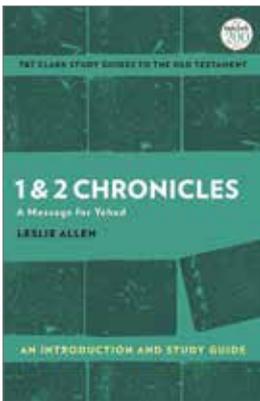
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Fuller Seminary is an evangelical, multi-denominational graduate institution committed to forming global leaders for kingdom vocations. Responding to changes in the church and world, Fuller is transforming the seminary experience for both traditional 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.

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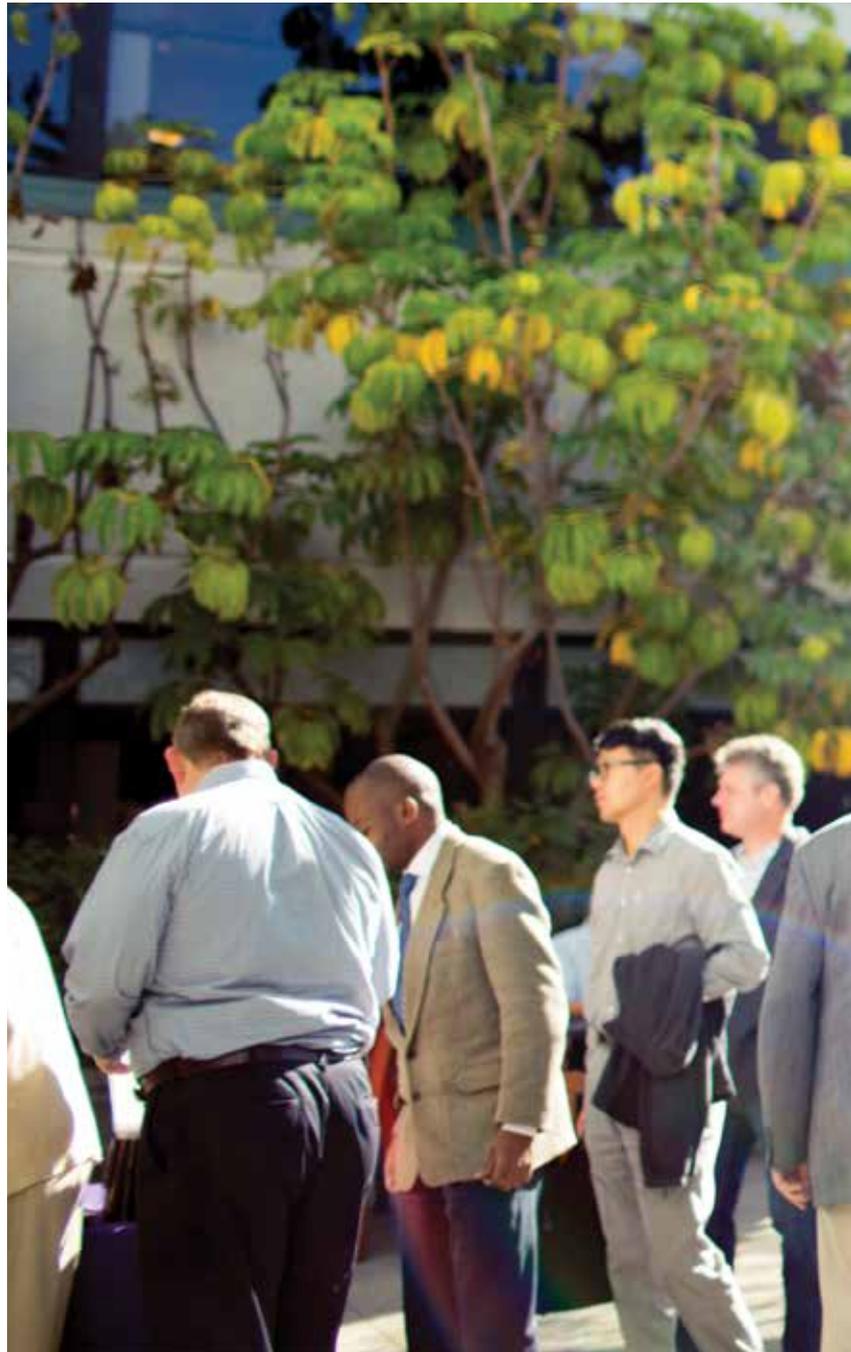
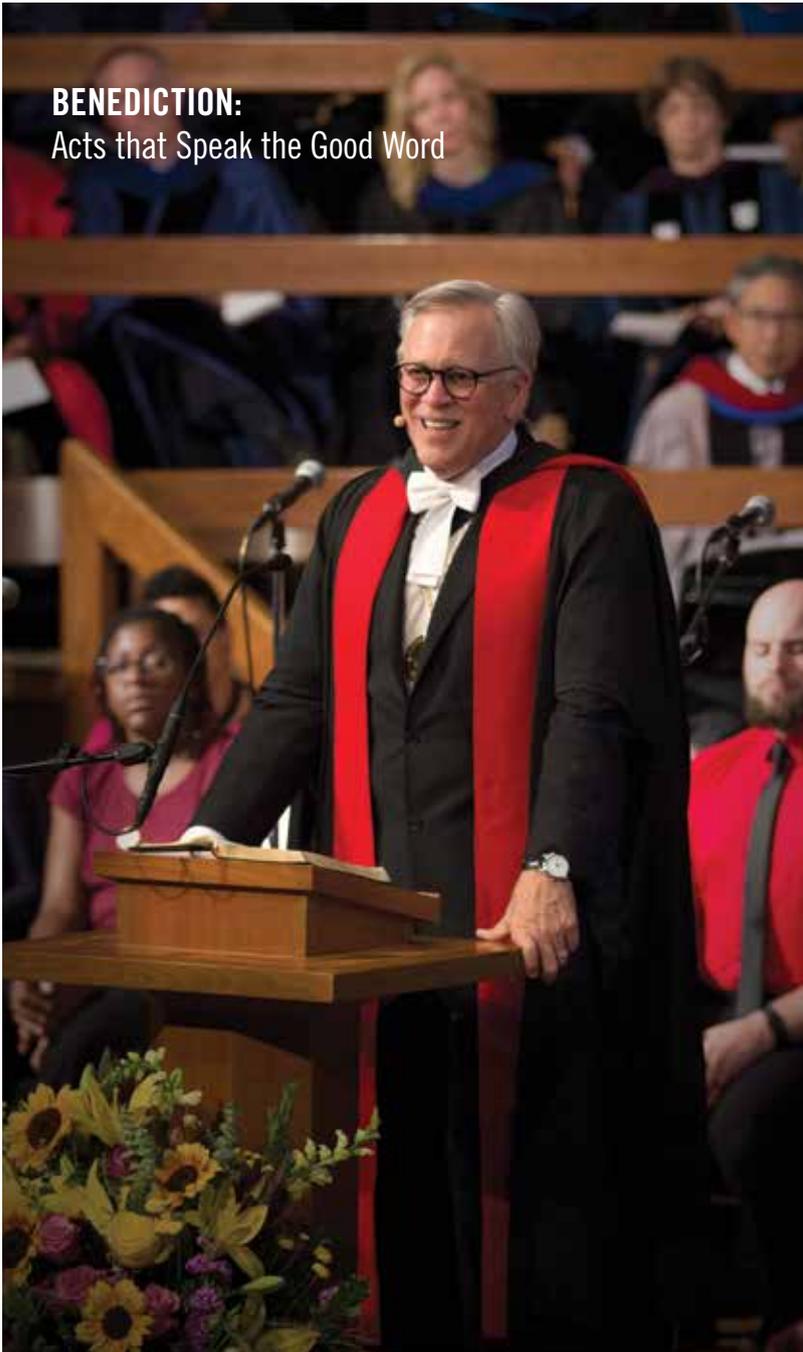


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BENEDICTION: Acts that Speak the Good Word



My first MDiv paper at Fuller was written in November 1976 for Robert Munger's course, Foundations of Christian Ministry (a perfect companion class to my opening quarter of Greek). It was a reflection paper on Psalm 116, and, of the many verses in it that have since shaped my life, verse 4 took hold of me most plainly: "Lord, I pray, save my life." I heard it as my most essential and comprehensive prayer. These brief words were a cry for the Lord's benediction then, and they remain so now at the close of my time as president, 46 years after I turned in that assignment.

I chose Fuller as a student because it was the most international and diverse seminary I could find and because its discussions at the time regarding the authority of the Bible were intrinsically valuable and superbly led. My experience did not disappoint as I compressed most of three years into two. I was changed by faculty and by students, and so encouraged by staff. Marc, from Reedley, California—via Juba, Sudan—taught me what it meant to see and love the truly other. Suzi, with significant impairment from cerebral palsy, taught me what vulnerability and courage could look like. The pre-lecture devotionals and prayers

of some professors led me into the presence of the God of mercy, truth, and power. Tim and Carroll saved my life at their Thanksgiving table. A TA named Dan rewrote my future as a pastor-theologian.

With an eagerness and passion to live eyes-wide-open, what followed has been a life of pastoral ministry, scholarship, discovery, mistakes, surprise, creativity, marriage, friendship, parenting, joy, pain, loss, listening, and beauty. All along, I kept stumbling forward as I felt my life enlarging and deepening while I learned so much more of what it meant to be a human, a disciple in community, a husband, a father, and a neighbor.

I returned to Fuller as a faculty member hired to teach preaching—while admitting that it wasn't my academic field, and that I wasn't sure there was a discipline called homiletics or that anyone could be taught to preach. Otherwise, it was a perfect fit. Nevertheless, I learned so much and thank God for the joy of those four years, which included launching the Ogilvie Institute of Preaching centered on the convergence of worship, preaching, and justice.



As the next surprise of being called to be Fuller's fifth president began to settle in, I discovered that what was known about this challenge was far less than what wasn't known about it. It became a role of exceptional honor in a season of unexplored rapids, sandy headwinds, and sludge. Things got challenging.

And yet, and yet, it seemed clear that God had Fuller in his hand. The task was to lean into any and all challenges possible and to learn to discern together what steps needed to be taken. The rapids became more familiar, the headwinds had less sand, and the sludge began to clear. Then it was possible to get down to the primary work at hand and make changes that were required. That is a far longer story than this space allows. The narrative has been one of progress and hope amidst fatigue, discouragement, reversals, as well as rapids and challenges that remain.

Leading Fuller is an immersion experience in God's grace amidst continuous change, vivid diversity, problem solving, deep scholarship, loving community, complex realities,

and faithful hope. But then, aren't these key ingredients for most Christian leadership? That is why Fuller exists.

Today's culture and church are thirsty—thirsty for a credible and embodied benediction, evidence the church testifies by its life that we are defined and filled by the God of love and forgiveness, new life and justice; thirsty for those who claim to be the people of God, who are set free from fear, idols, and abusive powers, and who seek that freedom for all who long for it; thirsty for a God-created human communion of people who, though unlike from one another, find their center in Christ and whose empathy, compassion, lament, and hope make Jesus visible. Lord, save me. Lord, save us.

Thank you, O Lord, and thank you, Fuller, for the privilege of a lifetime to serve as president of Fuller Theological Seminary. God's call now of David Emmanuel Goatley to be Fuller's sixth president is already a source of great joy and hope, an anticipatory benediction for Fuller's future.

✦ by Mark Labberton, Fuller Seminary's fifth president.



+ Paper River, Holy Communion (at Providence Mission Homes, Pasadena, California) by Young-Ly Hong Chandra. Mixed media on hanji, 2021. See more of Young-Ly Hong Chandra's art in the opening cover and on pp. 3, 9, 68–69, and 84–85.



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