

ISSUE #27 | HOPE AND HEALING

# FULLER

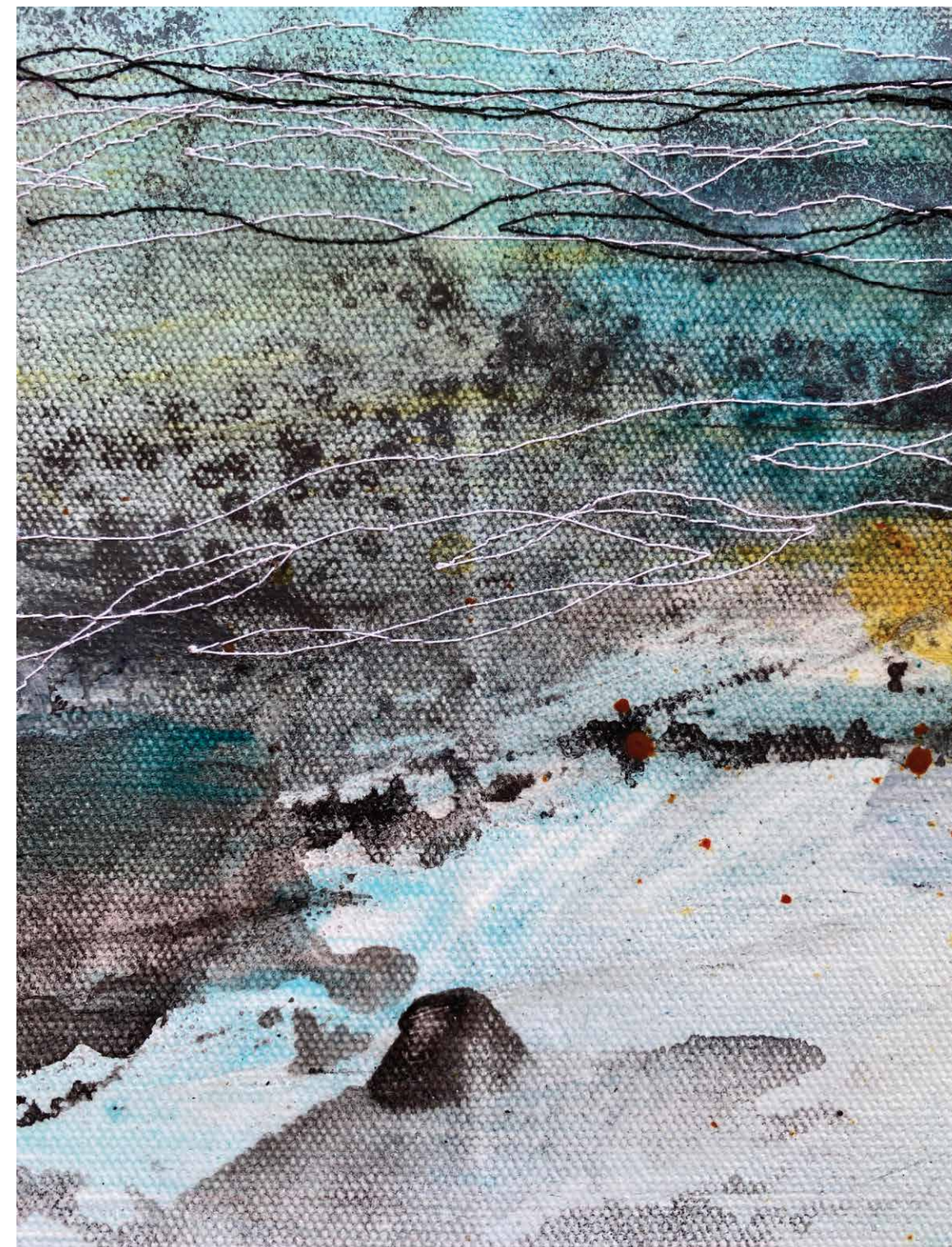


**STORY** Jarret Keith (pictured above) shares about encountering God in prison and his work of ministering to the incarcerated church *p. 22*

**SCHOLARSHIP** Faculty and staff reflect on Christ's ongoing work of bringing hope and healing to the church and to the world *p. 32*

**VOICE** Fuller professors explore the topics of theological education, Asian American well-being, and mature leadership *p. 74*





+ Common Prayer Thread 1 and Common Prayer Thread 5 by Claire Astra MacKenzie. Sumi ink, wood ash, acrylic, and thread on linen canvas, 2022.

Claire Astra MacKenzie is a multidisciplinary visual artist based in La Jolla, California. Claire received her BFA in Drawing and Painting from the University of Hawai'i and then continued graduate studies at Regent College where she explored the relationship between faith and art making. In 2022, Claire participated in Fuller's Brehm Residency and went on to

become the Artist in Residence at Catalyst Church Humboldt.

This issue of FULLER magazine features pieces from across Claire's portfolio. She writes of her work: "Growing up in a coastal desert climate, the ocean and desert are familiar and grounding themes in my work that offer endless wonder and symbolism. Life

with epilepsy limits ease of travel, so I am making peace with my home and the places my feet can take me. To my delight, this has opened up time to really look at the beauty and worlds of wonder in my day-to-day life.

The Common Thread Prayer series happened unexpectedly. I started with sumi ink that I hand

ground in lament as the war in Ukraine unfolded. Using the ink, ash from our wood stove, and paint, I began to create a single painting—a prayer for healing and an end to war. I imagined how many others love and grieve in isolation, so I ran stitches across the entire piece to symbolize our shared hearts, tears, and prayers. I then cut it into multiple pieces—beautiful small compositions that could be

held in our hands and shared. Each little canvas contains lament and hope and stitched reminders that we don't hold these things alone."

See more of Claire's art in the closing cover, this, pp. 10–11, 73, 92, and at [claireastra.com](http://claireastra.com).



# FULLER

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Jarret Keith by Eric Tai

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## + Editor's Note

One of the great gifts of putting *FULLER* magazine together is this: to hear and receive the stories of Fuller alumni doing remarkable things for Christ and his kingdom worldwide. Over the years that I've been a part of this team, I've had the privilege of speaking with faithful women and men engaged in Spirit-led work in countless corners of creation and culture. We've shared stories of ministry and work happening in churches, therapy rooms, non-profits, schools, hospitals, coffee shops, general stores, and everything in between—some are included in this very issue. It is both humbling and inspiring to remember these stories represent only a fraction of the stories that have sprung from Fuller's community throughout its history.

Since Fuller's founding in 1947, the seminary has striven to send into the world Christian leaders committed to living out Christ's gospel—to carrying the hope and healing of Christ to the church and to the world.

In this issue of *FULLER* magazine, we consider together what this means for us today. Our alumni profiles feature Mark Finney, Jarret Keith, Raul Sandoval, and Jessica Smedley, who join in God's hopeful and healing work through refugee ministry and relief, advocacy for the incarcerated church, love for the local neighborhood, and mental health services for the Black community. Articles by Jennifer Ackerman, Andrea Cammarota, Cynthia Eriksson, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Kyong-Jin Lee, Wayne Park, and Amos Yong explore hope and healing in theological education, missiology, therapy, psychology, preaching, creation care, and more. And interviews with Jessica ChenFeng, Oscar García-Johnson, Daniel D. Lee, and David Wang provide essential wisdom on hope and healing among Asian American communities, cultivating mature pastoral leadership in a world rife with church hurt, and the history and future of theological education around the globe.

We hope these pages celebrate, encourage, challenge, educate, and inspire you in your own journey of sharing God's hope and healing in our church and our world.



**JEROME BLANCO**  
Editor in Chief



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## All Shall Be Well

David Emmanuel Goatley, President

In 1964, the award-winning musical group The Temptations released “My Girl,” the single that became their first number-one hit. The upbeat love song, which includes lyrics like, “I’ve got so much honey the bees envy me. I’ve got a sweeter song than the birds in the tree,” begins with the memorable line, “I’ve got sunshine on a cloudy day.”

I know people, on the contrary, who can find the cloud on a sunny day.

The prevalence of cynicism, sarcasm, and skepticism can make you sad and make you sick. Prophets of doom and purveyors’ gloom seem abundant. They echo the sentiment that Buck Owens and Roy Clark sang about: “Gloom, despair, and agony on me.”

If not careful, even followers of Jesus can find themselves in a ditch of desolation. We are not, however, destined for despondency. We are not obligated to follow the death

march of the world. We have instead an invitation to go in a very different direction.

Our alternative is not grounded in a rationale that is understandable to many. It is grounded in the gospel—the good news—that Christ is risen! He is risen indeed.

Living in the power of the resurrection leads disciples of Jesus to engage with the world and bless others in various ways. We can impact people with Christ’s transforming

love, which helps address spiritual, mental, physical, and social needs, and more.

The contributors to this volume share insight into how believers can exemplify hope and healing when living in the power of the risen Lord. While some people focus on what is wrong in the world, people of faith in Christ live with such confidence that they can join with Julian of Norwich in saying: “All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.” ■

## Todo acabará bien

David Emmanuel Goatley, Presidente

En 1964, el galardonado grupo musical *The Temptations* lanzó “*My Girl*” (“*Mi chica*”), el sencillo que se convirtió en su primer éxito número 1. La alegre canción de amor, que incluye letras como “Tengo tanta miel que las abejas me envidian. Tengo una canción más dulce que los pájaros en el árbol,” comienza con la inolvidable línea, “Tengo sol en un día nublado.”

Por el contrario, conozco personas que pueden encontrar la nube en un día soleado.

La prevalencia del cinismo, el sarcasmo y el escepticismo puede entristecerte y enfermarte. Los profetas del desastre y los difusores del pesimismo parecen abundar. Reflejan el sentimiento sobre el cual cantaron Buck Owens y Roy Clark: “La tristeza, desesperanza y agonía están sobre mí.”

Si no tenemos cuidado, incluso los seguidores de Jesús pueden encontrarse en una zanja de desolación. Sin embargo, no estamos destinados al desánimo. No estamos obligados a seguir la procesión fúnebre del mundo. Tenemos, en cambio,

una invitación para ir en una dirección muy distinta.

Nuestra alternativa no se basa en un razonamiento comprensible para muchos. Está fundamentada en el evangelio, la buena noticia, de que ¡Cristo ha resucitado! ¡En verdad ha resucitado!

Vivir en el poder de la resurrección lleva a los discípulos de Jesús a interactuar con el mundo y bendecir a otros de diversas maneras. Podemos impactar a las personas con el amor transformador de Cristo, que ayuda a

atender las necesidades espirituales, mentales, físicas y sociales, entre otras.

Los colaboradores de este volumen comparten perspectivas sobre cómo los creyentes pueden ejemplificar esperanza y sanación cuando viven en el poder del Señor resucitado. Mientras algunas personas se centran en lo que está mal en el mundo, las personas que tienen su fe en Cristo viven con tanta confianza que pueden unirse a Julian de Norwich al decir: “Todo acabará bien, y cualquier cosa, sea cual sea, acabará bien.” ■

## 모든 것이 잘 될 것입니다

데이비드 엠마누엘 고틀리, 총장 (David Emmanuel Goatley)

1964년, 수상 경력에 빛나는 뮤지컬 그룹 더 템테이션스는 첫 번째 히트곡이 된 싱글 ‘마이 걸’을 발표했습니다. “난 벌들이 부러워할 만큼 꿀이 많아. 나무 위의 새들보다 더 달콤한 노래가 있어...”라는 가사가 인상적인 이 곡은 “흐린 날에도 햇빛이 있어”라는 기억에 남는 대사로 시작됩니다.

하지만 반대로 전 화창한 날에도 구름을 찾을 수 있는 사람들을 알고 있습니다.

냉소주의, 비꼬는 말, 회의론이 만연하면

슬프고 병이 날 수 있습니다.

파멸의 예언자들과 우울함을 전하는 사람들은 넘쳐납니다. Buck Owens 와 Roy Clark이 노래한 정서를 반영합니다: “우울, 절망, 고통이 나를 덮치네...”

조심하지 않으면 예수님을 따르는 사람들도 황폐의 도랑에 빠질 수 있습니다. 그러나 우리는 낙담할 운명이 아닙니다. 우리는 세상의 죽음의 행진을 따라야 할 의무가 없습니다. 그 대신 우리는 매우 다른 방향으로

나아가라는 초대를 받았습니다.

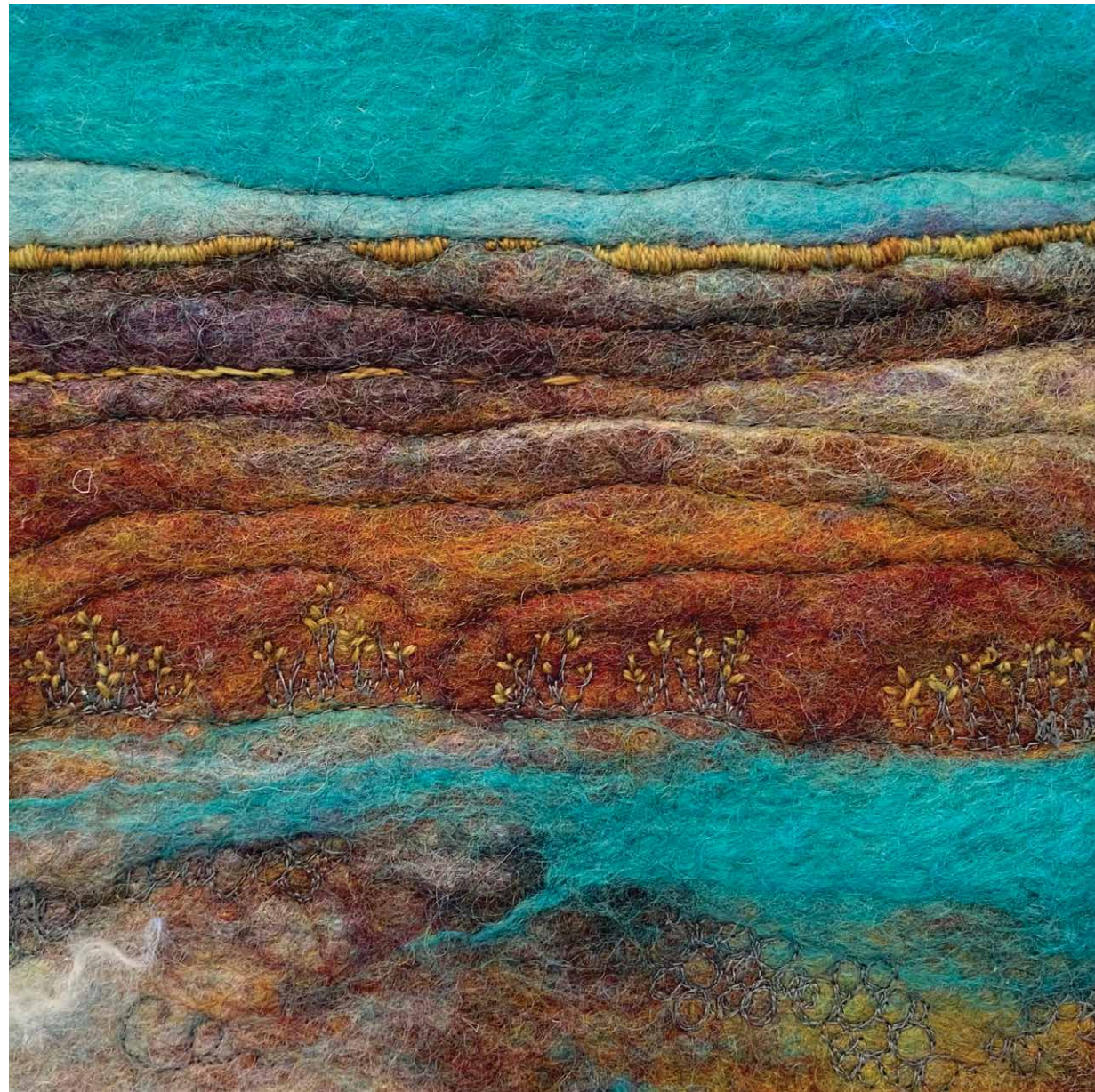
우리의 대안은 많은 사람이 이해할 수 있는 이론에 근거하지 않습니다. 그것은 그리스도께서 부활하셨다는 복음, 즉 좋은 소식에 근거합니다!

부활의 능력으로 사는 삶은 예수님의 제자들이 세상과 소통하고 다양한 방식으로 다른 사람들을 축복하도록 이끕니다. 우리는 영적, 정신적, 육체적, 사회적 필요 등을 해결하는 데 도움이 되는 그리스도의

변화시키는 사랑으로 사람들에게 영향을 줄 수 있습니다.

이 글의 기고자들은 부활하신 주님의 능력 안에서 살아갈 때 신자들이 어떻게 희망과 치유의 모범을 보일 수 있는지에 대한 통찰을 공유합니다. 어떤 사람들은 세상의 잘못된 것들에 초점을 맞추지만, 그리스도를 믿는 사람들은 Norwich의 Julian과 함께 이렇게 말할 수 있을 만큼 자신감을 가지고 살아갑니다: “모든 것이 잘 될 것이며, 모든 일이 잘 될 것입니다.” ■





+ Little Streams in the Desert by Claire Astra MacKenzie. Wet felted wool, machine and hand stitched, 2022.



+ Still Tide by Claire Astra MacKenzie. Wet felted wool, machine and hand stitched, 2022. See more of Claire Astra MacKenzie's art in the opening and closing covers, and on pp. 73 and 92.



# WHEN REFUGEES THRIVE, WE ALL THRIVE

Through the work of his Spokane-based nonprofit, Mark Finney desires to see refugees and their communities flourish.

Written by LIZ COOLEGGE JENKINS  
Photographed by JOHN HARRISON

Shortly after Mark Finney (MDiv '08, PhD '17) began working as a refugee resettlement specialist in Spokane, Washington in 2016, the director of his office left unexpectedly. This happened right as hundreds of new refugees were arriving in the area, terrified by the anti-Muslim and anti-refugee rhetoric they were hearing from the highest offices of the US government. "We need to do something," Mark thought. He wanted to show refugees that they were safe and welcome in the community. So, he called people he knew in ministry and gathered a group of several dozen local pastors. Just one week later, Mark tells me, "Over a thousand people gathered at Gonzaga University," rallying to stand in solidarity with refugees.

Mark describes the moment as a "huge milestone in the history of our community." He explains that welcoming refugees is good both for the refugees and also for the preexisting community that welcomes them. "When the immigrants in a community thrive," Mark reflects, "it spills over." Refugees have so much to add to the communities they join, and Mark wants to see them empowered to thrive in their new homes. He wants refugees to be able to "buy a home, send their kids to college, start their own businesses, bring their food, bring their culture, bring their ideas, make this place better."

This vision of refugees' holistic thriving, interconnected with the thriving of the broader community, led Mark in 2021 to found





Thrive International—a local Spokane-based nonprofit serving refugees. Their motto: *Together, we thrive.*

Raised in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho—as a white kid growing up in a rural, predominantly white community and a public high school graduating class of 19 students—Mark did not always have a passion for building multicultural communities centered on refugees' thriving. It is a calling that has taken shape over many years—and particularly through his experiences at Fuller.

While Mark and his wife were studying at Fuller, they lived for six years in a mostly Hispanic neighborhood in Northeast Pasadena, in Fuller's Madison Square intentional community. Their neighbors were fellow Fuller students from Korea, China, and the Central African Republic. "It really was a microcosm," Mark

reflects, "of the whole planet and the whole kingdom of God." This experience of multicultural community was deeply formative for Mark. "It shaped me," he says, "to think about things in a much broader perspective than what I inherited growing up in rural white America."

## ONE FORMER REFUGEE TOLD HIM THIS: "CHRISTIANITY WORKS BEST NOT WHEN IT'S ENDORSED BY AN ORGANIZATION BUT WHEN IT'S EMBODIED BY PEOPLE."

After graduating with his MDiv in 2008, Mark was awarded the Parish Pulpit Fellowship and spent a year in Thailand serving alongside missionaries who were doing holistic justice

work. During this time, he served as an interim pastor for a bilingual church composed of people who spoke eight different first languages. "The church met in a hotel banquet room in the heart of a huge red light district, worshiping Jesus together in an incredible multicultural community." It was "pretty unconven-

tional," he says—and "a beautiful place to see God's Spirit at work."

Mark kept these experiences in mind when he and his family moved to Spokane a few years later. Newly arrived in the area, he "prayed and looked around at the needs in the city," and he saw that "not many churches were intentionally multicultural or multilingual communities." This was the kind of community he wanted to be a part of, the kind he wanted to help build. He worked briefly as a church planter and then for several years in refugee resettlement at a large, national Christian humanitarian organization before he finally founded Thrive.

From its very beginnings, Thrive has stretched and deepened Mark's faith—often in unexpected ways. When Mark first set out, he imagined he would found a faith-based organization. After all, his background was in Christian ministry, Christian seminary education, and Christian nonprofit leadership, and his faith was the reason he wanted to help welcome refugees into the local community. But then he sought guidance from several mentors—particularly people who had been refugees themselves.



One former refugee told him this: "Christianity works best not when it's endorsed by an organization but when it's embodied by people." This woman helped Mark understand that "for people who've been traumatized, excluded, or oppressed, they're very, very sensitive to any other forms of oppression or injustice." Refugees might be suspicious of a religious organization's motives. "They'll be wondering," she said, "if you're serving them because you care or because you're trying to make an impression for them to join you."

This conversation surfaced profound questions for Mark. As he considered

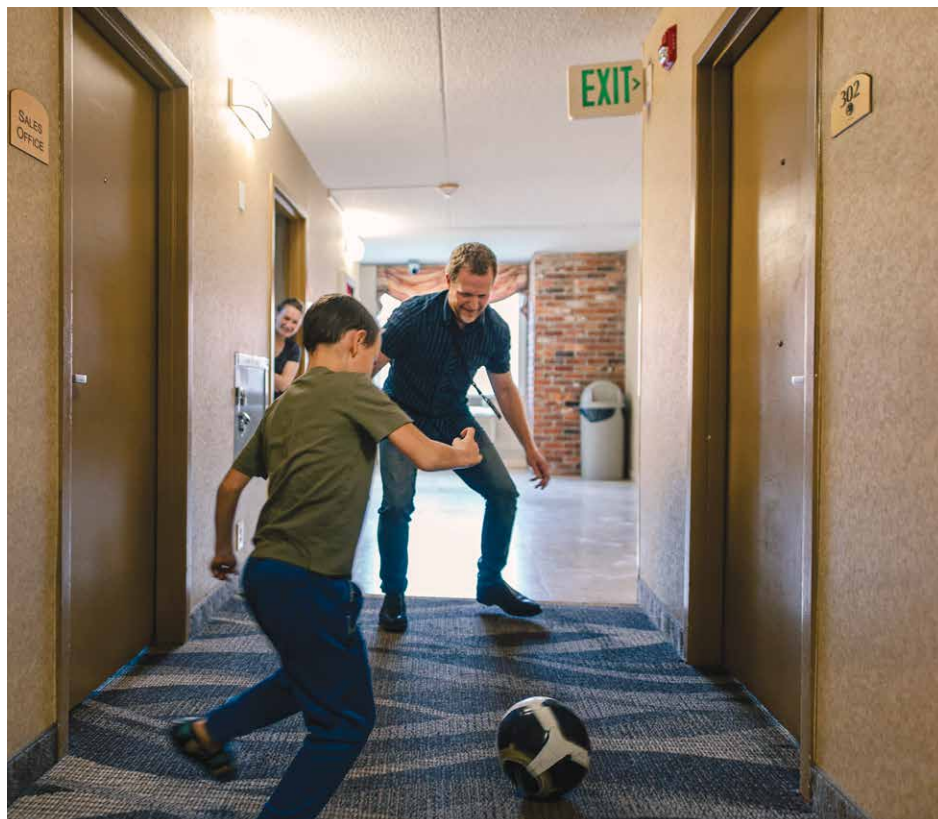
whether to start a faith-based nonprofit or a secular one, he wondered, "What works best as a witness for the gospel?" and, "Which approach requires me to operate with the most faith?"

didn't need to try to control the future direction of the organization. He says, "I needed to start something and trust that if it's God's work, then God can maintain it."

## "I NEEDED TO START SOMETHING AND TRUST THAT IF IT'S GOD'S WORK, THEN GOD CAN MAINTAIN IT."

Mark realized he didn't need staff to share his faith commitments or sign off on any particular belief statements. He

Thrive's work focuses on three areas: housing, programs for women, and programs for youth. These were the

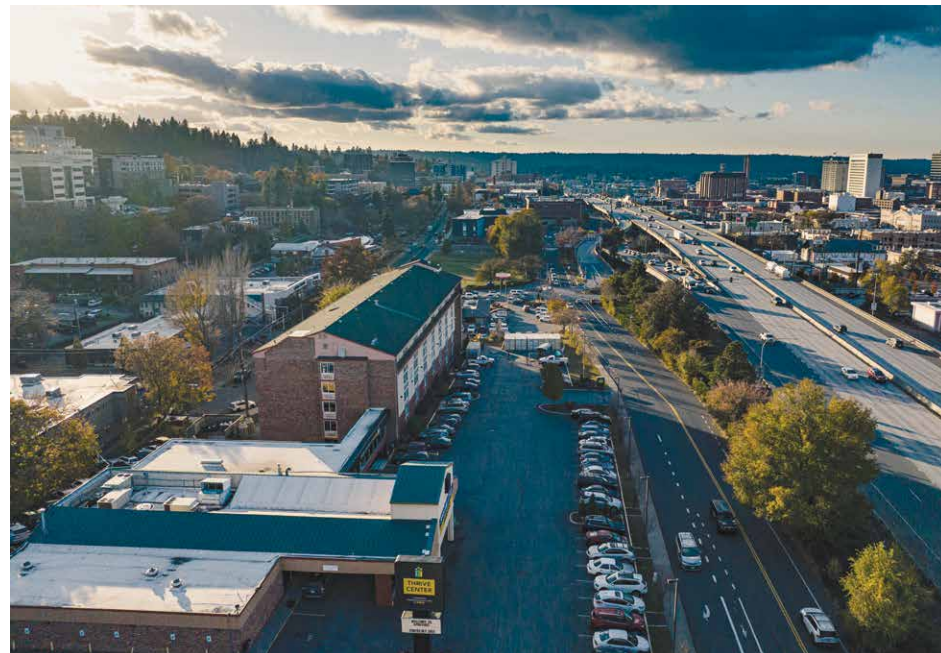




most pressing needs Mark saw among refugees who recently arrived in the Spokane area.

Around the time Mark was starting Thrive, Russia invaded Ukraine, displacing millions of people. And the need for affordable housing for refugees was enormous. Mark knew the owners of a hotel that had closed down, and Thrive quickly repurposed the fully furnished building to house about two hundred refugees. This became the Thrive Center, a “combination of transitional affordable housing and a multicultural community center.”

Some days at the Thrive Center, there is on-site health care. Other days, local public libraries come in and offer educational programs. On Fridays, a volunteer teaches a Zumba class for women. Thrive also partners with the local YMCA to offer free gym access for youth every Thursday night, and they partner with a nearby church that lets



them use their parking lot for driving classes for women.

Through all of these services, the goal is to build thriving multicultural communities. Mark wants to help refugees “see themselves as part of a story of flourishing and hope,” and he wants to help non-refugees see their communities and cities as “stories of

diversity, community, and interdependence.” As we reshape the stories we tell ourselves, he says, we reshape our communities.

In this work of reshaping stories, Mark’s role is often that of a listener. “I try really hard to make sure that, as a leader, the thing I do best is listen,” he says. “There are so many things I don’t know and don’t understand.” As a self-described “white guy in a multicultural space,” Mark tells me, he is always learning, always seeking to empower others to take the lead. He says, “I have to make sure the folks who best understand the situations are the ones making the decisions.”

Mark loves that much of his work involves supporting a deeply multicultural team. Thrive’s women’s programs, for example, are staffed by two women who are refugees themselves. And Thrive’s youth program leader came to the US as a teenage refugee from South Sudan many years ago. The youth leader’s passion for his work comes from his own refugee experience; he remembers what made life difficult in a new place, and he wants to make that experience better for others. At Thrive, he gets to do exactly that—for hundreds of other teens in the position he was once in. Mark feels honored to be able to support these leaders in their work.



Ultimately, through the affordable housing, women’s programs, and youth programs that Thrive offers, Mark hopes to see refugees empowered. He wants to see them have space to be creative. “God is a creator,” Mark explains, and since humans reflect God’s image, we are meant to be creators too. “Whether art or music or business or agriculture,” Mark continues, “whatever it is, we are meant to be generative.” In Mark’s vision of human flourishing, creativity overflows in abundance. “Creators make enough to share,” he says. “Jesus always had leftovers.”

Mark finds himself thinking often of Jeremiah 29, written to God’s people during exile. “They are refugees in their day,” Mark tells me, “struggling with being oppressed in a foreign culture.” Even in this context—perhaps especially in this context—God doesn’t

just want them to survive; God wants them to thrive. God says, as Mark paraphrases it, “I want you to build homes, plant gardens, get married, have kids—I

nonprofit is not an explicitly faith-based organization, but his work, and his approach to it, is deeply formed by his belief in a God who wants us all to

## WITHOUT REFUGEES AND OTHER IMMIGRANTS THRIVING, HE SAYS, “WE CANNOT ACHIEVE OUR FULLNESS AS A COMMUNITY.”

want you to thrive and seek the thriving of the city to which you are called. Because if it thrives, you will thrive too.”

To Mark, this is what it means to seek the shalom of his city (Jer 29:7). Without refugees and other immigrants thriving, he says, “we cannot achieve our fullness as a community.” Mark’s

flourish. From Pasadena to Thailand to Spokane, Mark has seen—and believes—that, together, we thrive. ■

**LIZ COOLEGGE JENKINS** is a Seattle-based writer and the author of *Nice Churchy Patriarchy: Reclaiming Women’s Humanity from Evangelicalism*.

**JOHN HARRISON** is a documentary filmmaker and photographer based in Spokane, Washington. See more of his work at [blueskyhill.com](http://blueskyhill.com).







## LIBERATED, EMPOWERED, WHOLE

As she provides therapy for her clients and creates resources on mental health, psychologist Jessica Smedley forms safe and empowering spaces for the Black community.

Written by JOY NETANYA THOMPSON

Photographed by KARLEY CARRILLO

It's common for psychologists and therapists to advertise their services on directories like Psychology Today. But Dr. Jessica Smedley (PsyD '15), who owns a private practice and consulting company in Washington DC, chooses to only advertise on Therapy for Black Girls. "I really support their mission," she says, which is to provide resources and therapeutic spaces to aid Black women and girls in tending to their mental health, a focus of Jessica's work as well.

"Black girls tend to have a specific social and emotional experience based on racial and/or ethnic backgrounds," Jessica writes on her blog, *Dr. Jess on Black Stress*. "Black women are powerful and resilient beyond measure but also need space to process emotions, pain, insecurities, and other vulnerabilities." She adds that many of the issues Black women and men face have been passed down through generations, and oftentimes it takes a Black therapist or psychologist to help navigate the complexities of the Black experience and generational or racial trauma.

Jessica had only just started her own independent practice when the pandemic hit, and shortly after, the murder of George Floyd added more grief, stress, and trauma to communities of color. "People were triggered and upset and sad about all the things happening in the news," she remembers. "It felt like unending trauma."

*The history of Black trauma is immeasurable. . . . It is imperative that this current generation engage in deep, intentional self-care to discontinue this long line of trauma in our veins. Therapy, with a Black professional (or other humble, culturally competent therapist) who is well-versed in trauma in the Black experience, is a very intentional way of healing these patterns. It takes work*

*and energy to break down the barriers of carrying the weight of the past and creating new family "rules" going forward. It may feel scary and unsettling to break away from the familiar way that family handles (or avoids) problems, but it is essential to give hope to the future generations.*

— from "The Weight of Generational Trauma" on the *Dr. Jess on Black Stress* blog

In her private practice, Jessica validates her clients' experiences and trauma and points out the way they "inform literally everything, from our relationships, our work styles, and how we show up in the world, to our self-image, self-esteem, and how we cope with stress." In her work with clients, she says, she tries to "emphasize the importance of tools and self-advocacy and having positive outlets, where historically we either didn't have access, or it wasn't a thing, or it was looked down upon."

Over time, she helps her clients to understand their own thought processes that may be "unintentionally harmful or filled with doubt because of not being able to advocate for themselves during childhood." She teaches them the skills they need "to set boundaries, to say no, to figure out healthier routines that reduce the feeling that you have to always wear the cape and be the savior for your family—I see a lot of that," she says. She knows their joint work is paying off when clients come in and share things like, "Wow, I never thought that journaling would help me know how I feel and what I want to do to address it," or "It felt really good to set a boundary and not feel bad about it," or "I really am gaining a better understanding of what it feels like to make myself and my needs more of a priority."





“At the end of the day,” says Jessica, “it’s really about trying to instill the importance of unapologetic self-advocacy” in her clients.

*As Black people, we have been socialized to not only try and stay safe, but to generally keep white people comfortable. Self-care for Black people requires pushing the envelope as we must challenge ourselves to speak up and place our emotions, needs, and boundaries into the atmosphere, without worrying what others will think. We must challenge past generational patterns of not speaking up and sweeping hard topics under the rug. We must learn that it is okay to take the well-earned time off that we have earned on our jobs. We must learn to first be attuned to our bodies to know that we need more sleep, stretching, or exercise. Black people have a long history of “pushing through” or being in “superwoman/man” mode, only to overlook chronic illness, jeopardize relationships, or have unrealistic expectations of themselves.*

*In all instances, we must challenge ourselves to acknowledge our humanity and go deeper with our self-care efforts.*

—from “Unapologetic Self-Care” on the Dr. Jess on Black Stress blog

As a Black woman, Jessica believes she can create a safe space in the virtual therapy room for her Black clients. For sale in her website’s merchandise section are T-shirts, hoodies, and pillows bearing the slogans “Black Therapists Matter” or “Black Psychologists Matter,” highlighting Jessica’s philosophy that Black therapists can uniquely offer a sense of safety for their Black clients.

For her own practice, Jessica says, “I think that my clients feel that the therapy room is a space where there is no judgment, where they don’t have to be filtered.” She can also provide cultural safety for her clients, where “a lot of times pop culture comes up or maybe a joke or a saying within the Black community.” That common background,

Jessica says, hopefully leads to clients feeling like “they can bring their whole selves into the virtual therapy room.”

She has also used her experience and background, along with her research that started when she was a student at Fuller working in Dr. Cynthia Eriksson’s trauma-focused research lab, to create resources for Black individuals and groups to use outside of therapy. Jessica has created three guided journals—*Dear Black Girl: Essential Guided Reflections to Celebrate You*; *Reclaiming Our Space: A Devotional Journal for the Black Woman of Faith*; and *Reflect, Process, Heal: A Guided Journal to Explore Generational Trauma*—and she recently coauthored *Before the Broom: A Premarital Workbook for Dating, Engaged, and Newly Married African-American Couples*.

Making such resources available outside of a traditional therapy relationship is important to Jessica because, as she notes, “access still feels like such a huge

issue; it feels like a barrier.” One of the reasons for that is how insurance often doesn’t cover or only partially covers therapy. She also points out that communities of color are less likely to have quality health insurance. For her part, Jessica makes a point to take insurance. She says, “Many people can’t afford a \$200 therapy session. Some can, which is fine, but many can’t. So if I really want to give access to people who look like me, I have to be paneled with at least one of the major health insurance options in my area.” Additionally, she has written a practical, step-by-step guide for finding a therapist, titled “Therapist Shopping While Black,” on her blog.

Jessica also thinks about access for Black people who desire to enter the field of psychology, pointing out that only four to five percent of psychologists are Black. “In the community environment where I grew up, I didn’t really know therapy was a thing until much later, around college,” she shares. “Just looking at the history of access to higher

education in addition to the stigma around mental health in Black communities, and the field of psychology not being something that’s encouraged at younger ages in urban neighborhoods . . . that is another barrier on the professional side that impacts access to treatment for communities of color.”

## JESSICA ALSO THINKS ABOUT ACCESS FOR BLACK PEOPLE WHO DESIRE TO ENTER THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY, POINTING OUT THAT ONLY FOUR TO FIVE PERCENT OF PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE BLACK.

Jessica says she keeps these barriers and issues of access in the back of her mind as she forges ahead in her career as a psychologist, as well as in her adjunct teaching position in the counseling

psychology PhD program at Howard University. She’s also recently taken on leadership roles where she can make meaningful changes at a higher level, serving as the newly elected president of the DC Psychological Association for 2024, and the appointed chair of the Advocacy Coordinating Committee

for the American Psychological Association (APA) for 2024. “It’s humbling,” she says of her leadership roles and representing her peers in the field. “It’s a powerful experience, and feels like I’m making an impact and giving back to the field in an important way.”

Less than a decade into her career as a psychologist, Jessica Smedley has already been making great strides in providing therapy and resources to the Black community with her particular blend of compassion, clinical expertise, and cultural insights. When asked what she wants her legacy to be, she pauses and thinks for a while before sharing, “I want people to say that Dr. Smedley was known for her faith, for her heart for people, and for wanting the Black community to feel more liberated, empowered, and whole.”

She’s well on her way. ■

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## COMING HOME

Drawing from his own testimony of encountering God's transforming hope in prison, Jarret Keith engages in the crucial work of reentry discipleship and ministry to the incarcerated church.

Written by **YOLANDA MILLER**  
 Photographed by **ERIC TAI**

Jarret Keith (MAT '21) remembers his first day of class at Fuller vividly: Dr. Roberta King began class by announcing, "I have a surprise for you today. I bet you have never met anyone who was sentenced to life in prison before."

Jarret, recently released from prison, felt his heart sink. How could his professor have possibly known about his past? Who would have told her? To his surprise, Dr. King motioned to a woman sitting up front and introduced her as Linda Barkman, a fellow Fuller student who had been incarcerated for 30 years, and who would be the class's TA. At that moment, Jarret knew God had him in the right place.

When talking with Jarret—husband and father of two, cofounder of Testimony Ministries, and outreach pastor at Renew Church LA—it's difficult to imagine him behind bars. He makes one feel at home with his quick wit, gentle spirit, and warm-hearted, pastoral presence. But Jarret will be the first to tell you that he was not always like this.

Growing up in a rough neighborhood full of drugs, gangs, and poverty was challenging enough, but Jarret's biggest struggle was with himself. His tan skin reflects his half-Mexican and one-eighth Native American heritage, but the implicit message in his childhood was that it was more valuable to be white. "My dad presents as fully white: he is tall, has blue eyes and very fair skin. So I compared myself to my dad and realized I'd never be able to live up to that ideal version of a human," shares Jarret. "I had a lot of social confusion, a lot of social tension, and just a lot of self-confusion. I grew up seeing these limitations of who and what I could become, and I felt disempowered and hopeless about life, but I didn't know how to process all of this

as a kid." His confusion and shame grew into anger, and the internal turmoil led him to the pathways of crime that were prevalent in his community. When he was 19 years old, he was incarcerated and sentenced to life in prison.

"I became very depressed," Jarret recalls. "The message was, 'You're no good. You're worthless. You don't have value in society. Society is better off without you. You're irredeemable, and everyone—including yourself—is better off if you're incarcerated.' From the life that I had lived up until that point, it made sense."

Surprisingly, hope arrived in the form of "two old white dudes"—as Jarret puts it. The picture Jarret paints of their weekly chapel service is almost comical: "They came every week and did the same thing every time. They shared their testimony and sang songs out of an old hardback hymnal. It was me and maybe five or six other guys who couldn't relate to anything they were saying or the songs we were singing with mediocre, terrible voices. It was a crazy dynamic."

Yet the Holy Spirit worked through these weekly encounters, to the point where Jarret found himself humming the tunes throughout the week and eventually, one night, falling to his knees, crying out to God for a fresh start, and surrendering his life to Jesus. He reflects on his journey to an authentic relationship with God: "When I look back, it wasn't even the singing or anything they said. It was this space they created just by being present—it created a sense of freedom that displayed the gospel. It felt like, when I was in that room, I didn't have to worry about a fight breaking out. I didn't have to worry about looking tough. I could take a breath, relax, be me. And then, when the hour was over, I'd put the shell back on and head back. They created a





space where I could begin to taste what it would be like to be free. That's what God used to show me he was the key to hope and redemption and freedom. For the first time since I was a kid, I had hope."

Slowly, Jarret's transformation began to unfold. He got "duped" into playing music for the worship services, since

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the two men leading them were the only people who would teach him to play the guitar. He started reading the Bible and praying, learning how to mend relationships, and attending school. He went on to become the first person in his family to graduate from college, completing two associate's degrees in prison. He also became certified as a substance use disorder counselor, developing and leading workshops which continue to be used inside California state prisons today.

After 15 years, policy reforms addressing excessive prosecution and sentencing created an opportunity for Jarret to return to the community based on his exemplary testimony and demonstrated rehabilitation efforts. When he was released, he had plans to move up the ranks in a career as a counselor, but he began to feel a divine restlessness.

One day, he came across an old and untouched application to Fuller that he'd had through a special three-year program he'd completed in prison called the Urban Ministry Institute. He struck a deal with God and said, "OK, I'll apply. If you're calling me to something else

besides counseling and open the door, I'll go through it. But if you're not, leave me alone!"

Sure enough, he was accepted, and after his startling introduction to Fuller by Dr. King, there was no doubt in his mind that God was orchestrating something in his life.

As Jarret progressed in his studies at Fuller and continued to be deeply involved in justice reform work, he noticed a painful dichotomy: While he appreciated the constant dialogue about theology and its implications in his Fuller classes, he did not see those conversations leading to any practical



actions impacting the communities in which he worked. Conversely, while he found his work in criminal justice reform and social justice spaces profoundly satisfying, those spaces were often dismissive of—even hostile to—anything faith-related, even though Jarret considered his Christian faith central to his work. Churches balked at his attempts to help returning citizens integrate into their congregations, while the coalition and prisons rejected his attempts to integrate even ecumenical faith into his programs, even though he demonstrated that 80 percent of the prisoners in his caseload indicated they had a Christian faith that helped them survive on the inside.

"I was finding churches knew very little to nothing about incarcerated people who are coming home," laments Jarret. "They didn't know how to serve them or what to do with them. But so many of them had been serving, leading, even pastoring, in the church in prison, which I refer to as 'the incarcerated church.'" When these believers finally gain their freedom, they lose their faith communities and the opportunities to be and serve the body of Christ.

Jarret says, "On the day you leave prison, that community gets stripped away, and you're out on your own. Your identity is gone, your community is gone, your purpose is gone. Nobody knows how to relate to you and there's very little opportunity to serve in the churches, even if you're really serious about your faith and have had faith play a major role in your life for years. So returning citizens really long for that community but are unable to recreate it outside of prison walls."

Jarret attempted to bridge this gap, but he kept running into closed doors and closed minds. At Fuller, he started a student group called Transform Criminal Justice to educate students and the church about how they could not only think about but also act on behalf of the incarcerated. Just as they were gaining traction and preparing to host their largest event ever, COVID shut everything down—but it also finally blew the doors wide open.

Jarret remembers, "People who were coming home from prison during the pandemic started calling me, saying, 'We don't know what to do. All the churches are closed. How do I find a church?' They knew that, without a church, they would be tempted to return to their old lives. But when people come home, they don't know how to do things online because many were incarcerated before social media, before Zoom, and all of that. So I began leading weekly calls to teach them how to use Zoom."

The Zoom meetings soon evolved into simple, house-church-like gatherings where those in reentry could read and reflect on Scripture, share their testimonies and their struggles, and pray for each other. These led to annual reunions of about 200 men and women coming home from various prisons throughout California. Unwittingly, Jarret had birthed Testimony Ministries, which provides reentry discipleship



to those who have been incarcerated in California and partners with local churches to mobilize faith, create restorative opportunities, and advocate for gospel-centered justice.

God began to open doors to partnerships, leading Jarret to establish reentry homes for returning citizens who needed a place to live, which eventually led to residents forming microchurches in their underresourced communities. Then he asked, "What if we did internships?" He found churches willing to run a pilot attempt, raised funds to stipend the positions, and developed a curriculum to help the church partners and returning citizens tailor the positions to their gifts. The 90-day internships were so successful that one participant ended up being hired by the church and another started his own nonprofit. Jarret says, "One brother had been sentenced to 45 years, and the other had a double life sentence. They were not supposed to ever come home, and now, they're bringing life to these churches." Unsurprisingly, more churches have signed on as partners.

Jarret is also now partnering with Fuller, where he's returned for a

doctorate, by creating a FULLER Equip course called "Empowered Inside" that can provide transferable credits toward a degree program for incarcerated students. He is thrilled by the inaugural class of 25 participants at Lancaster Prison, saying, "This is so important to me personally because I hit a dead end inside; I could have had a master's degree years earlier if I had access to it in prison. I never thought this ministry would be able to tackle something this big, but God opened the door for us. We're hoping to expand it into other prisons and to keep creating greater access to education for people pre-release, before they come home."

Jarret marvels at all that has transpired since his coming home, musing, "This was never the plan. It's really crazy. And I always tell people none of what we're doing is because of my good plan; it's always through the good people and the good relationships God brings us." ■

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## OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

On an unexpected path to seminary and ministry, Raul Sandoval finds a new sense of belonging and vocational purpose in Los Angeles, the city he calls home.

Written by **CHANTELLE GIBBS**  
Photographed by **KARLEY CARRILLO**

**W**hen Raul Sandoval (MAT '23) graduated from Life Pacific College with a degree in biblical studies, he was ready for local church ministry, sure that he was done with school with no plans of returning. "I had a lot of difficulty with the school format, with retaining and engaging," Raul says. "School was not my gift."

He did feel skilled in and inclined toward pastoral work, and he'd longed to serve the local church that was close to his heart. Raul grew up as a skater kid in East Los Angeles, a historically predominant Hispanic neighborhood, attending church with his family every Sunday. Even from a young age, he recalls gravitating to the experience of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal church, along with the contemplative and meditative expression prevalent in Catholic mass. He valued growing in his spirituality and doing it alongside his community.

Still, even with a full heart for ministry, he experienced the tension of feeling on the outside when it came to his own cultural identity, and he wondered how it might fit in the context of ministry. "I don't entirely fit in

with Mexican culture or American culture," says Raul, who is the son of immigrant parents. "I'm a bit removed from both. I've felt that also in training for ministry." He sensed the weight of being the first in his family called to ministry, and he remained unsure how to offer his upbringing and background to the church.

In college, he served as an associate youth pastor in El Monte and was

join her for a campus preview event at Fuller. Since school was off the table for him, he didn't think much of it, but he decided to tag along.

He was sitting in on a guest lecture when suddenly, everything stopped. "I had never had this happen to me before, but everything was just muted. I got this impression in my spirit and heard the words, 'There are no shortcuts.'"

"I FELT THIS VERY STRONG  
YET GENTLE TONE AND KNEW  
IMMEDIATELY THAT GOD WAS TRYING  
TO GET MY ATTENTION."

involved in a ministry that reached out to at-risk youth in Los Angeles. But upon graduating, he struggled to find a job in the local church.

Raul and his wife, Ashley, had been attending Bread Church, which he loved. A little over a year into attending, a staff member at Bread who was considering seminary invited Raul to

He sensed God challenging him about the path that he was supposed to be on. "I felt this very strong yet gentle tone and knew immediately that God was trying to get my attention, inviting me to consider Fuller."

He talked with his wife and his senior pastors, hesitant because academia wasn't his thing. It would be a step of



faith, he thought to himself. “I don’t have the money for this, and I don’t necessarily feel I have the personality for it. But I felt like every step of the way, God was giving me grace for it and really peeling back some layers around things that I had believed about myself, like school not being for me.”

Those he confided in responded in a way that affirmed that God was leading him. So two weeks later, he applied and was accepted—but with a caveat. “I was admitted on probation because I had done so poorly in undergrad, which is funny,” he recounts with a laugh. “But I was able to get off of it fairly quickly because I did surprisingly well.”

For Raul, going to public school and coming from a neighborhood “on the wrong side of the tracks” planted many doubts and subconscious thoughts that he wouldn’t fit within a context like Fuller. “Years of hearing that because of my background or where I grew up, certain things weren’t and wouldn’t be for me.”

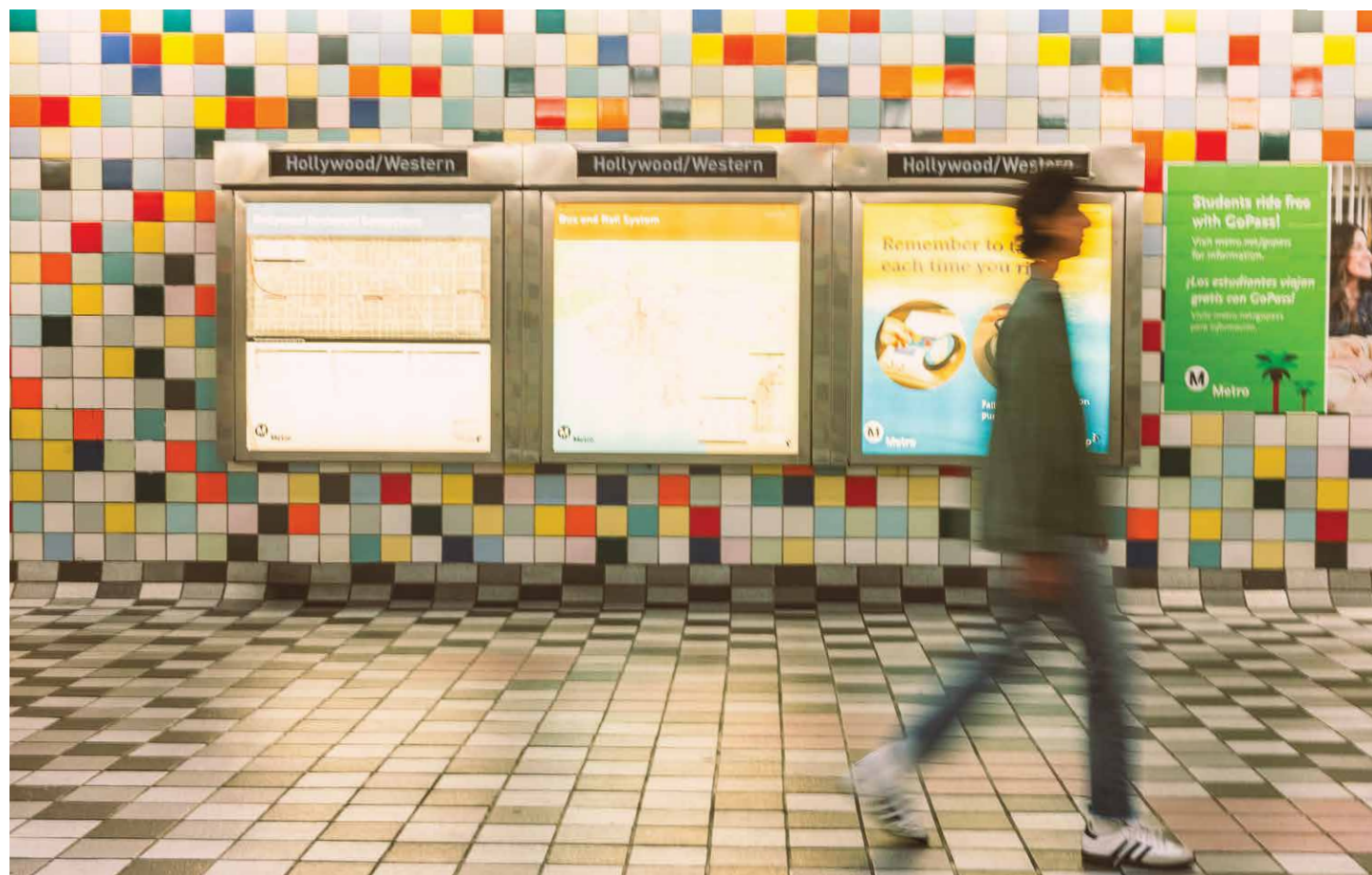
In his first quarter, he realized how much sense it made for him to be at Fuller, including being three stops away from the campus

on the metro. There was a sense of ease watching God do transformative work in him and he was starting to see it. “It was great to feel like ‘I can actually do this’ and ‘This can be my world.’”

He gained more and more clarity on his vocation and calling as he took various classes, had discussions with other students, and read books he wouldn’t have come across if it hadn’t been for the classroom setting. Much of it helped clarify the ministry he felt he was supposed to be doing, what the needs were in his community, and what God’s vision is for the world. “A lot of that came from being on the ground, seeing it, and then engaging with it in the classroom.”

While Raul was enrolled in seminary, he had no expectations to start working at Bread Church. But as time went on and the church continued to grow, he saw a need for more pastorally oriented gifts, ones that aligned with exactly who he was and who he felt called to be.

A staff member—the same one who had encouraged Raul to join her to tour Fuller—moved back to London, opening up a spot on the pastoral team. He found himself meeting with



the senior pastors in their backyard, sharing with them his heart and what he knew he could bring to the church. He had been with the church a couple of years at that point and felt he could be a stable and reliable presence for people—to be somebody that they could count on. And more than that, to bridge the gap between the transplants and the native Angelenos.

“Because LA is a port city, people come and go,” Raul says. “I felt like the church could do with some stability in terms of leadership. I’m from here. I know the city. I know the culture. I felt like the background that I bring, especially to a church like Bread, is necessary.”

He’s been serving on the pastoral staff as the community and social engagement leader ever since.

“Part of how I approached my responsibility at Bread is the weight of the stories and perspectives right in my neighborhood. I felt that I had a responsibility to bring witness to these other voices and also what God is doing in that demographic. Because he’s working there as well.”

Bread Church attracts transplants—people from other parts of the country

or world who come to Los Angeles to work in Hollywood and entertainment. “Naturally, that’s our audience and that’s who we are going for. And often what is missed in churches with that kind of demographic is the voice from the other side.”

Raul says, “There’s this side of LA that often gets neglected, people you might not naturally think of when you think of Los Angeles. If the church is supposed to be a place where there’s a diversity of voices and perspectives, then the perspective of the native Angeleno needs to

“I’M FROM HERE. I KNOW THE CITY. I KNOW THE CULTURE. I FELT LIKE THE BACKGROUND THAT I BRING, ESPECIALLY TO A CHURCH LIKE BREAD, IS NECESSARY.”

be included in that.” Raul knows that’s exactly what he offers.

“I’ve found it very moving to see people who aren’t from here that call Bread their home, to see them want to engage, be involved, and invest in the local

community. That kind of thing can only happen if God is at work and if people really catch what it is that God is doing. I don’t think that comes naturally.”

But it has been natural for Raul—leading and planning ministry initiatives to meet needs that are tangible and easily identifiable to him. He knows LA to be an immigrant city with immigrants from all over the world and refugees among them. And when Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in 2021, he learned of an organization that was helping refugees get settled in the city. Raul shared this with the church and named an opportunity to help families who had had to leave everything behind. Five people from the congregation committed to sponsoring these families for a year, helping them establish roots and complete ordinary tasks like obtaining a driver’s license, furnishing an apartment, enrolling kids in school, and navigating the US healthcare system.

The Adventist church Bread rents from has a shower program for the unhoused population in Hollywood to shower every week. Twice a year, Raul and his team put on a dinner for the people in that program. Recently, the outreach was “tailgate”-themed, so they had trucks, food, and a live band. Hosts

served every guest, brought a meal to the table, and sat with them to hear their stories and get to know them. “The whole point of it was to meet a felt need. More than just having an assembly line and giving people a tray of food, though there’s a place for that and we need that,



we wanted to do something a bit different and make our guests feel special.”

“What I’m reminded of is when Jesus says in Matthew 25: ‘I was hungry and you fed me, I was a stranger and you welcomed me in. I was a prisoner and you visited me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink.’ Feeding, visiting, hosting—these are the things of the kingdom that are often the most effective. We don’t need to be the most resourced or educated. I just feel like we need to have that heart and go for the kingdom stuff. God really uses that to transform people and transform our communities.”

Raul says there are plenty more stories of what he’s been able to witness during his time at Bread, all underscored by what happens when you bring yourself wholly and uniquely to answer God’s call. “Fuller helped reinforce the idea that we’re whole beings, that we’re all interconnected and being formed. This idea really helped me understand that even as far back as my childhood, my experiences helped form and shape my view of God and my understanding of spirituality.” Reflecting on what he has seen God reveal to him in recent years, Raul thinks back often to his time at Fuller as profoundly formative, particularly because of how much it helped him to understand who he was and—beyond how he fit in—how much he was needed.

“The perspective I offer, this way of seeing the world and engaging with it, has been shaped by my being ‘outside looking in.’ We need Christian leaders to be informed by the folks on the outside. So try not to be discouraged if you find yourself on the outside because God uses people on the outside as much as he uses people on the inside.” ■

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## FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS: HOPE AND HEALING AS THE MISSION OF MENTAL HEALTH

Cynthia Eriksson

*Cynthia Eriksson's installation address, delivered at her installation as the dean of the School of Psychology & Marriage and Family Therapy in 2023, edited for publication.*

### “What Is Your Theology of Hope?”

Twenty-one years ago, in my theology exam to become a core faculty member, I was sitting in a conference room with eight or nine theologians, and I was asked to answer a question: “What is your theology of hope?”

I had come to the clinical psychology program at Fuller in 1990, planning to use my psychology training in overseas missions. I studied trauma for my master's project in Liberia during the Civil War and in my dissertation research with humanitarian aid workers. Then, God redirected me to this unexpected place in academia. Now I was being asked, “What is your theology of hope?”

I will be honest. What I remember of my first thoughts to that question was something akin to, “Oh no, I didn't study anything like that.”

Then, when I regained my grounding, I realized that the question was asking, how I, as a Christian, approach the places of pain in clients and in the world that do not seem redeemable. I remember answering that I believe that God is working towards the health and well-being of anyone I come in contact with. That God's desire is for healing for the child who experienced sexual abuse or the trauma of war, as well as for the person who perpetrated the abuse or committed atrocities in combat. That, one day, all things will be on earth as they are in heaven.

My theology of hope—my trust that God desires truth and justice, my faith that

God can redeem anything—allows me to bring that hope into any situation. Depending upon my work context, I may or may not be able to explicitly speak out my confidence in Christ's hope and healing. But I have embodied that hope in my relationship with those I serve. And this hope is what propels me to walk toward those in pain.

I thought that I would be a missionary in other countries or cultural spaces, but instead, the mission God invited me into became broader: to be present in the pain of others and to embody Christ's hope and healing, and to teach others to do the same. This is the mission of mental health.

Now, God's good purposes have brought me to another unexpected place, as the new dean of the School of Psychology & Marriage and Family Therapy. Again, God broadens the mission for such a time as this.

### “For Such a Time as This”

What is this time? We hear the phrases “mental health crisis,” “youth mental health crisis,” “global trauma,” “war and political violence,” “pandemic stress,” “racial trauma,” “climate change stress,” “polarization,” and so many more.

Every generation has had challenges, changes, and crises. While I do not want to start our reflections with an “alarmist” mentality, I do want to unpack these phrases and calls to action. What are the crises we are facing related to mental health? What are the ways that we need hope and healing in our world?



Recent global reports and research provide stark data. The surgeon general of the United States recently put out an advisory on youth mental health. He notes that in the decade between 2009 and 2019 (even prior to COVID-19), the number of US high school students reporting feeling persistently anxious or depressed increased by 40%, the number stating that they seriously considered suicide increased by 36%, and the number saying that they had a plan to commit suicide increased by 44%.<sup>1</sup> Research reported by the Trevor Project also notes that LGBTQ youth are more than four times as likely as their peers to attempt suicide.<sup>2</sup>

Epidemiological research notes that between 1999 and 2020, the number of adult deaths in the US related to “deaths of despair” (suicide, drug overdose, and alcoholic liver disease) increased by 227% for Native American and Alaskan Native adults, by 164% for White Americans, by 121% for Black Americans, by 100% for Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and by 49% for Hispanic Americans.

The World Health Organization World Mental Health Report from 2022 notes that since 2000, severe weather events (tropical storms, heat waves, wildfires, floods, and mudslides) have increased by 46%, and these events lead to emergency mental health challenges like posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and other stress-related issues.<sup>4</sup>

The World Health Organization report also states that in 2021, 84 million people were displaced from their homes due to conflict or threats of violence. Every one of these people will experience some type of emotional distress in that displacement. But, on average, one in five people in these settings of displacement will develop a mental disorder (that is over 16 million people).<sup>5</sup>

The experience of racial violence, threats of racial violence, and even hearing media reports of race-based violence and legal proceedings are all significantly related to poorer mental health in communities of color.<sup>6</sup> Experiencing racial discrimination is also associated with anxiety, depressive symptoms, and sleep difficulties.<sup>7</sup>

Experiencing sociopolitical polarization is also related to emotions like anger, fear, and frustration—which are significantly related to poorer physical health.<sup>8</sup> In addition, those reporting a sense of increasing polarization in their own social circles are more likely to report depression, anxiety, and sleep problems.<sup>9</sup>

There are so many needs and so much pain, it can almost feel like too much to take it in. How do we embody hope and healing in the midst of these needs?

As a Christian, I hold all of these statistics, challenges, and crises with a posture of prayer and lament: crying out to God in the truth of the pain, naming what is hap-

pening, and then also naming what I want from God. I want hope. I want healing. I want justice. And I hold a theology of hope, that one day, all things will be as in heaven.

Psalm 103 promises that God heals our diseases and rescues us from the pit, that God works righteousness and justice for the oppressed, that God has compassion on us and is gracious. That promise holds “hope” for things yet to come and an expectation of “healing.” I lament these mental health crises, and I trust God’s desire for healing. We exist in the reality of God’s love and God’s kingdom purposes. We are in the overall story of the people of God, and God’s intention—his telos—for the planet. So, we are grounded in the purposes of God and the love of God. And we are called to be disciples—to act in faithfulness.

Healing is at the very core of Jesus’ ministry. When he enters a village, he teaches and he heals. When Jesus sends out his disciples in Luke 9, he does not just commission them to “tell everyone about the kingdom of God,” but he also gives them the “authority to heal all the diseases.”

How are we healing these diseases? In this time of crisis, we come to “such a time as this” with a mission to use the skills and knowledge of mental health as a way to bring Christ’s healing and hope to a desperate world.

The book Esther and the fifth chapter of Luke are two very different stories—one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament—two very different times in the life of the people of Israel. What is something they have in common? We could say that their characters are desperate.

Esther is desperate to save her people from genocide, desperate for a hope that there is a future for her people. The friends in Luke are desperate for healing for their friend, desperate to get to the source of that healing. Desperate for a hope; desperate for healing.

The story of Esther challenges us to think about the privilege that she stewards to try to stop the deaths of her family and community, even as she is honest about her own identity at the risk of her own life. The story in Luke of the friends lowering the paralyzed man through the roof to Jesus invites us to consider the ways that desperation can lead to creativity. What are we capable of when we “think outside of the box”?

Let’s consider these, and the desperation of our own time, to think about how we are engaging in this mission of hope and healing for mental health.

### Privilege in Esther and in Mental Health

A brief reminder of the story of Esther in the Persian Empire: The Jewish people are under threat of genocide. A narcissis-

tic political leader, Haman, has plotted to destroy his Jewish nemesis, Moredecai, and Mordecai’s people, the Jews. Haman has wheedled his way into the influence of King Xerxes and has convinced the king to make a decree allowing for the slaughter of the Jewish people on a certain day. But disinterested and self-absorbed King Xerxes had chosen Mordecai’s cousin, Esther, to be his queen not knowing of her Jewish identity.

Mordecai is in mourning about the decree, and Esther sees him at the palace gate in his mourning clothes. She sends a messenger to find out what is wrong, and she hears that her people are under threat. While earlier, Mordecai had told Esther to hide her Jewish ancestry, now he says that this is the time to hold her privileged position as queen and her Jewish identity together.

Esther is in a privileged and unique position to influence the king, but she also has to be honest about who she is. She needs to own her identity as a Jew in order to have the influence she needs to save her people. She also knows that if she goes to the king without being summoned, she may be put to death.

“For such a time as this.” This is the time when Esther needs to act. She sends the message for her people to fast for her—and with her—and then she takes the risk of

death. In the end, Esther saves her people, through her courage and God’s justice. Esther used her privileged position, her wits, and her identity, and she took a big risk.

### Privilege Today

Today, having an advanced degree in a mental health field is a significant privilege. It provides a set of competencies that can be used to contribute to the healing of others—and it can also be used to increase our own wealth or status.

According to the American Psychological Association, there were approximately 130,000 psychologists in the US in 2021.<sup>10</sup> And in that same year, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics estimates that there were approximately 65,000 marriage and family therapists.<sup>11</sup> For a US population of nearly 332 million people, that is one psychologist or MFT for every 1,702 people.

Globally, there are estimated to be approximately 13 mental health workers (of all types) for every 100,000 people. There are regions in the world that have even fewer; for example Southeast Asia has 2.8 mental health workers for every 100,000, and the continent of Africa has 1.6 mental health workers per 100,000 people.<sup>12</sup>



With this in mind, we need to acknowledge that simply having an advanced degree in a mental health field is a significant privilege. The next question is, what risks are we taking to use our privilege to address urgent needs around us and around the world? Each of us is in a particular place—with particular influence and particular barriers. We need to listen to the voices around us, calling for us to step closer to the pain or help tear down places of oppression.

In what ways can we have more influence when we live into our identity? Our Christian faith, and our competence to bring reflection on spirituality and religion into therapy, is also a privilege. 80% of psychologists report that they have not had specific training in how to address religion and spirituality in mental health treatment.<sup>13</sup> Yet religion and spirituality are key resources to contribute to mental health in the US and around the globe.

Esther reminds us to be our true selves and to use all of our privileges in this work to address mental health crises. Being people of faith will build opportunities for connection in some sectors, like engaging local faith community leaders or Christian nonprofits. But it may also raise challenges from people and institutions that have been harmed by judgment or polarized perspectives. Yet we are still called to embody God's hope and work towards healing with all that we have.

### Creativity in Luke and in Mental Health

The story in Luke shows desperation in a different way. The friends are desperate for the paralyzed man to be healed. They want to get him to Jesus. The space is crowded with Pharisees and teachers of the law (take

a moment to consider the metaphor here), so there is no room to bring in this person they cared about—who needs Jesus' touch. They try to get him through the door, but it is too crowded.

So, they decide to go “outside the box” and find their own way to get their friend to this healer that they have heard of. They bring their friend up to the roof, remove the tiles, and lower him down to the feet of Jesus. Whenever I hear or read this story, I cannot help but imagine Jesus having a big laugh as this is happening.

Remarkably, Jesus sees the urgent faith of these friends and says to the paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven you.” This leads to quite some criticism from the Pharisees and teachers of the law, and Jesus ultimately shows his power to both forgive sins and heal, as he commands the man to “get up, take his bed, and go to his house.” Healing and restoration are intertwined. The desperate faith of the friends and their willingness to do something creative (and perhaps annoying and messy) brought freedom and healing to their friend.

### Creativity Today

Fuller's School of Psychology & Marriage and Family Therapy has always been a place that has stepped outside of the expected. In 1972, we became the first program to integrate psychology and theology accredited by the American Psychological Association. We work to develop competencies in our students to understand the theoretical relationship between the disciplines of theology and psychology. We train our students to bring this understanding into the therapy room, and we emphasize the spiritual formation of the person, developing what the Marriage and Family

Therapy faculty recognize as four clinical virtues: compassion, hope, humility, and Sabbath rest.

Our faculty have also led the way in unique scholarship located outside of the therapy room: Cameron Lee's research on youth faith development that led to the Fuller Youth Institute's Sticky Faith movement; Pam King's research on thriving and spiritual health; Siang-Yang Tan's work on lay counseling that has brought healing to many; Brad Strawn and Warren Brown's work that has empowered churches to consider how embodied cognition is a component of worship; Archibald Hart's many books supporting the well-being of pastors; Terry and Sharon Hargrave's



model of relational healing and resilience for couples, faith leaders, and teams all over the country; Alexis Abernethy's groundbreaking research on the psychology of worship; and Lisseth Rojas-Flores's partnership with World Vision International to evaluate their parent training models in 14 countries. This is just a taste of what has been happening in the School of Psychology & Marriage and Family Therapy.

Perhaps my favorite part of this Luke scripture is the very last verse, when the people are filled with awe and say, “We have seen strange things today.” Yes, that is the work of Christ, but it is also the work of the friends.

Let's continue to get out of the expected molds of mental health care. We can be rooted in rich scholarship and theory, and we can also bring these ideas to our communities in new ways. Excellent therapy will always be a critical resource, but what other ways can we use our skills to contribute to healing?

As we bring healing to trauma that has already happened, we may be able to prevent some additional abuse or violence. Perhaps it is extending Siang-Yang's lay counseling models into trauma-informed resources for international churches. Perhaps it is incorporating knowledge of family systems, human development, or trauma care into all theological education. Perhaps it is using books, podcasts, or blogs; church small groups or Sunday school classes; websites; teletherapy; artificial intelligence models; or some other thing we have not even thought of yet.

### Our Mission Today

We are called to have our eyes open for the needs of those around us. Mental health

needs are not just in the therapy room, and distress is not just in those who can access insurance or pay for therapy themselves. We need to work together to meet these needs, just as the friends banded together to lower their paralyzed friend. We need each other to respond effectively.

What is our mission now? How might God use the marriage and family therapists, the psychologists, the scholars, the researchers, and the consultants who come out of our programs to contribute to the hope and healing in our world today?

We do not have enough mental health practitioners to respond to all of the world's needs. But we can use our privileged position and be creative in how we train others, build resilience, increase knowledge, and develop competencies in leaders from many sectors.

At Fuller, we have led the way in planting the cross in the heart of psychology; let's bring this integrative model of mental health and plant it in the heart of the community and the church.

The mission of mental health is to steward the privilege of our education and live into our unique identity, creatively making the space for others to be at Christ's feet, confident in Christ's healing and hope. We do this together, for the sake of the kingdom, for the God who heals all our diseases and rescues our lives from the pit. Amen. ■

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## PARA UN MOMENTO COMO ESTE: ESPERANZA Y SANIDAD COMO MISIÓN DE LA SALUD MENTAL

Cynthia Eriksson

*Discurso de investidura de Cynthia Eriksson, pronunciado en su nombramiento como decana de la Facultad de Psicología y Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar, editado para su publicación.*

### ¿Cuál es su Teología de la Esperanza?

Hace veintiún años, en mi examen de teología para convertirme en profesor titular del cuerpo docente, estaba sentada en una sala de conferencias con ocho o nueve teólogos, y me pidieron que respondiera a una pregunta: “¿Cuál es su teología de la esperanza?”.

Había entrado en el programa de psicología clínica de Fuller en 1990, con la intención de utilizar mi formación en psicología en misiones en el extranjero. Estudié el trauma para mi proyecto de maestría en Liberia durante la Guerra Civil y en mi investigación de tesis doctoral con trabajadores de ayuda humanitaria. Entonces, Dios me redirigió a este lugar inesperado en el mundo académico. Ahora me preguntaban: “¿Cuál es tu teología de la esperanza?”.

Seré sincera. Lo que recuerdo de mis primeros pensamientos a esa pregunta fue algo parecido a “Oh no, yo no estudié nada de eso”.

Luego, cuando recuperé el equilibrio, me di cuenta de que la pregunta se refería a cómo yo, como cristiana, afronto los lugares de dolor en mis clientes y en el mundo que no parecen redimibles. Recuerdo haber respondido que creo que Dios trabaja en pos de la salud y el bienestar de cualquier persona con la que yo entre en contacto. Que el deseo de Dios es la sanidad para el niño que sufrió abuso sexual o el trauma de la guerra, así como para la persona que perpetró el abuso o cometió atrocidades en combate. Que un día, todas las

cosas serán en la tierra como son en el cielo.

Mi teología de la esperanza -mi confianza en que Dios desea la verdad y la justicia, mi fe en que Dios puede redimir cualquier cosa- me permite llevar esa esperanza a cualquier situación. Según el contexto de mi trabajo, puede que tenga o no la posibilidad de expresar explícitamente mi confianza en la esperanza y la sanidad de Cristo. Pero he incorporado esa esperanza en mi relación con aquellos a los que he servido. Y esta esperanza es lo que me impulsa a acercarme hacia los que están sufriendo.

Pensé que sería misionera en otros países o espacios culturales, pero en lugar de eso, la misión a la que Dios me invitó fue más amplia: estar presente en el dolor de los demás y personificar la esperanza y la sanación de Cristo, y enseñar a otros a hacer lo mismo. Esta es la misión de la salud mental.

Ahora, los buenos propósitos de Dios me han llevado a otro lugar inesperado, como la nueva decana de la Facultad de Psicología y Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar. Una vez más, Dios amplía la misión para un momento como este.

### Para un momento como este

¿Qué es este momento? Escuchamos las frases “crisis de salud mental”, “crisis de salud mental juvenil”, “trauma global”, “guerra y violencia política”, “estrés pandémico”, “trauma racial”, “estrés por el cambio climático”, “polarización” y tantas más...

Cada generación ha tenido retos, cambios y crisis. Aunque no quiero empezar nuestras reflexiones con una mentalidad “alarmista”, sí quiero analizar estas frases y llamados a la acción. ¿Cuáles son las crisis a las que nos enfrentamos en relación con la salud mental? ¿De qué manera necesitamos esperanza y sanidad en nuestro mundo?

Recientes informes e investigaciones mundiales ofrecen datos contundentes. El cirujano general de los Estados Unidos ha publicado recientemente un informe sobre la salud mental de los jóvenes. Señala que en la década entre 2009 y 2019 (incluso antes de COVID-19), el número de estudiantes de secundaria de EE.UU. que informan sentirse persistentemente ansiosos o deprimidos aumentó en un 40%, el número que afirmó haber considerado seriamente el suicidio aumentó al 36%, y el número que declaró tener un plan para suicidarse aumentó en un 44%.<sup>[1]</sup> La investigación reportada por el Proyecto Trevor también señala que los jóvenes LGBTQ tienen más de cuatro veces más probabilidades que sus compañeros de intentar suicidarse.<sup>2</sup>

La investigación epidemiológica señala que entre 1999 y 2020, el número de muertes de adultos en los EE.UU. relacionadas con “muertes por desesperación” (suicidio, sobredosis de drogas y enfermedad hepática alcohólica)<sup>[3]</sup> aumentó en un 227% para los adultos nativos americanos y nativos de Alaska, en un 164% para los estadounidenses blancos, en un 121% para los estadounidenses negros, en un 100% para los estadounidenses asiáticos e isleños del Pacífico, y en un 49% para los hispanoamericanos.

El Informe Mundial sobre la Salud Mental de la Organización Mundial de la Salud de 2022 señala que, desde el año 2000, los fenómenos meteorológicos graves (tormentas tropicales, calor extremo, incendios forestales, inundaciones y deslizamientos de tierra) han aumentado en un 46%, y que estos fenómenos generan desafíos de salud mental de emergencia, como el trastorno de estrés postraumático, la ansiedad, la depresión y otros problemas relacionados con el estrés.<sup>4</sup>

El informe de la Organización Mundial de la Salud también afirma que en 2021, 84 millones de personas se vieron desplazadas de sus hogares debido a conflictos o amenazas de violencia. Cada una de estas personas experimentará algún tipo de malestar emocional en ese desplazamiento. Sin embargo, en promedio, 1 de cada 5 personas en estos contextos de desplazamiento desarrollará un desorden mental (es decir, más de 16 millones de personas).<sup>5</sup>

La experiencia de violencia racial, las amenazas de violencia racial, e incluso escuchar informes en los medios de comunicación sobre violencia basada en motivos raciales y los procesos judiciales están todos significativamente relacionados con una peor salud mental en las comunidades de color.<sup>6</sup> Y, experimentar la discriminación racial se asocia con ansiedad, síntomas depresivos y dificultades para dormir.<sup>7</sup>

Experimentar la polarización sociopolítica también está relacionado con emociones como la ira, el miedo y la frustración, que a su vez están significativamente relacionadas con una peor salud física.<sup>8</sup> Además, aquellos que informan sentir un aumento de polarización

en sus propios círculos sociales tienen más probabilidades de sufrir depresión, ansiedad y problemas de sueño.<sup>9</sup>

Hay tantas necesidades y tanto dolor, que casi puede parecer demasiado para asimilarlo. ¿Cómo podemos personificar la esperanza y la sanidad en medio de estas necesidades?

Como cristiana, afronto todas estas estadísticas, desafíos y crisis con una postura de oración y lamento. Clamando a Dios en la verdad del dolor, nombrando lo que está sucediendo, y luego también expresando lo que quiero de Dios. Quiero esperanza. Quiero sanidad. Quiero justicia. Y mantengo esa teología de la esperanza, de que un día todo será como en el Cielo.

El Salmo 103 promete que Dios cura nuestras enfermedades y nos rescata del abismo, que Dios obra con justicia y rectitud para los oprimidos, que Dios tiene compasión de nosotros y es misericordioso. Esa promesa nos da “esperanza” para lo que está por venir, y una expectativa de “sanidad”. Lamento estas crisis de salud mental, y confío en el deseo de Dios de traer sanidad. Existimos en la realidad del amor de Dios y de los propósitos del Reino de Dios. Estamos en la historia global del pueblo de Dios y en la intención de Dios -su telos- para el planeta. Por tanto, estamos arraigados en los propósitos y el amor de Dios. Y estamos llamados a ser discípulos, a actuar con fidelidad.

La sanidad está en el centro mismo del ministerio de Jesús. Cuando entraba en un pueblo, enseñaba y sanaba. Cuando Jesús envía a sus discípulos en Lucas 9, no sólo les encarga que “hablen a todos del Reino de Dios”, sino que



también les da “autoridad para sanar todas las enfermedades”.

¿Cómo estamos sanando estas enfermedades? En esta época de crisis, llegamos a “un momento como este” con la misión de utilizar las técnicas de y los conocimientos sobre la salud mental como una forma de llevar la sanidad y la esperanza de Cristo a un mundo desesperado.

Los libros Ester y el quinto capítulo de Lucas son dos historias muy diferentes -una del Antiguo Testamento y otra del Nuevo Testamento-, dos momentos muy diferentes en la vida del pueblo de Israel. ¿Qué tienen en común? Podríamos decir que sus personajes están desesperados.

Ester está desesperada por salvar a su pueblo del genocidio, desesperada por la esperanza de que haya un futuro para su pueblo. Los amigos en Lucas están desesperados por curar a su amigo, desesperados por llegar a la fuente de esa sanidad. Desesperados por una esperanza, desesperados por sanidad.

La historia de Ester nos desafía a pensar en el privilegio que ella administra para tratar de detener la muerte de su familia y su comunidad, incluso poniendo en riesgo su propia vida al ser honesta sobre su propia identidad. La historia de Lucas de los amigos que bajan al paralítico por el tejado hacia Jesús nos invita a considerar cómo la desesperación puede conducir a la creatividad. ¿De qué somos capaces cuando “pensamos fuera de la caja”?

Consideremos esto, y la desesperación de nuestro propio tiempo, para pensar en cómo

participamos en esta misión de esperanza y sanidad para la salud mental.

### El privilegio en Ester y en la salud mental

Un breve recordatorio de la historia de Ester en el Imperio Persa: el pueblo judío está amenazado de genocidio. Un líder político narcisista, Amán, ha conspirado para destruir a su némesis judío, Mardoqueo y al pueblo de Mardoqueo, los judíos. Amán ha logrado ganarse la influencia del rey Asuero y ha convencido al rey de emitir un decreto que permite la masacre del pueblo judío en un día determinado. Pero el desinteresado y ensimismado rey Asuero había elegido a la prima de Mardoqueo, Ester, para que fuera su reina sin conocer su identidad judía.

Mardoqueo está de luto por el decreto, y Ester lo ve en la puerta del palacio vestido de luto. Envía un mensajero para averiguar qué ocurre y se entera de que su pueblo está amenazado. Aunque anteriormente Mardoqueo le había dicho a Ester que ocultara su ascendencia judía, ahora le dice que es el momento de mantener unidas su posición privilegiada como reina y su identidad judía.

Ester se encuentra en una posición privilegiada y única para influir en el rey, pero también tiene que ser sincera sobre quién es. Tiene que asumir su identidad como judía para tener la influencia que necesita para salvar a su pueblo. También sabe que si acude al rey sin ser convocada, puede ser ejecutada.

“Para un momento como este.” Este es el momento en que Ester debe actuar. Envía el mensaje a su pueblo para que ayune por ella -y con ella- y se arriesga a morir. Al final, Ester

salva a su pueblo, gracias a su valentía y a la justicia de Dios. Ester utilizó su posición privilegiada, su ingenio y su identidad, y asumió un gran riesgo.

### El privilegio hoy

Hoy en día, tener un título avanzado en un campo de la salud mental es un privilegio importante. Proporciona un conjunto de competencias que se pueden utilizar para contribuir a la sanidad de los demás, y también se puede utilizar para aumentar nuestra propia riqueza o estatus.

Según la Asociación Americana de Psicología, en 2021 había aproximadamente 130.000 psicólogos en EE.UU.<sup>10</sup> Y en ese mismo año, la Oficina de Trabajo y Estadísticas calcula que había aproximadamente 65.000 terapeutas matrimoniales y familiares<sup>11</sup> Para una población estadounidense de casi 332 millones de personas, eso supone un psicólogo o un terapeuta matrimonial y familiar por cada 1.702 personas.

A escala mundial, se calcula que hay aproximadamente 13 trabajadores de salud mental (de todo tipo) por cada 100.000 personas. Hay regiones del mundo que tienen incluso menos; por ejemplo, el sudeste asiático tiene 2,8 trabajadores de salud mental por cada 100.000, y el continente africano tiene 1,6 trabajadores de salud mental por cada 100.000 personas.<sup>12</sup>

Teniendo esto en cuenta, tenemos que reconocer que el mero hecho de tener un título superior en un campo de la salud mental es un privilegio importante. La siguiente pregunta es: ¿qué riesgos asumimos al utilizar nuestro privilegio para abordar necesidades urgentes

en nuestro entorno y en todo el mundo? Cada uno de nosotros se encuentra en un lugar concreto, con una influencia y unas barreras particulares. Tenemos que escuchar las voces que nos rodean, que nos piden que nos acerquemos al dolor o que ayudemos a derribar lugares de opresión.

¿Y de qué manera podemos tener más influencia al vivir plenamente nuestra identidad nuestra identidad? Nuestra fe cristiana, y nuestra competencia para reflexionar sobre la espiritualidad y la religión en la terapia, es también un privilegio. El 80% de los psicólogos afirman que no han recibido formación específica sobre cómo abordar la religión y la espiritualidad en el tratamiento de la salud mental.<sup>13</sup> Sin embargo, la religión y la espiritualidad son recursos clave para contribuir a la salud mental en los EE.UU. y en todo el mundo.

Ester nos recuerda que debemos ser auténticos y utilizar todos nuestros privilegios para abordar las crisis de salud mental. Ser personas de fe creará oportunidades de conexión en algunos sectores, como involucrándonos con líderes de comunidades de fe locales u organizaciones cristianas sin ánimo de lucro. Pero también puede plantear desafíos por parte de personas e instituciones que se han visto perjudicadas por juicios o perspectivas polarizantes. Aun así, estamos llamados a encarnar la esperanza de Dios y a trabajar por la sanación con todo lo que tenemos.

### La creatividad en Lucas y en la salud mental

El relato de Lucas muestra la desesperación de otra manera. Los amigos están desper-

ados de que el paralítico se cure. Quieren llevárselo a Jesús. El lugar está lleno de fariseos y maestros de la ley (tómame un momento para considerar la metáfora), así que no hay espacio para llevar a esta persona que les importaba, que necesitaba el toque de Jesús. Intentan que entre por la puerta, pero hay demasiada gente.

Así que deciden pensar “fuera de la caja” y encontrar su propia manera de llevar a su amigo a este sanador del que han oído hablar. Suben a su amigo al tejado, quitan las tejas y lo bajan a los pies de Jesús. Cada vez que oigo o leo esta historia, no puedo evitar imaginarme a Jesús riéndose a carcajadas mientras esto sucede.

Sorprendentemente, Jesús ve la fe urgente de estos amigos y le dice al paralítico: “Tus pecados te son perdonados”. Esto provoca un gran conflicto y críticas entre los fariseos y maestros de la ley, y Jesús finalmente muestra su poder tanto para perdonar pecados como para sanar, cuando ordena al hombre que “se levante, tome su cama y se vaya a su casa”. La sanidad y la restauración están entrelazadas. La fe desesperada de los amigos y su voluntad de hacer algo creativo (y quizás molesto y desordenado) trajo la libertad y la sanidad a su amigo.

### La creatividad hoy

La Facultad de Psicología y Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar de Fuller siempre ha sido un lugar que ha trascendido lo esperado. Fuimos el primer programa en integrar psicología y la teología acreditado por la Asociación Americana de Psicología en 1972. Trabajamos para desarrollar competencias en nuestros estudiantes para comprender la relación teórica entre las disciplinas de la teología y la

psicología. Formamos a nuestros estudiantes para que lleven esta comprensión a la sala de terapia, y hacemos hincapié en la formación espiritual de la persona, desarrollando lo que la facultad de Matrimonio y Familia reconoce como 4 virtudes clínicas: compasión, esperanza, humildad y descanso sabático.

Nuestro cuerpo docente también ha liderado el camino en trabajos académicos únicos situados fuera de la sala de terapia: La investigación de Cameron Lee sobre el desarrollo de la fe de los jóvenes, que dio lugar al movimiento Sticky Faith del Fuller Youth Institute; la investigación de Pam King sobre la salud espiritual y el florecimiento del ser humano; el trabajo de Siang-Yang Tan sobre la consejería laica, que ha traído la sanidad a muchos; el trabajo de Brad Strawn y Warren Brown, que empoderado a las iglesias a considerar cómo la cognición corporeizada es un componente de la alabanza; los numerosos libros de Archibald Hart de el bienestar de los pastores; el modelo de Terry y Sharon Hargrave sobre sanación relacional y resiliencia para parejas, líderes religiosos y equipos de todo el país; la investigación pionera de Alexis Abernethy sobre la psicología de la alabanza; y la colaboración de Lisseth Rojas-Flores con World Vision Internacional para evaluar sus modelos de capacitación para padres en 14 países. Esto es sólo una muestra del trabajo que se ha realizado y se está realizando en la Facultad de Psicología y Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar.

Quizás mi parte favorita de este pasaje de Lucas es el último versículo, cuando la gente se llena de asombro y dice: “Hoy hemos visto maravillas.” Sí, esa es la obra de Cristo, pero también es la obra de los amigos.



Sigamos saliendo de los moldes esperados del cuidado de la salud mental. Podemos enraizarnos en una rica erudición y teoría, y podemos llevar estas ideas a nuestras comunidades de nuevas maneras. Una terapia excelente siempre será un recurso fundamental, pero ¿de qué otras maneras podemos utilizar nuestras habilidades para contribuir a la sanidad?

Al curar los traumas que ya se han producido, tal vez podamos prevenir otros abusos o actos de violencia. Tal vez sea aplicando los modelos de consejería laica de Siang-Yang a los recursos informados sobre el trauma para las iglesias internacionales. Tal vez sea incorporando el conocimiento de los sistemas familiares, el desarrollo humano o la atención al trauma en toda la educación teológica. Tal vez sea utilizando libros, podcasts o blogs; grupos pequeños de iglesias o clases de escuela dominical; sitios web; teleterapia; modelos de Inteligencia Artificial; o alguna otra cosa en la que ni siquiera hemos pensado todavía.

### Nuestra misión hoy

Estamos llamados a tener los ojos abiertos a las necesidades de quienes nos rodean. Las necesidades de salud mental no están sólo en la sala de terapia, y la angustia no sólo afecta aquellos que pueden acceder a un seguro o pagar ellos mismos la terapia. Tenemos que trabajar juntos para satisfacer estas necesidades, así como los amigos se unieron para bajar a su amigo paralítico. Nos necesitamos mutuamente para responder con eficacia.

¿Cuál es nuestra misión ahora? ¿Cómo podría Dios utilizar a los terapeutas matrimoniales y

familiares, los psicólogos, los estudiosos, los investigadores y los consultores que salen de nuestros programas para contribuir a la esperanza y la sanidad en nuestro mundo actual?

No tenemos suficientes profesionales de la salud mental para responder a todas las necesidades del mundo. Pero podemos utilizar nuestra posición privilegiada y ser creativos en la forma que capacitamos a otros, fomentamos resiliencia, aumentar los conocimientos y desarrollar competencias en líderes de muchos sectores.

En Fuller, hemos abierto el camino para plantar la cruz en el corazón de la psicología; llevemos este modelo integrador de salud mental y plantémoslo en el corazón de la comunidad y de la iglesia.

La misión de la salud mental es administrar el privilegio de nuestra educación y vivir de acuerdo con nuestra identidad única, creando creativamente el espacio para que otros estén a los pies de Cristo, confiados en la sanidad y la esperanza de Cristo. Lo hacemos juntos, por el Reino, por el Dios que sana todas nuestras enfermedades y rescata nuestras vidas del abismo. Amén. ■

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## 요즘과 같은 시대에 : 정신 건강 선교로서의 희망과 치유

Cynthia Eriksson

본문은 신시아 에릭슨(Cynthia Eriksson) 박사의 심리학 및 결혼과가족치료 대학부 학장 취임식의 연설문이며 출판을 위해 편집되었습니다.

### “당신의 희망 신학은 무엇입니까?”

21년 전 풀러 신학대학원의 교수 중 한 명이 되기 위한 신학 시험에서 저는 8~9명의 신학자들과 함께 회의실에 앉아 있었습니다. 그들은 저에게 이런 질문을 했습니다. “희망에 대한 당신의 신학은 무엇입니까?”

저는 1990년 풀러 신학대학원의 임상 심리학 프로그램에 입학했고, 제가 받은 심리학 훈련을 해외 선교에 활용할 계획이었습니다. 저는 라이베리아의 내전 중 식사 프로젝트를 진행하면서 트라우마를 연구했고, 인도주의적 구호 활동가들과 함께 박사 논문 연구를 했습니다. 그러다가 하나님께서 저를 학계라는 뜻밖의 장소로 인도해 주셨습니다. 그리고 지금 저는 “희망에 대한 당신의 신학은 무엇입니까?”라는 질문을 받았습니.

솔직히 말해서 그 질문에 대해 제가 제일 먼저 했던 생각은 “아, 안돼, 이런 것에 대해서는 공부하지 않았는데”와 비슷한 것이었습니다.

그러다가 다시 정신을 차렸을 때, 저는 그 질문이 기독교인으로서 고통 속에 있는 클라이언트들과 구원받을 수 없을 것 같은 세상에 어떻게 접근해야 하는지를 묻는 것이라는 것을 깨달았습니다. 저는 제가 만나는 모든 사람들의 건강과 안녕을 위해 하나님께서 일하고 계신다는 것을 믿는다고 대답했던 것을 기억합니다. 하나님께서 바라시는 것은 성적 학대나 전쟁의 트라우마를 경험한 어린이들을 치유하는 것 뿐만 아니라 전투에서 학대를 자행하거나 잔학 행위를 저지른 사람들을 치유하는 것이라고 대답했습니다. 그런 날이 오면 모든 것이 하늘에서와 같이 땅에서도 이루어 지게 될 것이라고 덧붙였습니다.

희망에 대한 저의 신학 - 하나님께서 진리와 정의의 원하신다는 믿음, 하나님께서 무엇이든 구

원하실 수 있다는 저의 믿음은 어떤 상황에서도 그 희망을 가져올 수 있게 해줍니다. 업무 상황에 따라서 저는 그리스도의 희망과 치유에 대한 저의 확신을 분명하게 표현할 수도 있고 그렇지 못할 때도 있습니다. 하지만 저는 제가 섬기는 사람들과의 관계에서 그 희망을 실천하고 있습니다. 그리고 그 희망이 제가 고통받는 사람들을 향해 걸어가갈 수 있는 원동력입니다.

저는 다른 나라나 다른 문화 공간에서 선교사가 될 것이라고 생각했습니다. 하지만 하나님께서 저에게 주신 사명은 다른 사람들의 고통 속에 있고, 그리스도의 희망과 치유를 구현하고, 다른 사람들도 그렇게 하도록 가르치는 것으로 확장되었습니다. 바로 정신 건강이라는 선교입니다.

그리고 지금, 하나님의 선하신 목적은 저를 심리학 및 결혼과가족치료 대학부의 학장이라는 예상치 못한 또 다른 자리로 이끌었습니다. 다시 한 번, 하나님께서는 요즘과 같은 시대를 위해 선교를 확장하고 계십니다.

### “요즘과 같은 시대에”

그것은 어떤 시대를 말합니까? 우리는 다음과 같은 문구를 들곤 합니다 : “정신 건강의 위기”, “청소년들 사이의 정신 건강 위기”, “글로벌 트라우마”, “전쟁과 정치적 폭력”, “팬데믹 스트레스”, “인종적 트라우마”, “기후 변화 스트레스”, “양극화” 등등 더 많은 것들이 있습니다.

모든 세대에는 도전과 변화와 위기가 있어 왔습니다. 저는 “정보적인” 사고 방식으로 우리의 성찰을 시작하고 싶지 않지만, 앞에 말한 문구를 풀어 보면서 어떻게 행동으로 옮길 수 있을지 이야기하고 싶습니다. 정신 건강과 관련하여 우리가 직면하고 있는 위기는 무엇입니까? 우리가 사는 세상에서 희망과 치유가 필요한 방법은 무엇입니까?



최근의 글로벌 보고서와 연구 결과는 냉혹한 데이터를 제공합니다. 미국 공중보건국장은 최근 청소년 정신 건강에 관한 권고를 발간했습니다. 그는 2009년부터 2019년까지(코로나-19 이전에도) 10년 동안 지속적으로 불안하거나 우울하다고 보고한 미국 고등학생의 수가 40% 증가했으며, 심각하게 자살을 고려했다고 밝힌 숫자는 36% 증가했다고 지적합니다. 자살할 계획이 있다고 응답한 비율도 44% 증가했습니다.<sup>1</sup> Trevor Project에서 보고한 연구에 따르면 LGBTQ 청소년은 다른 청소년들에 비해 자살을 시도할 가능성이 4배 이상 높습니다.<sup>2</sup>

역학 연구에 따르면 1999년에서 2020년 사이에 미국에서 "절망의 죽음"(자살, 약물 과다 복용, 알코올성 간 질환)과 관련된 성인 사망 건수는<sup>3</sup> 아메리카 원주민 및 알래스카 원주민 성인의 경우 227% 증가, 백인 미국인의 경우 164% 증가, 흑인 미국인의 경우 121% 증가, 아시아계 미국인 및 태평양 섬 주민의 경우 100% 증가, 히스패닉계 미국인의 경우 49% 증가하였습니다.

세계보건기구(WHO)의 2022년 세계 정신 건강 보고서에 따르면 2000년 이후 심각한 기상 현상(열대성 폭풍, 폭염, 산불, 홍수, 산사태)이 46% 증가했으며 이러한 사건은 외상후 스트레스 장애, 불안, 우울증, 기타 스트레스 관련 문제와 같은 응급 정신 건강 문제로 이어집니다.<sup>4</sup>

세계보건기구(WHO) 보고서는 또한 2021년에 8,400만 명이 분쟁이나 폭력 위협으로 인해 집을 잃었다고 밝혔습니다. 이 사람들 모두는 이주 과정에서 일종의 정서적 고통을 경험하게 될 것입니다. 그러나 평균적으로 이러한 난민 환경에 있는 사람 5명 중 1명은 정신 장애를 앓게 됩니다(이는 1,600만 명 이상에 달합니다).<sup>5</sup>

인종 폭력의 경험, 인종 폭력의 위협, 심지어 인종을 기반으로 한 폭력과 법적 절차에 대한 언론의 보도를 청취하는 것은 모두 유색인종 지역 사회의 정신 건강 악화와 상당한 관련이 있습니다.<sup>6</sup> 그리고 인종 차별을 경험하는 것은 불안, 우

울 증상, 수면 장애와 관련이 있습니다.<sup>7</sup>

사회정치적 양극화를 경험하는 것 또한 분노, 두려움, 좌절과 같은 감정과도 관련이 있으며 이는 신체 건강 악화와 상당한 관련이 있습니다.<sup>8</sup> 더 불어 자신의 사회 집단에서 양극화가 심화되고 있다고 보고하는 사람들은 우울증, 불안, 수면 문제를 보고할 가능성이 더 높습니다.<sup>9</sup>

도움이 필요한 사람들이 너무 많고 고통도 너무 많아서 받아들이기 힘들다고 느낄 수 있습니다. 이러한 필요 속에서 우리는 어떻게 희망과 치유를 실현할 수 있을까요?

그리스도인으로서 저는 이 모든 통계와 도전과 위기를 기도와 탄식의 자세로 붙잡고 있습니다. 고통의 진실 속에서 하나님께 부르짖고, 무슨 일이 일어나고 있는지 이름 붙이고, 제가 하나님께 바라는 것이 무엇인지도 이야기합니다. 저는 희망을 원하고, 치유를 원하며, 정의를 원합니다. 그리고 언젠가는 모든 것이 천국과 같을 것이라는 희망의 신학을 믿습니다.

시편 103편은 하나님께서 우리의 질병을 고치시고 우리를 파멸에서 속량하시며, 억압받는 자들에게 공의와 정의를 행하시며, 우리를 긍휼히 여기시고 은혜를 베푸신다고 약속합니다. 그 약속에는 앞으로 다가올 일에 대한 “희망”과 “치유”에 대한 기대가 담겨 있습니다. 저는 정신 건강의 위기를 한탄하며, 치유를 향한 하나님의 소망을 믿습니다. 우리는 하나님의 사랑과 하나님 나라의 목적이라는 현실 속에 존재합니다. 우리는 하나님 백성의 전반적인 이야기와 지구를 향한 하나님의 의도(텔로스) 속에 있습니다. 그러므로 우리는 하나님의 목적과 하나님의 사랑에 기초를 두고 있습니다. 그리고 충실하게 행하도록 제자로 부름 받았습니.

치유는 예수님 사역의 핵심입니다. 예수님은 어느 마을에 가시던지 가르치시고 병을 고치셨습니다. 누가복음 9장에서 예수님은 제자들을 파송하실 때 그들에게 “하나님의 나라를 모든 사

람에게 전하라”고 명령하실 뿐만 아니라, “모든 병을 고치는 권위”도 주셨습니다.

우리는 이러한 질병을 어떻게 치유하고 있습니까? 우리는 정신 건강에 대한 기술과 지식을 사용하겠다는 사명을 가지고 "요즘과 같은" 위기의 시대를 살고 있습니다. 이는 절망적인 세상에 그리스도의 치유와 희망을 가져오는 것입니다.

에스더서와 누가복음 5장 말씀은 매우 다른 두 가지 이야기입니다. 하나는 구약의 이야기이고 다른 하나는 신약의 이야기입니다. 이스라엘 백성의 삶에서 매우 다른 두 시대의 이야기입니다. 그렇다면 이들의 공통점은 무엇일까요? 그것은 캐릭터들이 절망적이었다는 것입니다.

에스더는 자신의 민족을 대량 학살로부터 구하기 위해 필사적으로 노력하고 있습니다. 자신의 민족에게 미래가 있다는 희망이 절실히 필요합니다. 누가복음에 나오는 친구들은 중풍병자 친구의 치유를 간절히 원하며, 그 치유의 근원에 다가가기에 간절히 원합니다. 희망이 절실하고, 치유가 절실합니다.

에스더의 이야기는 자신의 목숨을 걸고 본인의 정체성을 밝히면서까지 가족과 공동체의 죽음을 막기 위해 그녀가 가지고 있는 특권을 사용했던 것을 생각하도록 우리에게 도전합니다. 누가복음에 나오는 중풍병자를 지붕을 통해 예수님께로 낮추는 친구들의 이야기는 우리에게 절박함이 창의력으로 이어질 수 있는 방법을 생각해 보도록 합니다. 우리가 "고정관념에서 벗어나 생각"할 때 우리는 무엇을 할 수 있습니까?

정신 건강을 위한 희망과 치유의 선교에 우리가 어떻게 참여하고 있는지 생각해 보기 위해 우리 시대의 절박함을 고려해 보겠습니다.

### 에스더가 가진 특권과 정신 건강 내 특권

페르시아 제국 시대의 에스더 이야기를 간단히

상기시켜 보면, 유대 민족은 대량 학살의 위협을 받고 있습니다. 자기 도취증에 빠진 지도자 하만은 자신의 유대인 적인 모르드개와 모르드개의 백성인 유대인을 멸망시키려고 음모를 꾸몄습니다. 하만은 아하수에로 왕의 영향을 받아 왕이 특정 날에 유대 민족을 학살하도록 허용하는 법령을 만들도록 설득했습니다. 그러나 무관심하고 자기중심적인 아하수에로 왕은 모르드개의 사촌인 에스더를 자신의 왕후로 선택합니다. 그녀가 유대인이라는 사실을 알지 못하고 말입니다.

모르드개는 이 법령 때문에 애통해하고 있고, 에스더는 상복을 입고 있는 모르드개를 왕궁 문에서 보고 무엇이 잘못되었는지 알아보기 위해 사자를 보냅니다. 그녀는 자기 백성이 위협을 받고 있다는 소식을 듣게 됩니다. 이전에 모르드개는 에스더에게 자신의 유대인 혈통을 숨기라고 말했지만 이제는 여왕으로서의 특권적인 지위와 유대인의 정체성을 함께 지켜야 할 때라고 말합니다.

에스더는 왕에게 영향력을 행사할 수 있는 특권적이고 독특한 위치에 있습니다. 하지만 그녀는 또한 자신이 누구인지 솔직하게 밝혀야 합니다. 그녀는 자신의 민족을 구하는 데 필요한 영향력을 갖기 위해 유대인으로서의 정체성을 밝혀야 합니다. 그리고 부름을 받지 않고 왕에게 나아가면 죽임을 당할 수도 있다는 것 또한 알고 있습니다.

“요즘과 같은 시대에” 지금이야말로 에스더가 행동하기에 딱 좋은 순간입니다. 그녀는 이스라엘 백성들에게 자신을 위해 -그리고 자신과 함께 - 금식하라는 메시지를 보냅니다. 그리고 죽음의 위험도 감수합니다. 결국 에스더는 자신의 용기와 하나님의 정의를 통해 자신의 백성을 구하게 됩니다. 에스더는 자신의 특권적인 지위와 재치, 정체성을 이용하였고, 큰 위협을 감수했습니다.

### 오늘날의 특권

요즘은 정신 건강 분야에서 대학원 학위를 가지고 있는 것이 중요한 특권이 됩니다. 이는 사람

들의 치유에 기여하는 데 사용할 수 있는 일련의 역량을 제공하며, 우리 자신의 부나 지위를 높이는 데에도 사용될 수 있습니다.

미국심리학회(American Psychological Association)에 따르면 2021년 미국에는 약 130,000명의 심리학자가 있었습니다.<sup>10</sup> 그리고 같은 해 노동통계국에서는 약 65,000명의 결혼 및 가족치료사가 있다고 추정했습니다.<sup>11</sup> 거의 3억 3천 2백만 명의 미국 인구에 대해 이는 1,702명당 심리학자 또는 결혼 및 가족치료사가 1명 있는 셈입니다.

전 세계적으로 100,000명당 약 13명의 정신 건강 종사자가 있는 것으로 추산됩니다. 세계에는 그보다 비율이 더 적은 지역들이 있습니다. 예를 들어 동남아시아에는 100,000명당 2.8명의 정신 건강 종사자가 있고, 아프리카 대륙에는 100,000명당 1.6명의 정신 건강 종사자가 있습니다.<sup>12</sup>

이를 생각해 보면 정신 건강 분야에서 대학원 학위를 갖고 있다는 것만으로도 상당한 특권이 있다는 것을 인정해야 합니다. 그 다음으로 해야 하는 질문은 우리 주변과 전 세계의 긴급한 필요를 해결하기 위해 우리의 특권을 사용하기 위해 어떤 위협을 감수하고 있는가입니다. 우리 각자는 특별한 영향력과 장벽을 가지고 특정한 장소에 놓여 있습니다. 우리는 주변의 목소리에 귀를 기울여야 합니다. 그것은 고통에 더 가까이 다가가거나 억압받는 곳을 무너뜨리는 데 도움을 줄 것을 요청하는 목소리입니다.

그리고 우리가 우리의 정체성대로 살아갈 때 어떤 방법으로 더 많은 영향력을 가질 수 있을까요? 우리의 기독교 신앙, 그리고 영성과 종교에 대한 성찰을 치료에 적용하는 능력도 특권입니다. 심리학자의 80%는 정신 건강 치료에서 종교와 영성을 다루는 방법에 대한 구체적인 교육을 받지 못했다고 보고합니다.<sup>13</sup> 그러나 종교와 영성은 미국과 전 세계에서 정신 건강에 기여하는 핵심 자원입니다.

에스더는 우리에게 진정한 자아가 되어 정신 건강 위기를 해결하는 일에 우리의 모든 특권을 사용할 것을 상기시켜줍니다. 믿음의 사람은 지역 사회 신앙 공동체 지도자들이나 기독교 비영리 단체들과 연결될 수 있는 기회를 얻을 수 있습니다. 그러나 비판이나 양극화된 관점으로 인해 피해를 입은 사람들과 기관으로부터 도전이 제기될 수도 있습니다. 그러나 우리는 여전히 하나님의 희망을 구현하고 우리가 가진 모든 것을 가지고 치유를 향한 일을 하도록 부름 받았습니.

### 누가복음과 정신 건강 내 창의성

누가복음의 이야기는 절망을 다른 방식으로 보여줍니다. 중풍병자의 친구들은 그가 낮기를 간절히 바랐습니다. 그들은 그 친구를 예수께로 데려가고 싶었습니다. 하지만 그 공간은 바리새인과 율법교사들로 붐볐기 때문에(여기서 잠시 비유를 생각해 보시기 바랍니다), 그들이 야끼는 친구, 즉 예수님의 손길이 필요한 사람을 데려갈 공간이 없었습니다. 그들은 친구를 문 안으로 데려가려고 했지만 너무 붐볐습니다.

그래서 그들은 "상자 밖으로" 나가기로 결정했습니다. 그리고 자신들이 들어본 적이 있는 이 치료사에게 친구를 데려갈 자신들만의 방법을 찾기로 결정했습니다. 그들은 친구를 지붕으로 데리고 올라가서 기와를 제거하고 예수님의 발 앞에 친구를 내립니다. 저는 이 이야기를 듣거나 읽을 때마다 예수님께서 이 일이 일어났을 때 크게 웃으셨을 것이라고 상상합니다.

놀랍게도 예수님께서서는 이 친구들의 절실한 믿음을 보시고 중풍병자에게 “네 죄 사함을 받았느니라”고 말씀하십니다. 이는 바리새인들과 서기관들 사이에서 상당한 갈등과 비판으로 이어졌고, 예수님은 궁극적으로 그 사람에게 “일어나 침상을 가지고 집으로 가라”고 명령하심으로써 죄를 용서하고 치유하는 능력을 보여 주십니다. 치유와 회복은 서로 얽혀 있습니다. 친구들의 필사적인 믿음과 창조적인 일(어쩌면 짜증나고 지저분한 일)을 하려는 그들의 의지가 그들



의 친구에게 자유와 치유를 가져다주었습니다.

### 오늘날의 창의성

폴리의 심리 및 결혼과가족치료 대학부는 항상 고정관념을 깨는 곳이었습니다. 우리는 1972년 미국 심리학회에서 인정된 심리학과 신학을 통합하는 최초의 프로그램이었습니다. 우리는 학생들이 신학과 심리학 분야 사이의 이론적 관계를 이해하는 역량을 개발하도록 가르치고 있습니다. 학생들이 이러한 이해를 치료실에 가져오도록 훈련시키고, 인간의 영적 형성을 강조하며, 결혼과 가족치료학 교수진이 격려하는 4가지 임상 덕목, 즉 따뜻한 관심, 희망, 겸손, 그리고 안식일의 휴식을 개발하도록 가르칩니다.

우리 교수진은 치료실을 벗어나 독특한 학문 분야에서도 앞장서고 있습니다 : 카메론 리(Cameron Lee)의 청소년 신앙 발달에 대한 연구는 폴리 청소년연구소(Fuller Youth Institute)의 끈끈한 믿음 운동(Sticky Faith movement)을 발전시켰습니다. 그리고 변영과 영적 건강에 대한 팸 킹(Pam King)의 연구가 있고, 시양 양 탠(Siang-Yang Tan)의 평신도 상담은 많은 사람들에게 치유를 가져왔습니다. 브래드 스트론(Brad Strawn)과 워렌 브라운(Warren Brown)은 구체화된 인지가 예배의 구성 요소임을 고려하도록 교회에게 힘을 실어 주고 있으며, 아치 하트(Arch Hart)는 목회자의 안녕을 지원하기 위해 많은 책을 썼습니다. 테리 하그레이브(Terry Hargrave)와 샤론 하그레이브(Sharon Hargrave)는 관계적 치유와 회복력의 모델을 전국의 커플, 신앙 지도자들, 그리고 팀들에게 가져왔습니다. 알렉시스 애버네티(Alexis Abernethy)는 예배의 심리학에 대한 획기적인 연구를 하고 있으며, 르셋 로하스 플로레스(Liseth Rojas-Flores)는 World Vision International과 협력하여 14개국에서 부모 훈련 모델을 평가하고 있습니다. 이러한 프로젝트와 연구는 심리학 및 결혼과가족치료 대학부에서 진행되어 왔고 현재 진행 중인 연구의 맛보기일 뿐입니다.

아마도 이 누가복음 말씀에서 제가 가장 좋아하는 부분은 사람들이 경외심에 가득 차서 “오늘 우리가 이상한 일을 보았다”라고 말하는 마지막 구절입니다. 그렇습니다. 그것은 그리스도께서 하신 일입니다. 그러나 그것은 친구들이 한 일이기도 합니다.

계속해서 정신 건강 돌봄의 고정관념의 틀에서 벗어납시다. 우리는 풍부한 학문과 이론에 뿌리를 내릴 수 있으며 이러한 아이디어를 새로운 방식으로 우리 지역 사회에 가져올 수 있습니다. 훌륭한 치료법은 항상 중요한 자원이지만, 치유에 기여하기 위해 우리의 기술을 사용할 수 있는 다른 방법은 무엇이 있을까요?

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서는 우리 프로그램을 졸업한 결혼과 가족치료사, 심리학자, 학자, 연구원, 컨설턴트들을 어떻게 사용하실 수 있습니까?

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## HOPE AND MUTUALITY IN THE SPIRIT

Amos Yong

*An interview with Amos Yong, professor of theology and mission, by Editor in Chief Jerome Blanco.*

**JEROME BLANCO: What do ministry leaders need to understand about the ways the church yearns for hope today? Can you describe the the landscape of hope or hopelessness we’re currently in?**

**AMOS YOUNG:** 2024 being a presidential election year reminds us of how divided we are, not only as a nation but as a church. It’s not only the partisan disagreements but the rhetoric of demonization and the praxis of otherization that we have experienced and are caught up in. Beyond “red states” and “blue states,” and by extension “red churches” and “blue churches,” we also have congregations arguing internally and dis-fellowshipping each other because of our differences. Underneath it all, in our electronic age, news comes from so many directions, and our social media silos have created cocoons of dis- and misinformation so there is no consensus on what is true. It would seem as if the time has come indeed “when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they

will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths” (2 Tim 4:3-4). In this climate, which many believe will persist through at least another presidential administration and therefore through the rest of this decade (if not beyond), we might all be despairing instead.

**JB: How might leaders sustain their own hope as they engage in the work of sharing Christ’s hope with others in such a time?**

**AY:** When considering our condition, my own hope is sustainable only in communities of difference. I am compelled into solidarity with others who are less privileged and fortunate, beginning first in Christian worship and fellowship and then growing from there to friendship, so that my life and perspective can be enriched by others who differ from me experientially, ethnically, racially, economically, socially, and politically. Fellowship and worship can then also perhaps open up to rereading Scripture together, studying God’s Word amid our differences, first to nourish our

spirits and then perhaps also to guide our postures and choices. As a theologian, I believe hope arises in and through the perennial Christian practices of fellowship, worship, friendship, and Scripture reading.

**JB: How might churches step further into this work of carrying Christ’s hope into the world?**

**AY:** As such hope continues to be forged in our disparate communities of faith, perhaps we can also look for opportunities to accompany those who hold vastly different theological and political commitments than us. By this, I mean creating space for mutual presence, so we can walk with others in and through the twists and turns of our personal lives against the backdrop of the ecclesial and national body politic. This accompaniment of course cannot be forced but presumes some kind of mutual attractiveness and invitation. Such walking together might bring about the bearing of reciprocal but also dissonant witness. Yet that is what happened on the Day of Pentecost: a kind of comprehension across languages about God’s deed of power yet an amazement and confusion

regarding what was happening and what it all meant. God’s hope here arrives out of being in the Spirit with others and allowing that mutuality to bear witness to the living Christ afresh for our time. ■



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## AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE OF CLIMATE CHANGE: AGAINST FEAR, SURVIVALISM, AND OVER-SECURITIZATION

Kyong-Jin Lee

**A**s a scholar of biblical studies who has been researching the underlying ontological and epistemological issues regarding current approaches to climate change in international relations over the last few years, I hope to invite church leaders to consider some current strategies in dealing with the challenge of global warming and to start a conversation on an alternative mindset within the church.

Climate politics today is strongly driven by an impetus to control, manage, and govern crises and risks, and thus the emphasis is on securitization. What is at stake is our use of apocalyptic rhetoric in climate discourse, which has the potential to develop an antagonistic understanding of nature and climate change, push the logic of risk and threat to macro-securitization, and shift political powers from individual agency to international institutions and governments. Climate change-related problems are undeniable and serious. To be clear, technology and institutions can be instrumental in God's healing and restoration of hope in this world. This essay interrogates the dominant survivalist mindset in the mainstream society, not completely absent among Christians, which believes that stronger crisis control and management by world powers can grant people security, well-being, and life. This discussion is intended to underscore that the fundamental commandment that Christ followers be the salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16) requires initially a critical understanding and engagement with a significant issue at a local and global level. As Christian believers, we face a generational task to consider how to formulate a distinctively biblical and theological response to climate change. But the first step at this critical juncture is to inform ourselves on the nature of the challenge.

### The Language of Apocalypse and a Rhetoric of Doom

To convey how rapidly anthropogenic activities are driving the Earth system to what many believe to be tipping points—"large-scale discontinuities"—in the climate system,<sup>1</sup> climate experts and average citizens commonly utilize dramatic metaphors and scenarios of emergency, destruction, catastrophe, and extinction to describe the devastating effects of deforestation, hurricanes, floods, and other disasters that seem to be accelerating because of global warming. Today's overwhelmingly cataclysmic environmental images warn that living organisms on this planet, including the human race, have a very limited time to prepare a response to an impending crisis. Depictions of life in the Anthropocene envision a future of environmental catastrophe, characterized by despair, chaos, and annihilation. According to this perspective, the future does not offer much hope, and people cannot do much to heal the already ailing planet threatened with gradual extinction.

Scholars from various disciplines have noted that critiques of environmental insecurity overuse alarmist and apocalyptic language, generating fear-driven interpretations and implications of the image of an endangered planet. Misperception and mismanagement of global catastrophic risk, such as climate change, can bring about extreme measures in countering the impending crisis in its apocalyptic possibilities. Today, common metaphors adopted to describe environmental challenges are those of "war" and "enemy," expressing climate change as an apocalypse, a well-known biblical image to signaling an imminent and unstoppable danger and threat. However, despite the ubiquitous use





of apocalyptic imagery in global climate change discourse, not many people are aware of the impact apocalyptic language and imageries have on debates about global climate change as well as the consequential connection between fear and the over-securitization of climate change. The logic of apocalypse applied to climate politics puts in motion “a ‘political eschatology’ that is ‘concerned with the end of things’ and gives rise to a modern politics of security that ‘derives from the positive exigencies of government and rule that arise in restricting that end.’”<sup>2</sup>

The fact that an epidemic of rational and irrational fear, terror, and insecurity in global politics propels efforts to anticipate and govern terrorism, pandemics, and climate challenge is well acknowledged by social theorists and political theorists alike. Societal fears and anxieties are known to be politically manipulated and become economic and security policies and institutions that otherwise would have been rejected.<sup>3</sup> A pervasive use of the theologically infused political rhetoric of doom in the global climate discourse testifies to the permanence of political theology, as reactionary politics of fear personify climate change as a deadly enemy. Yet specifically in the climate discourse, the question of how notions of the theologico-political—specifically the apocalyptic imagination—serves to dominate, produce, and reproduce politics and policies of insecurity and security seems to be overlooked. The trap of excessive, disruptive, and fear-mongering practices and policies that continue to

concentrate and centralize fear and power result in an increasing macro-securitization around the world. This phenomenon is clearly seen in the ongoing securitization of climate change.

The introduction to “Climate Change and International Responses Increasing Challenges to US National Security through 2040,” issued by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence, contains dire warnings concerning the security issues that will emerge because of climate change. It states,

*We assess that climate change will increasingly exacerbate risks to US national security interests as the physical impacts increase and geopolitical tensions mount about how to respond to the challenge. Global momentum is growing for more ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reductions, but current policies and pledges are insufficient to meet the Paris Agreement goals. Countries are arguing about who should act sooner and competing to control the growing clean energy transition. Intensifying physical effects will exacerbate geopolitical flashpoints, particularly after 2030, and key countries and regions will face increasing risks of instability and need for humanitarian assistance.*<sup>4</sup>

Climate impact is expected to raise geopolitical tensions as countries argue about how to accelerate and what constitutes a fair portion of responsibility that must be assigned to each country to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also, as extreme effects of climate change threaten the already limited natural resources such as food and water, cross-border conflicts will only intensify because of growing migration and unilateral geoengineering. Particularly, developing countries are in

more vulnerable positions as they are not able to adapt to the physical changes caused by climate change and ensuing corollary effects such as growing and potential internal instability and violent conflicts. Simply put, global climate change today is seen as a security threat, and the range of security issues continues to expand—classified into national, human, international, and ecological security.<sup>5</sup>

By framing climate change in the language of existential threat, risk, and otherwise apocalyptic catastrophe, a dominant response to the challenge of the Anthropocene in recent ecological politics and policy has been to treat climate change as a security issue in need of governance, management, and control.<sup>6</sup> Exaggerated paranoia about climate-induced risks and dangers overstates the likelihood and calls for precautionary policies that may be characterized as overreactions.<sup>7</sup> This is in no way to minimize the many effects of climate change, which exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts in international relations and domestic politics.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, one cannot gainsay the legitimacy and value of research and policies concerned with environmental security. However, it is important to recognize that, since the end of the Cold War era, the definition of security has continued to proliferate.<sup>9</sup> This phenomenon is particularly extensive and controversial in the research and debate on the link among environmental change, conflict, and security.<sup>10</sup>

Objectively speaking, the future of climate is unknown and unknowable, yet climate politics heavily relies on apocalyptic imaginaries to mobilize public opinions and policies to advance new and existing climate imperatives. Emergent threats and risks are complex, uncertain, and po-

tentially catastrophic. Studies show that urgent cries of climate apocalypse are, in fact, not as effective as one might think in propelling citizens to change their behavior. Apocalyptic discursive practices fuel politics of fear, urgency, and exceptionality by transforming climate change into an unknowable and unquantifiable sort of threat and risk that must be dealt with through aggressive reactive policies and an antagonist understanding of security.

Risk management, preventive approaches, and policies that appeal to security are increasingly called for in climate discourse.<sup>11</sup> Julia Trombetta, a researcher in politics and environment, observes that “[m]any appeals to environmental security have been made not only with the intent of prioritizing issues but also with that of transforming the logic of security and the practices associated with it.”<sup>12</sup> On the whole, even when climate change rhetoric does not use explicitly apocalyptic language, an antagonist framing of climate change is considered to have far-reaching implications in the global security agenda. The concept and treatment of climate change within the framework of security produces and reproduces the problematic understanding of nature as an enemy that unleashes chaos and destruction. Studies show that arguments that push for security and governance typically speak of “catastrophes as types of events that remain shrouded in uncertainty, confound expectation and challenge the predictive, preventive and protective knowledge of security experts.”<sup>13</sup> Natural fearfulness underpins an anticipation of the end of the world. Fear and hopelessness spread as apocalyptic environmentalism impacts core metaphysical assumptions and political actions. Apocalyptic forms of environmentalism lead to some of the most

contentious aspects of social and political change. Ill-founded notions of the apocalyptic in the climate discourse can lead to a “deadlock or a sense that there are intractable obstacles to taking action.”<sup>14</sup> Doomist interpretations of climate change may promote philosophical arguments that it is too late to take action and defer responsibility to technocracy and bureaucracy from engaging personally with a challenge that affects social justice and economic costs. Hopelessness and deferral of responsibility caused by apocalyptic climate discourses, which highlight a catastrophic endpoint, in the end legitimize and authorize all-powerful governance structures and support arguments that push for taking aggressive measures of control and security in the name of efficiency.

### An Alternative, Hopeful Narrative and an Inaugurated Eschatology

Clearly, there is need for critical rethinking and reorientation of environmental security discourses that assume and problematize climate change as a security issue.<sup>15</sup> Again Trombetta explains, “Security is about survival, urgency, and emergency. It allows for exceptional measures, the breaking of otherwise binding rules and governance by decrees rather than by democratic decisions. Moreover, security implies a ‘decisionist’ attitude, which emphasizes the importance of reactive, emergency measures. This set of practices is not necessarily codified nor can it be identified by specific rules.”<sup>16</sup> It must be stressed that the extreme language of doom can only hope for human survival, not a flourishing of the cosmos. The climate change-security relationship is concerned only with existence and extinction. Climate change is considered to be a problem multiplier as environmental

and security issues interlock in the context of military security, energy security, and various forms of human security. Securitization of global environmental policy mainly anticipates worst possible scenarios, and thus it is driven by the logic that mass destruction will require crisis management: protection, perception, and action to govern threats and contingencies.<sup>17</sup> This alarmist and exceptionalist stance is unfortunately not confined only to the discourse of the Anthropocene in this modern age.

Scholars have pointed out that the logic of apocalypse suffers from the contradiction of systematic ignorance that influences the typical attitude characterizing climate policy—the will to know the future.<sup>18</sup> The vagueness and systematic lack of knowledge that veils the danger of climate change only exacerbate the condition of ignorance and perception of apocalypse. In this line of thinking, the antagonism of climate change animating the apocalypse is bound to translate into over-securitization that normalizes and justifies exceptional politics and security to control and govern catastrophe at all times. As mentioned above, this kind of approach gives free rein to an attitude and discourse of permanent risk management that thrives on fear and insecurity. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben writes, “Messianic time is *the time that time takes to come to an end*” (italics original).<sup>19</sup> He challenges his readers not to renege on their individual ethical and political vocation to an integral transformation of the self and ways of living in this penultimate and messianic time—the now time.

The warning of the tipping point from climate scientists and our neighbors who have lost homes and livelihood to the devastating effects of global warming indicates that now is the penultimate





hour when we must stop leaning on the transnational institutions of power and knowledge for salvation. We must reject passivity and disavow any deferral of hope and possibilities in exchange for security called survival. Technocracy- and bureaucracy-driven modernity dictates that the logic of apocalypse that frames current approaches to climate change requires that we surrender historical action to the powers of this world. An alternative and hopeful narrative of climate change can rise above the discourse of limits and mere existence and instead recognize that we live in the “penultimate [realities] which make up our everyday human and social condition”<sup>20</sup> and push us to strive for an integral transformation of the self and of ways of living wherever we have been placed in a time such as this.

Faced with such a dire reality, where shall Christian people turn their eyes and minds? In John 17:13–16 Jesus prays for his disciples. Here, all Christians are called to be “in the world” but not “of the world.” This attitude is directly pertinent to the situation we are experiencing with the challenge of climate change. There are woeful adversity, suffering, and empirical facts to corroborate the existential fear, anxiety, and desire to securitize the future against the climate-induced catastrophes. Additionally, as Christian people who confess that we belong to the holy catholic church—the true Christian church of all times and all places—we are called to compassion with our sisters and brothers in Christ around the world who are directly in the crossways of the climate change-related humanitarian emergencies.

While acknowledging the legitimate value of the interconnection between the environ-

ment and security, it is important to stress that the church’s climate change discourse does not have to lean on the hopeless imageries of catastrophe, crisis, or emergency to proffer effective and compelling visions for life in the face of the effects of climate change. Readers of the prophetic literature in Scripture may remember that writers from various walks of life and different sociopolitical and climate-related hardships preached fiercely about both bewildering catastrophes and confident hope. Solely going by human security concerns, power resources will continue to shift around the global geopolitical scene while claims to material resources only intensify. Christians prayerfully living in this world, but not of this world, can and must rise above a mindset of insecurity and securitization.

Attitudes toward climate change within the church are not too different from the rest. They are split between “not yet” and “here already”—a cleavage that stems from the tension in the inaugurated eschatology of “already but not yet.”<sup>21</sup> Parts of the Global North perceive the climate crisis as “not yet” here, while for many in the Global South it is “here already.” A reframed apocalyptic approach to the conditions, normative sources, and implications of the climate crisis will show that the doctrine of Christ’s incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection juxtaposed with the universality of the climate crisis can solve the conundrum of the Christian “inaugurated eschatology” as manifested broadly in the notion of time by the secular world.<sup>22</sup> According to the inaugurated eschatology, on the one hand, the end times were already inaugurated at the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Hence, humanity can access the kingdom promises right now. On the other hand, the world is living in the end times, and it awaits the imminent return of

Christ when the eventual consummation of God’s promises will happen. The two-sided reality is divided between a faction that embraces the belief that humanity is now living in the latter days vs. those who believe that the telos of all history is a separate era located somewhere in the future. In dealing with climate change, an eschatological belief for the future must be firmly rooted in the present depth of human existence and what God is doing now and here in collaboration with his children. In the words of the systematic theologian Jürgen Moltmann, history “becomes the field in which the heavenly lordship of Christ is disclosed in Church and sacrament. In place of the eschatological ‘not yet’ (*noch nicht*) we have a cultic ‘now only’ (*nur noch*), and this becomes the key-signature of history post-Christum. It is understandable that this disclosure of the eternal, heavenly lordship of Christ can then be regarded as a continuation of his incarnation.”<sup>23</sup> New creation is cosmic and not just an individual hope for salvation. “The present ‘day of salvation’ is a temporal anticipation of the eschatological moment.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, the belief in eschatology compels the church to be first informed and engage prayerfully and creatively with our Creator and Redeemer God’s ongoing project to heal creation in the context in which we each have been planted. ■

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## HEALING THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ECONOMICS

Wayne Park

“Something’s broken,” I said out loud. I was used to a few days with triple-digit temperatures over a typical summer in Houston, but we were experiencing the strange phenomenon of seemingly endless consecutive days in an unbearable swelter—45 days, according to a recent report.<sup>1</sup> In my heat-induced frustration, I wanted to blame somebody, but I knew that fingers were pointing at my own city—Houston, the energy capital of the world. Climate activists rail against the industry that has benefited my home city with jobs, growth, development, medicine, philanthropy, the arts, and overall quality of life. And yet here we are suffering in the heat we’ve created ourselves.

Has the energy industry given us far more evil than good?

This is an honest question I have had to wrestle with as I’ve studied the 150-year-old history of oil. From its beginnings in providing a “clear, strong, brilliant light of day, to which darkness is no party,” extending the work day and exponential increase in productivity sparking the Industrial Revolution, to its impacts on transportation and mobility, oil has become the lifeblood and circulation system of the world, resulting in greater connectivity and globalization.<sup>2</sup> It has connected us, empowered us, kept the lights on for us, and improved the quality of life for countless humans over the last century, even as it has had its checkered past as well.

So how do we reconcile the historical good produced by oil with its impacts for ill? And how do we, as Christians, respond to inexorable global growth and development while holding on to the value of stewardship of the earth and creation?

Over my many years in Houston, I have befriended more than one engineer. In fact, the city is full of them, to the point where, in my view, it takes on the character of engineers. I have speculated that if Houston were on the Enneagram, it would be a 5. We are a city that, when posed with a problem, innovates and builds a solution. This is why Texas has been given the “can-do” moniker. To vilify an industry, and implicitly a region, as the culprit for our current climate woes can potentially marginalize a necessary and essential ally in the fight against climate change. In fact, I would go so far as to say that our challenge is not exclusively a scientific problem nor a problem of ideals but rather an engineering problem to solve.<sup>3</sup> I would combine that with economic policy. In other words, you need us to be part of the solution.

It’s the power piece that people don’t like. Big oil is synonymous with big power. And that smacks of all that we as Christians are suspicious and wary of. Rather than engage the problem at scale, many of us would favor instead an individualistic approach, like choosing an EV, or switching to solar. Strange, that while our theological proclivities on other matters are more inclined toward communal solutions and less favorable toward individualism, in the case of climate change we seem to prefer the view that the aggregate of our individual actions will result in the sum of reduced carbon emissions on a global scale. Some disagree.<sup>4</sup> Why do we eschew the corporations and mechanisms that can attack the problem at scale, moving the needle at more than the imperceptible drop of clear water in a salty ocean?

At Fuller Texas, we are working toward creating a Doctor of

Global Leadership program focused on these solutions, an Energy and Environment cohort, designed for Christians in the energy, science, and policy sectors to come together in pursuing non-industry-skeptic solutions. We are already building relationships with people at mid-level companies as well as the majors and learning about solutions built at scale, such as direct-air capture, something that can’t be accomplished without large corporations and government fiscal policy. It requires an engineering mind, or rather many tens of thousands of them put together, to facilitate solutions that make more than a tiny fraction of an impact. Solutions at scale. One can accuse such large corporations of “greenwashing.” But one cannot deny that without them solutions cannot be engineered at the scale needed to make a sizeable and noticeable reduction in global emissions and CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

What would it look like if Christians eschewed reactionary responses and led the way in solution-building toward God’s mission of hope and healing in the world? I am of the view that we can fix what’s broken. But it requires all of us—individuals and corporations alike—galvanized with a sense of agency. We don’t have to vilify or disparage one or the other. It takes individuals to dream big and corporations to make those dreams a reality. ■

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## THE GRACE OF NOT KNOWING

Andrea Cammarota

### A Childhood Memory

This is a story about not knowing. And about how, out of a place of not knowing, one can emerge healed, hopeful, and postured to offer the same to others.

In recent months, I’ve been asked more than once about the various hats I currently wear. What’s funny is that as a Christian woman at the fabulous age of 50, I do not play the typical caretaking roles that many expect. I am not a wife or a mother—at least not to any human children. I do not take care of elderly parents, my own having long passed away. I am a single, Black/Afro-Latina, female pastor, spiritual director, and seminary chaplain, and a fur-baby mama to two occasionally demanding cats and one regularly needy dog. My life is divided between my home, my house church, and my campus life, along with the questions that each of these generate. (At home: Is everyone healthy? Who needs what? Will the ends meet? At the house church: Who’s on this Sunday? How can we grow? Why aren’t we growing? Whose idea was this? In campus life: What week are we on? Who is my next appointment? How can we reach more staff? Do they know we are here for them?) So, while I ultimately do a lot of “taking care of,” I don’t do so in traditional or expected ways.

When my many roles come up in conversation, I’m often asked how they are distinct from each other and how they are alike. Margaret Guenther’s metaphor of midwife, offered in her book *Holy Listening*, is a fitting descriptor of the ways I see these roles overlapping and how the Spirit moves in and through them to offer hope and healing. But my journey did not begin with this metaphor in mind. Looking back, what stands out to me is that, at the start

of it all, I knew nothing. And it’s been on my journey from knowing nothing to making meaning a step at a time that God has birthed hope and healing in and through me.

At the beginning of 2019, I had just left the church that had been my home for over a decade. I was leaving with wounds that were in the process of healing and with a distinct sense of release from God that there was something more in store for me. It seemed an odd time to leave, having just fought my way to being ordained, but the release was clear, because the fight had been arduous and I was ready to go. So off I went, with no plan and no real direction.

The first place I landed was a local Vineyard church, which was familiar territory because Anaheim Vineyard was where I first met Jesus, and because my sister and brother-in-deed pastor a Vineyard church. I sat there for a couple of months, happily anonymous, no one knowing who I was. It was especially luxurious having no one know that I was ordained, or that I had a Fuller degree, or that I worked (at that time) as a full-time hospital chaplain. I was a lazy pew member for the first time ever—and it was wonderful.

But soon enough, I had to start talking to folks and getting to know people, and next thing I knew, the Holy Spirit was (inevitably) prompting me to participate. My little hiatus was over. While I didn’t go into full-blown volunteer mode, I found myself in a season of discerning what was next and sensing again that God was pointing toward something new. I could have sworn I heard some prompting around church planting, but since I didn’t know anything about that, I busily ignored anything in



that arena. Surely Jesus wasn't suggesting that I should plant a church, since that was completely outside my expertise. Swiping left on that, I moved on.

I had begun to train as a spiritual director and that felt life giving. It was a calling that overlapped with the work of chaplaincy in many ways, but also aligned with the contemplative practices I had been growing in over the past decade. Suddenly the Ignatian spirituality that was central to my own relationship with Jesus was teaming up with the listening and presence practices of chaplaincy. These things made sense! Swipe right on that, I thought, and nodded approvingly at Jesus—who smiled knowingly. Perhaps too knowingly.

Which brings us to January 2020. Having for some time ignored the perpetual nudges—nay, billboards—from the Holy Spirit to lean into church planting, I relented by registering for Vineyard's church planting conference. I was attending in order to "check off the box" since, in my heart, I had already decided that the fundraising, big-church-launch model was not for me. I had no interest in the amount of glad-handing and overhead required for that sort of church plant. Not only was I not gifted in these ways, but it was not the church model that I felt was life-giving for me any longer.

I'd been moving away from the preacher-centered model of Sunday service and longing for something different. A place where people could encounter Jesus for themselves, personally—the Word, Jesus, not someone else's words. I had heard of a few contemplative churches and wondered at the possibilities, but I attended the conference, just wanting my ticket punched so I could show God that I came, I saw, and I'm not planting a big church.

Of course, this is the story about how I ended up with a house church. The conference turned out to be much different than I'd expected. Keynote speaker after keynote speaker, and one breakout session after another, all talked about how microchurches and house churches are a growing movement in the church planting world. My eyes were opened to a world of possibility, and I distinctly remember thinking to myself, "Well, that I could do."

The full vision for what would become Neighborhood Abbey Vineyard wasn't born there and then, but it was the beginning of my heart being open to something new. The dreams I had for a contemplative church seemed possible, and there was room in the church planting world for my own giftings. What was born, or perhaps reborn, at that conference was my own capacity to hope again and to allow space for God's ability to surprise me. Not knowing left me able to be surprised by the work of hope and healing God wanted to do in me—and, in the chapter that has followed, through me.

As pastor of a house church in its nascent stage (that is, experimental and optimistic), I'm hopeful that removing the pastor from the center and replacing the focus on Jesus will allow us to stay mindful of these sorts of truths: that God is always present and waiting for us, even (or perhaps especially) in our not knowing. We keep rhythms of spiritual practices in community as a way of fostering formation, by providing what each person needs to better know God at the place they currently are. Every Sunday is different, which we have seen modeled by other contemplative communities here in the States and in Canada. We begin our month with *Lectio Divina*, then

cycle through Centering Prayer/Breath Prayers/*Visio Divina*. One Sunday, we have a message or sermon of just 15 or 20 minutes, and the responsibility for this is shared across the leaders.

All of this is so unexpected. And honestly, I still don't know much. Will it work? Is it working? How will I know? I still carry so many questions as I go. What has become clear to me is that God is in the process and about the process, as much as or more than the results. My hope is that it won't fail—yet even my own history tells me that failures are simply wisdom with a less attractive label. And isn't wisdom something to hope for, to be glad for, despite the packaging?

Encouraging people to embrace not knowing is also powerful in my ministry of spiritual direction. Working through sticking points that many thoughtful seekers find themselves in while in relationship with God, attempting to get through to the other side of a thing—or developing an image of God that is broader, freer, looser, more loving than what they've known before—is a process. It's a messy, meandering, winding road of not knowing—and it's the road where God meets us.

What I love about being a spiritual director is that I feel no pressure to know. I am simply present to listen and observe, not to have answers. There's great freedom

in this. What's marvelous too is that the freedom is both theirs and mine. Session by session over the course of time I have the privilege of watching and waiting as the Spirit does her work on behalf of a certain directee—healing an old wound, for example. Yet in that process, I notice also, without fail, that witnessing someone else's healing allows a little overflow in my direction. The messy and communal work of God in a space of unknowing brings a healing to all of us, never just one of us.

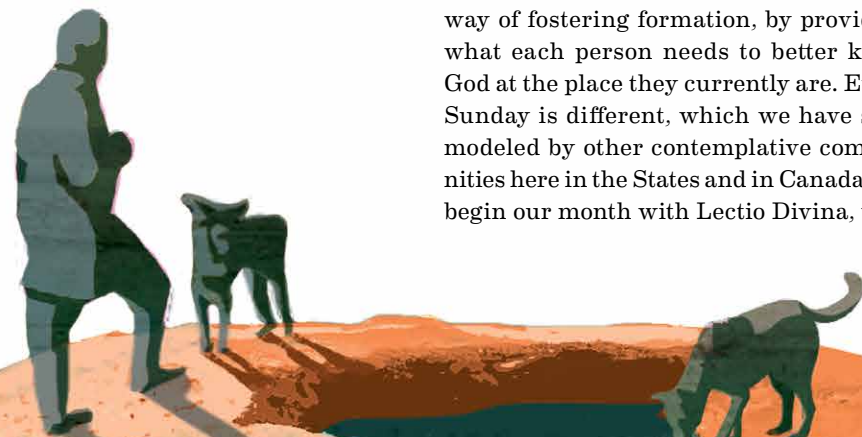
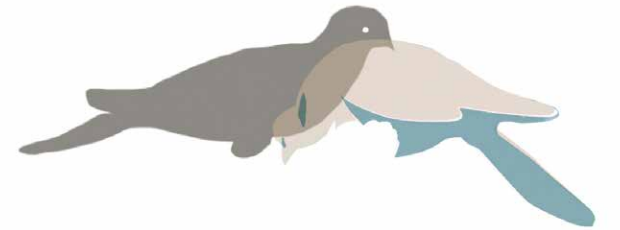
And so it comes full circle: God provides hope and healing to all in intimate spaces where seekers enter with questions, with their not knowing. Sometimes, we don't even know the questions we have; we just know we are broken. Other times, we find ourselves asking a question that ultimately isn't the one that God is looking to resolve.

These days, I lead in a couple of these spaces. One, where I light a candle, read a psalm or poem, meet with a directee one on one, and wait to see how the Spirit shows up. Another, in a slightly larger space, where I light a candle and a group of 10 or so, ages 10 to 71, forms an unlikely house church with two cats and a dog. A welcome prayer is read, a gathering song is sung, the Holy Spirit is invited to speak to us, and we wait in hopeful, silent anticipation for what she might say this week.

The thing is, in both spaces, we never know. Our hopes, our plans, our healing. We hold it all loosely. But we also hold it together.

It's very easy to confuse contemplative practice with a "just me and Jesus" stillness journey into some remote, mountain location. But whether done one on one or in community, formational spiritual practices like centering prayer or *Lectio Divina* or Examen don't survive alone in the wild. While each of these spiritual practices can be done, and ought to be done, as part of one's own daily or weekly disciplines, they are not meant to be always done alone. Alone, it becomes easy to question whether or not one is hearing from God. On one's own, there's no one to gift you confirmation or even challenge you with an observation that may bring up a question that you had yet to consider.

Contemplative practice should draw us into community, which draws us toward the Spirit with her ever-guiding arms and deep wisdom; toward Jesus, as he gladly journeys alongside us in every human high and human low; toward God our Mother and Father, our eternal Parent, the true director and pastor of our lives, lovingly rooting us on as we figure out the way. And as we lean into the mystery of it all, we slowly discover that perhaps this journey is less about knowing and more about simply going. ■







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## FLOURISHING LIFE IN HEALTH AND SICKNESS: JESUS' COMPASSIONATE HEALING MINISTRY FOR THE FRACTURED WORLD OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

*This article was originally delivered as a sermon during Fuller Seminary's 2021 Missiology Lectures.*

*Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. (Matt 4:23–25)*

In his book, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, the great German theologian Jürgen Moltmann invites us to consider what is missing in our credal statements about Christ. This is quite surprising in light of how much the creeds detail about Christ: There are statements from his pre-existence, virginal conception, suffering, death on the cross, all the way to his glorious ascension. So, is there something missing? Moltmann's response to his own question is this: Between the statements, "born of the Virgin Mary" and "suffered under Pontius Pilate," there is merely a comma—the implication being that what happened between Jesus' miraculous birth and his sorrowful last days of suffering leading up to the violent death would not be worth repeating in the credal confession!<sup>1</sup>

The theological-pastoral point is this: How different it is with the Gospels, particularly with the three Synoptics. By far the most space is devoted to Jesus' earthly life and ministry, in other words, to the "space" occupied in the creeds only by the comma! Consider Matthew, the Gospel from where our text comes. Between the narrative of

virginal conception in the first chapter and the condemnation by Pontius Pilate in the next to last chapter, there are no less than 27 long chapters telling the story of Jesus' life. Indeed, for the Gospel writers, Jesus' earthly life had a profound theological, missiological, and pastoral significance—without in any way undermining the significance of the suffering, cross, and resurrection. The suffering of Christ was aptly captured, but only after the bulk of Jesus' story had been told.

What would happen if, as Moltmann heuristically invites us to imagine, Christians dwelled on the meaning of Jesus' earthly life and ministry when reciting the creeds? What if, every time we gather for the service to recite the creed, following the clause, "conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary," we continued:

*Baptized by John the Baptist,  
filled with the Holy Spirit:  
to preach the kingdom of God to the poor,  
to heal the sick,  
to receive those who have been cast out,  
to revive Israel for the salvation of the nations, and  
to have mercy upon all people.*

... continuing that he also "suffered under Pontius Pilate..."<sup>2</sup>

Now, don't misunderstand me; Moltmann is too good a theologian to suggest a revision to the creed. Indeed, these ancient faith formulae are not up to annual revision, as it were. His—and my—point is simply that Jesus' earthly life and ministry—one marked abundantly by healing and deliverance as described in Mark 4—has profound





theological, missiological, and pastoral implications.

Jesus' life and ministry, as much as his suffering, death, and glorious resurrection, provide hope for times of both health and sickness, both good seasons and crises. We lean on Jesus the healer both in times of flourishing and of suffering. We need a Savior both for growth and for disability. What Jesus' healing ministry, as well as his deliverance ministry, was all about was giving hope to the hopeless. Jesus' touch of the lepers and other outcasts affirmed their dignity to those despised. Jesus' invitation for those outside the people of God was a profound invitation for belonging.

According to the New Testament testimonies, Jesus' healings were occasioned by compassion: "When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick" (Matt 14:14). The Greek word used is *splagchnizomai* (literally: "to be moved as to one's bowels"), which means a thoroughgoing physical-mental reaction to the despair of the suffering person. This means that Jesus' healings were a value in themselves. It is just a good thing to help a person in need! It does not have to serve any other purposes. Loving the neighbor, alongside one's God, is the gospel of Christ.

Alongside compassion, the New Testament evangelists also forge an important theological-pastoral connection with the kingdom of God. The whole focus of Jesus' coming, ministry, and proclamation was the coming kingdom established by his Father, whose

ushering in he serves in the power of the Spirit. In his coming, his incarnation, the kingdom had entered the world but not yet in its fullness; the final consummation was still to be awaited. Importantly, healings, deliverances, forgiveness of sins, the inclusion into the people of God of those considered to be outside, and the welcoming of the "little ones," the children, the women, and others, heralded the coming of the kingdom. While in the now even the ones healed would catch another disease and those raised from the dead such as Lazarus would encounter death again, in the final coming of the kingdom all sicknesses, frailties, and even the threat of death will be overcome.

Living in between the "already" and "not yet" dynamic, every opening of the eyes of the blind points to the coming of the glory too bright for human eyes to look upon; every opening of the ears of the deaf signifies the coming of the kingdom with sounds so beautiful that they are never heard in this life. Every healing witnesses to the coming of the era of endless shalom and well-being. Yet—and this is very important pastorally and missiologically—there was nothing "automatic"—no formulae, no standard prescriptions—about Jesus' healings and the coming of the kingdom's promises. Why is that? Simply because the kingdom has not yet arrived in its fullness! Until that happens, the final coming of God's shalom, every healing, every cure, every raising from the dead is not yet final, only anticipatory, promissory. The fullness is yet to come.

It is exactly here that the so-called faith healers fail—and at times make the sick more sick! Because they do not acknowledge the "already-not yet" dynamic of the coming of the kingdom of God. Thereby,

these Christian teachers make faith—the faith of the recipient of the healing—the condition for the cure. The logic is simple: No cure, no authentic faith. How merciless, how uncompassionate! The New Testament testimonies to the role of faith are far more complex. Indeed, you can find at least three kinds of perspectives on faith-and-healing relationship. First of all, there are instances in which faith is called forth as the condition of healing—and to those passages faith healers typically appeal. Second, at times the faith of other people is called forth, as in Mark's story of the four men carrying their friend on a mat before Jesus. Third, at other times, there is no mention of faith at all. The point is clear: While desirable, the faith (of the suffering person) can never be made a precondition for divine cure, if not for other reasons, then for the simple observation that in the New Testament there are instances where all sick people were healed, other times when only some, and still others when no one was. This is the "already-not yet" dynamic at work. As mentioned, healing is always provisional as later in life other sicknesses will come. On the other hand, there is always the assurance of the final consummation in the coming of the kingdom. While it may not console a dying cancer patient on the deathbed, it still is true that the hope for final cure in the kingdom of God is sure and guaranteed. Always, when following the healer who ultimately faced suffering and death, there is the shadow of the cross present among both the healed and those not healed. All of us are awaiting the final resurrection and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth.

Ultimately, Jesus' own destiny manifests the presence of both healing and suffering in human life. Yes, he was the healer,

but he was also wounded for our wounds and pains. Yes, he was the fountain of water quenching the thirst of all, but he also thirsted on the cross. Yes, he was the harbinger of resurrection, of hope, but he also faced death on the tree. The famous book by the late Roman Catholic Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*, illustrates this dilemma. Based on an ancient Jewish legend (with several versions), the book tells a story about a young rabbi who wants to meet the Messiah. Not finding the Messiah anywhere, one day the rabbi encounters the prophet Elijah in the mountains and asks him where the Messiah can be found. In response to the rabbi's question, Elijah simply responds: "You can find the Messiah down in the valley on the other side of the mountain with a lot of poor and suffering people." To the question of "How can I recognize him," the rabbi receives only a brief nod from the elderly prophet, "You will."<sup>3</sup> In the valley, the rabbi sees a big host of wounded people, all of them suffering greatly. Wounded and bleeding, they all bandage themselves with both hands. The prophet wonders where on earth the Messiah is. Finally, he notices one person who, while bandaging his own wounds with one hand, is at the same time rushing to help others with his other hand as soon as help is needed. He recognizes the Promised One. This is the Wounded Healer, himself suffering and yet, at the same time, giving aid to others in suffering.

Martin Luther speaks to the same issue with his famous distinction between God's "proper" and God's "alien" work, at times called his right and left hand work. The proper work of God includes healing, restoring, bringing about new life, and raising hope. The alien work means striking with

sickness, causing despair, and taking away hope. The one putting trust in the God of the Bible receives both works as coming from God; this is the attitude of the "theologian of the cross." As opposed to the "theologian of the glory" who only embraces God and God's work of glory, power, and splendor, the theologian of the cross is willing to follow in the footsteps of the suffering Messiah on the way to Calvary. Whereas the human mind imagines God after our own image, namely victorious and powerful, the mind illuminated by the cross is content with the lowly and dying Savior and healer.

Yes, the message of the kingdom of God brings hope for a flourishing life. It is a message of healing and restoration, a message of new beginnings. At the same time, it reminds us of the fact that flourishing takes place in the quotidian and is a life of mixed experiences. Human life in the quotidian is all we have at the moment, a life of health and sickness; a life of light and darkness; a life of success and failure; a life of raising to new life and a life under decay. But that is not all. We also have a powerful hope for final consummation. In the meantime, recall, we live our lives between the times, as it were.

Rightly, Moltmann reminds us: "Only what can stand up to both health and sickness, and ultimately to living and dying, can count as a valid definition of what it means to be human." Hence, the secular definition of "total health" as an index of human flourishing in terms of functionality is highly problematic. It implies that the opposite of healthy is "dysfunctional."<sup>4</sup> Allow me to illustrate with a personal experience. Among my four siblings, my late youngest brother Mika was born with very severe

Down's Syndrome. Typical of these kids, he also had a heart condition, alongside other deficiencies. Mika brought so much happiness and joy to my childhood family; he was the hero. And he passed away before his first birthday. Yet, his life was precious and valuable. It was a gift and a treasure. On the index of "total health," he was a total failure. But on the index of the values of God's kingdom, he is among the greatest of us. I will meet my youngest brother in the kingdom, and I so much look forward to it.

This is not to glorify sickness, nor suffering—any more than poverty and injustice. There is nothing noble about any of it. It is rather the realistic acknowledgment of our life in the quotidian. It is life with both health and sickness, happiness and sadness, joyful and downcast spirit. Rightly, Moltmann reminds us that "Love for life says 'yes' to life in spite of its sicknesses, handicaps and infirmities, and opens the door to a 'life against death.'"<sup>5</sup>

Yes, following the title of this reflection, Jesus' compassionate healing ministry brings hope for the fractured world of the third millennium. ■

#### ENDNOTES

1. J. Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1989]), 150.
2. Ibid.
3. H. J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Image Books, 1979).
4. J. Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 273.
5. J. Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 86.





## VIDA FLORECIENTE EN LA SALUD Y LA ENFERMEDAD: EL MINISTERIO COMPASIVO DE SANIDAD DE JESÚS PARA EL FRACTURADO MUNDO DEL TERCER MILENIO

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

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*Jesús recorría toda Galilea enseñando en las sinagogas, anunciando las buenas noticias del reino y sanando toda enfermedad y dolencia entre la gente. Su fama se extendió por toda Siria y le llevaban todos los que padecían de diversas enfermedades, los que sufrían de dolores graves, los endemoniados, los epilépticos y los paralíticos, y él los sanaba. Lo seguían grandes multitudes de Galilea, Decápolis, Jerusalén, Judea y de la región al otro lado del Jordán. (Mateo 4:23-25)*

En su libro *El camino de Jesucristo*, el gran teólogo alemán Jürgen Moltmann nos invita a considerar lo que falta en las declaraciones de nuestros credos sobre Cristo. Esto es bastante sorprendente a la luz de cuánto detallan los credos sobre Cristo: hay afirmaciones sobre su preexistencia, concepción virginal, sufrimiento, muerte en la cruz, hasta su gloriosa ascensión. Entonces, ¿hay algo que falte? La respuesta de Moltmann a su propia pregunta es la siguiente: entre las afirmaciones “nació de la Virgen María” y que “padeció bajo el poder de Poncio Pilato”, solo hay una coma, dando a entender que lo que ocurrió entre el nacimiento milagroso de Jesús y sus últimos días de sufrimiento, que sirvieron de antesala a su violenta muerte, no valdría la pena repetir en la confesión credal.<sup>1</sup>

El punto teológico y pastoral es el siguiente: qué diferente es esta realidad con la que nos encontramos en los Evangelios, especialmente con los tres Sinópticos. De lejos, la mayor parte de estos textos se dedica a la vida y el ministerio terrenal de Jesús, en otras palabras, ¡al “espacio” que ocupa la coma en los credos! Consideremos a Mateo, el evangelio del cual proviene nuestro texto: entre la narrativa de la concepción virginal

en el primer capítulo y la condena por parte de Poncio Pilato en el penúltimo capítulo, hay nada menos que 27 capítulos largos que cuentan la historia de la vida de Jesús. De hecho, para los escritores de los Evangelios, la vida terrenal de Jesús tenía un profundo significado teológico, misionológico y pastoral, sin de ninguna manera menoscabar la importancia del sufrimiento, la cruz y la resurrección. El sufrimiento de Cristo fue plasmado acertadamente, pero solo después de que se hubiera narrado la mayor parte de la historia de Jesús.

¿Qué sucedería si al recitar los credos, como nos invita heurísticamente Moltmann a imaginar, los cristianos se detuvieran a reflexionar sobre el significado de la vida terrenal y el ministerio de Jesús? ¿Qué sucedería si, cada vez que nos reuniéramos para recitar el credo, tras la cláusula “que fue concebido por obra y gracia el Espíritu Santo, nació de la virgen María”, continuáramos:

*Bautizado por Juan el Bautista,  
lleno del Espíritu Santo:  
para predicar el Reino de Dios a los pobres  
para sanar a los enfermos,  
para recibir a los marginados,  
para reanimar a Israel para la salvación de  
las naciones, y  
para tener misericordia de toda  
la humanidad.*

... y continuando que Él también “padeció bajo el poder de Poncio Pilato. . .”<sup>2</sup>

Ahora, no me malinterpreten; Moltmann es un teólogo demasiado competente como para sugerir una revisión del credo. De hecho, estas antiguas fórmulas de fe no están sujetas a revisiones anuales, por así decirlo.

Su punto, y el mío, es simplemente que la vida y el ministerio terrenal de Jesús, marcado abundantemente por la sanidad y la liberación como se describe en Marcos 4, tiene profundas implicaciones teológicas, misionológicas y pastorales.

La vida y el ministerio de Jesús, así como su sufrimiento, muerte y gloriosa resurrección, nos brindan esperanza tanto en tiempos de salud como de enfermedad, tanto en temporadas de prosperidad como de crisis. Nos apoyamos en Jesús el sanador tanto en momentos de florecimiento como de sufrimiento. Necesitamos un Salvador tanto para el crecimiento como para la discapacidad. Lo que el ministerio de sanidad de Jesús buscaba, así como su ministerio de liberación, era dar esperanza a los que no tenían esperanza. Al tocar a los leprosos y otros marginados, Jesús estaba afirmando su dignidad ante aquellos que los despreciaban. La invitación de Jesús a los que estaban fuera del pueblo de Dios era una profunda invitación a sentir que pertenecían.

Según los testimonios del Nuevo Testamento, las sanaciones de Jesús fueron motivadas por la compasión: “Cuando Jesús desembarcó y vio tanta gente, tuvo compasión de ellos y sanó a los que estaban enfermos.” (Mateo 14:14). La palabra griega utilizada es “splugchnizomai” (literalmente: “conmoverse hasta las entrañas”), que significa una completa reacción física y mental ante la desesperación de la persona que sufre. Esto significa que las sanaciones de Jesús tenían valor por sí solas. ¡Es bueno ayudar a una persona necesitada! No tiene que servir ningún otro propósito. Amar al prójimo, junto a Dios, es el Evangelio de Cristo.

Junto con la compasión, los evangelistas del Nuevo Testamento también establecen una importante conexión teológica y pastoral con el reino de Dios. Como es bien sabido, todo

el enfoque de la venida, el ministerio y la proclamación de Jesús fue el reino venidero establecido por su Padre. Además, Jesús presenta este reino por medio del poder del Espíritu. En su venida, su encarnación, el reino había entrado en el mundo pero aún no en su plenitud total; la consumación final aún estaba por llegar. Es importante destacar que las sanaciones, liberaciones, el perdón de pecados, la inclusión en el pueblo de Dios de aquellos considerados excluidos, y la bienvenida a los “pequeños”, los niños, las mujeres y otros, anunciaban la venida del reino. Mientras que en el presente incluso aquellos sanados volverían a contraer otra enfermedad y aquellos resucitados de entre los muertos, como Lázaro, volverían a encontrarse con la muerte nuevamente, en la venida final del reino serán superadas todas las enfermedades, debilidades e incluso la amenaza de la muerte.

Viviendo en la dinámica del “ya” y el “todavía no”, cada apertura de los ojos de los ciegos señala la venida de la gloria que es demasiado brillante para ser contemplada por cualquier ojo humano; cada apertura de los oídos de los sordos significa la llegada del reino con sonidos tan hermosos que nunca se oyen en esta vida. Cada sanación da testimonio de la llegada de la era de shalom y bienestar sin fin. Sin embargo, y esto es muy importante desde una perspectiva pastoral y misionológica, no había nada “automático”, ninguna fórmula, ninguna receta estándar sobre las sanaciones de Jesús y la llegada de las promesas del reino. ¿Por qué? Simplemente porque el reino aún no ha llegado en su total plenitud. Hasta que eso suceda, la venida final del shalom de Dios, cada sanación, cada curación, cada resurrección de entre los muertos aún no es definitiva, solo anticipatoria, promisorio. La plenitud está aún por venir.

Es precisamente aquí donde fallan los llamados “sanadores por la fe”, y a veces

enferman más a los enfermos. ¿Por qué? Porque no reconocen la dinámica del “ya” y el “todavía no” en relación a la venida del reino de Dios. De esta manera, estos maestros cristianos hacen que la fe, la fe del que recibe la sanidad, es la condición para la cura. La lógica es simple: no hay cura sin fe auténtica. ¡Qué despiadado, qué ausencia de compasión! Los testimonios del Nuevo Testamento sobre el papel de la fe son mucho más complejos. De hecho, se pueden encontrar al menos tres tipos de perspectivas sobre la relación entre la fe y la sanación. En primer lugar, hay instancias en las que la fe se presenta como la condición de la sanidad, los sanadores por la fe suelen apelar a estos pasajes. En segundo lugar, a veces se acude a la fe de otras personas, como en la historia de Marcos de los cuatro hombres que llevan a su amigo en una camilla ante Jesús. En tercer lugar, en otras ocasiones, ni siquiera se menciona la fe. La idea es clara: aunque deseable, la fe (del que sufre) nunca puede ser una condición previa para que haya una cura divina, si no es por otras razones, entonces al menos por la simple observación de que en el Nuevo Testamento hay instancias en las que todos los enfermos fueron sanados, otras veces solo algunos y aún otras cuando nadie fue sanado. Esto es la dinámica del “ya” y el “todavía no” en acción. Como ya se ha mencionado, la sanidad siempre es provisional, ya que más adelante vendrán otras enfermedades. Por otro lado, siempre está la garantía de la consumación final en la venida del Reino. Aunque no pueda consolar a un paciente de cáncer en su lecho de muerte, sigue siendo cierto que la esperanza de una cura final en el reino de Dios es segura y garantizada. Siempre, cuando seguimos al Sanador que en última instancia enfrentó el sufrimiento y la muerte, está presente la sombra de la cruz tanto entre los que han sido sanados como los que no han sido sanados. Todos estamos esperando la resurrección final y la creación de los nuevos cielos y la nueva tierra.



En última instancia, el propio destino de Jesús manifiesta la presencia tanto de la sanación como del sufrimiento en la vida humana. Sí, él fue el sanador, pero también fue herido por nuestros dolores y heridas. Sí, fue la fuente de agua que sacia la sed de todos, pero también tuvo sed en la cruz. Sí, fue el precursor de la resurrección, de la esperanza, pero también enfrentó la muerte sobre el madero. El famoso libro del fallecido católico romano Henri J. M. Nouwen titulado El sanador herido ilustra este dilema. Basado en una antigua leyenda judía (que tiene varias versiones), el libro cuenta la historia de un joven rabino que quiere conocer al Mesías. Al no encontrar al Mesías en ninguna parte, un día el rabino se encuentra con el profeta Elías en las montañas y le pregunta dónde puede encontrar al Mesías. En respuesta a la pregunta del rabino, Elías simplemente responde: “Puedes encontrar al Mesías allá abajo, en el valle, al otro lado de la montaña con mucha gente pobre y que está sufriendo”. Ante la pregunta de “¿Cómo puedo reconocerlo?”, el rabino recibe solo un breve asentimiento del anciano profeta, “Lo reconocerás”.<sup>3</sup> En el valle, el rabino ve a una gran multitud de personas heridas, todas ellas sufriendo enormemente. Heridos y sangrando, todos se vendan con ambas manos. El profeta se pregunta en dónde se habrá metido el Mesías. Finalmente, se fija en una persona que, mientras se venda sus propias heridas con una mano, se apresura al mismo tiempo a ayudar a otros con su otra mano en cuanto se necesita ayuda. El rabino reconoce al Prometido. Este es el Sanador Herido, un sanador que está sufriendo él mismo y, al mismo tiempo, le está brindando ayuda a otros que sufren.

Martín Lutero aborda el mismo tema con su famosa distinción entre la “obra propia” y la “obra extraña” de Dios, a veces denominada la obra de su mano derecha y mano izquierda. La obra propia de Dios incluye sanar, restaurar, dar nueva vida y aumentar esperanza. La obra

ajena significa traer enfermedades, causar desesperación y quitar la esperanza. Aquel que confía en el Dios de la Biblia acepta ambas obras como provenientes de Dios, esta es la actitud del “teólogo de la cruz.” A diferencia del “teólogo de la gloria” que solo acoge a Dios y la obra gloriosa, poderosa y esplendorosa de Dios, el teólogo de la cruz está dispuesto a seguir los pasos del Mesías sufriendo en el camino hacia el Calvario. Mientras que la mente humana imagina a Dios a nuestra propia imagen, es decir, victorioso y poderoso, la mente iluminada por la cruz se contenta con el humilde y moribundo Salvador y sanador humilde.

Sí, el mensaje del reino de Dios trae esperanza para una vida floreciente. Es un mensaje de sanación y restauración, un mensaje de nuevos comienzos. Al mismo tiempo, nos recuerda el hecho de que el florecimiento ocurre en lo cotidiano y es una vida de experiencias mixtas. La vida humana en lo cotidiano es lo único que tenemos en este momento, una vida de salud y enfermedad; una vida de luz y oscuridad; una vida de éxito y fracaso; una vida de renacimiento y una vida bajo la decadencia. Pero eso no es todo. También tenemos una esperanza poderosa de consumación final. Mientras tanto, recordemos, vivimos nuestras vidas entre los tiempos, por así decirlo.

Con razón, Moltmann nos recuerda: “Solo lo que puede resistir tanto la salud como la enfermedad, y en última instancia, la vida y la muerte, puede contar como una definición válida de lo que significa ser humano.” Por lo tanto, la definición secular de “salud total” como un índice del florecimiento humano en términos de funcionalidad es altamente problemática. Implica que lo opuesto a lo saludable es “disfuncional.”<sup>4</sup> Permíteme ilustrarlo con una experiencia personal. Entre mis cuatro hermanos, mi difunto hermano menor, Mika, nació con un síndrome de

Down muy grave. Como es típico en estos niños, también tenía una afección cardíaca, junto con otras deficiencias. Mika trajo mucha felicidad y alegría a mi familia durante mi infancia; él era el héroe. Y falleció antes de cumplir su primer cumpleaños. Sin embargo, su vida fue preciosa y valiosa. Fue un regalo y un tesoro. Sin embargo, en el índice de “salud total”, fue un fracaso total. Pero en el índice de los valores del reino de Dios, él está entre los más importantes de nosotros. Me reuniré con mi hermano menor en el reino y espero con ansias ese encuentro.

Esto no significa que estoy glorificando la enfermedad ni el sufrimiento, ni tampoco la pobreza y la injusticia. No hay nada noble en ninguna de estas cosas. Es más bien el reconocimiento realista de nuestra vida en lo cotidiano. Es una vida con salud y enfermedad, felicidad y tristeza, un espíritu alegre y abatido. Con razón, Moltmann nos recuerda que “El amor por la vida dice ‘sí’ a la vida a pesar de sus enfermedades, minusvalías y dolencias, y abre la puerta a una ‘vida contra la muerte.’”<sup>5</sup>

Sí, siguiendo el título de esta reflexión, el ministerio compasivo de sanación de Jesús brinda esperanza para el mundo fracturado del tercer milenio. ■

#### NOTAS

1. J. Moltmann, *El camino de Jesucristo: cristología en dimensiones mesiánicas*, traducido por M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1989]), 150.
2. Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 150.
3. H. J. M. Nouwen, *TEI sanador herido: el ministerio en la sociedad contemporánea* (New York: Image Books, 1979).
4. J. Moltmann, *Dios en creación: Una nueva teología de creación y el Espíritu de Dios*, traducido por M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 273.
5. J. Moltmann, *TEI Espíritu de la vida: Una afirmación universal*, traducido por M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 86.



## 건강과 질병 속에서 번영하는 삶: 제3천년기의 분열된 세상을 위한 예수님의 자비로운 치유 사역

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

이 글은 원래 풀러 신학교의 2021년 선교학 강의에서 설교로 발표되었습니다.

예수께서는 갈릴리 전역을 다니시며 회당에서 가르치시고, 하나님 나라의 기쁜 소식을 선포하시며 백성들의 모든 질병과 모든 병을 고쳐 주셨습니다. 그래서 그의 명성이 온 시리아에 퍼져, 모든 병자, 각종 질병과 고통에 시달리는 사람들, 귀신들린 사람들, 간질 환자들, 마비 환자들을 예수께 데려왔고, 예수께서는 그들을 고쳐 주셨습니다. 그러자 갈릴리, 데카폴리스, 예루살렘, 유대, 요단강 건너편에서 큰 무리가 예수를 따랐습니다. (마태복음 4:23-25)

독일의 위대한 신학자 Jürgen Moltmann 은 그의 저서 『예수 그리스도의 길』에서 그리스도에 대한 우리의 신조에서 무엇이 빠져 있는지 생각해 보라고 권유합니다. 그리스도의 선재, 동정녀 탄생, 고난, 십자가에서의 죽음, 영광스러운 승천에 이르기까지 신조가 그리스도에 대해 얼마나 자세히 기술하고 있는지에 비추어 볼 때 이는 매우 놀라운 일입니다. 그렇다면 뭔가 빠진 것이 있을까요? Moltmann의 대답은 다음과 같습니다: “동정녀 마리아에게서 나셨다”와 “본디오 빌라도 치하에서 고난을 받으셨다”라는 진술 사이에 쉽표가 하나 있을 뿐인데, 이는 예수님의 기적적인 탄생과 폭력적인 죽음으로 이어지는 슬픈 마지막 날의 고난 사이에 일어난 일은 신조 고백에서 반복할 가치가 없다는 의미입니다!<sup>1</sup>

신학-목회적 요점은 이것입니다: 복음서, 특히 세 개의 공관복음서가 얼마나 다른가 하는 것입니다. 가장 많은 지면을 할애한 부분은 예수님의 지상 생애와 사역, 다시 말해 신조에서 쉽표로만 채워진 ‘공간’입니다! 오늘 본문이 나온 복음서인 마태복음을 생각해 보십시오. 첫 장의 동정녀 탄생 이야기부터 마지막 장의 본디오 빌라도에 대한 정죄까지, 예수의 생애에 관한 이야기가 27개 이상의 긴 장에 걸쳐 서술되어 있습니다. 실제로 복음서 기자들에게 예수의 지상 생애는 신학적, 선교학적, 목회적으로 심오한 의미를 지니고 있었으며, 고난과 십자가, 부활의 의미를 훼손하지도 않았습니다. 그리스도의 고난은 적절하게 포착되었지만, 이는 예수 이야기의 대부분이 전해진 후에야 이루어졌습니다.

Moltmann 추론적으로 상상해 보라고 권유한 것처럼, 기독교인들이 신조를 암송할 때 예수님의 지상 생애와 사역의 의미에 대해 깊이 생각한다면 어떤 일이 일어날까요? 예배를 위해 모일 때마다 신조를 암송할 때마다 “성령으로 잉태하사 동정녀 마리아에게서 나시고”라는 구절에 이어서 계속 암송한다면 어떨까요?

세례 요한에게 세례를 받음, 성령으로 충만하여 가난한 자들에게 하나님의 나라를 전파하고, 병든 자를 고치고, 쫓겨난 자를 받아들이고, 열방의 구원을 위해 이스라엘을 부흥시키고 모든 사람에게 자비를 베푸는 것입니다.

... 계속하여 그는 또한 “본디오 빌라도 아래서 고난을 받았다...”<sup>2</sup>

Moltmann 은 신조 개정을 제안하기에는 너무 훌륭한 신학자였으니 오해하지 마십시오. 사실, 이 고대의 신앙 공식은 매년 개정할 수 있는 것이 아닙니다. Moltmann의 요점은 마가복음 4장에 묘사된 대로 치유와 구원으로 가득 찬 예수님의 지상 생애와 사역이 신학적, 선교학적, 목회적으로 심오한 함의를 지니고 있다는 것입니다.

예수님의 삶과 사역은 고난과 죽음, 영광스러운 부활만큼이나 건강할 때나 병들었을 때, 좋은 계절과 위기 모두에 희망을 줍니다. 우리는 번영할 때나 고통받을 때나 치유자이신 예수님께 의지합니다. 우리에게는 성장과 장애 모두에 구세주가 필요합니다. 예수님의 치유 사역과 구원 사역의 핵심은 절망에 빠진 사람들에게 희망을 주는 것이었습니다. 나병환자와 다른 버림받은 사람들을 어루만지신 예수님의 손길은 멸시받는 사람들에게 그들의 존엄성을 확인시켜 주었습니다. 하나님의 백성 밖에 있는 사람들을 향한 예수님의 초대는 소속감을 향한 깊은 초대였습니다.

신약성경의 증언에 따르면, 예수님의 치유는 동정심에서 비롯되었습니다: “예수께서 해변에 가실 때에 큰 무리를 보시고 그들을 불쌍히 여기시



어 그들의 병을 고치시니”(14:14). 사용된 헬라어는 스피라그니조마이 (문자 그대로 “창자처럼 움직이다”라는 뜻)로, 고통받는 사람의 절망에 대한 철저한 신체적-정신적 반응을 의미합니다. 이것은 예수님의 치유가 그 자체로 가치가 있었다는 것을 의미합니다. 도움이 필요한 사람을 돕는 것은 좋은 일입니다! 다른 목적이 있을 필요는 없습니다. 하나님과 함께 이웃을 사랑하는 것이 바로 그리스도의 복음입니다.

신약의 전도자들은 공황과 더불어 하나님 나라와의 중요한 신학적-목회적 연관성을 형성했습니다. 잘 알려진 바와 같이 예수님의 오심과 사역, 선포의 모든 초점은 성령의 능력으로 섬기시는 아버지께서 세우신 하나님 나라에 있었습니다. 예수님이 오셔서 성육신하셨을 때 그 나라는 세상에 들어왔지만 아직 충분하지 않았고, 최종적인 완성은 아직 기다려야 했습니다. 중요한 것은 치유와 구출, 죄의 용서, 외부에 있다고 여겨지는 사람들을 하나님의 백성으로 받아들이고, 어린이와 여성 등 ‘작은 자’를 환영하는 일이 왕국의 도래를 예고했다는 점입니다. 지금은 치유받은 사람들도 다시 병에 걸리고 나사로처럼 죽은 자 가운데서 살아난 사람들도 다시 죽음을 맞이하지만, 마지막 왕국이 오면 모든 질병과 연약함, 심지어 죽음의 위협도 극복될 것입니다.

‘이미’와 ‘아직’의 역동성 사이에서 살아가는 소경이 눈을 뜰 때마다 인간의 눈으로 볼 수 없을 정도로 밝은 영광의 시대가 오고 있음을 가리키고, 귀머거리가 귀를 열 때마다 이 세상에서는 들을 수 없을 만큼 아름다운 소리로 왕국이 임한다는 것을 의미합니다. 모든 치유는 끝없는 살롬과 건강의 시대가 오고 있음을 증거합니다 그러나 이것은 목회적으로나 선교학적으로 매우 중요한 일이지만, 예수님의 치유와 하나님 나라의 약속의 도래에 대한 “자동적”인 공식이나 표준 처방은 없었습니다. 왜 그럴까요? 단순히 하나님 나라가 아직 충분하게 임하지 않았기 때문입니다! 그렇게 될 때까지 하나님의 살롬의 최종적인 도래, 모든 치유, 모든 치료, 모든 죽음으로부터의 부활은 아직 최종적인 것이 아니며 단지 기대와 약속에 불과합니다. 충분함은 아직 오지 않았습니다.

소위 신앙 치료사들이 실패하고 때로는 병자를 더 아프게 만드는 곳이 바로 여기입니다! 왜 그럴까요? 그들은 하나님 나라의 도래에 대한 “아직 오지 않은” 역동성을 인정하지 않기 때문입니다. 따라서 이 기독교 교사들은 치유를 받는 사람의 믿음, 즉 신앙을 치료의 조건으로 삼습니다. 치료가 없으면 진정한 믿음도 없다는 논리는 간단합니다. 얼마나 무자비하고 공황이 없습니까! 믿음의 역할에 대한 신약성경의 증언은 훨씬 더 복잡합니다. 실제로 믿음과 치유의 관계에 대해 적어도 세 가지 관점을 찾을 수 있습니다. 첫째, 믿음이 치유의 조건으로 언급되는 경우가 있는데, 이러한 구절에서는 일반적으로 믿음 치료사가 호소합니다. 둘째, 마가복음에 나오는 예수님 앞에 친구를 매트에 엮고 가는 네 사람의 이야기에서처럼 다른 사람들의 믿음이 요청될 때도 있습니다. 셋째, 어떤 경우에는 믿음에 대한 언급이 전혀 없습니다. 요점은 분명합니다. 다른 이유가 아니라면 신약 성경에서 모든 병자가 치유 된 경우가 있고, 일부만 치유 된 경우가 있고, 아무도 치유되지 않은 경우가 있다는 단순한 관찰을 위해 (고통받는 사람의) 믿음이 신성한 치료의 전제 조건이 될 수는 없습니다. 이것이 바로 ‘아직은 아니지만’이라는 역학 관계가 작동하는 방식입니다. 앞서 언급했듯이, 나중에 다른 질병이 올 수 있기 때문에 치유는 항상 잠정적인 것입니다. 반면에 왕국이 임할 때 최종적으로 완성될 것이라는 확신은 항상 존재합니다. 임종을 앞둔 암 환자에게는 위로가 되지 않을 수 있지만, 하나님 나라에서 최종적으로 치유될 것이라는 희망은 확실하고 보장된 것이 사실입니다 궁극적으로 고통과 죽음에 직면했던 치유자를 따라가다 보면, 치유받은 사람과 치유받지 못한 사람 모두에게 십자가의 그림자가 항상 존재합니다. 우리 모두는 마지막 부활과 새 하늘과 새 땅의 창조를 기다리고 있습니다.

궁극적으로 예수님 자신의 운명은 인간의 삶에서 치유와 고통이 모두 존재한다는 것을 보여줍니다. 예, 그분은 치유자이셨지만 우리의 상처와 고통 때문에 상처를 입으셨습니다. 예, 그분은 모든 사람의 갈증을 해소하는 샘물이었지만 십자가에서 목마름을 느끼기도 하셨습니다. 예, 그는 부활과 희망의 선구자였지만 나무 위에서 죽음에 직면하기도 했습니다. 고인이 된 로마 가

톨릭 신자 Henri J. M. Nouwen 의 유명한 저서 <상처 입은 치유자>가 이 딜레마를 잘 설명합니다. 고대 유대인의 전설 (여러 버전이 있음)을 바탕으로 한 이 책은 메시아를 만나고 싶어 하는 한 젊은 랍비의 이야기를 담고 있습니다. 어디에서도 메시아를 찾지 못한 랍비는 어느 날 산에서 선지자 엘리야를 만나 메시아를 어디서 찾을 수 있는지 묻습니다. 랍비의 질문에 엘리야는 간단하게 대답합니다: “가난하고 고통받는 사람들이 많은 산 반대편 골짜기에 가면 메시아를 찾을 수 있습니다.”라고 대답합니다. “그분을 어떻게 알아볼 수 있습니까?”라는 질문에 랍비는 노인 선지자로부터 “알게 될 것입니다.”<sup>3</sup> 라는 짧은 고개만 끄덕입니다. 계곡에서 랍비는 큰 상처를 입은 수많은 사람들을 보게 되는데, 모두 큰 고통을 겪고 있습니다. 상처를 입고 피를 흘리는 이들은 모두 양손으로 봉대를 감고 있습니다. 선지자는 메시아가 도대체 어디에 있는지 궁금해합니다. 그러던 중 한 손으로 자신의 상처를 봉대로 감으면서도 다른 한 손으로는 도움이 필요하면 즉시 다른 사람을 돕기 위해 달려가는 한 사람을 발견합니다. 그는 약속하신 분을 알아본다. 바로 ‘상처 입은 치유자’였습니다.

마틴 루터는 하나님의 ‘고유한’ 일과 하나님의 ‘이질적인’ 일, 즉 하나님의 오른손과 왼손의 일을 구분한 유명한 말을 통해 같은 문제를 이야기합니다. 하나님의 고유한 사역에는 치유, 회복, 새 생명, 소망 불러일으키기 등이 포함됩니다. 외계인의 일은 질병으로 치고, 절망에 빠지게 하고, 희망을 빼앗는 것을 의미합니다. 성경의 하나님을 신뢰하는 사람은 이 두 가지 역사를 모두 하나님으로부터 오는 것으로 받아들이는데, 이것이 바로 ‘십자가의 신학자’의 태도입니다. 하나님과 하나님의 영광, 능력, 찬란한 사역만을 받아들이는 ‘영광의 신학자’와는 달리, 십자가의 신학자는 갈보리로 가는 길에 고난당하신 메시아의 발자취를 기꺼이 따라갑니다. 인간의 마음은 하나님을 우리 자신의 모습, 즉 승리하고 강력한 모습으로 상상하지만, 십자가의 조명을 받은 마음은 낮고 죽어가는 구세주이자 치유자이신 예수님에 만족합니다.

네, 하나님 나라의 메시지는 변형하는 삶에 대한 희망을 가져다줍니다. 그것은 치유와 회복의 메

시지이자 새로운 시작의 메시지입니다. 동시에 변형은 사소한 일상에서 일어나며 다양한 경험의 뒤섞인 삶이라는 사실을 상기시켜 줍니다. 건강과 질병의 삶, 빛과 어둠의 삶, 성공과 실패의 삶, 새 생명으로 떠오르는 삶과 쇠락하는 삶이 현재 우리가 가진 전부입니다. 하지만 이것이 전부는 아닙니다. 우리에게는 마지막 완성에 대한 강력한 희망도 있습니다. 그 동안 우리는 시대와 시대 사이의 삶을 살고 있다는 사실을 기억하세요.

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예, 이 목상의 제목처럼 예수님의 자비로운 치유 사역은 3천 년대의 분열된 세상에 희망을 가져다 줍니다. ■

각주

1. 예수 그리스도의 길 : 메시아적 차원의 그리스도론 [ 개정판 ] 위르겐 몰트만 저 / 김균진,김명용 역 | 대한기독교서회 | 2017년 05월 30일
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## THE PREACHER AS PROPHET

Jennifer Ackerman

*An edited and condensed excerpt from Jennifer Ackerman's Preaching the Gospel of Justice: Good News in Community (Fortress, 2024).*

**Jennifer Ackerman** is assistant professor of preaching and director of Brehm Preaching—A Lloyd John Ogilvie Initiative. She holds an MDiv and a PhD in Theology and Culture from Fuller and is a member of the Academy of Homiletics, the American Academy of Religion, the North American Academy of Liturgy, and the Presbytery of the Cascades. Dr. Ackerman has nearly 30 years of experience facilitating the worship and preaching efforts of churches in multiple denominations across the US, and as an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA), she serves as the seminary's liaison to the denomination.

I became a preacher quite begrudgingly. Not for what I imagine are the usual reasons, though. I'm not afraid to speak in front of people. I had a former career as a singer and musical theater performer. I'm plenty happy to step into the spotlight, so to speak. I'm an extrovert. I think quickly on my feet. I've got no problem keeping a conversation going. All these things would make it seem, I suppose, that I would be a natural preacher—perhaps even longing to be in the pulpit. That was never the case.

Performing on a stage is one thing. Preaching from a pulpit is something entirely different. The weight and burden of being a voice for God, the burden of giving voice to the gospel, is one I never wanted to bear. It's still a weight that I carry somewhat heavily every time I stand to preach. I've come to understand that it is a gift and a privilege to preach, and I do so now with a significant amount of joy, but it will never not be a burden.

The rub for me is primarily in the prophetic sense of preaching. Must every preacher be sage, priest, *and* prophet?<sup>1</sup> I take some issue with each of those archetypes, actually. A preacher as sage should not mean resident expert with all the answers but rather a wise asker of questions and facilitator of conversation. A preacher as priest does not have some magical clergy powers or direct hotline to God that isn't also available to each of our listeners, but we do hold the lives of our people in a pastoral way that helps us experience the Word through their joys and challenges. What, then, does it look like to be a preacher as prophet?

I don't believe every preacher is called to be a prophet in the same sense as Elijah, Elisha, Micah, or Malachi. Some certainly are, and I have been deeply impacted by prophets in my own life who seem to hear the voice of God as a clarion call, carrying the authority of that voice into their message—whether from the pulpit, at the watercooler, or across the kitchen table. God does not speak to me that way, or at least I do not hear God in that way, but I recognize the authenticity of the message as it is spoken through these contemporary prophets I know as friends and partners in ministry.

Biblical prophets spoke truth to power, confronted idolatrous practices, declared the work of God to be a work of justice in which we must participate. Many of their sermons were confrontational: "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me," says the Lord through Amos (5:21-24). "How the faithful city has become a whore! She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers!" declares the Lord through Isaiah (1:21).

As preachers today become more convinced of the need to speak truth to power as an act of justice, it may be these types of prophetic confrontations that are most on our mind. But this would not be true to the full voice of the prophets in Scripture. A significant portion of prophetic proclamation is good news. "Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!" declares Zephaniah, "The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies" (3:14-15). Pastoral comfort and hope are delivered through prophets



such as Jeremiah, offering the Lord's assurance, "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you" (29:11). Biblical prophets were also sage-like. In 2 Samuel 12, for example, Nathan's parable of the poor man's lamb wisely leads David to recognize his iniquity. And they were priestly—Jeremiah weeps for Jerusalem, Daniel is a prayer warrior on behalf of Israel, Moses returns to the Lord again and again to advocate for the people.

All of this leads me to wonder if the role of preacher as prophet, for most of us, is perhaps something more akin to the role of witness. We are witnesses who disrupt the complacency that makes us fail to smell the stench of our idolatry and unrighteousness, as well as the complacency that makes us fail to rejoice in the provision and deliverance of a God who loves us.

### The Prophet as Witness

In Thomas Long's book *The Witness of Preaching*, he explains, "The verb 'to witness' has two main meanings: to see and to tell." To be a witness, you must first "behold" something; you must be "present and active as an observer." You must "take something in." But it doesn't stop there, because a witness also has to "give something out." What they saw they now have to say. What they *perceived*, they will *testify*.<sup>2</sup>

Every biblical prophet receives a specific message from God and then speaks it to the people. From Moses to Isaiah to Jesus, it's always the same—they see and they tell. You could say that the role of the sage is also a witness—to learn and then teach. Even the role of a priest is a witness—to take in the experience of the people and then share God's presence in that experience.

The role of prophet as witness carries a more peculiar burden, though. The prophet beholds a message directly from God that is meant specifically for *their* people, the particular community to whom God has called them to speak.

The call to preach bears the responsibility of being a faithful witness, seeking the truth that may be a disruption to what we thought we already knew. We go to the text on behalf of the people, praying that we might behold a message from God, and then we have to testify. This sounds to me an awful lot like the work of a prophet.

To preach as a prophet is to embody the Word, as it lives and breathes among God's people now, drawing us into a community of faith that began in the distant past and pointing us toward an eschatological future rooted in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is a prophetic witness.

As prophetic witnesses, each of us is being asked to speak the truth as it appears uniquely to us, as we hold in our hearts the needs of a particular community. What is the truth *I* perceive God to be speaking in Scripture and in the world, and that most needs to be heard at this time, among these people? Each of us sees truth in a different way, but collectively—and only collectively—the fullness of God's truth can be revealed. We need the disruption of having to refocus our lens to see what that witness over *there* sees, so that we end up seeing what is going on right *here* more truthfully. That's why it takes a multitude of voices to fulfill this call to preaching, and that's why I believe preachers are called to be part of a prophetic community. One preacher cannot seek to speak for all. We are all members of the body of Christ, which allows us the gift

of seeing and hearing through a diversity of voices, revealing how God's grace and presence are moving among us in extraordinary ways.

Ultimately, this is how the preacher as prophet is equipped to preach the gospel of justice. We open ourselves to continually *receive* the witness of others so that we can more faithfully, more prophetically, *be* a witness to others. This means confronting our own relationships with power and privilege. It means learning to stand inside pain, rather than walling ourselves off from it. It means learning to discern the good news of Christ's redeeming work in the world in the most unexpected places.

### The Prophetic Witness Is Imaginative

In Walter Brueggemann's seminal book *The Prophetic Imagination*, he argues that the Christian tradition, "having been co-opted by the king," has fallen into a collective state of "numbness," tending toward the false smiles and insincere platitudes of "crossless good news and a future well-being without a present anguish." The prophetic imagination has the power "to cut through the numbness, to penetrate the self-deception, so that the God of endings is confessed as Lord."<sup>3</sup> The God of endings does not deny the stench of death, but has conquered it. The prophetic ministry of Jesus did not gloss over human pain and suffering but endured it. The power of the Holy Spirit does not remove the fear of terror or injustice but comforts us within it. Siloed preaching that fails to take note of the disruptive witness from culture—the lament of artists, the fear in the marketplace, the anger of politics—will fail to cut through the numbness. It will fail to preach the gospel of justice. It will fail to proclaim truly good news.

Much of my work with preachers at Fuller Seminary is situated with the Brehm Center, which is dedicated to integrating worship, theology, and the arts for the renewal of church and culture. As a musician myself, my own approach to preaching is very much aligned with this integration, and I began to wonder if engagement with the arts might help other preachers as well—especially those with no self-described artistic abilities. What is it about the way artists move in the world that impacts our ability to witness in unique ways?

The product that an artist creates may be the medium through which they "testify," but the way in which they "see" has much more to do with the process than with the product. Whatever the discipline—visual art, music, dance, photography, filmmaking, culinary arts, poetry, literature—an artist must learn certain fundamental practices of "making," which they continually rehearse, refine, build upon, and fight against. As they do so, they learn how to see, how to hear, how to taste, how to feel, and eventually how to express all of that seeing and feeling into what we call art. For some, this process is mainly about learning a technique. For me, it is a spiritual discipline.

Through the process of experimenting with, and especially struggling with, rudimentary art-making practices, we have the opportunity to engage in a form of embodied spiritual contemplation that facilitates an imaginative space for embracing the invitation to be co-creators with God. You do not have to be an artist to accept this invitation! Anyone can learn to see and hear and feel in new ways by simply submitting to a repeated creative practice that expands the imagination. More specifically, when preachers submit to such a practice, it has the potential to stimulate a

prophetic ministry of creativity, curiosity, and courage.<sup>4</sup>

I have come to believe that these 3 C's are vital to a flourishing ministry at the convergence of worship, preaching, and justice, where the prophetic call to preachers requires *curiosity* toward what God is already doing in their community, *creativity* to engage new approaches to living that mission through a life of worship inside and outside the sanctuary, and *courage* to proclaim this disruptive, prophetic witness from the pulpit.

### Curiosity

An instinct of curiosity inspires people in power to ask more questions and issue fewer dictums. Probing more deeply into the anxieties and hopes of a community, for example, can open up new avenues of dialogue and influence the manner in which decisions are made, not to mention the nature of the decisions themselves. This is itself an act of justice, as it is an opportunity to redistribute power away from a privileged few and into the hands of the full community.

Furthermore, curiosity engages a sense of empathy that aids in moving people through the discomfort of change. This sense of curious empathy is especially critical in the work of justice, where conflict often leads to polarizing ideologies that attempt to simplify one another's narratives through assumption and stereotyping rather than wading into the deeper complexities of the issue. Empathetic curiosity leads not only to asking more questions but also to asking better questions: What is a personal experience that may be impacting your feelings about this? What is most mystifying to you about people who hold this view? What would you like to know about

them? What do you want them to know about you?<sup>5</sup>

Preaching from this place of empathetic curiosity can particularly help to expose biases within a church community and begin to remove barriers that prevent shared visioning and decision-making in a church's collective witness.

### Creativity

God has called us to be agents of a changing world, a yet-unforeseen new creation, and yet we are not the ones responsible for the final reality. Creativity, then, must be understood as a joint effort between God and God's people in which we are to be more concerned with the journey than the destination. This means making space, giving time, and fostering an environment of learning, failure, and practice. Embracing creativity is not about producing something new or beautiful, but rather immersing yourself in a process of allowing curiosity to lead into exploration.

As a preacher grows in their personal expression of creativity, their imagination will likely become more and more generative. This may begin from the essentially narcissistic place of experiencing God through a very personal creative lens, but the more our creativity grows, the more we become aware of the dominant symbols and metaphors emanating from our own aesthetic preferences. From here, a church leader is better equipped to critically assess the dominant symbols and metaphors within their worship space.

Does the imagery used in bulletin covers, worship slides, banners, and church websites reflect a vibrant imagination for the past, present, and future of God's



kingdom? Do the hymns, praise songs, and other musical offerings not merely reflect the taste or preference of dominant voices in the community but also draw worshipers into the history of our faith and the future of a mission both local and global? Do

sermon illustrations and references reflect a broad range of voices and interests rather than tending toward particular affinities?

Moving toward an emphatic “yes” to each of these questions is a big step toward creative leadership that is rooted in the gospel of justice.

### Courage

Courage is, arguably, an important characteristic for any type of leader, but it is particularly vital to a preacher seeking to be a prophetic witness. It is one thing to develop one’s own ability to see and sit with uncomfortable truth, but it is quite another to give voice to it and to call others to see and sit with it. Strengthening muscles of curiosity and creativity helps foster courage to step outside our comfort zones and engage with others as an exercise of vulnerability.

The church is meant to be an institution where this type of courageous, curious, creative engagement is an ongoing part of formation and discipleship, but all too often, churches (and perhaps especially church leadership) are more invested in promoting their communities as “safe” or “peaceful” or an “escape” from the affront of the outside world. This is the trap of numbness called out by Brueggemann. It takes courage to facilitate a disruption that stirs up the prophetic imagination of a community more inclined toward stagnant pew sitting and silencing of critical voices than toward loving God and neighbor according to the gospel of justice.

### Conclusion

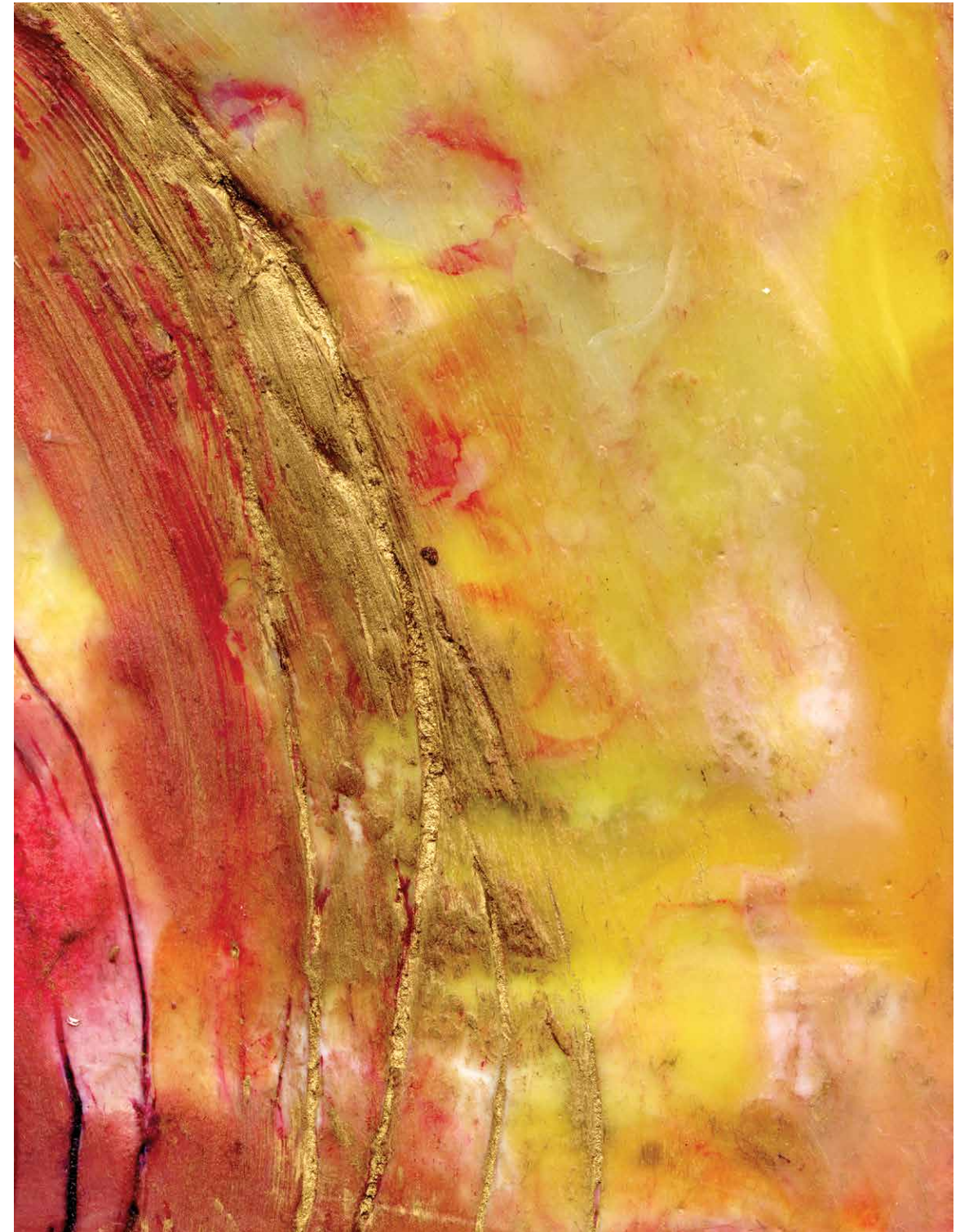
Prophets are witnesses to truth—the truth of humanity’s preference for chasing the power of empire rather than the power of

grace, and the truth of God’s persistent love and mercy that offers the greater freedom. Jesus prophesied to these dual truths in the Sermon on the Mount, demonstrating the good news of blessings that rest on those who are fortified by the alternative power of the kingdom of God. The preacher’s burden is to be a prophetic witness to this gospel of justice, and especially to its particular call to each particular community that is listening to our particular voice.

No matter the congregation, God has already provided the blessings needed for each community to live out its particular mission in God’s kingdom. This is a call, in one form or another, to do justice by loving God and neighbor more than self and empire. The prophetic witness must be a disruption to the numbness of stagnant pew sitting that may suggest otherwise. Disruption is uncomfortable. We protect ourselves by refusing to receive the disruption, pushing away the discomfort. Preaching as a prophetic witness helps point to the discomfort, and instead of shutting it down, asking “How might God be speaking to us if we keep listening?” ■

### ENDNOTES

1. Kenyatta Gilbert explores this “trivocal nature” of preaching in *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).
2. T. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 99.
3. W. Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 44–45.
4. Much of this section is taken from a curriculum I’ve written for FULLER Equip called “Artful Leadership,” <https://equip-store.fuller.edu/product/artful-leadership/>.
5. For more on the power of curious questions, see “Courageous Conversations Across a Growing Divide: One Small Step,” NPR audio program, October 13, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/13/912725672/courageous-conversations-across-a-growing-divide-one-small-step>.



✦ Golden Strands by Claire Astra MacKenzie. Encaustic on paper, digitally enhanced, 2008. See more of Claire Astra MacKenzie’s art in the opening and closing covers, and on pp. 10–11, 92, and 99.



# Toward a Hopeful Horizon for Theological Education

WITH OSCAR GARCÍA-JOHNSON



**OSCAR GARCÍA-JOHNSON** is professor of theology and Latino/a studies, also having previously served as Fuller's chief of diversity, equity, and inclusion and associate dean for Centro Latino. An experienced minister and church planter, he is the author and editor of numerous works, including his current ongoing series *Teología del Nuevo Mundo*, a revolutionary multivolume exploration of decoloniality, Christian doctrine, intercultural theories, and practical theology to shape the global Christian citizen of the 21st century.

**JEROME BLANCO:** *The current state of North American theological education appears to be characterized by a particular yearning for hope. Can you describe for us the contemporary landscape of theological education, here and beyond, and what makes hope such a salient element of the work of seminaries like Fuller today?*

**OSCAR GARCÍA-JOHNSON:** I'm going to begin by using the word "hopeless."

In the contemporary Global South, and more widely in world Christianity, traditional theological education is increasingly seen as irrelevant and hopeless, unable to address today's global challenges. This crisis, rooted in the contradiction between Western-centric theological norms and the diverse, global spread of Christianity, highlights the obsolescence of Western theological frameworks in postcolonial and post-Christendom contexts. This fundamental displacement of Western theological discourse underlies many broader issues, including recruitment and retention challenges in theological institutions, a disconnect between churches and seminaries, and a lack of relevant scholarly contributions. These problems, mirrored in both Western and Latin American contexts, point to a deeper issue of theological irrelevance, a concern raised as early as the 1960s by Liberation theologians.

Modern theological education, with its colonial and civilizing ethos, has failed to adapt to the fluid and counter-imperial nature of the gospel, which originated in diverse, ancient Mediterranean societies. The shift of the Christian church from a marginalized, resisting entity to an official part of empire structures has led to a loss of the gospel's core values of diversity, resistance against injustice, and compassion. This gap between the "logic of Pentecost" (Acts 2) and the "logic of Babel" (Gen 11) underscores the significant paradigm shift in Christian existence. Despite

attempts to modernize or consumerize theological education, these efforts have fallen short in capturing the transformative ethos of the nonconformist gospel.

The Western-centric approach to global missions has failed to resonate with the diverse human experiences in postcolonial territories, leading to a perpetuation of colonial dynamics. The historical imposition of Western forms of discipleship and Christianization has often overlooked the needs and cultures of colonized peoples, resulting in ambiguous and sometimes damaging representations of Christ that favors an elite. Consequently, theological education has struggled to be contextually relevant, failing to empower locals as agents of transformation in their own environments. Recognizing this crisis and the limitations of Western perspectives is the first step toward fostering a more inclusive and effective theological education that resonates with diverse global experiences against the backdrop of hopelessness.

**JB:** *What does a movement toward hope look like for theological education amidst these realities?*

**OGJ:** Let us be frank here and admit that hope is the gospel of the oppressed, dispossessed, and persecuted, and of those aligned on their behalf. Those of us feeling healthy, wealthy, safely protected by the laws of our governments, empowered to be ourselves, to tell our successful stories, in relative economic stability, and envisioning a future horizon where our progeny and legacy will thrive, do not need a gospel of hope but a gospel of status quo. Indeed, most of us living under these privileged conditions would rather struggle for a gospel of conservation and preservation.

We in the West need to acknowledge that our provincial and local experience of God is not universal and applicable everywhere in the world. We need to acknowledge that God

*Recognizing this crisis and the limitations of Western perspectives is the first step toward fostering a more inclusive and effective theological education that resonates with diverse global experiences against the backdrop of hopelessness.*







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is everywhere, beyond the West, working with people in their own languages, ethnicities, localities, experiences. As the majority population of the world lives under conditions of poverty, political instability, some kind of war (military, drugs, gangs, religious, human trafficking, etc.), lack of basic infrastructures, and survival modes, we cannot expect people to relate to God as we would in the West.

But let me be clear here. This idea of the “West” as the “land of milk and honey,” where none of these miseries happen, is a fiction and is dangerous because it creates the basis of a civilizing gospel leading to Western duplication. Nevertheless, this fiction exists in real time and place and possesses human bodies and imaginations. It has money, power, privilege, and an agenda of expansion and preservation through whatever means possible. In the context of this Western fiction of affluence, power, privilege, and prosperity, we must begin with a question: “What is, Christianly speaking, our true location in the world?”

The first thing we all need to do, and what theological education can help us achieve, is to truly get to know ourselves in the reality of God’s kingdom—that is, our social location. Self-awareness should precede any task or role we undertake in the name of God. And then, whatever role God calls us into will have to happen in relationship, namely, being next to and learning from others, especially those individuals and communities we may think of as different. This isn’t the old apologetic way of learning another person’s language to show them that they don’t have God. This is an approach of a humble disciple of the Spirit, moving outside one’s own framework, learning with the people, and discovering that truth is much more distributed than we, individually or collectively, may be willing to admit. This allows for authentic exchange without dominating or being dominated by our colonial fictions. When we acknowledge our ignorance and are willing to offer it as an opportunity to embrace each other’s knowledge of God, selves, and creation at large, there is a chance that hopelessness may transform into hope.

**JB:** *Are there examples of this hopeful movement that you’re describing? Even as such a posture is something we should move toward, are there already instances of this being done well that can help shape our imagination?*

**OGJ:** I see many examples across the Bible. But we need to enter the multidimensional scriptural world to grasp it. In other words, we must acknowledge our own hermeneutical lens in our own context, the biblical horizon in its own context, and the Spirit of God’s agency in making us aware of both contexts, plus the unfolding realities brought to us by the kingdom of God happening daily and everywhere.

In the biblical historical world, Christianity is not dominant but marginal and unfolding; several scholars have even argued that Christianity was not a religion

per se until the fourth or fifth century AD. So, let’s begin with that. Perhaps the first thing we need to do is adopt a marginal positionality when reading and practicing biblical truths. For example, think of how the gospel was shared in Cornelius’s house (Acts 10). You see a paradigm of the gospel being shared with the powerful from the margins. You have God’s Spirit redrawing the plans and architecture of the missional enterprise. You have the unfolding of Christianity touching the ends of the world and bending colonial realities to allow for the life abundant promised by the crucified and resurrected Messiah of Nazareth.

Today, there are examples all over: independent churches in Africa, indigenous churches in Latin America, multiple expressions of Christianity in Asia. Churches are living their life and faith in particular ways. In the past, we have called these “syncretistic Christianities.” I would not use that term, because syncretism has been used as a negative and derogatory label. I call it synthesis, or sometimes, “original Christianities.” They emphasize, “We bring with us our experience with the land, with our culture, with the wisdom of our ancestors, with our reading of the Bible, with our encounter with Jesus. Jesus has been with us since long ago—not just when we received the Bible. God has been here all the time—the creator, omnipresent. God has been part of our experience. Perhaps our languages and metaphors are different and do not convey the same literal meaning one may see in the Western translations of the Bible. And this may give the impression that God is disguised in several of our concepts, practices, and aspirations. But why not the other way around? To what extent has the Western translation of the Bible disguised the Creator to the point of non-recognition, hence requiring a larger-than-the-West translation to fully know the Creator and Healer of the world?”

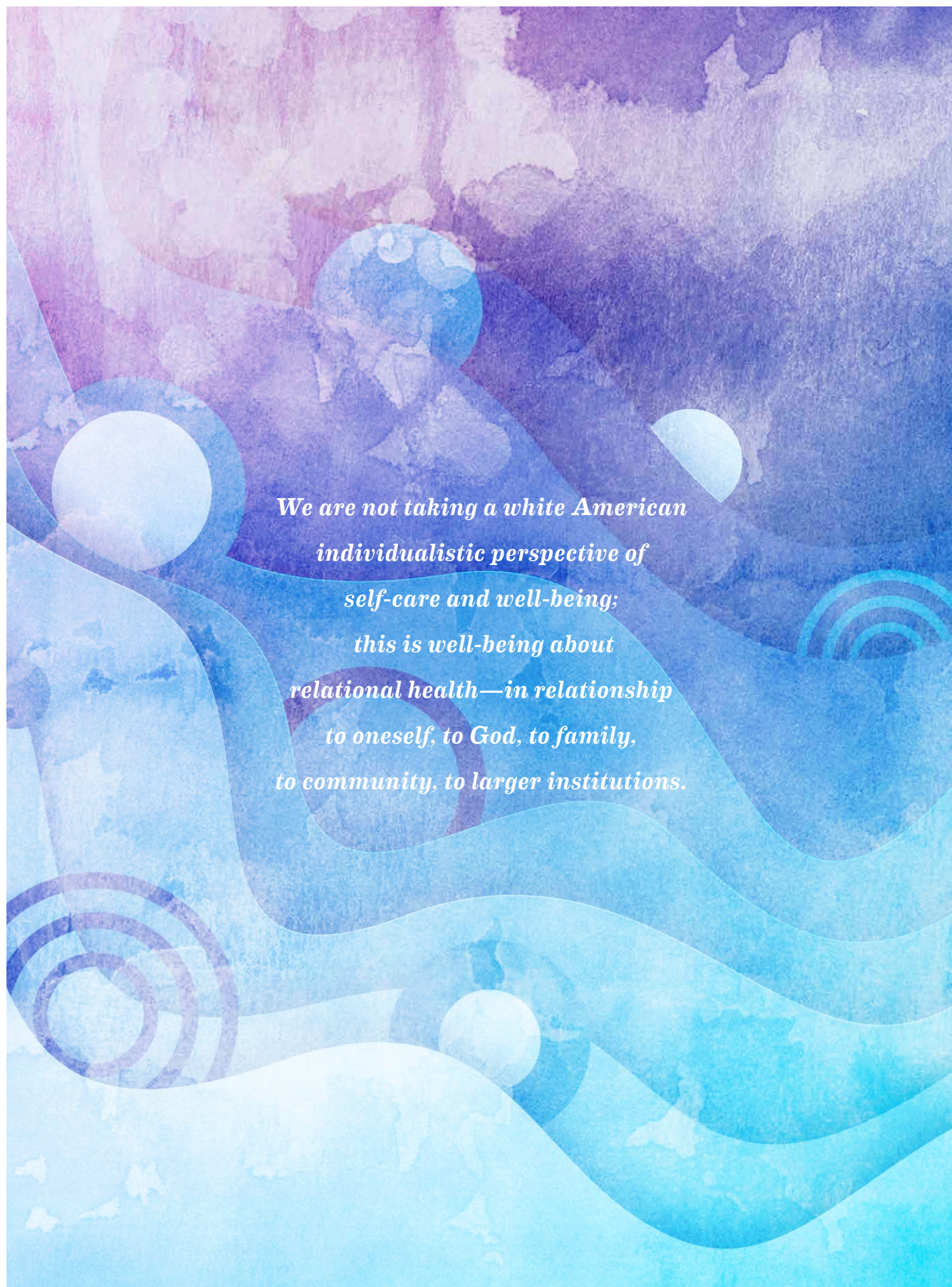
God has been participating with multiple communities. Exchanging our experience with other groups around the world is the Christian way. It’s a world Christianity in which the West is one part of the experience. There are different communities beginning to operate on that understanding. But it’s difficult for us in the West, as we’ve thought of ourselves as being chosen by God and by history to be the carriers of the truth. I don’t have any desire to deny agency to the West, but if we can be more careful to say we have been a vessel and we have had an experience of God, among many other experiences of God, then we can have a conversation.

The question I have for institutions of theological education like Fuller is, how will we be more multilingual to house the challenges of world Christianity? By multilingual, I mean being welcoming of and speaking the language of multiple theologies, multiple ecclesiologies, multiple discourses, multiple cultures. What would it take to become a theological education institution where many worlds fit?









*We are not taking a white American individualistic perspective of self-care and well-being; this is well-being about relational health—in relationship to oneself, to God, to family, to community, to larger institutions.*

# Well-Being in the Asian American Church

WITH JESSICA CHENFENG AND DANIEL D. LEE



**JESSICA CHENFENG** is associate professor of marriage and family therapy. She has years of experience in MFT teaching, research, and supervision, as well as clinical and consulting experience across ministry, community, and medical contexts. She is coauthor of *Finding Your Voice as a Beginning Marriage and Family Therapist*.

**DANIEL D. LEE** is academic dean for the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and associate professor of theology and Asian American studies. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is the author of *Doing Asian American Theology: A Contextual Framework for Faith and Practice* and *Double Particularity: Karl Barth, Contextuality, and Asian American Theology*.



**JEROME BLANCO:** *You've described the vision of the Asian American Center's new Well-Being Collaboratory initiative this way: "To realize a flourishing Asian American Christian community that is connected to our racial and ethnic identities, is informed by our cultural and family legacies, upholds personal and community wholeness and well-being, and is transformed by our faith." It's an exciting vision, and I'm particularly curious about the concept of "well-being"—what you mean by it and why that is the key word you've used for this work.*

**JESSICA CHENFENG:** We talked a lot about what we would call this initiative. At the outset, the conversation started with mental health, but there are limits with that term as a primary entry point because of people's assumptions. Culturally speaking, Asian Americans think of mental health as having a somewhat individual focus—your *personal* emotional and psychological well-being. Those are good and important things! But in my clinical experience and research, in Asian American communities, it's actually rarely a matter of individual concern. It's not simply about addressing symptoms of depression and anxiety so an individual can function better. It's more relational in nature. It isn't individual-focused. *Well-being* better describes this hope of wholeness. We are not taking a white American individualistic perspective of self-care and well-being; this is well-being about relational health—in relationship

to oneself, to God, to family, to community, to larger institutions. We're attempting to establish a foundation of well-being that is integrative across all these relational aspects of our lives.

**DANIEL D. LEE:** Why don't you explain the five different relationships? They give great insight to how we're thinking about well-being. They're kind of a guide for us.

**JCF:** This is still in the works. For now, I'm calling them the five elements of connection—*elements* implying Asian forms of medicine and our groundedness with creation and our physical bodies. Asian American Christianity takes so much from white evangelicalism, right? So there's this disconnect from our bodies. I think that happens through migratory experiences, loss, and grief. In order to survive, you disconnect from your physical self but also your relational self. The five elements I mentioned are our relationship with self, with God, family, community, and institutions.

Historically, in Asian American Christian spaces, we understand relationships with God, family, and community—these are foundational to traditional discipleship. But relationship with ourselves has been distorted. Our second greatest commandment is "love your neighbor as yourself." And at least in ethnic immigrant churches, serving the church, God, or others often happens at the



sacrifice of attending to your own family and even to yourself. People say, “Yeah, my dad was never around because he was serving at church.” There are mother figures who sacrifice their own physical health for the sake of others. So many of us don’t grow up with an imprint of healthy relationships developed for ourselves in terms of self-love and self-value. When I’ve asked Asian American clients, “What do you love about yourself?” I get blank stares in response. Something about our theological orientation or our discipleship or church models of health have not quite addressed what it means to love and relate to myself as I seek to relate to God in others.

**JB:** *We need both a recognition of deeply connected communities and a grasp of the value of our own selves.*

**DL:** We want to establish a solid theological foundation for why we matter. We are Christians in our bodies, in our specific contexts. Who we are and what embodied presence we have matters profoundly to God. This lays the foundation for how we do this work. We’re talking about a holistic, robust, embodied discipleship. This also means we need to understand the great diversity of Asian America: Korean American, Taiwanese American, Filipino American, and everyone. That’s important. We want to make sure we cover East Asian Americans, Southeast Asian Americans, South Asian Americans, adoptees, multiracial Asian Americans—they’re all included. It’s saying, “Hey, this is a significant part of who you are.” We want this initiative and all the work we do with Asian Americans to embrace that diversity.

**JB:** *Can you tease out this idea you mentioned of relationship to institutions?*

**JCF:** We’re using the term “institutions” to represent various systems of power that shape and affect our relationships. There was a time in Christian America when racial issues were not recognized as a core, relevant part of our faith identity. So, a lot of therapy models didn’t historically integrate issues of race, ethnicity, and culture. Now, we would think that’s incompetent or strange. Training programs all include it. The difference though is that within the Asian American church, many people are still only coming to realize, “Oh, our race matters. People see us in our racial identity even if they don’t understand it. They treat us a certain way.” So, churches are now addressing it. However, just because we understand or see racial issues doesn’t mean we know how to work with them therapeutically. One of our hopes is to offer ongoing training and workshops for Asian American therapists—but really

for any Christian therapist wanting to engage with racial issues with Asian clients.

That intersection of Christian faith, identity, and relationships not just to race but to other larger systemic issues is really critical for well-being. For example, a lot of Asian American families and ethnic cultures have histories of patriarchy. You might have a heterosexual couple with egalitarian theology, but patriarchy seeps through unintentionally in the day to day. How do we have language to unpack that? The socialization of Asian-American boys and firstborn sons affect this part of how this person functions as a husband, right? And even if the wife is a strong leader at work, why is it that she has more traditional expectations for herself at home? Not that anything is inherently wrong with this, but these are common marital issues that we see.

This is all to say, addressing institutions and understanding our relationship to things like racism and patriarchy with our Asian American lenses matters for well-being.

**JB:** *The complex intersectionality of these relationships and categories of relationships really speaks to the need for an integrative approach. Can you speak more about the integrative and collaborative aspect of your work? The Collaboratory is intentionally a partnership between Fuller’s two schools and your respective disciplines.*

**DL:** In my own work in theology, even when I teach classes, I integrate trauma studies, family systems, attachment theory, because all these tools help us understand who we are and what experiences we’re having—to really explain what’s happening in Asian American lives and contexts. As a theologian, I’ve had to look through these fields and integrate them because every discipline has its own limitations.

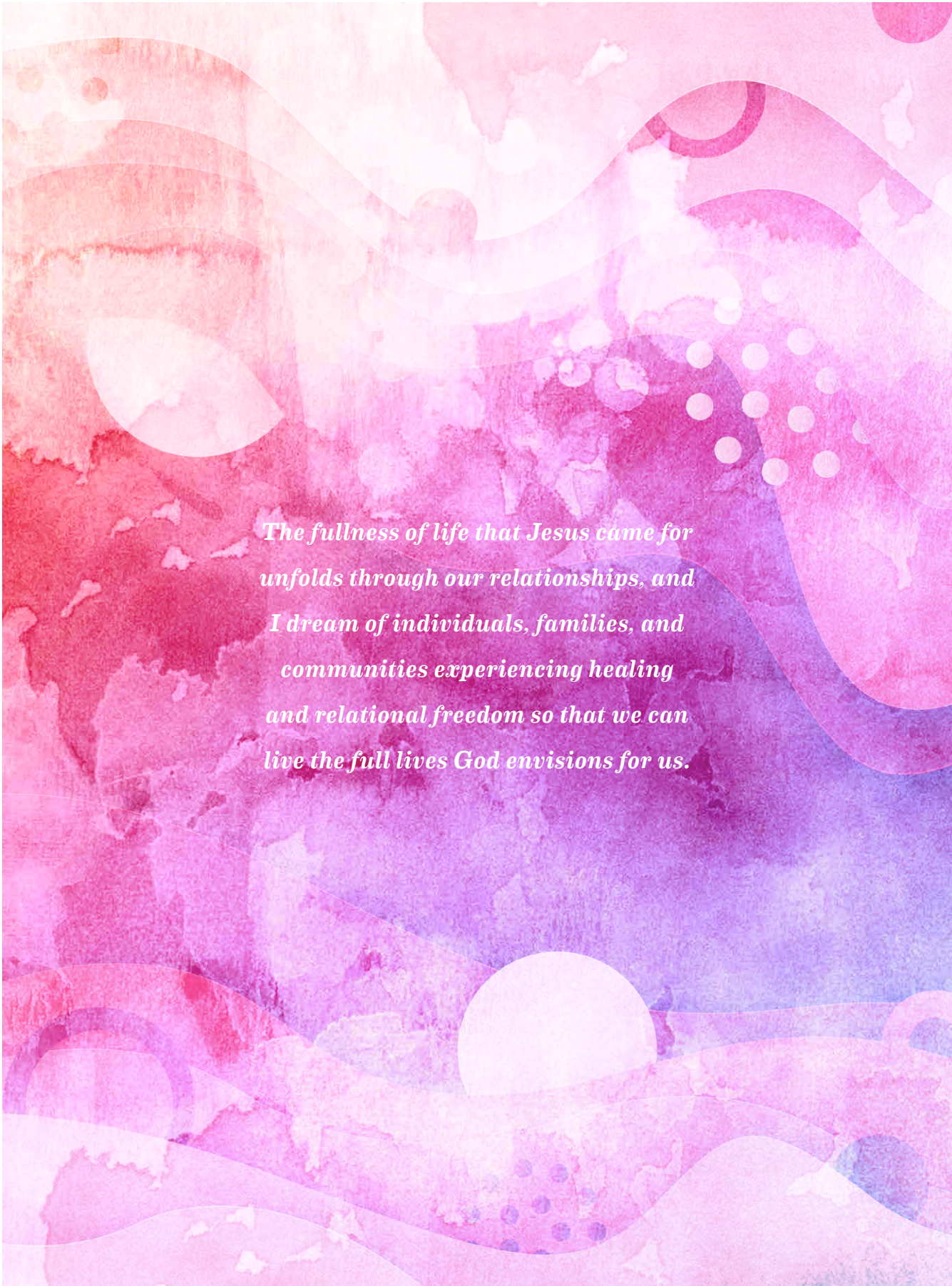
I’m part of the Association for Asian American Studies. I’m also part of the Asian American Psychological Association. Why? Because they each offer different things. For our course on “Asian American Identity in Ministry,” our main textbook, along with my book *Doing Asian American Theology*, is the textbook *Asian American Psychology*—because psychological concepts help us understand reality.

**JCF:** There’s also a real need in Asian American churches. We are sort of at this inflection point where, if you’re 40 or younger, you’re open to therapy—it’s a cultural shift. Previously, that has not been the case. But in average Asian churches, congregants still go to their pastors first for most kinds of support—marital support, parenting issues, and



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whatever it is, because we care a lot about discipleship and spiritual formation. So we need good, robust theology among pastors and lay leaders—because this is still where many Asian American Christians see wisdom coming from. And we also have to get our therapists and their amazing clinical expertise in this. We need to do this together. We're not centering anyone's knowledge or wisdom.

**JB:** *What does this look like, on a practical level, for the Well-Being Collaboratory? What are the first steps for equipping leaders for this important work?*

**JCF:** We have a couple of things planned. We're working on a podcast that I'm excited about, as well as online CEU training for Asian American Christian therapists. During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May, we'll have our inaugural Well-being Conference—bringing together pastors and therapists, lay leaders, and others who care about well-being and relational health within our communities. There will be didactic portions, but we're also really hoping for deepened networks and relational connection between leadership, so all of our ongoing work can be improved and supported.

We know there are theological divides around many of these questions—even the question of whom you turn to for mental health care. These are real questions pastors deal with in the Asian American Christian world. So, we want to emphasize developing relationships even as we offer research- and Bible-based wisdom for life together as a community. The hope is that we are going to be part of the fullness of life that Christ came for, and that requires relationship development.

**DL:** To add a little bit: We reaffirm the different ways in which people receive healing. We affirm prayer, communal life—it's all good. It isn't this or that. We want to broaden people's understanding of resources.

A friend of mine was sharing recently about our being faced with a number of mental health crises—suicides and other things—in his own church. He was totally unprepared for that level of crisis. The question is, how do we prepare for these things? How do we make sure that we know what to do when things become very difficult? When you're in the middle of a crisis, that's really too late. You're scrambling and overloaded. So, how do we make sure there are resources from the beginning? Counseling, pastoral care—we believe in that. We also believe that God supernaturally heals. There's room for coaching, for therapy. The question is how pastors, churches, and leaders can have a wide range of these re-

sources at their disposal, for the health and wholeness of our community.

**JB:** *What are you particularly hopeful about seeing in this work—not only at Fuller but for Asian American and Asian Christian communities as a whole? Is there something uniquely hopeful about our current landscape?*

**JCF:** I was listening to a podcast this morning where they talked about the tribalism that's present within Asian American Christian families—for all kinds of reasons, whether political, religious, theological, or a number of things. I believe that at the heart of this, there is a desire for our well-being as families and communities, but the ways we imagine getting there are different. And this is where trained clinicians, pastors, and leaders can come together to engage thoughtfully and say, "How are we going to care about intergenerational healing? How can we improve marriages for Asian American Christian families? How can we equip parents to communicate with their teenagers in a way that holds all of these tensions? How do we talk about this as a community?" My hope is that we bring in clinical expertise in concrete ways and get leaders on board. The fullness of life that Jesus came for unfolds through our relationships, and I dream of individuals, families, and communities experiencing healing and relational freedom so that we can live the full lives God envisions for us. That's what I'm hoping will be realized in the next decade.

**DL:** I'm hopeful because when I go to theologically different spaces, there's a great openness to learning about all of this. I think people are realizing more and more that our cultural and racial identities matter and are trying to figure out how we make sense of it. We're asking, how do we create resources for ourselves? How do we train ourselves better? How do we make sure that we leverage the gifts in our community? Obviously, there are still a lot of people who are struggling to understand why this is important. But I do see a wide range of theological and spiritual places where people really care. The key is to keep on having these conversations and keep on creating resources that actually help. We can talk about it, but when the rubber meets the road, that's when we know it's making a difference. That's the challenge. That's the struggle. That's where we need the community to continue to do the work, to invest and see the benefits in our community, to see the health and wholeness and deeper discipleship in Christ. That's what we want to see. ■

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



# Cultivating Mature Leadership for Healthy Churches

WITH DAVID C. WANG



**DAVID C. WANG** is the Cliff and Joyce Penner Chair for the Formation of Emotionally Healthy Leaders and is associate professor of psychology. A licensed psychologist, pastor, author, and speaker, his academic and applied work focuses on the holistic formation of Christian leaders. He is the editor of the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* and is pastor of spiritual formation at One Life City Church.

**ALY HAWKINS:** *It would be negligent to explore this issue's theme of Christ's hope and healing without also talking about wounds sustained in Christian spaces. It feels particularly significant today for the church to consider the features of contemporary evangelicalism that make spiritual trauma or "church hurt" more likely. Since much of your research focuses on best practices for forming spiritual maturity in Christian leaders, what connection do you see between a lack of maturity and the likelihood of abuse and/or trauma?*

**DAVID WANG:** Let me start by giving readers a feel for where I'm coming from personally. My findings highlight the unity and interrelatedness of spiritual maturity with our overall maturity as human beings. The latter may encompass our virtue and character dispositions, our capacity for intimate relationships, our self-awareness, insight, emotional regulation—essentially, our capacity to lead ourselves. While I wouldn't suggest that being spiritually mature is exactly the same thing as emotional maturity, I certainly believe that emotional immaturity bears upon and has implications for our spiritual life.

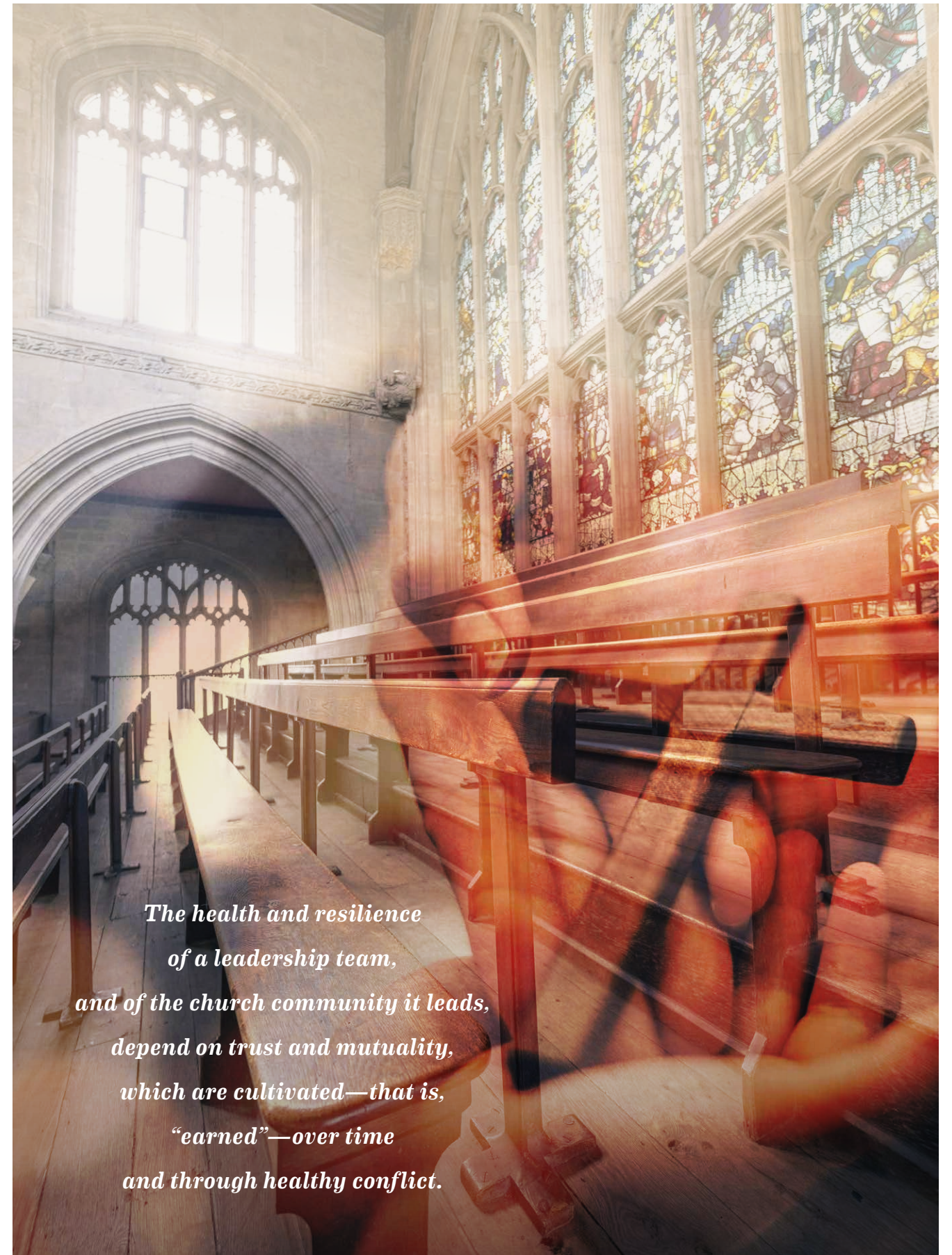
Pete Scazzero, author of *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* and *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*, argues that churches too often tolerate emotional immaturity among their leadership. He shares some pertinent examples of beneath-the-surface emotional immaturity that can undermine discipleship and keep people from becoming spiritually mature. For example, you can be a gifted public speaker while at the same time being a detached spouse or angry parent at home behind closed doors. You may function in a leadership position but be unteachable, insecure, and defensive. You might quote the Bible accurately and easily and still be totally unaware of your emotional reactivity. And it's certainly possible to lead people "for God" when your primary motive is an unhealthy need to be admired by others.

All these symptoms of immaturity create vulnerability to and a potential for "church hurt" within a church system. Adding to the spiritually corrosive dissonance between public acts of service and a darker private reality, emotionally immature leaders directly and indirectly contribute to relational conflict and then are ill-equipped to navigate and repair relational breaches when they occur.

**AH:** *Why is that?*

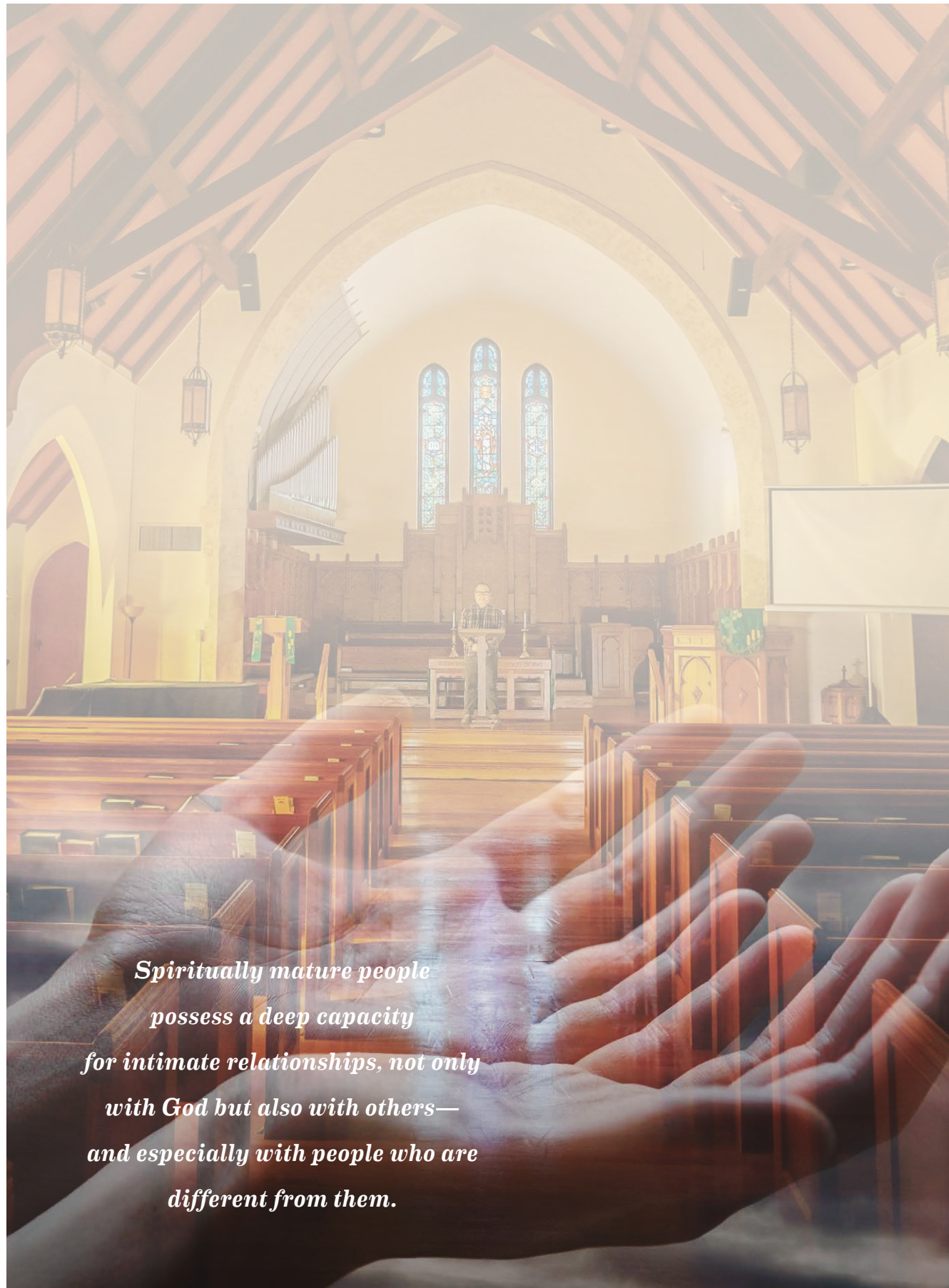
**DW:** The health and resilience of a leadership team, and of the church community it leads, depend on trust and mutuality, which are cultivated—that is, "earned"—over time and through healthy conflict. As conflicts are navigated well over the long haul, people feel safe to honestly share their thoughts and concerns without fear of retaliation or aggression, and this honest exchange facilitates greater insight and understanding between all parties. But emotional immaturity often sabotages this process of healthy conflict, making a leader react with avoidance, defensiveness, blame, and passive-aggression when conflicts arise. And when social power is combined with emotional immaturity, then intimidation, retaliation, manipulation, and exploitation become all too likely—often hidden behind a "Christian" veneer.

When it comes to the particular vulnerabilities of contemporary evangelicalism, I would suggest that one contributor is unintended excesses stemming from the church growth movement, which can create conditions that lead to church hurt. While the foundational principles of the church growth movement—understanding one's local context and presenting the gospel in a culturally relevant way, gleaning insight from sociological research and trend analysis—continue to be sound, some adherents to the movement seem to have gone astray in recent years, relying on purely numeric measures of success driven by a



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series of oversimplified formulas based on social engineering. When numeric growth implicitly or explicitly becomes the measure of success, “reaching people for Christ” can be used to justify church systems that are destructive.

For example, a common strategy to drive numeric growth is to build an entire church system around a single celebrity figurehead who is a charismatic and gifted public speaker, who likes being the center of attention, and is able to draw in crowds. When a leader with these kinds of narcissistic tendencies is unleashed by rationalization—such as “God must be using him because so many people are being reached”—and a lack of accountability, it is a recipe for disaster.

**AH:** *I’m sure most church leaders don’t intend to inflict spiritual trauma. And yet, if the epidemic of church hurt among my circles are any indication, it still happens with distressing regularity. So, what can churches do to prevent it? What qualities and practices are shared among faith communities where church hurt is rare?*

**DW:** Because we are all broken human beings, conflict and hurt are inevitable and unavoidable. This is true not only in our family systems but in our church communities, as well. With that being said, there are several things that can help to minimize the kind of institutional, systemic hurt that is self-perpetuated and self-perpetuating.

First, resilient church systems deal with their problems. They don’t avoid them, sugarcoat them, or over-spiritualize them. Taking a cue from Alcoholics Anonymous, the critical first step toward healing and change is admitting that we have a problem. Yet I’ve seen too many examples of churches struggling with a culture of niceness and passivity, where problems and conflicts that should be confronted are left alone in the hopes of keeping everyone happy and together. Research suggests that the number-one reason Christian leaders prematurely leave the ministry is because of unresolved conflict with other members of their ministry team. The mark of a healthy marriage or a health family, for example, isn’t the absence of conflict—the truth is, some couples don’t argue because they just don’t communicate—but rather a capacity to do conflict well: to share what needs to be shared, to hear what needs to be heard, and then to repair the misunderstandings and ruptures that have happened getting to this point.

Second, resilient church systems create space for both positive and negative emotions. Unfortunately, many evangelical churches struggle with triumphalism: a view of the Christian life in which we are to progress from victory to victory, where we sustain a disposition of perpetual joy, contentment, and peace at all times and never experience negative emotions such as sadness, fear, or anger. Speaking as both a pastor and a clinical psychologist, I’d call that toxic positivity with a Christian twist.

The fundamental problem with triumphalism is that it’s just not true. It’s theologically problematic and psychologically impossible. Even Jesus experienced negative emotions throughout his lifetime! Humans are literally not able to always experience positive emotions and never experience negative emotions. The goal, rather, is harmony between the two and congruence between our emotions and our circumstances.

Ecclesiastes 3 explains that there is a time for everything, a season for every activity and experience: a time to be born and a time to die, for example, as well as a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance. God created negative emotions for a good purpose. There is so much for Christians to grieve in our own lives, in our communities, and in our world! Yet in toxic church systems, people are led to believe that if their feelings deviate in any way from perfect bliss and unending peace, there must be something wrong with them or something lacking with their faith—and that shame leads to church hurt.

Hurtful church systems stifle grief and seek to rewrite or ignore unpleasant history. Healthy, resilient church systems, on the other hand, do not see grief as a threat but rather as a pathway to wholeness and wisdom. They practice the deep, historic Christian tradition of grief and lament. The church I help to pastor, for example, convened a series of “lament panels” to bring the deeper, darker emotions of our community to the surface. Medical staff cried as they recounted their hardest days treating COVID-19 patients in the ICU, while other members of our community shared about feeling vulnerable in light of our country’s ongoing history of racialized violence.

Third, resilient church systems require and promote spiritual maturity in their leaders, who embody the likeness of Christ in real, rather than ideal, situations.

**AH:** *What does that look like, exactly?*

**DW:** Spiritually mature people possess a deep capacity for intimate relationships, not only with God but also with others—and especially with people who are different from them. They practice faith in the context of community, in an ongoing process of conversion centered on relationships with Christ and others. They are persons of faith, hope, and love, who embody the fruit of the Spirit. They manifest a spirit of docility to the working of the Holy Spirit, open to the process of formation even in the face of pain and difficulty. They are humble, maintaining a relatively low self-focus and a grounded perspective of themselves that acknowledges and accepts not only their mistakes, imperfections, and limitations but also their abilities and achievements. They know they are not omniscient and respect the boundaries of their capacity—and they invite others to fill in these gaps. They contribute to God’s redemptive work



in the world by working toward social change in their community, for the liberation and justice of all peoples.

Spiritually mature people engage with reality. One of our recently published empirical studies found that prayer's positive or negative mental health benefits are tied to one's disposition toward experiential avoidance. That is, if you pray prayers of avoidance—like, “God just take this away”—then the practice of prayer can be associated with poorer mental health—and poorer spiritual health, I might add. But if you pray for strength and courage to face reality, no matter how difficult reality might be, the practice of prayer can be associated with positive mental health as well as deepening spiritual maturity.

A beautiful model of engaging—rather than avoiding—reality is Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. As Jesus looks ahead to the events that will ultimately lead to his death on the cross, he prays, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matt 26:39). Here, Jesus is facing his inner reality of preferring an alternative to the cross. And yet, he ends his prayer by accepting the reality that the way of the cross is nonetheless set before him. This same principle applies to church leaders: Are your prayers a means of avoiding reality or a means of receiving supernatural courage to face reality—whether that be the reality of yourself, of others, and/or of the world—no matter how painful or difficult it might be?

**AH:** *In addition to your academic work, you're also a pastor. How do you personally help people in your church who have been spiritually traumatized? What are some steps that a spiritually mature leader can take to help parishioners heal from past church hurt?*

**DW:** I serve as the pastor of spiritual formation at One Life City Church in Fullerton, California. We function as an experimental laboratory of sorts, exploring new ways of accompanying each other through life. One of our church values is the idea that “formation is slow-cooked.” We take a “long” approach not only to the healing of trauma—which is everywhere in our community, from youth to adults—but to discipleship overall. I love Eugene Peterson's description of discipleship as “a long obedience in the same direction,” and the same is true when it comes to helping people recover from spiritual trauma. We're not looking for that one key insight or that one perfectly timed Bible verse or that one breakthrough moment where we magically usher in a new season of healing and freedom. Healing, like spiritual formation, happens at the speed of life. We can't rush it, but we can resist it, slowing the process down or even grinding it to a halt.

The substance and work of trauma recovery is actually quite mundane. It's showing up consistently. It's reaching out to others and finding a way to trust people again, a little

bit at a time. It's cultivating safety in the community, both physically and emotionally, and that requires boundaries and honest conversations about our limitations (even about our inability to help). It's asking people how they are doing and really meaning it, and doing that over and over again for a long time. It's earning the trust that's necessary for someone to share their pain with us.

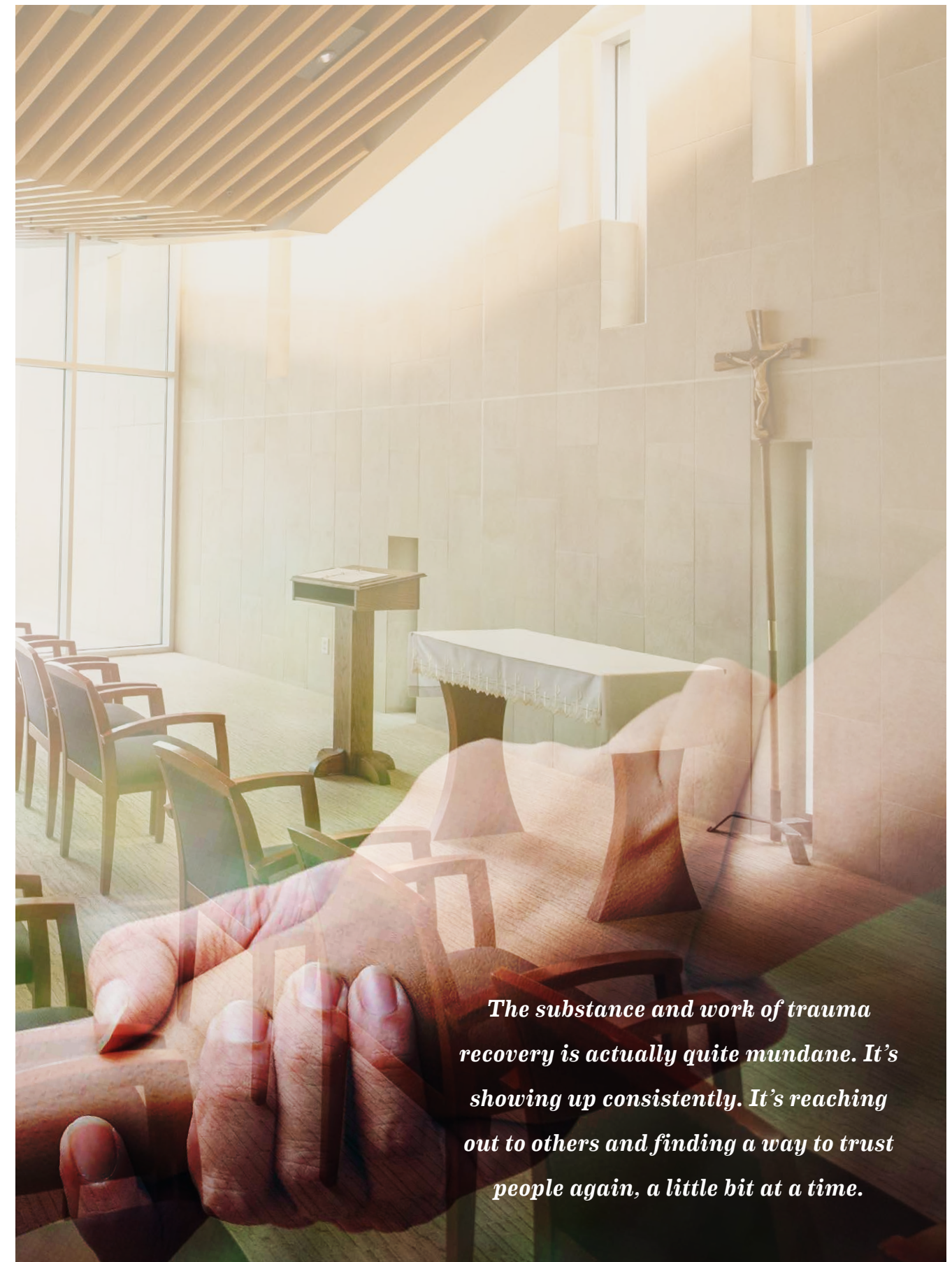
Robert Stolorow defines trauma as what happens when “intense emotional pain cannot find a relational home in which it can be held.” There are profound implications here for churches that want to become that relational home. Beyond the basics of ensuring the safety of all children and securing the church premises, church policy should reflect the reality that trauma is present not only within the congregation but within the leadership as well. Provisions for the ongoing sustainability and well-being of the pastoral staff (regular breaks and vacations, professional boundaries that protect the personal and family life of the leadership, etc.) should be formally codified and communicated.

Teaching ministries can normalize trauma by highlighting it in the biblical narrative and in our lives today. Preaching should avoid triumphalist language and convey the reality that our spiritual life, as well as our recovery process, is a journey that will not end until Christ returns. Be careful not to implicitly or explicitly convey an oversimplified framework for healing—“Trust in Jesus and all your pain will magically disappear,” for example. Find ways to celebrate when God answers prayers for healing without stigmatizing those who have prayed and are still waiting.

Next, broaden the emotional palette of worship. Glenn Pemberton notes that less than five percent of the most popular worship songs sung in American churches can be classified as songs of lament, compared with at least half of the Bible's Psalms. Create space within the worship service for grief and lament. It's perfectly fine for some songs to end on a hopeful note and for others to finish without a happy ending—just like many of the Psalms.

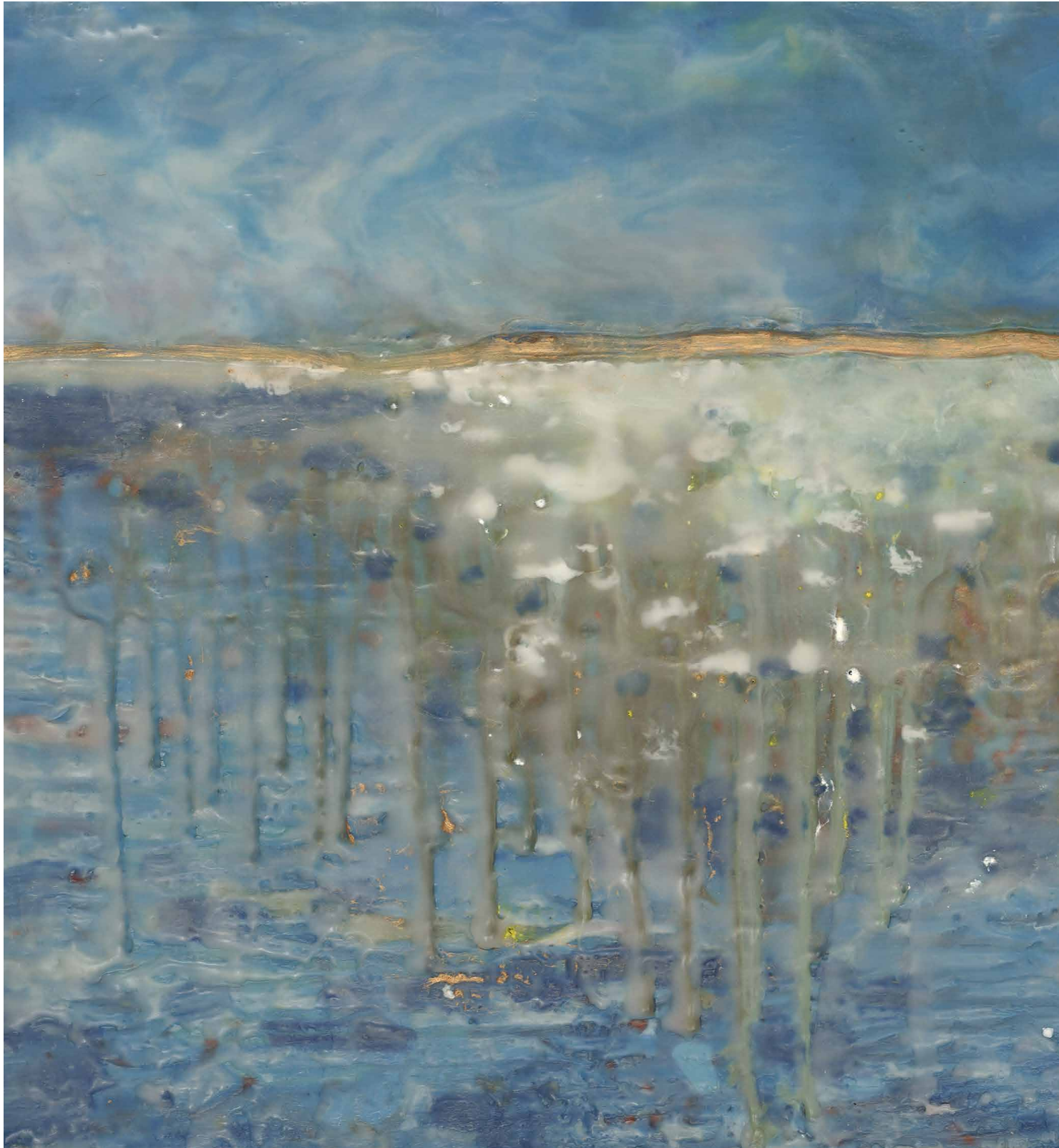
One of the foundational principles that undergirds my work as both a pastor and a clinical psychologist is that emotional pain tends to resist efforts to be “fixed.” However, if we are able to form trusting, attuned relationships with one another that make space for emotional pain to be seen and held, we help to build each other's capacity to hold our own pain and incorporate it into our story. And in so doing, we point each other to Christ, the wounded healer, who suffered and died on the cross to redeem humankind, and who is and will be the ultimate relational home in which all of our emotional pain will be held now and forevermore. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are” (Heb 4:15). ■

**ALY HAWKINS** is editorial director & senior writer at Fuller. Find more of her work at [thewritingvicar.com](http://thewritingvicar.com).



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+ He Calms the Storm by Claire Astra MacKenzie. Encaustic on paper, digitally enhanced, 2008. See more of Claire Astra MacKenzie's art in the opening and closing covers, and on pp. 10–11 and 73.

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Who Is Fuller?

Fuller Seminary is an evangelical, multid denominational graduate institution committed to forming global leaders for kingdom vocations. Responding to changes in the church and world, Fuller is transforming the seminary experience for both traditional students and those beyond the classroom: providing theological formation that helps Christ followers serve as faithful, courageous, innovative, collaborative, and fruitful leaders in all of life, in any setting. Fuller offers 19 Master's and advanced degree programs—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through its School of Mission and Theology and School of Psychology & Marriage and Family Therapy, as well as rich and varied forms of support for the broader church. More than 3,000 students from 83 countries and 114 denominations enroll in Fuller's degree programs annually, and over 45,000 alumni serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businesspersons, and in a variety of other vocations around the world.

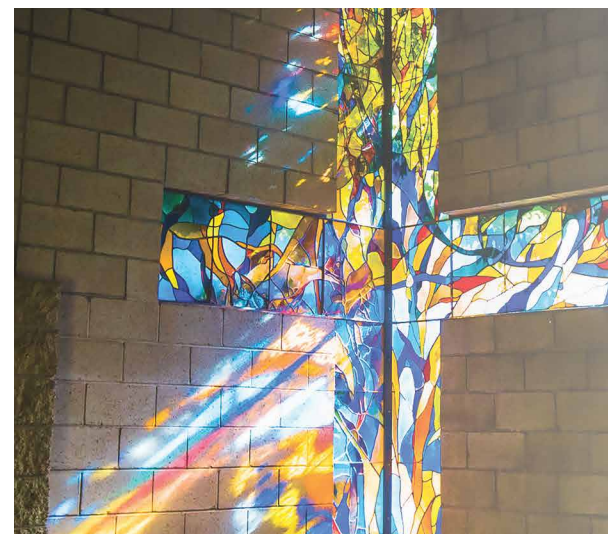
¿Qué es Fuller?

Fuller es una institución de posgrado evangélico y multid denominacional que está comprometida a la formación de líderes globales para las vocaciones del reino. En respuesta a los cambios en la Iglesia y el mundo, Fuller está transformando la experiencia del seminario tanto para los estudiantes tradicionales como para aquellos fuera del aula: ofreciendo una formación teológica que ayuda a los seguidores de Cristo a servir como líderes fieles, valientes, innovadores, colaboradores, y fructíferos en todo aspecto de la vida y en cualquier entorno. Fuller ofrece 19 programas de maestría y títulos avanzados - con opciones en español, coreano y en línea - a través de su Escuela de Misión y Teología y su Escuela de Psicología, y Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar así como maneras enriquecedoras y variadas de apoyo para la Iglesia en general. Más de 3,000 estudiantes de 83 países y 114 denominaciones se matriculan a los programas de Fuller anualmente, y más de 45,000 graduandos que se desempeñan como ministros, consejeros, maestros, artistas, líderes de organizaciones sin fines de lucro, empresarios, y en una variedad de otras vocaciones alrededor del mundo.

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## Give Hope for the Future

In just a few months, another class of Fuller graduates will head out to make their difference for Christ in the world. Last year, **more than half of the Class of 2023** expected to engage in traditional ministry roles, while the remainder felt called to careers such as teaching, counseling, the arts, medicine, engineering, and social justice work.

Many did not reach the finish line alone.

In the spirit of Hebrews 13:16, donors made possible their provision as biblically sound, practically formed Christian leaders. In fact, during the last academic year, **nearly two-thirds of Fuller students relied on financial aid.**

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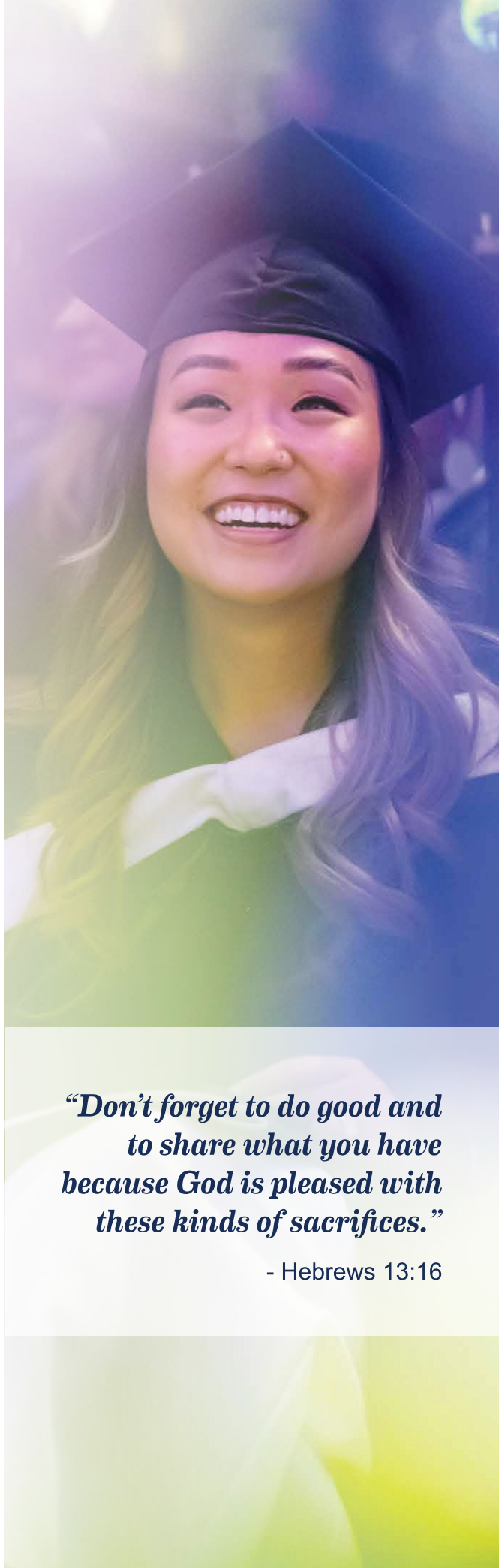
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**“Don’t forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.”**

- Hebrews 13:16

### RECENT FACULTY BOOKS

**Those for Whom the Lamp Shines: The Making of Egyptian Ethnic Identity in Late Antiquity**  
Vince L. Bantu (University of California Press, 2023)

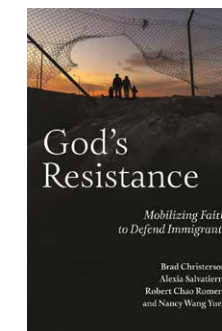
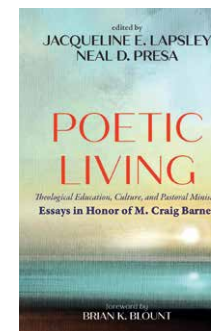
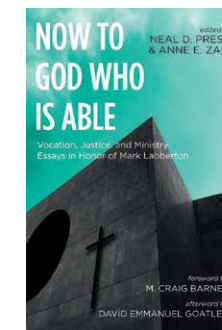
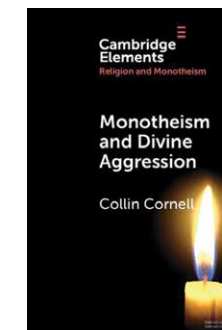
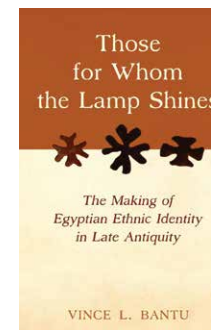
**Monotheism and Divine Aggression**  
Collin Cornell (Cambridge University Press, 2023)

**Now To God Who Is Able: Vocation, Justice, and Ministry: Essays in Honor of Mark Labberton**  
Neal D. Presa and Anne E. Zaki, eds. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023)

**Poetic Living: Theological Education, Culture, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays in Honor of M. Craig Barnes**  
Neal D. Presa, with Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023)

**God’s Resistance: Mobilizing Faith to Defend Immigrants**  
Alexis Salvatierra, with Brad Christerson, Robert Chao Romero, and Nancy Yuen Wang (New York: New York University Press, 2023)

**Psalms and Wisdom Books, Biblical Interpretation Series**  
Chloe Sun (Hong Kong: Evangel Press, 2023)



### RECENT FACULTY ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

**PETER ALTMANN**, “Sword, Plague, and Hunger: Covid through the Eyes of the Prophet Jeremiah,” *Biblische Notizen* 198 (2023): 21–38. **VINCE BANTU**, with J. Dyer, *Haymanot Journal*, vol. 3 (UMI, 2023); “Daughters of the Kisse: The Presence of Foreigners in Christian Nubia,” *Haymanot Journal* 3 (2023): 3–16; “I Am Black and Beautiful: A Biblical Haymanot (Theology) of Blackness,” *Do Black Lives Matter?* (2023): 191–201; “Bright as the Sun: Religions, Translations, and Circulation in Post-Byzantine Africa,” *Africa and Byzantium* (2023): 127–141. **WARREN BROWN**, with N. C. Murphy, “Christian Theology and Neuroscience,” *St Andrews Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. B. Wolfe (2023); with A. M. Nobles and L. K. Paul, “Verbal Memory in Children with Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum,” *International Neuropsychological Society* (February 2024); with K. J. Rigg, M. D. Wallace, and L. K. Paul, “Processing Speed in Musical Judgments in Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum,” *International Neuropsychological Society* (February 2024); with N. M. LeFebre, J. M. Kaplan, S. M. Kendrick, and L. K. Paul, “MMPI-2-RF Patterns in Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum,” *International Neuropsychological Society* (February 2024); with M. D. Wallace, L. K. Paul, K. D. Callaway, and K. J. Rigg, “Emotional Perception Abilities of Music for Individuals with Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum” *International Neuropsychological Society* (February 2024); with M. R. Spezzaferri and L. K. Paul, “Emotion Recognition and Perception in Simple and Complex Social Contexts in Persons with Hemispherectomy,” *International Neuropsychological Society* (February 2024); with E. Shahnazarian, N. M. LeFebre, K. D. Callaway, and L. K. Paul, “Moral Foundations Theory in Individuals with Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum,” *International Neuropsychological Society* (February 2024); with N. M. LeFebre, K. D. Callaway, and L. K. Paul, “Impacts of Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum on Visual Aesthetic Judgements,” *International Neuropsychological Society* (February 2024). **JESSICA CHENFENG**, with B. Hernandez and N. Schwenke, “Supporting Physicians during the COVID-10 Pandemic: A Cumulative Feminist Autoethnography,” *Journal of Systemic Therapies* (2023); “A Systemic and Whole Person Framework for Supporting Physician Resilience and Well-Being,” in *Cultivating Systemic Resilience in Therapy: Applications and Interventions for Families, Relationships, and Individuals*, eds. C. Eppler and R. Martin (Routledge, 2024). **COLLIN CORNELL**, “God’s Mission Story Centers on Fellowship,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (January 2024); “God’s Shining Face in the Psalms: Three Rhetorically Lively Uses,” *Biblische Notizen* (January 2024). **OSCAR GARCÍA-JOHNSON**, “Nuevo Mundo Theology as a Latinx Decolonial Response to the Global Crisis in Theological Education,” in *Decolonial Horizons: Reimagining Theology, Ecumenism and Sacramental Praxis*, ed. R. C. Barreto and V. Latovic (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 183–201; “The Latino/a/x Space in the North American Seminary: Forming in Between,” in *Now to God Who Is Able: Vocation, Justice, and Ministry: Essays in Honor of Mark Labberton*,

ed. N. D. Presa and A. E. Zaki, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023), 165–174; “The Postcolonial/Decolonial Option in Theology,” in *Emerging Theologies from the Global South*, ed. M. Raheb and M. A. Lamport (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2023), 38–52. **TOMMY GIVEN**, “Election According to Paul,” in *T & T Clark Handbook of Election* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2023). **VELI-MATTI KÄRKKÄINEN**, “‘ex abundantia caritatis suae’: The Trinitarian Form of Divine Love and Revelation,” in *Now to God Who Is Able: Vocation, Justice, and Ministry: Essays in Honor of Mark Labberton*, ed. N. D. Presa and A. E. Zaki (Portland, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023), 219–232; “A Constructive Trinitarian Theology of the First Article for the Religiously Pluralistic and Secular World,” in *PNEUMA: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* 45, no. 3–4 (2023): 1–26; “Mission, Ecumenism, and Religious Pluralism(s): The New Habitat of the Global Christian Church,” in *Kirkon olemus on Missio. Juhlakirja dosentti Risto Ahosen täyttäessä 80 vuotta, toim. Risto Ahonen* [in *Mission Is the Essence of the Church. Festschrift for Dr. Risto Ahonen*], ed. J. Rusama (Rovaniemi: Väyläkirjat, 2023): 368–386. **KIRSTEEN KIM**, “Time to Talk about Race: Colorblindness and Missiology,” *Mission Round Table Journal* 18, no. 1 (2023): 8–15. **JANETTE H. OK**, “Living Hope: Practices of Possibilities,” in *Now to God Who Is Able: Vocation, Justice, and Ministry: Essays in Honor of Mark Labberton*, eds. N. D. Presa and A. E. Zaki (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023), 205–218; “Introduction to 1 Peter,” in *The SBL Study Bible: Including Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (New York: HarperOne, 2023), 2133–2135; “Minor Feelings and Embodied Strategies in Doctoral Biblical Education,” in *Remapping Biblical Studies: CUREMP at Thirty*, eds. S. Buckhanon Crowder and M. F. Foskett (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2023), 251–256. **NEAL D. PRESA**, with A. E. Zaki, “The Sacramentality of Justice: Towards Kapwa Theologies,” in *Now to God Who Is Able: Vocation, Justice, and Ministry: Essays in Honor of Mark Labberton* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023); with J. Lapsley and B. Blount, “Supra-Text and Sub-Text: Pastor as Ecclesial Liturgical Theologian,” in *Poetic Living: Theological Education, Culture, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays in Honor of M. Craig Barnes* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023). **SOONG-CHAN RAH**, “Evangelicalism,” in *Christianity in North America*, eds. K. R. Ross, G. J. Kim, and T. M. Johnson (Edinburgh University Press, 2023). **SIANG-YANG TAN**, “Awe and Mental and Physical Health and Well-Being: Empirical Evidence and Clinical Applications from a Christian Perspective,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 42, no. 4 (2023). **KENNETH WANG**, with J. Stricker, B. A. Simonsmeier, S. Buecker, and T. Simacek, “Relations of the German Almost Perfect Scale-Revised and Short Almost Perfect Scale with the Big Five Personality Facets,” *Current Psychology* 42 (2023): 23821–23829; with M. S. Kang, “Assessment in Research and Practice: Relationship with God Measures,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 42, no. 3 (2023): 259–263.





Fuller Seminary has always been about the work of forming people into the image and likeness of Christ. It is our hope, prayer, and expectation that by educating persons in the gospel, we are equipping them to serve God's kingdom in their particular social locations. Over the years, Fuller (along with many other seminaries) has realized that we want to holistically form our students. Yes, we want to academically form them, but we also want to form them spiritually, vocationally, interculturally, and emotionally.

A hallmark of Fuller's formational ethos is *embodiment*. If you are a student at Fuller, you are bound to hear in numerous settings that we are human bodies and that this reality matters! What we do with our bodies, what is done to our bodies, and how our bodies are impacted by events altogether shape and form us into the people we are becoming. For example, threatened bodies learn to be suspicious and scared; they interact in the world through an understandable lens of fear. Bodies impacted by love not only have a more optimistic view of the world and enter into relationships with greater trust, but they also are better able to risk loving themselves.

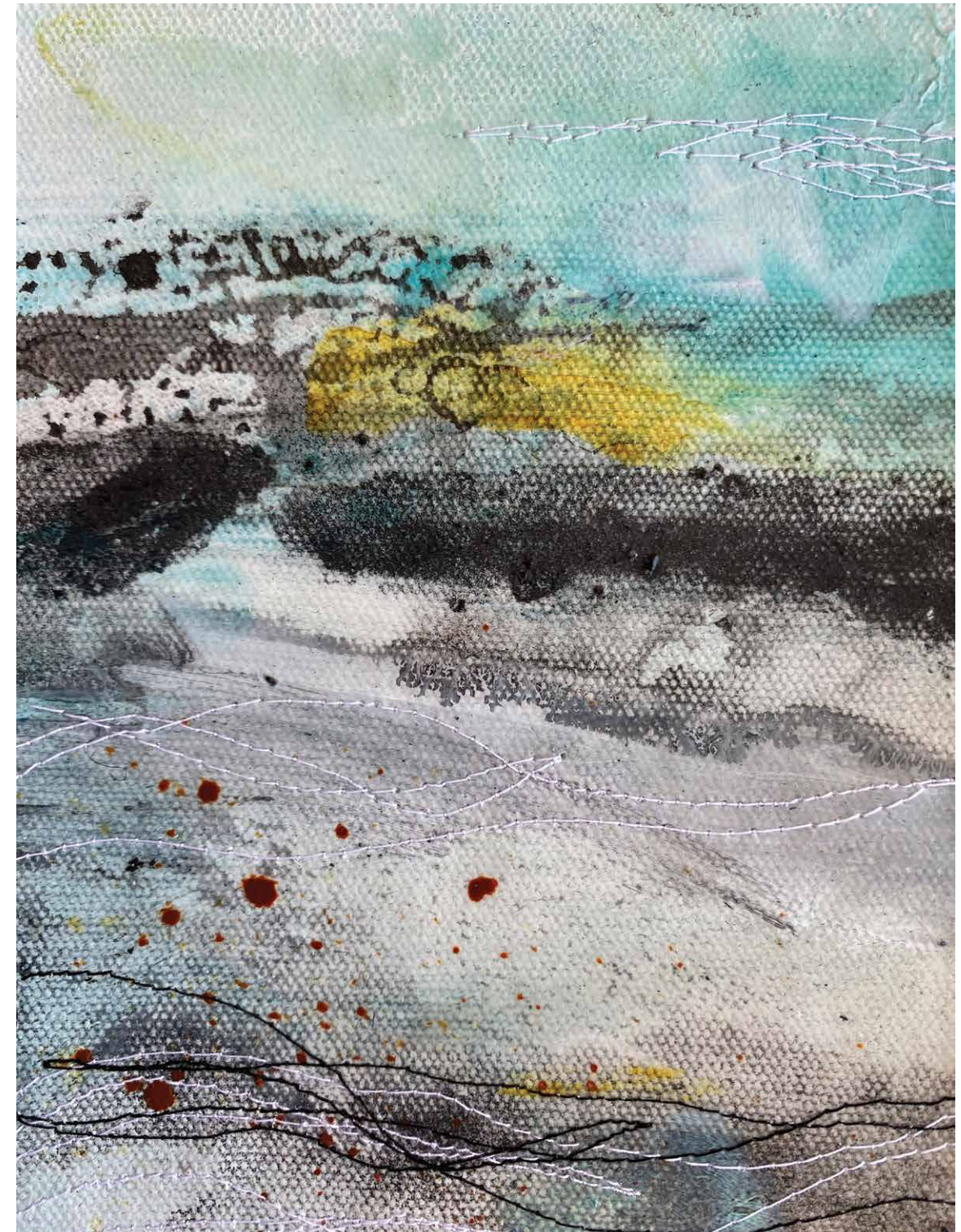
Formation, therefore, must include what we do *with our bodies*. We don't think our way to spiritual formation; we embody our way toward it. In Fuller's Division of Formation where we work, we take this very seriously. We teach ancient spiritual practices, provide retreats, and engage in embodied experiences such as group spiritual direction and spiritual formation groups. This last August, we engaged in a truly embodied spiritual practice: pilgrimage.

Twenty-two of us traveled to Spain to walk approximately 72 miles of the Camino de Santiago, an ancient pilgrimage connected to the apostle James. The walk ends in Santiago at the site of a beautiful cathedral erected over the site of James's tomb. We walked and prayed and sang and talked with Jesus, then walked some more and prayed some more and felt the pain in our bodies and remembered Christ's walk to Golgotha. For six glorious days, we walked our way in the path of spiritual formation and found our Way. We were changed.

How were we changed? Some pilgrims found clarity related to vocation. Some experienced grief and closure with deceased loved ones. Some reconnected with Christ by the sheer time spent in silence listening to the Spirit in them, through nature and even through pain. Some realized that their life priorities were askew and came back ready to reorganize their lives to center on what is most important. The Way was made by walking.

What we all realized is that the real pilgrimage is our ongoing lives. We are all on pilgrimage right where we are. You don't have to go to Spain or walk a famous route (though we highly recommend it) to get back on the Way. It is our prayer that you will find your own Camino, your own embodied way of listening, looking, and finding Christ's leading. We hope that you will do so through your lived embodied life because embodied formation matters. It is the way that the Way is made.

+ **Brad Strawn**, chief of spiritual formation and integration, dean of the chapel, and Evelyn and Frank Freed Professor of the Integration of Psychology and Theology, and **Amy Drennan**, executive director of vocation formation and affiliate professor in the School of Psychology & Marriage and Family Therapy



+ Common Thread Prayers for Ukraine by Claire Astra MacKenzie. Sumi ink, wood ash, acrylic, and thread on linen canvas, 2022. See more of Claire Astra MacKenzie's art in the opening cover and on pp. 10–11, 73, and 92.



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**+ Jarret Keith (MAT '21) at Testimony Ministries in Los Angeles, California. Read Jarret's story on p.22.**

