“That verse of Scripture jumped out, grabbed me by the throat, wrapped itself around my heart, and I’m telling you, I’ve never gotten over it. Here was this young, green as grass, African American kid, in a kind of genteel segregated town. And there was the God of eternity marking this kid off for himself, putting a call on him: ‘You’re mine.’ You don’t get over that!”

—WILLIAM E. PANNELL, ON VOCATION
A BETTER COUNTRY

we left a world two thousand miles behind
and crossed wide Arizona on the 10
to reach some undisclosed horizon line

the forests and the rivers I called mine
have faded into scrub and barbed wire fence
we left a world two thousand miles behind

and who can say if this was by design?
we heard a voice say go and so we went
to reach some undisclosed horizon line

still, in our hearts there sits a little shrine—
above the door, it reads, what might have been
we left a world two thousand miles behind

what greater sorrow, though, if we resign
ourselves to saying no and not amen—
amen to undisclosed horizon lines

how often do our hopes and fears entwine!
two roads of one same journey in the end
we left a world two thousand miles behind
to reach some undisclosed horizon line

BY KYLE DESCH (MA student)
When the flesh—the lived human experience—becomes word, community can develop. When we say, “Let me tell you what we saw. Come and listen to what we did. Sit down and let me explain to you what happened to us. Wait until you hear what we saw,” we call people together and make our lives into lives for others. The word brings us together and calls us into community. When the flesh becomes word, our bodies become part of a body of people.—Henri Nouwen

There is a deep tradition of the Word becoming flesh in the Christian faith, so it should not be a mystery beyond our imagination that the words we speak—whether in the form of story, comment, challenge, sermon, or confidence—have embodiment power. We tell stories about things that happen in the flesh, but the words we speak also have the power to affect the concrete world. Sometimes these shifts are grand, sometimes granular. A sample of the latter: a colleague told me recently the story of a bad week—disillusioned, bitter, unhappy. She sat in my office and wept as she spoke. Her words produced tears, her tears elicited my own. The next day a heartfelt word of kindness from her supervisor turned those unhappy thoughts on their heels. “What’s wrong with me,” she thought. “Life is good.”

This is one of the reasons that we have combined the stories from Fuller’s previous Focus magazine with the theological reflections of Theology, News & Notes. We want our theological studies to be illuminated by the lived human experience, and our actions to be informed by—many other stories, discussions, and conversations taking place among—and who we are and who we are becoming together.

This brings me to one more story, of the grand shift kind. Four times too many in the last year the Pasadena community has gathered in the prayer garden to mourn the loss of loved ones. We gathered to remember, to pay respect, to gain strength from sacred lamenting. Words were spoken and sung, hearts were opened, griefs were shared, and a miraculous chemistry occurred—our sorrow bonded us more strongly together. These loved ones had words unique to them: Thelma Polanco-Perez, Glen Steassen, Olga Martinez, and Toi Perkins-Prince. Their bodies among us may be gone, but the words still have power. They reside in us, a body of people.

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You Hold Our Words in Your Hands

From the Editor

You hold our words in your hands

When the flesh—the lived human experience—becomes word, community can develop. When we say, “Let me tell you what we saw. Come and listen to what we did. Sit down and let me explain to you what happened to us. Wait until you hear what we saw,” we call people together and make our lives into lives for others. The word brings us together and calls us into community. When the flesh becomes word, our bodies become part of a body of people.—Henri Nouwen
The words continuity and change mark the beginning of my second school year as president of Fuller. A brief glimpse of the world around us shows dramatic change in the cultural landscape near and far; the perplexity of structures and habits of the institutional church; the new experiments and models of church life; the growing interest in church planting and in bivocational ministry; the inspiring rise of immigrant congregations; the large number of our students who intend to put their education to work in some form of service in the public square or in non-profits, in the arts, or in business; morphing delivery systems for all graduate-level education, seminaries included; an urgent need for training women and men to be leaders who can form leaders for the mission of the church in the world.

Such change outside of Fuller requires change within it. Our curriculum, reimagined from the ground up last year, will move our students forward with a greater intentionality and integration over the course of their education. Alongside them, we want to discern within the community what God is calling us to do in the world—inside the Las palabras continuidad y cambio marcan el comienzo de mi segundo año escolar como presidente de Fuller. Un breve destello del mundo que nos rodea nos muestra el cambio dramático en el panorama cultural cercano y lejano; la perplejidad de estructuras y hábitos de nuestra iglesia institucional; los nuevos experimentos y modelos de la vida eclesiástica; el creciente interés en plantación de iglesias e iniciativas bivocacionales; el crecimiento sorprendente de congregaciones inmigrantes; el gran número de nuestros estudiantes que pretenden poner en práctica la educación adquirida dentro de alguna forma de servicio en el círculo público o en organizaciones sin fines de lucro, en las artes, o en el negocio; una necesidad latente de capacitar mujeres y hombres a ser líderes que puedan formar líderes para la misión de la iglesia en este mundo.

Tal cambio fuera de Fuller requiere un cambio dentro de sí mismo. Nuestro plan de estudios, re-imaginado el año pasado desde abajo hasta arriba, moverá adelante a nuestros estudiantes con una mayor intencionalidad e integración a lo largo de su trayectoria educacional. Juntos e ellas, queremos discernir dentro de la comunidad lo que Dios nos está llamando a hacer en este mundo—dentro de la comunidad de Fuller.
issue #1 vocatio

After serving in pastoral roles for three decades, Mark Labberton, Ph.D. (M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary) in 2009 to teach and direct the Lloyd John Ogilvie Insti-tute for Preaching. In 2013, he was inaugurated as Fuller’s fifth and current president. He articulates a broad vision of leadership that is elaborated upon in his new book Called: The Crisis and Promise of Follow-ing Jesus. Today, from which some of these comments are drawn.

Call is a word that has many associations, so let me be clear what I mean by it. The heart of God’s call is that we receive and live the love of God for us and for the world. This is the meaning of the two great commandments, that we are made. We are God with all we are and our neighbors as ourselves. The Bible as a whole, and Jesus in particular, reveals what such a life looks like. Our calling is living communion with God and God’s world, and it encompasses everything.

Vocation doesn’t just mean the pursuit of ordained ministry; it refers to God’s desire for all of our lives. The primary call of God, then, is for us to live for the flourishing of God’s purposes in the world—a foundation that we receive and live. That means inclining our lives to God’s priorities and inclining our lives to the needs of others. This is the context of our calling, the background to which our lives are directed.

Here is the crisis we face: we’ve made for this calling, but it slides through our fingers. Jesus delivers love and the many tenations and ambiguities that others do, and we see that love is often more evident in the unknown, the unexpected, and the unplanned. We move into a sea of great challenges with confidence (because of our Lord), urgency (because of our mission), and humility (because of our faith). May this FULLER magazine help narrate the stories of how Fuller students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, donors, and friends seek to do just this.

Yours in freedom and joy.

La iglesia más allá de ella.

Así como muchas voces reclaman que la iglesia se está muriendo o es irrelevante, de igual forma tenemos la labor de hacer la vida auténtica y el testimonio del pueblo de Dios más evidentes. Con toda confianza (por nuestro Señor), urgencia (por nuestra misión), y humildad (por nuestra fe), nos estamos moviendo hacia un mar de grandes desafíos. Que esta revista FULLER ayude a narrar las historias de cómo el estudian-tado, docentes, el personal, ex alumnos(as), fieles comunar一篇文章, donantes y amistades de Fuller buscan hacer esto.

Atentamente en libertad y gozo.

Our high calling of love has become encrust-ed, buried under layers that lack significant evidence of life. I have been caught in this vortex, well knowing the command of Jesus to live out genuine love in the face of real need.

After serving in pastoral roles for three decades, Mark Labberton, Ph.D. (M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary) in 2009 to teach and direct the Lloyd John Ogilvie Institute for Preaching. In 2013, he was inaugurated as Fuller’s fifth and current president. He articulates a broad vision of leadership that is elaborated upon in his new book Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus. Today, from which some of these comments are drawn.

In it I attempt to frame the urgent need to live as disciples of Jesus. A friend of Fuller’s has made the gift of this book possible with the hope that this central vocation, which shapes the whole of Fuller, can be a gift to all of Fuller.

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Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today

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My husband and I host dinner parties often enough that a group of regulars has started to convene. Our friends are young professionals with varying careers and goals. At a recent dinner I looked around the table and saw a humanitarian who campaigns for clean water in Africa, a filmmaker, a high school Bible teacher, a city of Burbank marketing professional, a youth pastor, a web developer at Jet Propulsion Laboratories (NASA), a comedian, a children’s counselor, the owner of an allergy-sensitive catering company, a church planter, and an entrepreneur and doctoral student (myself). Noting that each of us graduated from Fuller, I realized that either by force or by choice, many seminary alums work outside traditional ministry contexts. On some level, that table represented the changing landscape of religious vocation. I looked around and saw friends who were able to respond creatively and with agility to their callings no matter what their careers.

In my past experience as a student at Fuller, I often felt that the mission statement “preparing men and women for the manifold ministries of Christ and his church” was limited to church ministry, faith-based nonprofit work, and counseling. And while these three spheres will likely always remain central, they are no longer the sole locations to which God is calling people to serve. Our dinner gatherings have convinced me this is the case: our conversations often turn to updates on our work. Angela (PhD student), the youth pastor, asks for input on the sermon she’s preparing for her youth group. Elizabeth (MAT ’12), the caterer, describes a cooking class she took last week. My husband Dan (MDiv ‘10), a filmmaker, convinces us to help imagine his latest story protagonist. Lyndsey (MAICS ’13), the humanitarian, invites us to strategize how to provide clean water to children around the globe. Brenton (MAT ’11), a web developer, explains NASA’s latest scientific exploration. As the night grows shorter, our conversations often explore such questions as how our theological training impacts what we’re currently doing. And for those of us working outside the church, how do our professions speak to the church and to Fuller? My friends intuitively know that our work is theological. Still, we long for training that brings those intuitive connections to the surface in explicit ways.

Around the Dinner Table

By Michaela O’Donnel Long
utilized both his technical and theological skills. Brenton had always naturally understood God through the lens of science and mathematics, and at Fuller he took classes and attended conferences that explored the intersection between God and science. Brenton realized that he is called to live at that intersection—using his technical skills and theology together to contribute to scientific exploration. When the job at JPL opened up, the planets aligned in Brenton’s life.

Vocational agility, the subject of a great many of our conversations these days, is the ability to move quickly and fluidly between theological frameworks and one’s social location. Elizabeth practices agility when she responds to God’s call of hospitality by opening a catering business. She does the tough work of contextualizing theological frameworks into her business model. And she does this because she sees God’s narrative and teachings as the basis for her own place in this world.

I must admit that when I first started hosting dinner parties I was tempted to cook the entire meal myself—not out of service, but out of a desire for control. Since we have grown closer with our friends, however, I saw that in a desire to keep a tight rein on the meal I cheated others of the chance to contribute, and myself of the opportunity to experience my friends in a more intimate way. The dishes—and the stories—my friends bring flow from their own lives in the form of a favorite recipe from someone’s mother or a dish using lettuce someone grew. The way we’ve grown close through these dinners is a witness to the power of being intentional about our love for neighbor, about integrating our faith fully within our careers, and about sharing life together around the dinner table.

The work of Martin Luther helps make explicit connections between theological work and the various professions we represent. As a Reformer, Luther ministered and wrote largely in reaction to medieval models of faith and religious practice—including perceptions of vocation and work. Medieval models thought of work as a part of everyday life, but they did not perceive work outside of the church as a vocation—a call—from God. Yes, society needed bakers and teachers and farmers, but that work was not spiritual. If a person wanted his or her work to be spiritual, it meant withdrawing from the world and entering into monastic life. But Luther rejected the idea that work was only spiritual if done within monastic parameters. He argued that humans live in the reality of two kingdoms: the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth. In the kingdom of heaven, we are called to respond vertically to God with our faith. In the kingdom of earth, we are called to respond horizontally toward our neighbor with love. Vocations, then, are specific callings to practice faithfulness toward God and love toward neighbor from within a particular social location.

When Elizabeth graduated from Fuller, she strung together various part-time jobs to make ends meet. Yet a deeper urge was growing in her to start a catering business that had a double mission: serve people with food allergies and teach about the connections between faith and food. Elizabeth founded that business on the belief that all people, regardless of difficult dietary restrictions, should have access to healthy, delicious food. She infuses work in the “hospitality industry” with Christian meaning, and her theology frames her task as the creation of space for people to break bread and form community. While her technical training as a chef equips her to serve food, it is her training as a theologian that equips her to serve people.

Our friend Brenton works for Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) field center. He earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and English. After college he picked up technical skills that landed him a job as a web developer, but after a few years, he could not shake the feeling that God was calling him to something deeper. A series of investigative conversations led him to study at Fuller. At first, after he graduated, he looked for the jobs that seminary explicitly prepared him for: church ministry and faith-based nonprofit work. He was unable to find a job that
When Joe Stroup (MDiv ’13) was first invited to a late-night Dungeons and Dragons game in college, he was wary. He decided to go, and found an entire underground culture of men and women who didn’t connect easily in other social settings, but did connect strongly with each other through “the game” — a role-playing experience in which players become the characters in an imagined, interactive story.

The discovery had a lasting impact on Joe, who went on to become a youth pastor as well as a gaming enthusiast. Noticing that some of the guys in his youth group were uncomfortable at the typical lock-ins and pizza parties, Joe started a gaming ministry — and a small group that ended up meeting at his home weekly for a year and a half. “We’d take part in a game that would last for a couple of hours,” Joe says, “and it gave us a common context to have conversations about real life.”

“I see a lot of potential to reach an unreached people group who are right our midst,” says Joe, “through the portal of game-playing.” Joe will never know the full impact of that group on the lives of those young men, but he does know about the life-and-death impact of another gaming experience on a young woman he has never yet met face to face.

Joe and Nora (not her real name) met each other virtually, in an online version of Dungeons and Dragons. “We were on a team together at one point,” Joe says. “As we got to know each other better, we communicated by email and integrated into each others’ Twitter feeds.”

Joe began to see Nora display clear signs of depression and learned she had Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism that causes difficulty in navigating social situations. The world of role-playing games can be a very hospitable place for those like Nora who struggle to interact with others in the real world. These imagined worlds feature clearly defined rules, controlled identities, and mediated social interactions, so they are easier to navigate. When things go wrong in the imagined world, however, people who feel most at home there can have nowhere left to turn.

One night Joe logged on to Twitter to find Nora tweeting in a moment of crisis. “Nora’s depression got really, really dark,” Joe recalls. In recent weeks Nora had been very vocal online about problems in her life — in both worlds. “A lot of the relationships that mattered to her within the world of the game were falling apart, along with real-life struggles in her relationship with her mom,” Joe says. Because he had come to know Nora well, Joe knew to take these things seriously.

Joe watched in horror on Twitter as Nora attempted to take her own life. “She took a whole bunch of pills, started drinking heavily, and was tweeting about it the whole time,” Joe recalls. It was her second suicide attempt; her first had yielded tweets from the hospital featuring the suturing skills of the nurses who had stitched up her arms.

Joe wasn’t the only one following along. Others in her online community were also watching, and many were frantically sending messages trying to get her to stop what she was doing. She wasn’t listening. Joe knew it was too late to reach out to Nora via phone. “I had to do something,” he realized. Something in the real world.

Joe scrambled through her past tweets. “I remembered that she had sent an image from the last time she was in the hospital. She was wearing a hospital bracelet, and I hoped it would show her real name,” Joe recalls. It did.

He remembered a passing comment she made about living in Tennessee. With that, Joe was able to call her local police department. Because this was Nora’s second suicide attempt, the dispatch officer quickly found her in their records and located her address. When the police officers arrived at her apartment, Joe saw Nora tweet angrily as she was taken to the hospital, where her stomach was pumped. Though she was angry, Joe was relieved for his friend.

Joe and Nora maintain their online friendship. But to this day, Nora doesn’t know who was responsible for the police officers’ intervention — and for saving her life.
In 1968 a young William E. Pannell wrote a book about race relations within the church that was so candid even the publisher who commissioned the book was skittish about it. My Friend, the Enemy was an uncompromising statement on black-white relations that shook up the evangelical world—Bill’s included. It came from someplace so deep in Bill that longtime white friends said they did not believe he wrote it. One insisted it was written by an outside agitator, because “that’s just not the Bill Pannell that I know.” Both had grown up in the same small Michigan town, so Bill’s reply was harsh but true: “That’s because you didn’t know Bill Pannell,” he said, “or the world I lived in.” It was possible for a white person to call Bill a “close friend” and still know little of a black man’s life in a white world. Often white colleagues would say, “We never thought of you as a negro.” That, he says, was supposed to have been a compliment.

“THERE IS AMONG US A GROSS IGNORANCE OF EACH OTHER. A PERNICIOUS SUSPICION AND SCORN FEEDING THE FLAMES OF RACIAL TENSION AND ALL BECAUSE, IN AN AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT, WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT RACE MEANS.” (PP. 117–18)

Shortly after, in 1971, Bill became Fuller’s first African American trustee. Ever since, his core life’s work has been to rectify the state of invisibility for himself and other American blacks who suffer inequity as daily bread. Two decades later, in 1993, he wrote a book on the heels of the Los Angeles uprising triggered by trials of police brutality toward Rodney King. In The Coming Race Wars: A Cry for Reconciliation, he bemoaned a state of racial affairs that had seen little change. That book made a shallower splash because denial was no longer the only issue—the will to make change was. Among evangelicals, black males were still in short supply even at conventions on race relations; they were inadequately represented in faculty meetings or classroom settings; they were too-much-missing even on a campus located in a city with a large mixed-race population—such as Fuller Theological Seminary.

In 2007 Fuller published a profile of Bill for then Focus magazine under the theme “a legacy of tireless belief.” At the time he spoke passionately about his lifelong advocacy of reconciliation between American blacks and whites and his frustration that, it seemed to him, so little ground had been won. His years of unique experience give Bill Pannell a rare voice in the evangelical world. Joy J. Moore, associate dean for the African American Church Studies Program (soon to be named after Pannell), calls him the father of black evangelicalism—a title he claims, sincerely, to find surprising. Nevertheless, “without him,” Moore says, “many would have no idea that black evangelicals even exist.”

It’s a mistake for a legacy like Bill’s to be judged by the winning or losing of “ground.” Bill’s goal is not dominance. His goal, his calling, is reconciliation. That is achieved primarily in his person. Without him, a unique call for change would remain unspoken. With him, present and future generations witness an advocate undaunted by insurmountable odds. In the foreword to The Coming Race Wars, then-president of Taylor University Jay Kesler confessed: “I thank Bill for his insistence on bringing up unsolved agendas, even when I am weary of hearing them again. They must be our agendas together in the name of biblical justice.”

Back in 1992, the uprisings in Los Angeles gave Bill occasion to “ponder the relevance of modern-day evangelicalism.” He saw that hopes for response from his white evangelical colleagues were not being realized. “I hoped they would come up with a marriage of their theology and their political ideology to lay alongside the heartbreak of the city and then carve some outposts of the kingdom there.” Instead, he found little change in the years between the Watts of 1965 and Los Angeles of 1992, and an evangelical establishment largely indistinguishable from most of white America.

In 2014, over four decades since that first explosive book blew the minds of white American evangelicals, Bill is thinking about his life at a time when “there is more behind me than ahead of me.” In the season when the African American Church Studies program is to be renamed after him, we asked him to reflect on nearly a half century at Fuller. In the midst of talk about “legacy” with accolades being lined up like bowling pins, Bill is tying on bowling shoes and picking out the heaviest ball he can throw. He knows the game is far from done. Bill models tireless courage, love for the unloving other, and a dogged, Christlike presence in our lucky lives. Still stung by the racism he sees imbedded in people and institutions—our own included—he is still pointing out a better way. Even at “five years shy of 90,” he does not tire of speaking truth to power.

This Is Then, That Was Now

By Lauralee Farrer
“But what would my white brother know of this? He taught me to sing, ‘Take the World, But Give Me Jesus.’ I took Jesus. He took the world.”

---from the introduction to My Friend, the Enemy

Following, in blue, are quotes from Pannell’s landmark 1968 book juxtaposed with a 2014 interview.

**“But there is a bondage so pervasive as to leave a man stripped of his humanity. It is this bondage, in fact, that dooms a man of color to wander all his lifetime in search of himself.” (p.14)**

Did I ever tell you this story? Did I ever tell you how I got started in all this? I was trying to figure out what to do after getting out of high school, and there was a woman I knew named Mildred Bedford—a domestic worker in one of the wealthiest homes in town. She was convinced I had to go to Bible school. “Why would I want to go to Bible school?” I argued stupidly. “I don’t know anything about the Bible!” Mildred comes to me one day and says cryptically, “We’ve got to strike while the iron is hot,” and she hands me $500. That’s 497 dollars. I’m still trying to figure out how she did that; I still sit all shook up when I think of it. So, that’s how I got to Bible college—Mildred Bedford’s savings. That $500 paid for my whole first year with a little left over for the summer. And of course it became much more to me. I didn’t always understand what was going on in the culture around me. I was a lost ball in high weeds.

Along the way, I realized I have to figure out how to negotiate the unspoken racism of white mid-America—where the Christians know about it and don’t tell you, where they know about it and don’t do anything. Folks who invited me to preach would shield me. For instance, they would keep me in their homes because they knew no motel or hotel would let me inside. Those were “sundowner towns”—meaning places where black folks better not be in town when the sun goes down. Anybody knew that black folks could travel Route 66 all they wanted, but they better stay somewhere where they know about it and don’t tell you, where the Christians know about it and don’t do anything. That’s one of the downsides to Civil Rights activism was that black folks and Latinos were getting the lion’s share of everything and poor white folks were being left behind. It just kind of leaks out in conversation, when people are upset over the fact that there’s too many of “them.” These guys didn’t have time or energy to give to the Civil Rights movement, marching on DC: “We’re concerned about whether it’s going to rain in the springtime so we can get these crops,” and all that good stuff.

Some were reluctant to take me seriously because I was a black person, but they felt obliged because I sounded just like them, believed as they did, was evangelical as they were—which means that I was kind of kosher. They might say, “Well, you’re not one of them.” Again, the “thems” would be a follower of Martin Luther King, somebody who would march, or somebody out on the front lines. On the other hand, friends on the opposite end of the spectrum, such as a Mennonite brother in Cleveland, would say, “Pannell, it makes as much sense for you to be an evangelical as it would if you belonged to the Klan.”

You have to understand, members of major African American denominations are uncomfortable with the term “evangelical” because they see it as a denigration of white culture. It’s more than that, but folks rarely realize that. Pannell is committed to an evangelical witness, but we don’t think of it as white. That’s why, among those denominations of black Christians, if you asked, “Have you ever heard of Bill Pannell,” they would say, “Who?” I had access to and moved freely among white evangelicals but was not well known in more liberal environments. If an African American pastor were to ask, “Pannell, what church are you with?” I replied, “I’m with the Plymouth Brethren,” he would say, “Huh?”

Most black folks were either Baptist or Methodist, so while evangelicals needed someone who was African American who could validate them. That’s one of the functions I gave myself to in those early days while I was still naïve about the racism of the South. It was a man named Vern Miller who perceived in me a need to be more aware of what was going on in the Civil Rights movement. I was probably 30, preaching up a storm, doing this, that, and I was probably 30, preaching up a storm, doing this, that, and still naïve about the racism of the South. It was a man named Vern Miller who perceived in me a need to be more aware of what was going on in the Civil Rights movement. I was probably 30, preaching up a storm, doing this, that, and still naïve about the racism of the South. It was a man named Vern Miller who perceived in me a need to be more aware of what was going on in the Civil Rights movement. I was probably 30, preaching up a storm, doing this, that, and still naïve about the racism of the South. It was a man named Vern Miller who perceived in me a need to be more aware of what was going on in the Civil Rights movement. I was probably 30, preaching up a storm, doing this, that, and still naïve about the racism of the South. It was a man named Vern Miller who perceived in me a need to be more aware of what was going on in the Civil Rights movement. I was probably 30, preaching up a storm, doing this, that, and still naïve about the racism of the South. It was a man named Vern Miller who perceived in me a need to be more aware of what was going on in the Civil Rights movement.
I said, “Well you can’t trust the Russians. They’re liars, they’re cheats. . . you know, Russians!” And Vern was quiet, a soft-spoken man. He said basically something like, “Bill, surely you are not naïve enough to think we just don’t do that sort of thing because we’re Americans?” And shortly thereafter, not only did the Russians produce the pilot, but they produced parts of the plane that got shot down. Oops.

So not only do we do things like that, but we lie about it. Oh boy—that was an eye opener for me. The next thing Vern did was give me a copy of Martin King’s Strength to Love. Here I was a Yankee, basically. I didn’t know what was going on in the South. I wasn’t involved. I wasn’t even on the sidelines because I was so busy doing other stuff. That’s why, when the Watts riots exploded, and I’m smoking the smoke from the fires in my town of Detroit—I found a new set of ears and a new set of eyes and a different kind of nose. I started smelling different aromas of what we were really like in America. And it blighted my evangelical conscience.

FROM HONOR AND INNOCENCE I WATCHED THE REMOVAL OF FOUR LITTLE BODIES FROM THE 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH IN BIRMINGHAM. . . . YOU COULDN’T FIND TWO NEGROES IN THE SAME TOWN IN ALL AMERICA WHO BELIEVED THAT JUSTICE WOULD BE SERVED IN THEIR BEHALF. . . . BODIES FROM THE 16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH IN BIRMINGHAM. . . . WHATEVER THEY TOLD YOU, THAT WAS JUST A COVER STORY. . . . BROTHERHOOD.” (P. 95)

So on the other hand, once a white kid raised his voice to say, “I must admit that what you’ve said here doesn’t resonate with me, it doesn’t make any sense to me and I’m not so sure it needs to or ought to.” And I said, “Okay, are you a student here?” And he said, “Yes.” And I said, “Are you interested in history?” And he said, “Yeah.” And I said, “Well, I was just giving you a chunk of evangelical history. You haven’t heard it before because wherever you’re from, it’s not important that you ever needed to hear about us. But that’s what I’ve just given you—a lesson on your own history as an evangelical. You ought to rethink.”

I was indebted to him for his courage to speak up. But you find that all over the place. If you don’t have representatives of different cultures in classes, you’re not going to get the full range of what it means to be evangelical. It’s still too lily-white, too middle American Presbyterian.

I’m reading some memoirs. One of them is by a white author who mentions one black person in the book—and not from personal experience. In passing he mentions Martin Luther King Jr. It’s possible for a white guy to write a memoir and not refer to anybody who was black, but it’s not possibly for a guy like me to write a memoir without mentioning white folks, white evangelicals, white institutions. It’s not possible. That’s one of the reasons why worship, theology, and the arts is so important. Because there’s no way in the world you can be educated in arts without coming to terms with what it means to be black. It’s absolutely not possible. I want to make sure that those responsible for teaching theology here are hip to that reality. I don’t care where you’re from, but don’t come here and think you’re going to get away with narrow-mindedness in an institution such as ours. It just cannot be tolerated.

We’ve got to work on that. After all the smoke clears, African Americans are still being left behind in major evangelical institutions. So we just cannot go to sleep here at Fuller. We just can’t.

“THIS BOOK IS BOTH A ‘PERSONAL CONFESSION’ AND AN ACCUSATION. OTHERS HAVE DONE BOTH BETTER. SO WILL I. IN LATER YEARS, RIGHT NOW THROUGH, THIS IS WHERE I AM. I HAVE HOPED TO WRITE WHITE DISPAR- SANGLY AND WITHOUT BUTTERCUPS. I FOUNT IT POSSIBLE IN BOTH COURTS, AND IT WOULD BE A DISERVICE TO MYSELF AND MY FRIENDS TO PEERED. I HURT INSIDE, AND I CAN THINK OF BUT A MERE HANDFUL OF WHITE BROTHERS WHO WOULD TRY TO RELIEVE ME.” (P. 119)

I bet you a nickel against your doughnut that the kind of things I’m talking about now are not part of the larger conversation as they should be. If we’re talking about being a church in “exile” as Mark (Labberton) says, a church that’s not part of the mainstream, who better to speak into that than black evangelicals? If we need a model for a church in exile, we’ve got it! The black church has got to be closer to the center of who we are at Fuller, set up in such a way that nobody can come to Fuller that’s interested in the church today without feeling its influence.

As I’ve tried to say over the years, Fuller is the only place to go if someone is interested in ministry in the African American community. This is the only place to be West of the Mississippi. We have enough internal resources to really shape something important, no matter what it is, but I’m only going to do this Pannell Center, have mercy, if we can be radical enough.

When I look back over all of this, the thing that has impacted me most over the years, has sustained me most over the years, is the realization that God chose me. I could take you to the place, the time, where that first got me to from the Scriptures. A seminal moment in my life. I was a teenager, and hadn’t long been a Christian. That fantastic statement by the apostle in Ephesians 1, when he talks about God, who has chosen us in Christ before the foundations of the world, that God had predestined us. Now, I didn’t know there was an Ephesians. I was a nominal Christian. But that verse of Scripture jumped out, grabbed me by the throat, wrapped itself around my heart, and I’m telling you, I’ve never gotten over it. Here was this young, green as grass, African American kid, in a genteel segregated town. And there was the God of eternity, and I’m telling you, I’ve never gotten over it. Here was this young, green as grass, African American kid, in a genteel segregated town. And there was the God of eternity, and I’m telling you, I’ve never gotten over it.
I may not live long enough to check this out, but my fear is that now that we are in touch with the social dimensions of our responsibilities, we are tempted to think we can solve things without Jesus. Are you kidding me? That’s why evangelism is in our DNA at Fuller, for crying out loud! We’re now in what is being called “the new normal.” Oh boy. We might end up thinking we don’t need the same Jesus that we talked about in 1968, that we need a new Jesus for 2014. A new Jesus that comes alongside us in a wonderfully nonjudgmental sort of way, pats us on the butt, and tells us to keep on keeping on.

The real Jesus is really not nice. Packed full of love, and all of that, but whoever said love is neat, and nice? Whew, give me a break! I think Mark [Labberton] uses the phrase about Fuller that we are “rooted in orthodoxy.” That is right on the screws. We are not prepared to jettison the word “evangelical,” because that’s who we are. What we have to do is to pack it full of more radical meaning.

God’s fundamental interest in us is relationship. It’s for intimacy, a love affair. That’s the good news. God says, “I love you, and let’s get that settled.” But then God says: “Now I’m going to mess with you because there are things that need to get straightened out.” Oh boy, are there ever! Have mercy!

An excerpt from “A Legacy of Tireless Belief,” Focus magazine, Fall 2007, in which Bill Pannell reflects on what drew him to Fuller three decades before [available in its entirety online]:

It chafed Pannell that so many institutions with a verbal commitment to diversity were not acting it out. “They had to address what was happening,” he says, and though he received many requests for help, “Fuller President David Allan Hubbard was the first and only representative of a major seminary who put the pitch to me in theological terms.” Pannell explains: “He said, ‘we don’t believe we can flesh out the meaning of the Kingdom of God monolithically.’ For Hubbard it was a theological issue. That impressed me. On that basis, I came to Fuller.”

Students were asking questions about Vietnam, about the Civil Rights movement, about issues of justice, and Pannell was one of few who had frontline, personal experience. Back in those days, the seminary, he says with characteristic frankness, needed him more than he needed it. “It was uncomfortable in the early days. Being a minority was a two-edged sword. Institutions don’t quite know what to do with us. I had more experience in evangelism than anyone on the faculty, but I was often typecast. It took me years to crawl up from under that,” he says. But he was determined that his tenure was not going to depend on whether or not he was African American. He wanted to be treated like any other faculty, “I came to be the professor of evangelism—I did not want to be an exotic intrusion.”

Lauralee Farrer, storyteller, is Storyteller, artist in residence, and editor of FULLER magazine. She is president of Burning Heart Productions.

TJ Lee, photographer, is a media project coordinator at Fuller, a professional photographer, and a creative media consultant.
A trip to the Holy Land should take you deep. You are not in shallow waters when you contemplate the ancient and modern issues raised by such a trip. That’s why you go with teachers and guides who are comfortable with the depths—just as you would on a scuba dive.

It might not seem like such a big deal. After all, it seems like everyone is going to Israel and Palestine lately. When I tell someone that we’re taking a trip from Fuller, I usually hear that they would like to go, and that they know people who’ve been. Most often it’s with a church. I worry about these trips, because I listen in on other groups, and wow: Their guides tell them some wild things. (Professor of New Testament) Marianne Meyes Thompson and I lead Fuller groups, and students get used to watching us to see if we raise our eyebrows at each other. Marianne says, “A large part of what we do on our trips is teach students which things to take with a grain of salt, which things are plausible, and how they might know the difference. We teach them to ask good questions.”

It’s not just about information, but about the whole shape of a trip. A scholarly approach allows us to widen our scope, to appreciate deeply the sites that are not starred in every guidebook. Some of the most interesting sights in the Middle East are completely off the radar of tour companies. You might stand by the ruined fortress city of Lachish at midday—alone during tourist season—and still be able...
to see the massive Assyrian siege ramp, to understand why Judeans lived in fear in the eighth century, and why Assyrian king Sennacherib memorialized his defeat of this city with reliefs carved all over his palace walls.

Marianne teaches on the southern steps of the Temple Mount. I watch as students light up when they realize where they are. This is one of the few places where you can stand on stones where Jesus walked, and yet it’s lightly touristed in our experience. The place is remarkable, yet there is no signage to identify its significance, no markers to inform your tracks. (The state of Israel likes having Christians visit, but does not invest much in telling the story of Jesus.) It is these places without explanatory videos or historical markers, without pilgrim paths or souvenir shops, that we can encounter as students.

I remember a visit to Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest biblical manuscripts known to exist, were found. In the visitors’ center, there was a large gift shop and a cafeteria, which were packed. There were probably 500 people in the complex. Tour buses were stacked like cordwood in the parking lot. But outside, on the archaeological site, only a few small groups circulated. Most didn’t even pause to examine the “scriptorium,” where the scrolls were likely copied. This site changed the way we think about the formation of the biblical writings, and the canon as a whole, but even the air-conditioned museum dedicated to the scrolls is often deserted, apparently offering no competition for spa products and cold sodas. By contrast, our Fuller group had toured Jerusalem’s Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are now held, guided by a member of the scrolls’ original editorial team, so they knew exactly what they were looking at.

A scholarly approach means that you know the right people. We often know the directors of the archaeological digs that we visit, and we have benefited from some wonderful tours that brought alive the stones and soil of ancient sites. (Of course, it’s not all scholarly . . . we also found time on our last trip to watch World Cup soccer in the Old City of Jerusalem, go to a water park in the Galilee, and soak up some rays on the beach in Tel Aviv. Knowing how to have fun matters, too.)

A scholarly approach also allows us to think for ourselves. A theological school is in a uniquely propitious position to do Holy Land tourism better—primarily because we have motivated students who are willing to put in the study time to make a trip transcend the average and become more meaningful. It’s especially hard to think for yourself when it comes to the modern political situation, when you have interests on both sides shouting at you in support of their viewpoint. We have recognized that the modern situation requires attention on any trip to the Middle East, and have worked hard to address it in ways that do justice to its complexity. We let the students hear perspectives from both Israelis and Palestinians, we have Christian, Jewish, and Muslim guides, and our primary lodging is literally on the border between Israel and the West Bank.

A trip to the Holy Land, if done well, is less about sight-seeing and more about story-forging. It is relatively easy to purchase a trip and consume a story—the same story that nearly everyone else gets. It is more difficult to read, listen, and prepare for such a trip, but it allows you to be a participant instead of a consumer. Like any good Fuller course, ours gives you the tools to think critically. And going deep allows the Bible and the land to inhabit your thoughts and words in fresh ways.
“I’m afraid of being sober. I used to see my dealer at 6 a.m. every morning, and now when I wake up, I don’t know what to do.” Alyssa is talking with others dealing with addiction in a recovery circle at the Recovery Café. Drug use has become so embedded in the daily rhythm of her life that she’s not sure what to put in its place. Susan, another circle member, puts her coffee down, pauses, and says from across the table, “I’ll meet you, then.” And so the next morning—and the next, and the next, and the next, for months—Susan meets Alyssa at dawn as they struggle toward sobriety together.

On a similar morning ten years earlier, Killian Noe and Ruby Takushi [PhD ’90] are praying together after a service at the New Creation Community in Seattle. They’re praying for people struggling with homelessness and addiction throughout the city, and they’re asking God how they might help. With multiple treatment centers and shelters already working in the area, they don’t want their efforts to be redundant, so they spend time talking to other advocates and looking for unseen patterns they might address. They learn that while Seattle healthcare providers offer many services to those on the margin, limited resources exist for ongoing support.

So Ruby and Killian decide to fill the gap. They wonder together what a center committed to long-term support might look like: they imagine people sitting around a table committed to sharing both their wounds and their hopes, baristas making good coffee so that people who are marginalized feel seen and valued—a place so committed to sobriety that everything from art classes to open mic nights are used for holistic transformation. In 2004, their plans are realized as they open the doors of the Recovery Café.

Ten years later, those early visions for the café are a daily reality. The staff and volunteers serve so many people at this point that everyone starts each morning with a time of contemplative silence to remember one another’s humanity. After the silence, a raucous day begins. Volunteers play checkers with people struggling with mental illness while teenagers share their poems in a writing group. A woman struggling with a heroin addiction helps a blind friend practice yoga. A man who was living in the street just a week before is serving potatoes and gravy to others for lunch.

As people begin to feel safe in the hospitality of the café, they’re invited to join a recovery circle: a group of seven to eight members committed to staying sober—and vulnerable—with one another. These circles create a safe space to struggle through shame and addiction with others. It’s the heart of the café, and Ruby says, it’s the purpose of everything they do: “to create space and relationship that can invite healing.” Being known and loved in this way, she says, sustains the journey toward recovery.

Supporting the recovery circle is careful planning, and as program director, Ruby uses her training to share the science behind psychotherapy with the volunteer leaders. It’s work that is shaped by studying with Warren Brown, a professor “committed to the enterprise of honest scientific inquiry while still being deeply faithful”—at Fuller’s School of Psychology, where she learned “to embed the science behind psychotherapy within our faith perspective and our community.”

Behind the front doors of the Recovery Café is both a conviction and a hope: a conviction to create a safe space for people to meet one another, and a hope that when they do, they’ll discover a community of people standing beside them—no matter how many mornings it takes—until they come to know themselves as valuable and loved. As one café regular put it, “I just needed to find someone to help me turn my story around.”

The Recovery Café is based on a therapeutic community model that insures people have “ongoing support out of the therapy office.” Ruby empowers the leaders of the weekly meetings to help cultivate intentional communities of people who are committed to vulnerability and to transforming their lives. Displayed on a wall in the café are their core convictions as a community. As a refuge for healing and hope, they will seek to be individuals who

LIVE PRAYERFULLY
SHOW RESPECT
PRACTICE COMPASSION
ENCOURAGE GROWTH
GIVE AND FORGIVE

Michael Wright [MAT ’12], storyteller, is Fuller’s editorial and social media specialist. He writes about spirituality and the arts at thisiscommonplace.org.

Martín Jiménez [MDiv ’12], photographer, is program manager at Fuller Northwest and is pursuing ordination in the PCUSA.
There is a story in the family: when Nate was five he strummed madly on his mother’s guitar one day and pronounced to the room, “I think God is calling me to be a pastor.”

At the end of 2013, Nate Myrick walked away from Fuller Theological Seminary with a guitar in one hand and a Master of Arts in Theology in the other. He still strums madly on his Fender Thinline Telecaster, and he is still passionate about the Bible, authenticity, orthodoxy, and teaching—even if he does not fit the traditional description of a “pastor.” The academic-blogger-songwriter-theologian is all right with that. He is where he needs to be.

The path to this spot finds its genesis in the scene of the little blonde boy with guitar and prophecy, but it winds through Central America, burnout, hundreds of performances, marriage, and the US Department of Immigration.

Nate was part of a touring music ministry for a year, and in that year he travelled through the US, Canada, the Philippines, Honduras, and, unexpectedly, El Salvador. The month-long trip to Honduras was more than Nate and the rest of his team bargained for; a coup d’etat to oust the current president saw a suspension of basic human rights—including free speech and the right to assemble—and Nate discovered a new definition of stress while helping to keep the team out of live fire or jail. It was thanks to the coup that the musicians found themselves hiding out in El Salvador. But the political turmoil, for all its stresses and strains, was not the piece of the tour that changed Nate. Instead, it was a Christianity that ministered to him among the people he thought he was going to evangelize. Here was something, Nate says, vastly different from the nationalist, Enlightenment Christianity he had grown up with; what he saw was not following Jesus with a million little caveats and compromises, nor simply words and intellectual assent. It was a Christianity of action and word, of truth and deed. He would never be the same.

The Truth, Some Lies, and Learning to Tell the Difference

By Reed McCall

There is a story in the family: when Nate was five he strummed madly on his mother’s guitar one day and pronounced to the room, “I think God is calling me to be a pastor.”

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He returned to the States with a jumble of emotions and experiences crammed into his overworked and overstimulated brain. After a solid year on the road, touring nonstop through foreign countries and foreign cultures and foreign theologies, Nate crashed hard. With too much to process and reconstruct to sleep, insomnia in the States filled with secrecy, control, fear, and shame, wrapped around what he saw as the creepiest thing he had ever encountered. What he saw was not right. He didn’t know how to tell his friends that nothing there was true, that everything there was a lie. All he could say at the time, he had no words for the conviction in his gut. He couldn’t quite put his finger on it until he went to the “gathering” was that it was a cult, about living a redemptive gospel and the language was . . . bizarre, their actions more so. Something was wrong—his friends were distant. Their friends were not in a church. They were in a cult.

Exile in Canada finally ended, and the Myricks made it to Fuller Theological Seminary. Nate brought his questions with him. Everything from Honduras, everything from that weekend with the cult, all the shards of his boyhood faith: they never quite left his mind, but ruffled around and rearranged themselves. His questions led to more questions. What was truth? What was sincerity? What was right and wrong? What was orthodoxy, and was what was masquerading as orthodoxy? And what could a guitar player do about any of it?

The answer to the last question, at least, was to write music. Nate cut an album. Months of research and practice and contemplation were poured into what would become a master’s thesis for Nate to complete his theology and the arts emphasis through the Brehm Center. A sonic exploration of truth, lies, doubt, idols, blindness, and authenticity, Nate’s album Believable Lies brings Led Zeppelin-style vocals and more than a bit of Dick Dale-esque surf guitar to the service of theology. He is following the musical project up with a book that delves even deeper into the same subject, that uses his encounter with the cult as a starting point to exposing and tearing down temples to false gods. Because the album itself isn’t enough: pleased as he is with the album, Nate doesn’t hope it makes his listeners think he is right. He hopes it makes his listeners think. For Nate, that is what is at stake. It isn’t about being right; it is about breaking through self-deceit that can lead one to join a cult, about living a redemptive gospel in word and truth, about righteousness as Paul seems to have understood it. Righteousness is recognizing that we aren’t right and stand in desperate need of God’s grace and transformation. Being right, holding on to “my way or the highway, my Jesus is the only way to encounter Jesus”—this is an idolatry, Nate believes. It skewed our perception of reality until we wall against the reality that we encounter in the Bible with “that’s not actually what it means” or “that was just an extreme abstraction” or “that is applicable to private life, not public life.” How do we get to the point, Nate asks, where we allow this sort of pride and compromise to happen? That is what he keeps asking.

And why he keeps making music.

Yes, he is writing both the book and a weekly blog. Yes, he is pursuing a PhD. But he is also still rockin’ the Telecaster. Because that is who he is, how he is engaging the question. He is authentically pursuing transformation, not leaving behind a core piece of himself as he tries to delve deeper and deeper into who God is and how we walk humbly and honestly before our God.

Because what pastor would you trust who is untrue to himself or herself? Because what pastor would you trust who was not transformed by the love, power, and transcendence of God?

And so here he is, many years from the little boy with the guitar and the calling, still holding the guitar and living into the calling. He is a pastor, even if an unusual one, preaching with books and tube amps, searching for and examining truth, articulating what he declares are the lies we can’t express but believe every day. As he continues to rebuild an entirely different means of seeing the world, he knows that this is the somewhere he is supposed to be and the something he is supposed to be doing.
The idea that I would be called to something that’s not somehow embedded within my church community, that doesn’t arise out of my church—and out of ministry experience in my church—is really quite foreign to me. We tend to think of call and vocation as part of the experience of what you might call ‘us-ness’ or ‘with-ness.’ Wesleyan ways of thinking about church structure are deeply embedded in accountability; in meeting together; in conferencing, as we sometimes call it; in struggling together over issues. Vocation arises out of that.”

—Joel B. Green
“El discernimiento de la vocación es la identificación de que form de service through which you will find perfect freedom.” Mark Labberton is the man who asked me to lead the discovery process around vocation and formation in the community at Fuller and he know the kind of freedom and joy are key markers in their pursuit. “My yes” was to something even deeper than the president’s request, however, or why would I have left the best job among the most loving people with the most beautiful ocean view on earth? Vocation.

Vocation is more than a job, it’s the voice that calls to the deepest part of your self, the thing that gives your life meaning because it is what God has created you to do. But, to truly be calling, it is about more than just our own fulfillment. Because God “loves the world,” calling is always about the world too. Or I have come to say, vocation is identity expressed in service to God’s mission in the world.

In the last year as I’ve been turning my attention to this challenge, a question has evolved: “At this point in your journey, how do you envision your call to God’s mission in the world?” The key word is envision. Calling is more about a vision than a title, more about a picture of oneself in the world than a title on the office door or a label on a business card. It’s more art than science. Readers will discover a sampling of answers in the following pages, along with several perspectives on the subject of vocation in a changing world. This will contribute to our ongoing conversation as we, together, attempt to discern and, with God’s help, answer the call on our lives.

Los archivos de mi vida están llenos de mate- riales acerca de la vocación, pero en cambio no hay nuevo para mí. Claro, desde mis días de estudio de pos-grado con el difunto teólogo Ray Anderson, la pregunta acerca de la vocación me ha mantenido ocupado más allá de la real- lización de la misión. Ray fue el que me enseñó la sabiduría que muchas veces he transmitido a otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.” Décadas después, otras personas: “No hay lugar o tarea en esta tierra que pueda satisfacer el corazón.”
Steve Yamaguchi, DMin, became Fuller’s dean of students in August 2014. For the previous 11 years he served as executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos in northern California. In this role he was a catalyst helping congregations grow in their mission outreach. Yamaguchi’s Doctor of Min- istry from Claremont School of Theology focused on transforming PC(USA) governing bodies from organizations modeled on corporate hierarchy into communities of Christ-followers sent into the world.

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THE DIVINE WILL

ACCOMPLISHING

ATTACHMENTS, STROLLING, WALKING

SALVATION OF ONE’S CONTEMPLATION, OF

EMBRACES EVERY LATER. FOR JUST AS BE MENTIONED

REGARDING THE EXERCISES ARE

BODILY EXERCISES, INSURING THE

METHOD OF METHODS FOR

ing in, of all places, the Church of England

It is delightful to see how this is happen-

vivors. Are we as the palace church open to

displaced from the center, as more than sur-

generations of experience living on the edges,

sisters as trainers for the church’s future

looked to their immigrant brothers and

programs. But rarely has the palace church

foods and dance and sing for their church

tra-palace neighbors as objects of “mission”

The palace church tends to engage its ex-

values of the streets. What if we could appre-

the palace to assess the worth of the cultural

readily when we use the cultural values of

only talk with each other. We fail to connect

smells; they smell; they huddle in cliques and

neighborhoods throughout the UK, at least

I marveled at the bishop’s quick thinking.

So clever a pastor in a moment like that?”

For 25 years I wondered, “Wow! Could I be

full in support, he went to spend time with

young Anglicans—often marked by

tattoos and piercings rather than robes—

who love him and know him and call him

Reusky. He regarded Fresh Expressions as the one thing he wants most to be remembered for in the Church of England, “the thing that’s most cheered me and encouraged me in recent years.”

In full support, he went to spend time with new, young Anglicans—often marked by tattoos and piercings rather than robes—who love him and know him and call him Reusky. He regarded Fresh Expressions as the one thing he wants most to be remembered for in the Church of England, “the thing that’s most cheered me and encouraged me in recent years.”

THE EXPRESSION OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

ESTABLISHES EVERY METHOD OF EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE, OF MEDITATION, OF CONTEMPLATION, OF VIOLENT AND MORTAL PUNISHMENT, AND OF OTHER SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY THAT WILL BE MENTIONED LATER. FOR JUST AS STRENGTHENING, WALKING AND RUNNING ARE BODILY EXERCISES, SO SPIRITUAL EXERCISES ARE METODS FOR PREPARING AND PURIFYING THE SOUL TO FREE ITSELF IN ALL INNOCENT FORMS OF SORROW AND AFTER ACCOMPLISHING THIS OF DELIGHTING AND DISCOVERING THE GOSPEL, WISDOM, AND AFTER DISPOSAL OF ONE’S LIFE, THIS IS THE WISDOM OF THE SALVATION OF ONE’S SOUL.”

—St. Ignatius Loyola

ENDNOTES


3. For the beginnings of the Fresh Expressions movement that flowed ecumenically out of the Church of England, see the seminal work in the report from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Mission at Peter Hitchens, Hidden Shaped Church (London: Church House Publishing, 2004). For an assessment of the movement after eight years of dynamic growth, change, and learning, see Michael Root, A Church for Every Context: An Introduction to Theology and Practice (London: SPCK, 2012).


7. This article, used with permission, is reprinted from a talk given at the “Moderate’s Colloquium” at Fuller, and is part of a forthcoming book edited by Neil Press, published by Wipf & Stock.
THE SEARCH FOR VOCATION

Todd Johnson, PhD

Manhattan Memories

The search was a swirling week of record-setting heat in New York City, that third week in July 2013. On Friday we were gathered to debrief our time together during the initial AIDS outbreak, heard from a Catholic priest who started a theatre in the “City.” The students experienced three perspectives on calling, encountering many texts written about the concept of vocation, and varied stories, all raising a variety of questions about vocation. We had discussed the writings of Quakers and Catholics and considered whether Ruth had a call like Mary or Moses. We heard from an Episcopalian who started the “Broadway Blessing” as an outreach to the theatre community during the initial AIDS outbreak, heard from a Catholic priest who started a theatre company, and discussed with an Adventist the challenges of being a worship leader in the “City.” The students experienced three kinds of texts in our class: read common texts written about the concept of vocation, they encountered the texts of the lives of the people from New York as well as the lives of theologians, philosophers, and artists of the surrounding area.

Discerning Life’s Vocation

Though Fuller is about to undertake the tremendous new venture of intentionally forming every student in both her spiritual life and her understanding of her Christian vocation, this is not the first time I have been involved with such a project. When teaching at Loyola University Chicago, I was appointed to the board of a new program called EVOKE: Encouraging Vocation through Knowledge and Experience. Its goal was to raise the question for every student: “What is your calling?” This process was to begin with each student’s application and continue through the entire undergraduate career of a student—a later expanding to alumni and graduate students. It used Frederick Buechner’s definition of calling as a guiding principle:

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

Our goal was to engage each student with a conversation about their gifts and passions in life, and allow the energy of those gifts and passions to motivate their education. This, we hoped, would lead to an embrace of one’s vocation, and further hoped that vocations could be linked to lives of service, specifically the service of God.

One of the challenges of discerning one’s life vocation is determining which voice or voices should dominate the conviction of vocation. For some a calling is a response to an inner voice, a gut-level feeling that “just feels right.” For others a calling is discerned by the “counsel of many” in their lives who know them best, who assess their gifts, abilities, and passions and work with them to focus on the direction of their lives. These two paradigms are never more clearly demarcated than in the areas of religion and art, where a personal passion can be stonewalled by lack of external support or encouragement, putting the internal and external voices in opposition. Of course the inverse is also true: a person with obvious gifts in art or ministry (or both) is hesitant to pursue this calling, in spite of their affirmation, because of the risks. This is more than just a philosophical difference about life decisions, it is an existential crisis facing young people—and sometimes not-so-young people—every day.

Developing Theology and a Theology of Development

We on the EVOKE board were a cross-section of Loyola. We represented a variety of faiths, ethnicities, theological disciplines, and stations within the university. We wrestled long and hard about what we meant by vocation and how that definition would define our approach to our ministry. After much discussion—even debate—we came to a consensus that was articulated by Jeanie ethicist John Haughey. This was a developmental model of vocation that took seriously the process of becoming who we are over a lifetime of decisions. This should not come entirely as a surprise, as part of Loyola’s Jesuit heritage are the Ignatian exercises, a deep and extended process of discernment. Further, with both educational and psychological voices at the table, the focus on process and human development was seen as a key to caring for our students. Even in the case of a converting flash of insight, the process of discernment was just beginning, not ending.

This particular model of understanding vocational discernment holds the inner and outer, objective and subjective, in a healthy and helpful tension. Haughey used the works of theologian Bernard Lonergan to frame the values we had articulated as a group. Haughey’s use of Lonergan proposed that discerning one’s vocation requires three conversions. The first is an intellectual conversion. This conversion requires individuals to discern the truths of the world around them and then adjust their perspective on the world accordingly. It is literally a reality check. The second is a moral conversion. Here the meaning of one’s understanding of reality is discerned with the assistance of one’s community. And by community Haughey means that cluster of people who speak most directly and helpfully into one’s life, such as a faith community. The last conversion is an affective conversion, where one responds to the moral issues discerned in conversation with one’s community with an attitude of love. An example of this sort of conversion of transfiguration might be a father who hears a commencement address at a child’s graduation about the decline in education funding in public schools and the need for volunteers in schools. This person, now with a revised understanding of a reality in his world, raises the possibility of getting more involved in the public schools as a volunteer because he heard about the need for community. After receiving affirmation from his community, this person begins a lifelong commitment to reach out to local schools, his teachers, and students. Discerning one’s calling, according to Haughey, is a multi-staged process.

What is so helpful in this approach is that Haughey’s text assumes both an inner conviction arising from a revision of one’s opinion of the world and one’s role in it, along with an external, objective conversation with others who see both the individual and the world from a different perspective and can reinforce and challenge them as necessary. Yet in the end, Haughey, from an ethical perspective, looks at the process of discernment as one in which the individual finds fulfillment in his or her role in society and its contribution to society’s betterment. This is ultimately not an exercise in self-sacrifice and altruism. Instead it assumes that God has created us for community and we are most joyfully our selves when we exercise our gifts and talents in, through, and for community, contributing to the greater good.

This model was echoed by another EVOKE board member in his work on vocation—psychologist, theologian, and counselor John Neafsey. Neafsey appealed to vocationals discernment as a sense of self-awareness and self-discovery of one’s “true self.” The core of one’s true self is encapsulated by the words of psychologist, philosopher, and religious scholar William James, who wrote, “At such moments a voice is heard inside which says: ‘This is the real me!’” This sense of self-discovery may seem to be overly if not completely subjective. Yet Neafsey follows Haughey in that such validation of one’s call is found not in one’s sense of self fulfillment alone, but in a process of discernment with another, using the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola as one example. The final test of discernment is the moral impact one has on the surrounding world. A just God calls people to lives of justice.

Art, Story, Learning, and Vocation

All of this may seem fairly abstract and philosophical when it comes to imple mentation, we learned that the most effective way of provoking these three conver sions, of inviting students to hear the voices of their inner self and their just, God...
through the stories of others. A good deal of the programming we ran in the EVOKE project, therefore, were framed with particular questions that invited them to consider how those paradigms in the stories they were hearing on campus simply to speak about their call—people shared their stories of finding their vocation. It began with lunches with faculty, then began asking guest speakers who were more fully developed and expanded in John Neafsey, and the films Romero and Mr. Holland’s Opus were some of the most profoundly provoking “texts” we discussed. They are not only fine pieces of self-definition and empowerment and a vehicle for justice.

What we learned through Haughey’s work is the challenge of making decisions well, especially fork-in-the-road decisions that can lead to profound moral choices with very different outcomes. It requires an ability to take a personal inventory of one’s passions, abilities, and skills as it responds to one’s evolving view of the world. At the same time, it assumes that one lives not in isolation but in community—a community which values not only the individual’s passions but also the needs of the community—and how the individual can find personal fulfillment and make a positive contribution to the world. Those types of questions are asked repeatedly throughout one’s life, honing one’s direction and evaluating life’s opportunities and choices.

BACK TO NEW YORK

Our conversation that hot July Friday in New York City, Summer 2015.

ENDNOTES
1. The course “Calling: The History, Theology, and Experience of Christian Vocation” will be offered again with an immersion experience in New York City, Summer 2015.
4. Haughey’s initial insights were published in our volume on vocation, “The Psychological Dimensions of the Discernment of Vocation,” in Revisiting the Idea of Vocation, 163–95. They were more fully developed and expanded in John Haughey, A Sacred Safe in Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006).
A farmer looks over his field, the South Dakota soil freshly turned in the after-noon sun, the work of the day behind him, his son next to him. “Put your hand in the soil, son,” he says. The boy, confused, complies. He looks in the eye: “Son, this soil is part of your life—you take care of it and it will take care of you.”

At that moment, a theologian was born.

It’s hard to fathom how a professor of theology could spring from such ground. Indeed, the mystery of how a South Dakota farm boy would eventually end up in the halls of Edinburgh, Scotland, studying theology with Thomas Torrance and then teaching at a seminary in Greater Los Angeles is both the story of Roy Anderson’s life and the conundrum of vocation.

Christian vocation, or “calling,” is woven through the great biblical narrative. From the moment that God knew the figures formed of the dust and charged them to “cultivate and keep” creation, to the final summons to the nations of the world to enter the New Jerusalem, the invitation of God became the call that becomes the charge that transforms us all. From the nomad Abram who left his country and kindred to follow a shepherd become a king; a fisherman and a Pharisee become apostles? In the Scriptures and throughout the Christian tradition, this transformation does not happen in some individualistic or disembodied way. The formation of vocation is from start to finish a communal event that is both contextual and interpersonal. The call of Abram was to produce a people, whose very purpose was to fulfill the call of God to bring tangible blessing to the whole world (Genesis 12:1–3). The boy Samuel, who was already living in the temple, heard the Voice in the night, but needed Eli to believe his ears and embrace his future (1 Samuel 3). Simon, Andrew, James, and John left their fishing nets and followed Jesus (Matthew 4) as part of a community that would live, eat, and minister together, not only preaching, but healing. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on them at Pentecost (Acts 2), the early church established churches—witnessing communities—whose very purpose was to form people for their apostolic vocation.

When Saul, the Christian-persecuting Pharisee, became the apostle to the Gentiles, it was not just the blinding light and the voice of Jesus, but the words of Ananias and later the calling of Christians to love the neighbor (Acts 22:16) and be a one-time, hopefully once-for-all ancestor of a community that would live, eat, and minister together.

Discovering calling is the long, complicated combination of convictions and context, of passion and prayer, of knowledge and need that seems to tap us on the shoulder and call us forth from our invitation into a process of self-discovery and humility, of taking up and laying down, of embracing and letting go that over time forms a deep, confident conviction that, of all things there are to do in the world, “This is mine to do.”

At Fuller we have embarked on an ambitious endeavor to recapitulate the entire work of the seminary around this concept of formation for vocation. Our shared conviction is that the God who calls us, our names and offers us life and partnership in his own redemptive purposes fits us for the call that calling is an expression of identity, and our ultimate calling is to express that identity in loving ourselves in something greater than us. And that requires us to grow; to be transformed—to become the people God intended us to be.

So, one will ask, if calling is not found but formed, then how is it formed? How does a shepherd become a king; a fisherman and a Pharisee become apostles? In the Scriptures and throughout the Christian tradition, this transformation does not happen in some individualistic or disembodied way. The formation of vocation is from start to finish a communal event that is both contextual and interpersonal. The call of Abram was to produce a people, whose very purpose was to fulfill the call of God to bring tangible blessing to the whole world (Genesis 12:1–3). The boy Samuel, who was already living in the temple, heard the Voice in the night, but needed Eli to believe his ears and embrace his future (1 Samuel 3). Simon, Andrew, James, and John left their fishing nets and followed Jesus (Matthew 4) as part of a community that would live, eat, and minister together, not only preaching, but healing. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on them at Pentecost (Acts 2), the early church established churches—witnessing communities—whose very purpose was to form people for their apostolic vocation.

When Saul, the Christian-persecuting Pharisee, became the apostle to the Gentiles, it was not just the blinding light and the voice of Jesus, but the words of Ananias and later the friendship of Barnabas that formed him for his call (Acts 9).

This biblical pattern continues throughout the centuries. The vocation of God is a gift of grace mediated through the relationship and formation of the people of God. The call comes within and through the community and if we, as a theological seminary, are going to continue that pattern into the next century, what kind of formation should this community offer? What characteristics should shape our seminary as we participate in the formation of kingdom vocations?

Our response is to draw on the rich tradition of our theological forebears who wrote vast treatises on Christian vocation that teach us that Christian calling is formed through communities of love and wisdom. For Luther, Christian vocation is expressed primarily through one command: To love your neighbor (Mark 12:31). For him, God’s calling of Christians to love the neighbor is indeed the way God loves the neighbor. Our vocation then is to participate in God’s own ministry to the world that he loved so much that he sent his Son. Our responding to the call of Jesus to embody that love in the world is the way God himself works in the world—secretly.

“All our work in the field, in the garden, in the city, in the home, in struggle, in government—to what does it all amount before God except child’s play, by means of which God is pleased to give his gifts in the field, at home, and everywhere? These are the masks of our Lord God, behind which he wants to be hidden and to do all things.”

For those of us seeking to discern our callings, the Reformers insist that living out the call of God is indeed a source of great joy and gratification. At the same time, those significant satisfactions are the blessed by-products of a call that is formed through a commitment to fulfill the command to love the neighbor, not in the search for personal fulfillment. To be sure, following the Reformers, we affirm that Christian vocation is an adoration to God that some might see as the masks of our Lord God, behind which he wants to be hidden and to do all things. Some might want to participate in God’s own ministry to the world that he loved so much that he sent his Son. Our responding to the call of Jesus to embody that love in the world is the way God himself works in the world—secretly.

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—Martin Luther

FORMED, NOT FOUND

Ted Bolsinger

Ted Bolsinger [PhD ’00], joined Fuller Seminary as vice president for vocation and formation in March 2014 and as assistant professor of practical theology in July. Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1993, Dr. Bolsinger had served as senior pastor of San Clemente Presbyterian Church in 1997. Prior to that he was associate pastor of discipleship and spiritual formation at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood.

With a PhD in theology and Master of Divinity from Fuller Seminary, he has taught graduate-level classes in theology for the past 14 years at Fuller’s regional campus in Orange County. He has extensive experience in church and nonprofit consulting and executive coaching, and writes frequent weblogs on church and leadership formation. His faculty role at Fuller includes team teaching the new Touchstone class that all master’s degree students will take to begin their course of study, teaching leadership classes, and developing a leadership cohort for DMin students.
the call of Jesus is first and foremost to dis-\[\textit{cipleship, none are excluded. Since dis-}\]\[\textit{ciplined, and apart from his work is living. His work is his life, and the whole of his life—work." For the artist there is no distinction between work and which his work can purchase for him; but the artist ordinary worker is this: the worker works to make money, “The great primary contrast between the artist and the "The Lord bids each of us in all life’s \[\textit{callings.’ Therefore, each individual has 11\]\[\textit{knowledge of self, knowledge of God} 14\]\[\textit{to the right worship of God.} 15\] Knowledge of self and knowledge of God leads both to \[\textit{to attune to the voice of God} 9\]\[\textit{leadership passed down, the South Dakota 17\]\[\textit{hands, just as Jesus taught us that what-}\]\[\textit{he may not heedlessly wander about 72\]...
(The cigarette lightened the load and loosened the reins.)

This yearning of the heart and the examples that shape the first steps of one’s purpose — “To preach good tidings to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted and his purpose — “To preach good tidings to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives.”

“See to it first of all that you believe in Christ and are baptized. Afterward, see to your vocation. I am called to be a pastor. Now when I preach I perform a holy work that is pleasing to God. If you are a father or a mother, believe in Jesus Christ and so you will be a holy father and a holy mother. Pay attention to the early years of your children, let them pray, and discipline and spank them. Overrun the household of the preparation and meal. These things are more than holy works to which you have been called. That’s why you have your holy life and see part of your Word and your vocation.” Cited in Berneithi-

“Retirement is a precarious perch from which view one’s calling. Calling looks ahead; retirement looks back to the exit one has just taken. Yet it is true that thisнуту of the first three is that one understands oneself to be. The yearning of the heart and the examples that shape the first steps of one’s purpose — “To preach good tidings to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives.”

What drew me to seminary was not what drew me to seminary. The purpose of well-doing... . Accordingly, your life will then be best viewed from the micro level’s standpoint. "The resurrection sun, into which the rebirth of the first man was cast, especially compels us to look upward." Calvin, Institutes, 1:35. 2. Philippians 2, Romans 12:1.

What drew me to seminary was not what drew me to seminary. The purpose of well-doing... . Accordingly, your life will then be best viewed from the micro level’s standpoint. "The resurrection sun, into which the rebirth of the first man was cast, especially compels us to look upward." Calvin, Institutes, 1:35. 2. Philippians 2, Romans 12:1.

A RETIREMENT VIEW OF CALLING

Winston Goodson

Retirement is a precarious perch from which view one’s calling. Calling looks ahead; retirement looks back to the exit one has just taken. Yet it is true that thisнуту of the first three is that one understands oneself to be.

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CALLED TO FLOURISH

by Mark Labberton

When I came to Fuller I was excited about my calling as an African American Christian female clinical psychologist with the freedom to work in spirituality and health from a theologically informed and cultural perspective. Recently, God has given me a sense of the future of missional ministry in the United States. How do we go to tools to lead in the church and use in the workplace? To honor the calling and the commandment of evangelism that Christ has placed on our hearts? For me, a vision of missional ministry is to use the gifts and talents that God has given me to reclaim the kingdom of God in both my local church and in the ministries that God has placed before me, and to be obedient to the talents God has given (and to multiply them) while not being constricted by traditional ideas about ministry.

I spent nearly two decades becoming a religious professional. As I look back, what stands out is how much I was conforming to the expectations of the institution that ordained me and the congregations that employed me. My ordination vows said: “...serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.” I provided the best church experience I could. But we wondered, a lot, why not-church people didn’t come. Then I got a call to plant a church for the not-church people. My whole sense of vocation was transformed from just caring for the people of God to preparing them for the work of embodying Jesus to the world. I love and am invested in my community more than ever, but I serve the Lord by preparing them for the larger project of redeeming all creation.

When one thinks of “Missional,” immediately the words “New Church Movements” come to mind. My default is to compartmentalize: I call myself a theologically informed and culturally perspective. Recently, God is calling me to be a vessel for God’s use in a project of redeeming all creation. In essence, at this point in my Christian journey, I envision calling to God’s mission in the world to be a community simple one. To preach the gospel, teach the gospel, and to live out the gospel—every way, everywhere—while I encourage others to do the same.

As a daughter of immigrants, my journey to understand vocation was a difficult one. I lacked a mentor who could help me understand how my gifts and my career choice in order to assist women of my generation in understanding their vocations, for my parents to access resources and am invested in my community as a group therapist has deepened my understanding of group dynamics; and studies in spiritual; and rely on others’ strengths; and being a group therapist has deepened my understanding of group dynamics; and studies in spiritual and practical; and are a single mother who is too busy providing for her family to think about the work of mission. As I look back, what stands out is how much I was conforming to the expectations of the institution that ordained me and the congregations that employed me. My ordination vows said: “...serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.” I provided the best church experience I could. But we wondered, a lot, why not-church people didn’t come. Then I got a call to plant a church for the not-church people. My whole sense of vocation was transformed from just caring for the people of God to preparing them for the work of embodying Jesus to the world. I love and am invested in my community more than ever, but I serve the Lord by preparing them for the larger project of redeeming all creation.

“She has been a blessing for me. It is her creativity, her faithfulness, her commitment, and her sheer joy in life that have been such an example to me of what it means to be faithful.”

“As a daughter of immigrants, my journey to understand vocation was a difficult one. I lacked a mentor who could help me understand how my gifts and my career choice in order to assist women of my generation in understanding their vocations, for my parents to access resources and am invested in my community as a group therapist has deepened my understanding of group dynamics; and studies in spiritual and practical; and are a single mother who is too busy providing for her family to think about the work of mission. As I look back, what stands out is how much I was conforming to the expectations of the institution that ordained me and the congregations that employed me. My ordination vows said: “...serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.” I provided the best church experience I could. But we wondered, a lot, why not-church people didn’t come. Then I got a call to plant a church for the not-church people. My whole sense of vocation was transformed from just caring for the people of God to preparing them for the work of embodying Jesus to the world. I love and am invested in my community more than ever, but I serve the Lord by preparing them for the larger project of redeeming all creation.

You and I are to be the tangible evidence of God’s intent for and pursuit of the world today. You and I. Together. The church. This is our calling as followers of Jesus. We are to fulfill the calling of all humanity and thus point to the true purpose of human life. The Word made flesh in Jesus Christ should show us how do you envision your call to God’s mission in the world?"
T he medieval notion of “vocation” is once again in vogue. “Vocational” is no longer a track in the educational world for those who want job training in contrast to university education. The hanger for a sense of “calling” is showing up all over the place—sometimes even without a clear sense of who is doing the calling. Within the Christian community, where the notion of “calling” has never been far from the minds of serious young believers, there seems to be an intensified preoccupation with how to think about one’s place and purpose in the world. De Gruyter’s The Call (Thomas Nelson, 2003), Steve Garbar’s Visions of Vocations (InterVarsity Press, 2014), and Tim Keller’s Every Good Endeavor (Dutton, 2012) are three examples of recent works on the topic. For those who want a longer and even more multidimensional perspective on calling, they can refer to two collections: Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation (Berdsvaag, 2002) and Leading Lives That Matter: What We Should Do and Who We Should Be (Berdsvaag, 2006). Perhaps more surprising in this moment is the expansion of language of “calling” and “vocation” to the larger world of higher education. We have the Lilly Endowment, in large part, to thank for this. Their initial investment in “vocation” to the larger world of higher education. We have the Lilly Endowment, in large part, to thank for this. Their initial investment in undergraduate education in partnership with the Council of Independent Colleges. Under this program, more than 80 colleges and universities have received grants to help create a “culture of calling.” This effort is described at length in Shirley Roela’s article “An Education for Life Abundant” in the Winter 2014 edition of the Association of American Colleges and Universities publication Liberal Education—an issue devoted entirely to the theme of “Exploring Purpose and Vocation in College.” Lilly’s focus is not only on undergraduates. They also supported a program on “Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission,” sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges, for college and university presidents.1

It is not hard to find reasons for the emergence of renewed interest in “vocation” and “calling.” Apart from the perennial human desire to hear our name amidst the swirl of competing distractions that make up our days, there is the economy—especially since 2008. Everyone knows someone with a college education who has returned home after graduation to work a minimum wage job and to wander for months or even years without a clear sense of purpose. Most of us know people who lost their jobs during the recession, and with their job, their sense of personal identity and self-worth. The high cost of a college or seminary education in an economy with uncertain job prospects creates pressure on colleges and universities to give more attention to helping their graduates get jobs. It is just plain market savvy, in an increasingly competitive educational marketplace, for institutions to strengthen their programs in career and life planning. Prospective students, and the parents of prospective students, want to know that there will be a salary after graduation commensurate with the student loan payments.

I regret that it has taken the economy and the competition for market niche to encourage churches, colleges, universities, and seminaries to strengthen vocational reflection in their educational programs. We should have been doing this years ago.

Often the very students who flourish best in the academy have the hardest time translating their academic success into life after graduation.

Moreover, life in “real world” jobs never looks like the textbooks. Teaching real students day in and day out is much different from writing lesson plans. Pastoring among any actual congregation of frail, finite, and fallen human beings requires more than the ability to get an “A” in homiletics. Preparing in the healing arts because you want to help people looks quite different in the context of today’s managed care. Doing one’s work well over the long haul is just plain hard. It takes more than a paycheck and competent job skills to sustain one’s energy and creativity through the ups and downs of any work worth doing.

I am delighted that vocation and calling are now receiving the attention and intentional- ity they deserve in our society. But I am also afraid.

I worry that, in our very zeal to be deliberate about “vocation” and “calling,” we may make this process of understanding one’s life work simpler and more reductionistic than it was ever intended to be.

There is mystery that attends our journey, and we ought not to wish that away. Real-life callings are usually progressive. Who at 18 or 21 or even 25 can imagine a lifetime of appropriate opportunities or the shape of a life large enough to include all that God might have in store? Most of our 18- to 21- or even 25-year-old selves would shrink in fear and dismay at tasks that life has prepared us for by the time we are called to take them on. God, in mercy, calls us and leads us forth one step at a time.

Real-life callings often emerge only retro- spectively. Just recently, I heard a highly ac- complished seminary administrator reflect in wonder at the way God had placed together his life in a coherent whole—enabling him to make a contribution that he could never possibly have known enough to intend from a vantage point earlier in his journey. We can see much more clearly looking backward how things fit together—or were made to fit together—by superintending hands not our own. As my grandfather wisely told me long ago, “Shirley, in God’s economy, nothing is wasted.” I saw that tangibly in my own life. The two years I spent in student develop- ment work between my master’s and doctor- al degree—two years that my mentor clearly viewed as “diversionary”—turned out to be seminal in my personal and profession- al development.

I am grateful for the many young couples who are seeking Real-life callings are often open-ended and inter-related. Many of the journeys of Joseph and Daniel in the Old Testament, who feels “called” to Pha- raoh’s prison or to the fiery furnace? Or take Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Carolyn Payne Miller in our own time. Why would a call to serve the German church as a pastor and theolo-
The world is changing rapidly and is anything but stable. Companies and institutions that existed for decades before the world position "too big to fail" no longer exist. Guarantee of retirement pensions, healthcare, and other benefits, and lifelong employment of one employer have long been forgotten. The world of work has fundamentally changed, and it's not going back to the way it used to be. With such uncertainty about the future, everyone wants an anchor to secure his or her life.

As Christians, we know—and are so grateful—that the anchor is Jesus. But even with our commitment, our education, and our faith, we still doubt. We ask so many questions: Isn't there more that I need to know? Or more that I need to do? What skills, experiences, education, and connections do I need to find that perfect job?

You know—that perfect job where I’ll be well-paid, have an amazing boss, a cohesive leadership team, familiar culture, colleagues, lots of resources, a short commute, reasonable hours and travel, work-life balance, free food and gourmet coffee—and be performing my one-and-only "calling"?

CAREER DEVELOPMENT TODAY

Researchers predict that today’s college students—often called Millennials—will have on average 22 jobs over the course of their lives. Oxford researchers predict that over the next two decades, 47 percent of jobs that exist today will be replaced by technology.

In the past, career development theory and practices focused on helping people to “find their fit” for the right work or job with the premise that one would do that type of work over a lifetime. Given the structure of organizations that existed for decades in the 20th century, that was reasonable thinking. But not any more.

Today, career development requires knowing yourself, knowing the world of work, developing job search and professional skills, and cultivating a positive, productive mindset to face the dynamic and unpredictable world in which we live. It’s not sufficient to just take a self-assessment test or read a self-help book to have it tell you which jobs will be most satisfying for you. It never was—but it’s especially the case today.

KNOWING YOURSELF

Who are you? This is the foundation of all career development. By having a clear sense of your interests, values, strengths (those skills that you are good at and enjoy using most), aptitude, talents, personality, aspirations, and life experiences, you can begin to envision the type of work—and life—that would be appealing and meaningful to you. A few people have an intuitive way of knowing themselves on all these dimensions. However, most people would benefit from working with sage, balanced, and unbiased career coaches and mentors to clarify and confirm their unique vocational virtuosity, as well as many small groups and adults and students. He is also the board chair for Sports Challenge, a Christian mentoring ministry for Stanford athletes.
often drives career decision-making on both conscious and unconscious levels. I have coached many people whose career interests are driven by what they think will please their parents, impress their friends, be acceptable to their spouse, or provide personal benefits like money, power, influence, or prestige. Some can name these attachments; others cannot without the help of both an external perspective and reflective introspection. These attachments are often things that people might perceive as important to them but upon close examination really are not.

KNOWING THE WORLD OF WORK
When I meet with job seekers and ask about their career interests, most of them know very little about the careers that they claim are of interest to them. In the past decade, I have spoken with numerous seminarians who have expressed an interest in becoming the next star of a popular television show. A great many of these young people have spoken with numerous collegians who are aware of their career interests, most of them know things that people might perceive as important to them but upon close examination really are not.

DEVELOPING A POSITIVE, PRODUCTIVE MINDSET
Perhaps the biggest difference today is what is most required to thrive in the dynamic world of work. Today, the ultimate aim of career development is for each person to develop career self-reliance and career agility. Those, along with a positive, productive mindset, transform career development from a transactional “just get a job” process to a “build a career” lifelong learning process.

In my work, I find that the greatest barrier people face in their own career mindset are their own ideas and expectations. Often those who have been admitted to or graduated from a selective college or graduate school are those whose career development journey is easy, or that better opportunities should come knocking on them than the current, often ill-equipped, unprepared, and undeserving. “Who will ever want to hire someone with a major or degree like mine?” Both perspectives create barriers for achieving a positive, productive mindset.

The truth about job search and career development is that it’s never easy. It takes more time, more grit, and realizations from the people who want to invest in it. It usually entails some confusion, pain, failure, and rejection. The job search is a job.

I remember daily that my trials are part of God’s plan to shape me to become more like Jesus and to fully “lean in” to him. By frequently connecting with my life purpose and relationship with God, I can develop appropriate expectations as well as a positive, productive mindset regarding my career—which is just one part of my life.

MINISTRY CAREER DEVELOPMENT
Given the foundation required to thrive and flourish in the 21st century and the expectations of our students, all higher education institutions must devolve serious thought to how to teach students to be prepared for the world of work. For seminaries, several key concepts elevate the importance and impact of ministry career development for every single student.

1. DREAM BIG. Inspires students to dream big in alignment with their purpose and values. The world—and our fears—tells us what’s not possible and to play it safe. With God, anything is possible, so encourage students to believe in the possibilities and explore the many ways in which people are realizing these possibilities.

2. TRAINEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. Learning how to make great decisions early in life will have a positive compounding effect over a lifetime. My friend, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church Senior Pastor and Fuller Board of Trustees member John Ortega, recently gave a compelling sermon, “The Secret to Making Great Decisions.” In which conveyed how we can consistently make God-honoring, life-giving, with-God decisions. Learning how to develop “with-God” wisdom is essential.

3. EQUIP THEM TO THRIVE. Students need practical tools and valuable competencies to navigate the career process. In school and throughout their careers, they need no better place and time to learn them than at school. They want it, they need it, and they are expecting it.

4. CULTIVATE ENTREPRENEURIAL MINISTRIES. In every organization, industry, and data, the most successful are those who create value, creatively solve problems, and can persist, overcome, and bounce back from obstacles and failures. In essence, the entrepreneurial-minded survive and thrive. Teaching and driving this into students will result in lasting dividends.

For seminaries like Fuller and other Christian schools, there are several steps that would enable them to progress on delivering the experiences and outcomes that their students, alumni, and friends expect from the institution given today’s challenging employer and economic environment.

1. MAKE IT MISSION CRITICAL. Personal and career/vocational development must become a core aspect of the academic experience right from the start. Creating courses for academic credit and/or building into existing courses will insure that students truly learn and do what’s required to build their personal and career development foundation that will have lifetime impact. To reach all students, solely offering extracurricular learning and experiences is not sufficient.

2. ENERGIZE CONNECTIONS. The university is a network of people—internal and external—with shared interests, values, and experiences. Rarely is this network fully activated. Connect students and faculty with alumni and friends of the institution for learning, for support, advice, and mentoring, and for further connections that lead to new open doors, opportunities, and walks with God. Career treks, job shadowing, internships, information sessions, speakers in classes, networking events, and an accessible alumni directory and/or LinkedIn alumni group are all methods to activate these connections and demonstrate the power and breadth of the network. This will pay dividends for the student and the institution long into the future.

3. UNIFY THE CULTURE. Activate the internal network so that all are open to mentoring and helping students in their career process, especially through faculty support, partner-
“It is only when we are knit together that we ‘have nourishment from Him, and increase with the increase of God.’ Neither is there any time, when the weakest member can say to the strongest, or the strongest to the weakest, ‘I have no need of thee.’ Accordingly our blessed Lord, when his disciples were in the weakest state, sent them forth, not alone, but two by two. When they were strengthened a little, not by solitude, but by abiding with him and one another, he commanded them to ‘wait,’ not separate, but being assembled together, for ‘the promise of the Father.’”

—John Wesley
Preface to Hymns and Sacred Poems

As a young seminarian, it was his artistic response to a theology class that inspired Roger Feldman to leave Fuller and pursue ministry as an artist. Over 40 years later, it is an artistic response to a conference on Paul featuring N. T. Wright that brought him back. A site-specific sculpture without right angles or straight lines, Tenacious Convergence is Feldman’s way of exploring in architectural form the unstable context of the first-century church to whom Paul wrote.
The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Psalm 19:1–4

CIEB SHEPHERD, from The SEMI, Spring 14.4

“Science and theology: they are not mutually exclusive. We don’t have to choose between science and theology, they are not mutually exclusive as if one cannot and should not inform the other, because keeping science and theology separate limits our understanding of God, nature, and our own place within God’s creation. Instead, let us work together to build a bridge between science and theology, allowing science to contribute to the fabric of our theology, and theology to provide meaning and depth to our study.”

SCIENCE + EVOLUTION: RICHARD CARLSON (MAT ’94), TTS* A case can now be made that evolution is a process that leads to a defined result, that evolution is convergent, that the development of sentient creative lives is inevitable. Christian evolutionary biologists refer to this as evolutionary creation. Hence, contrary to certain anti-evolutionist claims, other biologists maintain that evolution is not to be associated with blind random chance.

SCIENCE + CREATION: RICHARD CARLSON, TTS* It’s so important for us to love what God loves, to take delight in what God takes delight in. In awesome wonder, when we consider all the worlds that God has created, that we take delight in those things—those uncountable aspects of the created world that we see around us. And this means that we look to develop a natural creation theology that respects all of the work of the Holy Spirit, informed by the kinds of discussions we have here.

SCIENCE + BELIEF: DEBORAH HAARSMA, TTS* Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God, that the “lens” of faith is a necessary filter for interpreting science. Our faith requires that we consider all the worlds that God has created, that we take delight in those things—that moves on the earth—a theme repeated in Psalm 8. So, it may be that serving as God’s stewards gives us a reason to study the beauty of creation.

SCIENCE + WORLDVIEW: PHILIP CLAYTON (MAT ’80), TTS* These are just a few of the broad discussions science and theology are having. Christian scientists do not see conflict, and these areas deserve our attention and our care. If you show respect for these areas, and you want to answer all of them, we can talk people to help us in the Baltimore and questions with the kinds of discussions we have here.

SCIENCE + SCRIPTURE: MARK GRIGSON, TTS* All of the American and most evangelical think the Earth is less than two thousand years old. Those struggling to come to terms with modern science operate in a tense and divisive environment where even the age of the Earth is a topic to be avoided. Scientifically informed voices are often rejected by their communities. In the church, we need new strategies for engaging churches in conversations about science and scripture.

SCIENCE + CONGREGATIONS: JUSTIN BARRETT, TTS* In general, those who say that God created humans in his image and commands them to “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”—a theme repeated in Psalm 8—may be right. So, it may be that serving as God’s stewards gives us a reason to study the beauty of creation.

SCIENCE + CONGREGATIONS: GREG GROCHOSKI, TTS* The church needs support scientists in our midst, and we need to help them come to terms with the glory of science and the glory of what they do. We need to help them reclaim the spiritual good of studying the beauty of creation.

SCIENCE + THE HISTORICAL ADAM: DANIEL RICH, TTS* Where do things go from here? If the pressures of scientific inquiry lead us to take down the sphere of the historical Adam? What might it look like for us to faithfully receive Paul’s testimony not merely by saying what he said, but by doing what he did? Might it be possible that we could retell the stories of both Adam and evolutionary sciences such that they continued to reflect our conviction that the endpoint of God’s great story is nothing else than new creation in the crucified and risen Christ?

SCIENCE + CONGREGATIONS: DAVID WOOD, TTS* There is a social consensus that religion is a subject that should not be taken up in our public schools. We in the church and in science is a subject that should not be taken up in our religious communities. We mirror this in a way we would never be proud of.

SCIENCE + CREATION: JUSTIN BARRETT, TTS* In general, those who say that God created humans in his image and commands them to “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”—a theme repeated in Psalm 8—may be right. So, it may be that serving as God’s stewards gives us a reason to study the beauty of creation.

“*This detail of an image from the Hubble Ultra-Deep Field was shown during Jennifer Wiseman’s lecture “The Heavens Declare the Glory of God: Contemplating Our Incredible Universe, the Lenses of Science and Faith” at the “Talk of God, Talk of Science” conference. Wiseman works at the Hubble Space program as the senior project scientist, and, rather than responding to these discussions with feelings of insignificance, her work has cultivated wonder at a massive bridge between science and theology, allowing science to contribute to the fabric of our theology, and theology to provide meaning and depth to our study.”

“*This context is created from resources and ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Check online for full videos, articles, and more resources.

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THEOLOGY, NEWS & NOTES

ISSUE #1 VOCATION

STORYVOICE THEOLOGY

FULLER MAGAZINE 2014

SCIENCE + EVOLUTION:

SCIENCE + CREATION:

SCIENCE + BELIEF:

SCIENCE + WORLDVIEW:

SCIENCE + SCRIPTURE:

SCIENCE + CONGREGATIONS:

SCIENCE + THE HISTORICAL ADAM:

SCIENCE + CONGREGATIONS:

SCIENCE + CREATION:

SCIENCE + CONGREGATIONS:

EDITORIAL NOTE

These quotes are taken from a 2013 conference at Fuller Seminary called “Talk of God, Talk of Science” (TTS) and from the Spring 2013 issue of Theology, News & Notes (TNN) on science and faith integrated by Joel Green.
Astronomer DEB SHEPHERD studies an infinite God

“I know God existed. I felt him inside of me. I knew Jesus as my savior; no one else could have brought me out of such deep despair. But I was also an astronomer, and I knew intimately just how big the universe was. I knew stars are born and they die each day, I knew there are billions (10^12 or 1,000,000,000,000) of galaxies, each with billions of stars. I knew the galaxies are expanding from an enormous explosion 13.7 billion years ago, the Big Bang. I know that galaxies themselves evolve and even collide in events that last more than a billion years. I understand, at least partly, the beauty and complexity of the physics and mathematics that describe the fabric of space-time and the incredible balance between matter and energy that exists at the quantum level.

So how could a God who created this amazing and wonderful universe possibly love something so insignificant as a human being? We are nothing but tiny organisms on a small rocky planet orbiting a dwarf star (that we call the Sun) located in the outer reaches of a rather standard galaxy in our universe. I just couldn’t figure it out. I had a very difficult time believing in my heart and soul that God actually loved me when he had so much else to hold together. . . . I still don’t know how it is possible. I probably never will. But I finally understand that it is possible: God both loves humans and creates and sustains the universe.”—from The SEMI, Spring 14.4, pp. 17–18

DEB SHEPHERD [MDiv student]

From a family of artists and musicians, Dr. Shepherd became an astrophysicist, working as a research engineer and then training astronauts for the NASA shuttle program at Marshall Space Flight Center. She also studied astronomy, after which she became a post-doctoral scholar at Caltech and then a lensed astronomer at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO). Her research focus is in the field of star and planet formation with a specialty in large radio telescopes (such as the Very Large Array, see right) in New Mexico, Chile, and South Africa. Shepherd holds degrees in physics from the University of Cincinnati (BS) and University of Tennessee (MS) and in astronomy from the University of Wisconsin (PhD).

Fuller faith and science STUDENT-GROUP begins

“This group is a mixture of hopes from the polarized worlds of faith and science. In the world of the church I constantly had to hide my love for science; many scientists I have talked to who are Christian feel that they need to hide their love for God. This group is about the hope that these fears will one day no longer be necessary. We are about learning with and from each other across the faith and science divide, a divide that was never necessary in the first place. Our ultimate hope is seeing a world where the church is no longer afraid of science and scientists need no longer be afraid of the church. It will be a long road, but I know that it is both possible and crucial to walk it. We will start where we can: lectures on campus by scientists and theologians, discussing emerging issues in science, technology, and ethics; and educational outreach to our faith communities. The end of the journey is arriving at a theology bolstered by scientific understanding and inquiry, and a science that explores and magnifies the glories of the Triune God.”—Reed Metcalf, cofounder

JENNIFER WISEMAN, senior astrophysicist at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, with a new view on the love of God

After reading Psalm 19:1–4, Wiseman said, “The heavens are speaking, in a sense, to us, and it’s our job both through science to find out the scientific truths that we’re learning by looking at the universe and through our faith and philosophy to find out the other things that we can glean by gazing at the universe. We need to put our minds to this task. . . . We recognize the beauty of nature, and we are drawn to explore it, perhaps that implies, as we’re looking for ways that the heavens declare the glory of God, that God enables us to desire, to explore, and to grow in understanding of the natural world—this could be a facet of God’s love.”

Durham University physicist TOM McLEISH lectures

Suggesting that much of the time the “science/faith debate” is much more fecund when investigated in exploration and wonder rather than “through shouting matches,” Tom McLeish of Durham University spoke as a guest of the Fuller student science group (Pasadena). Drawing from thoughts in his new work Faith and Wisdom in Science (Oxford University Press, 2014) to an intimate but engaged crowd that included President Mark Labberton and School of Theology Dean Joel Green, McLeish shared some of his books’ exploration. He observed enthusiastically that “there are better starting places,” McLeish urged. “For me, the corpus to start in is the wisdom literature: Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs. . . . [and] the snowy mountain peak of Job.” As Professor McLeish was aware that many students in the room were currently part of a summer course studying Job, he was quick to incorporate his observations on that text into his lecture.
NANCEY MURPHY on the discipline of theology

“The nonreductive physicalist account of religious experience is valuable in that it allows believers to accept and make use of research on the biological, psychological, and social realization of religious experience. However, without an account of divine action, religious experience will be reducible to these lower levels of the hierarchy. The nonreductive physicalist account of nature needs to be completed by a theological account in which descriptions of divine action supervene on descriptions of natural and historical events, but without being reducible to them. We need to conceive of the hierarchy of the sciences as incomplete without theology, and especially to maintain the nonreducibility of theology to other disciplines.”—from Whatever Happened to the Soul? pp. 147–8

WARREN BROWN reflects on the mystery of the soul

“The soulful aspects of human experience are engendered by the experiences of personal relatedness. This relatedness is, in turn, an emergent property of certain critical human cognitive capacities. Just as the properties of soul presumed by Jewish and Christian Scripture emerge from personal relatedness, so also personal relatedness emerges from the operation of the incredibly enhanced mental powers of humans. In the plan and design of God, the richness and depth of human interpersonal relatedness was made possible by an evolutionary explosion of our mental capacities. Nevertheless, personal relatedness and the soulful capacities of humans are not the same as these cognitive systems or reducible to nothing but cognition. Rather, the human experiences of soul are conditioned by but cannot be reduced to the underlying mental processes from which they emerge.”—from Whatever Happened to the Soul? p. 103

Further reading from our faculty

Whatever Happened to the Soul? Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy, and H. Newton Malony, eds. (Fortress Press, 1998)

Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies? Nancey Murphy (Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Did My Neurons Make Me Do It? Nancey Murphy and Warren S. Brown (Oxford University Press, 2009)


Body, Soul, and Human Life Joel B. Green (Baker Academic, 2008)


With thoughts on body and soul relatedness, JOEL GREEN writes about partnering with God

“Work in biblical and theological studies, together with insight from the neurosciences, encourages a way forward marked by an account of the human person that rejects the necessity of a separate, metaphysical entity such as a soul to account for human capacities and distinctives; that underscores the material location of the human person in relation to the created order; that refuses to reduce personal identity to our neural equipment, emphasizing instead the personal contribution and relatedness of human beings to the human family and the cosmos; and thus that as its primary point of beginning and orientation the human in a partnering relationship with God.”—from Body, Soul, and Human Life, pp. 37–38

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“What I find most inspiring is to read the Bible through the eyes of immigration. Abraham and Sarah, our patriarch and matriarch of faith, are people who had faith in God in the process of moving though they did not know their destination. Throughout the Scripture we see that God is at work when people are on the move. The people of Israel actually learned more about God when they were in exile than when they were in the land of Israel. I challenge my students to read the Bible through the lens of migration. In the New Testament, we, as followers of Jesus Christ, are often called strangers, pilgrims, people on the move. As we read through the Bible we see that God often works through those who are immigrants. All of those things point to the fact that we should be concerned about this issue.”—from “Churches Help Push for Immigration Reform,” Take Two (KPCC Radio), November 18, 2013

VOICES ON
Immigration

Rally to advocate for IMMIGRATION REFORM

In the winter of 2013, President Mark Labberton looked out over a crowd gathered at Pasadena City Hall and told them, “We often think of ourselves as a nation of immigrants, but when it comes to immigration reform our hearts just shut down. We need to make our hearts bigger than they are.” He was speaking to over 300 advocates—all Fuller students, faculty, and community supporters committed to comprehensive immigration reform.

It was the final stop on a march that started in prayer on Fuller’s Pasadena campus and ended with testimonies and songs on the steps of City Hall.

The Peace and Justice Advocates student group worked with LA Voice and G92 to organize the rally, and they sent a clear message to the local government to not only push immigration reform on a national level but also to remember their commitments to undocumented people living nearby.

Director of Fuller Arizona TOM PARKER urges public prayer and “light-bearing”

“The Bible is filled with immigrants—all people created equal in the image of God. We see immigration reform as an important issue, as a matter of gospel. We can continue to be a light-bearing country, a country that stands out for how we treat others.”

— from a Phoenix, Arizona, gathering of church and education leaders to pray publicly for immigration issues

Director of clinical training LISSETH ROJAS-FLORES on offering support

“We tend to think that the psychological is separate from the physical and separate from the spiritual, but I believe that they’re all intertwined. When we think of trauma, we see precisely this connection. When an unexpected traumatic event [like the deportation of a parent] occurs, it shatters your concept of the world. It shatters your faith in God, your relationship with others, and your sense of purpose and meaning in life. Particularly, citizen children who are here legally feel that they are not protected by the society or their parents or even God, and their sense of security and hope is challenged. . . . Particular patients who are providing support in very creative ways for these families. I think the important thing is to be educated, to be willing to be open, even at times to be bold.”

— from a presentation, with doctoral student Marisol de Jesus-Perez, at a conference of the Latino Behavioral Health Institute

“This content is curated from resources and ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Check online for full videos, articles, and more resources.

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ISSUE #1 VOCATION
An invitation to the WHITE HOUSE

It was past 10:00 on Sunday night when Solano Beach Presbyterian Church pastor Mike McClenahan (DMin ‘00) was surprised to see an email from the White House. It invited him to meet with President Barack Obama and his senior staff to discuss the moral urgency of passing immigration reform. He thought it was a joke. A quick email to friends at the Evangelical Immigration Table confirmed it was real, and the next morning he was speaking to the President of the United States. McClenahan was joined at the meeting by Fuller alumna Hyepin Im (pictured in red). The White House thanked attendees “on behalf of all of us, for your interest and leadership on this issue.”

“GLEN STASSEN, the late Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics, from his groundbreaking book on ethics

“The perception of all human beings as equal, and equally valuable, as persons worthy of respect and equal treatment before the law, is a relatively rare and recent achievement in human history. The concept that women, children, racial minorities, immigrants, refugees and the poor are to be treated not only equally but with special concern because of their frequent marginalization and vulnerability is a central biblical teaching rarely actualized in public life.”

— from Kingdom Ethics, p. 222

An inspirational prayer from TOMMY GIVENS, given at a Pasadena immigration rally in 2013

Nuestro padre Abraham fue un arameo errante. Como él somos un pueblo inmigrante en busca de una tierra de justicia y paz. Díos, en nuestra peregrinación, confesamos que nos hemos desviado del camino de vida que tú has colocado delante de nosotros y nos hemos ido por nuestro propio camino; nos hemos desviado de ti y de nuestros propios. Nos hemos instalado y acomodado de tal manera que no hemos recibido a nuevos inmigrantes a nuestras comunidades. Ahí donde hemos pisado para permitir una bienvenida justa. Que la congregación de nuestros cuerpos y palabras en esta noche cambie nuestros corazones. Que nuestro cuerpo y voz lleguen hasta las iglesias por toda esta tierra y hasta las que están en el pozo. Concedenos poder, te pedimos. Concedanos poder, te pedimos. Amen.

Our father Abraham was a wandering Aramean. Like him we are an immigrant people in search of an earth of justice and peace. God, in our wandering we confess that we have turned from the path of life, that you have put before us. And going our own way, we have turned from you and from our neighbors. We have settled in ways that keep us from welcoming new immigrants to our communities. We have made a system of laws and documents that oppresses them. We have driven them to take extraordinary risk to survive and seek a healthy life crossing deserts, working for pitiful wages, living in fear. Turn us now toward those who suffer and toward you, so that we will be hospitable even when the law of the land is inhuman, and so that laws may be referred to provide a just welcome. May the gathering of our bodies and words tonight change our hearts. May our bodies and voices reach to church, throughout this land and to those in positions of power. Grant us sorrows, we pray. Grant our immigrant neighbors justice, we pray. Amen.

“You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.”

EXODUS 22:21-22

“When I was an undocumented immigrant, I struggled to reconcile guilt and gratitude. Guilt because I understand that by crossing the Mexico-US border without inspection, I broke the law. Gratitude because I validate my mother’s decision to provide a better life for her family. When my grandfather died in 1997, my mother saved money and paid a smuggler (we call them coyotes) to help. And we embarked on a one-month journey across Mexico to Los Angeles, California.

“Years later, I’m getting a master’s degree in theology, and I’m passionate about humanizing the issue of immigration. People everywhere are moving away from their native countries to seek out better futures, jobs, a safer environment, sacrificing their family ties, abandoning their children, communities. Most of the time they move by force, and others move by choice. Christians should pay close attention to this movement of people. Christians should test the times and the seasons to see and hear what it is the Lord is trying to tell us through his undocumented children everywhere. My challenge, therefore, to you tonight is to have eyes to see, and ears to hear the cries of the undocumented immigrants here in North America but also in the rest of the world.” — Jennifer Hernández (MAT student), at the Pasadena rally for immigration reform
When Mark Labberton was named the fifth president of Fuller, he asked one of the artists in residence at Fuller’s Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts to screen a film on the eve of his inauguration ceremony. On this momentous occasion for Fuller, an evening of film and prayer and music and spoken liturgy gave a fresh view on the ancient discipline of the hours of prayer, ushering the audience into thoughtful worship together. The nearly 1,000 attendees heard many voices—most of whom were part of the Fuller community of students, alumni, staff, faculty, and administrators who read from Scripture, recited contemporary poems, and spoke prayers both ancient and new. The unconventional liturgy that was intermingled throughout the service led to the focal point of the film screening. It was evidence of the new administration’s commitment to an abundant reception to the arts.

“I asked filmmaker Lauralee Farrer to screen a portion of Praying the Hours on the eve before my inauguration because I wanted to reinforce that the arts are an integral part of Fuller, and that a discipline like filmmaking deserves equal respect as a form of ministry.”

MARK LABBERTON, President

Why do stories matter to human beings?

I think people are captivated by story because that’s the way we speak to one another. How many times have you sat bored in class or a church while the speaker shares factual information but as soon as they start saying, “You know, my sister-in-law got in an accident at the grocery store . . .” we immediately sit forward and feel connected. With stories, we become in tune with the experience they’re relating, and that is just hardwired into our brains.

What is the relationship between faith and stories?

Stories get to that connection that we all share between each other, between ourselves and our family, and between us and the Creator. I think Christianity as a religion recognizes the importance of that connection between people. At the heart of it, there’s still some mystery that only God knows. That is what stories can touch; when you have a really good story, it’s reaching for that unknown. This is what art does; it takes something beyond words—something that you can talk around but can’t quite grab onto with words—and speaks about that elusive nature of what it is to be human.

Why do we connect to characters in film?

There are numerous studies out today about mirror neurons and how they help us empathize with others. When we watch someone’s experience, those neurons fire. So when we watch someone play tennis, we experience in some small way what that is like. It’s thanks to those neurons that I have a job. At Pixar, we’re looking for ways to trigger those so that the audience feels the same thing the character on the screen feels. When we’re writing these films, you’re looking for that meaning—that connection between what’s going on in you and what other people share as well.

How should films tell the truth?

As we’re creating our films, we’re always looking for some sort of theme. It’s easy to think we’re looking for a moralistic message, but we don’t intend for it to be a lecture. Films are supposed to be a reflection on the world we see as people. Whether the characters are cars or monsters or insects, I’m always trying to find what it is about my life that if I saw it on the screen I’d recognize it like looking in a mirror. I see it and say, “That is truth. That is what life is about,” and I think that’s why people go to the movies. Obviously you go to be entertained, but the films that really stick with you are the ones that speak about what it is to be alive. That is what I’m looking for in the work I do.

“Pete was a keynote speaker at our conference on ‘Preaching in a Visual Age,’ and I am very pleased to call him a friend and ongoing conversation partner at Fuller. The thoughtful video interviews he did with us on story are rich reminders to us of the power of film. They bear watching over and over again.”—Mark Labberton
For nearly 15 years Fuller’s Reel Spirituality group has been curating the conversation between film, faith, and culture. Screenings, panels, books, study guides, discussions, and filmmaking are part of ongoing life together.

Robbie Johnston, founder of Reel Spirituality, on relationship to culture

“If I am simply critical of the culture, the culture is going to be dismissive of me. If we’re going to be effective in our outreach and evangelism, and if we’re going to really know ourselves—because we’re a part of that same culture—we need to be able to engage the stories that are forming the metanarrative and way we understand life around us, and we need to be able to put that in conversation with God’s story that can complete it.”

Further Reading

- Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus for an Emerging Discipline Robert Johnston, ed. (Baker Academic, 2007)
- Scoring Transcendence: Contemporary Film Music as Religious Experience Kutter Callaway (Wayne University Press, 2012)
- Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue Robbie Johnston (Baker Academic, 2012)

KUTTER CALLAWAY [PhD ’09],
educator and author

Very much like preaching, audiovisual renderings of biblical stories (like Noah) offer us an opportunity to imaginatively explore the ways in which this ancient text might inform or shape our basic understanding of the world. These narratives are meaningful not because of their strict fidelity to some abstract notion of biblical “accuracy,” but instead as they draw us into a story that shapes our lives. In no way am I suggesting that biblical content is irrelevant. Rather I am simply recognizing that, as it concerns both the Bible and biblical films, the core measure of a story’s power and meaning does not reside in its rigid adherence to historical or linguistic data. In other words, whether we are watching a film like Noah or reading a text like Genesis 6–11, our primary focus should be on clarity rather than fidelity, that is, on the interpretive insight these stories offer—the unique vision of the world that the story lays bare.

NEVILLE KISSER [MAT ’19],
screenwriter

Although it’s never explicitly called a “commercial calling,” everything about (Lars and the Real Girl) looks and feels as though it is. The mystics have told us, “Love is what stitches us together.” The film shows how a community’s “communal calling,” everything about its affinity, accessible technology was just emerging as a viable alternative to celluloid, and the church still considered cinema the devil’s playground. It’s so rewarding to me that we have a legitimate filmmaking community here at Fuller that is as sophisticated as those found at actual film schools. We’re not just talking about movies over espresso drinks, we’re watching (and reading) Tarantino, discussing Sokurov, watching Malick, and making our own films as we find our voices. I remember Bob Bethel, Justin Bell, Matt Webb, Camille Tucker, Drea Gacs, Dan Long, Eugene Suen, and many many others, as they started at Fuller, wondering if they had permission to merge twin callings to ministry and cinema. Now we have award-winning work coming from our community that is giving us exposure on filmmaker panels, journals, and festivals around the world. That means that the conversation that’s happening in our ad hoc independent film community here is cycling out to the wider world where we can inform and be informed. A dream come true.

BOBETTE BUNSTER, Biola Lecturer 2013

Tuning in to the truth of our own story can be daunting for any of us. Our first impulse is to deflect our stories, by saying they’re all too common, that no one would be interested. Why should anyone care? But, in fact, tuning in to your own story is your power. We are all unique. We have all faced difficult circumstances, experienced triumphs, setbacks, and disappointments. But it is how we have made our choices in the face of adversity—how we harnessed courage at our own threshold—that makes each of us unique and exceptional. This is the story others want to hear. This is why you need to tell your story. And tell it well.

EUGENE SUEN [MAT student],
producer

The notion that a film should be condemned for merely showing immoral behavior is, I hope, self-evidently problematic. Depiction does not mean endorsement. Great works of art engage the human condition with honesty and seriousness. This sometimes means taking an unflinching look at the darkest, ugliest parts of our existence. The fact that a work of art is about immorality does not make it an instance of immorality.

LAURALEE FARRER [artist in residence], film director

Years ago I started as a filmmaker when the renaissance of independent film was in its infancy, accessible technology was just emerging as a viable alternative to celluloid, and the church still considered cinema the devil’s playground. It’s so rewarding to me that we have a legitimate filmmaking community here at Fuller that is as sophisticated as those found at actual film schools. We’re not just talking about movies over espresso drinks, we’re watching (and reading) Tarkovsky, discussing Sokurov, watching Malick, and making our own films as we find our voices. I remember Bob Bethel, Justin Bell, Matt Webb, Camille Tucker, Drea Gacs, Dan Long, Eugene Suen, and many many others, as they started at Fuller, wondering if they had permission to merge twin callings to ministry and cinema. Now we have award-winning work coming from our community that is giving us exposure on filmmaker panels, journals, and festivals around the world. That means that the conversation that’s happening in our ad hoc independent film community here is cycling out to the wider world where we can inform and be informed. A dream come true.

ROBERT K. JOHNSTON,
founder of Reel Spirituality, on relationship to culture

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Reflections on living room film festivals from Reel Spirituality podcast and codirector host ELIJAH DAVIDSON [MAICS '13]

“We all have cinematic blind spots, films we haven’t seen that are famous and that have influenced so much of the cinema we love. Reel Spirituality podcast regulars Matt Aughtry, A. C. Noel, Jonathan Stoner, and I decided to correct at least one of those blind spots together by focusing on the films of Andrei Tarkovsky. For several nights we watched his greatest films together. Discussing them afterwards was among the most enriching group movie-watching experiences of our lives.

“I hope our podcasts inspire people to incorporate the communal into their movie watching and to take a chance on films that are outside their comfort zone. Art has the power to transform us when we interact with it communally and not just consumptively, when we commune with the artwork and with others in the process. We’re not made to be just consumers. We’re made to be communers with God, with others, and with the world.”

(at right: scene from Andrei Tarkovsky’s film Stalker)

Film director AVRIL SPEAKS [MAT '14], on the power of film to bring awareness and change

“The art and beauty of film is that it has the power to entertain, but it also has the power to be a weapon that brings awareness, as it did in Do the Right Thing and its predecessors. A ‘classic’ is defined as ‘a work of art of recognized and established value.’ These types of films encouraged me the most to become a filmmaker, making them ‘classics’ in my book. My own ethic as a filmmaker of faith has been largely shaped by these films, giving me a desire to tell my truth, to add my voice as an African American woman, to ‘shake things up,’ and hopefully cause people to take another look at life and see the truths that God is speaking through it.”

JOHN PRIDDY [MA IL '05], founder of the Windrider Forum, and RALPH WINTER [filmmaker and adjunct professor] at the Sundance Film Festival

“Stories are truly the ‘storehouses’ of culture, and film—our culture’s principal form of storytelling—is the most critical, value-defining medium of our age. The name ‘windrider’ means ‘to ride the Ruach,’ the Hebrew term for the creative Spirit that hovered over the earth at creation and, we believe, continues to move in the hearts and minds of artists and their audiences today.”

WILL STOLLER LEE [director, Fuller Colorado] leads screenings and panel discussions

“There are always films with broad issues of spirituality, justice, and forgiveness for us to see and talk about as a community. The value of watching films together is that it creates an opportunity for hospitality to the filmmakers and the chance for us to find common ground through stories.”

Stoller Lee (far right) hosts a question and answer panel with filmmakers James Cuff and Jaka Morrison of Thnk and Ano, screened as part of the Windrider Bay Area film festival.
Using staff member Zach Smith’s idea, the David Allan Hubbard Library in Pasadena invites suggestions for improvement:

**TOP ANSWERS:**
1. coffee/refrigerations
2. more study rooms
3. faster library network
4. help desk
5. better online library presence
6. better shelves
7. more scanners
8. more study rooms
9. more study rooms
10. standing workstations
11. easier reserves process
12. lockers
13. color/aesthetics
14. ebooks
15. more security

**Las Respuestas Más Comunes:**
1. Más seguridad
2. Más aulas de estudio
3. Computadoras de red con más rapidez
4. Horas más largas
5. Servicio en línea más presentable
6. MÁS BIBLIOTECA
7. Más maquinas para escanear
8. Una colección más balanceada
9. Más tomas de corriente
10. Más estaciones de trabajo de pie
11. Un proceso de reserva de libros más fácil
12. Maquinaria
13. Mejores colores/estética
14. Libros electrónicos
15. Más seguridad

**New Faculty Books and Journal Articles**


**New Fuller Faculty as of July 2014**

**TOD BOLSINGER**
Vice President for Vocation and Formation and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology

Tod Bolsinger has been a pastor, teacher, author, speaker, blogger, and consultant to churches, nonprofits, and business leaders. His faculty role at Fuller includes team-teaching the new Touchstone class that all master’s degree students will take to begin their course of study, teaching leadership classes, and developing a leadership cohort for DMin students.

**KEN FONG**
Executive Director of the Asian American Initiative and Assistant Professor of Asian American Church Studies

Third-generation Chinese American Ken Fong is the pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church and a popular speaker, author, and trailblazer in Asian American post-immigrant ministry. He has led EvergreenLA to become the first English-only multi-Asian American, multiethnic, multigenerational church in North America.

**W. DAVID O. TAYLOR**
Director of Brehm Texas and Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture

Artist, pastor, and theologian David Taylor was shaped by the intertwining of music and theology in his childhood home in Guatemala City. Married to a visual artist, Taylor’s special interest lies in the theological significance of sight and seeing in the biblical narrative.

**DIANE OBENCHAIN**
Director of the China Program and Professor of Religion

Obenchain’s expertise is in Asian religious traditions, particularly the Ru (Confucian) tradition, as well as world Christianity and mission. She has lectured worldwide on Chinese cultural traditions, the place of religion in Chinese society and the world today, and Christian engagement with people of other faiths. Obenchain has lived many years outside the US, about 15 of them in China.

**AMOS YONG**
Director of the Center for Missiological Research (CMR) and Professor of Theology and Mission

Amos Yong’s scholarship has been foundational in Pentecostal theology, interacting with both traditional and contemporary contextual theologies on themes such as the theologies of Christian-Buddhist dialogue, of disability, of hospitality, and of the mission of God. He comes to Fuller from Regent University School of Divinity.

**WHY EVANGELICAL?**

*Issue #2 | Winter 2015*

**GUEST THEOLOGY EDITOR**
Oliver Crisp

FULLER MAGAZINE 2014 FULLERMAG.COM

ISSUE #1 VOCATION

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ISSUE #1 VOCATION
The Story of Arab Dola

By Hanna Masud (PhD 08), Founder of the Christian Mission to Gaza

I want to share with you the story of Arab Dola, a man I visited recently in Gaza with Pastor Richard, my friend from Scotstoun Parish Church, in Glasgow, Scotland.

Three weeks before Pastor Richard and I were due to visit Gaza together he saw a feature on the Channel 4 News in the UK about a man called Arab Dola in Gaza—a young martial arts champion who had been paralysed from the neck down in a construction accident. That report showed that Dola could no longer support his wife and young baby on his way.

We agreed we should try to help this young man, only in his twenties, so Pastor Richard tweeted the journalist who first discovered the story, asking for an address. He received a reply at the last minute before he left Scotland, with the phone number of a local Muslim contact named Khaled. Pastor Richard texted Khaled several times without success, and just as we were about to give up, Khaled called and agreed to take us to see Arab Dola on the morning we were to leave Gaza.

We met Arab and his mother, wife, and baby daughter. We were taken aback by their circumstances. All of life was centered around two poor rooms, one where the women cooked on a gas ring (and dealt with rats that came in through the drains) and the room where Arab lay continually on his bed.

After a nice time talking with Arab, we asked what we might do to help. He longed to have an electric wheelchair, so that he might return to some semblance of a life, but the cost was impossible for them. Khaled, who also was a nurse, informed us that a medical supplies company was just a few streets away.

We prayed in the name of Jesus for this Muslim man and his family, asking God’s blessing to be poured into their lives. Pastor Richard revealed that he had brought with him a gift from his church and that we should try to help this young man.

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¿Qué es Fuller?

El Seminario Teológico Fuller es una de las instituciones evangélicas más influentes del mundo, el seminario teológico más grande, y uno de los centros de formación de mujeres y hombres cristianos más importantes del mundo. Con raíces profundas en la ortodoxia y suscursales en innovación, estamos comprometidos a formar mujeres y hombres cristianos a sí mismos. Fuller ofrece 19 programas de estudio en 9 localidades—con opciones en Español, Coreano, y clases en línea—a través de nuestras facultades de Teología, Sociología y Estudios Interculturales junto con 15 centros, institutos e iniciativas. Más de 4,200 estudiantes de 70 países y 100 denominaciones ingre- san anualmente a nuestros programas y nuestros 40,000 ex alumnos y ex alumnos han aceptado el llamado a servir en el ministerio, la consejería, educación, las artes, en organizaciones sin fines de lucro, los negocios y una multitud de diferentes vocaciones alrededor del mundo.

¿Qué es Fuller?

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 Fuller Theological Seminary is one of the world’s most influential evangelical institutions, the largest theological seminary, and a leading voice for faith, civility, and justice in the global church and wider culture. With deep roots in orthodoxy and branches in innovation, we are committed to forming Christian women and men to be faithful, courageous, innovative, collaborative, and fruitful leaders who will make an exponential impact for Jesus in any context.

 Fuller offers 19 degree programs at 9 campus locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 15 centers, institutes, and initiatives. More than 4,200 students from 70 countries and 100 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 40,000 alumni have been called to serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, non-profit leaders, businesspersons, and in a multitude of other vocations around the world.

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THE COST OF THEIR LEADERSHIP BELONGS TO US ALL

“I’m always inspired by stories of our students making an impact around the world. Yet I know many others feel called to Fuller but can’t attend because of financial burdens. We must respond to this need.” —Mark Labberton

Royalties from President Labberton’s new book CALLED will be used to support student scholarships. Will you join him with your own commitment to share the burden of leadership for the next generation? fuller.edu/CALLEDtoGive or call 626-584-5495