“African Americans who speak of being ‘unseen,’ ‘invisible,’ or ‘good as ghosts’ in a dominantly white culture—including Fuller Seminary—are right to demand the deep work of justice. We commit to the work of reconciling race, one day at a time, because we follow the one who rightly orders love, who holds all things together, and who promises authentic reconciliation that God alone can accomplish.”

—MARK LABBERTON, PRESIDENT
The title refers to 100% humanity and 100% divinity of Christ. The artist did a series of paintings using the horizon as a symbol of peace in Christ.

100%/100% by Angelica Sotiriou-Rausch, acrylic on canvas, 8' x 3.5', 2008, angelicasotiriou.com
Jeff Wright walked into my office recently, caught by my wall of photos and notes and sketches and story ideas on race and reconciliation. He said, from the point of view of an African American trustee at Fuller, “I have more thoughts about this than either one of us has time for.” I offered him a chair. For over an hour, he spoke his troubled mind.

This issue of FULLER magazine is the most challenging work I’ve done since I came to the seminary. It’s not meant to address race relations in America; it’s about reconciling race here—at Fuller and in the wider church we serve. Twenty years ago, in his book The Coming Race Wars, Bill Pannell warned of upheaval if ever again we saw dissociation like the four little girls murdered at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham; yet, here we are again, with the murder of nine innocuous churchgoers in Charleston. What hope can we have for change?

When I was young, addressing the unhealed wound between American blacks and whites was something I felt passionate about, convinced of the power of the gospel and my own purity. I started by listening—to Martin Luther King Jr., Billie Holiday, Ralph Ellison, John Perkins, August Wilson, Maya Angelou, James Baldwin. I said, aloud and in my heart, “I see.” I didn’t, of course.

By middle age my longing for unity had grown, yet my understanding of racism had expanded from a binary one to one as diverse as the people to tell it. I was sometimes surprised by bitter vitriol from Christians I assumed would agree. I was sometimes surprised by bitter reciprocation.

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El 28 de junio de 2015 fue un día de dos amores y un día histórico en los Estados Unidos. Primero, fue un día de profunda tristeza y amor por las familias cubiertas por el horror—todos los hombres y mujeres que fueron asesinados en Charleston. El perdón y la reconciliación en Cristo que fueron esas víctimas ayudaron a recordar la vida de los hermanos y hermanas en Cristo que fueron asesinados a medida que personas en Carolina del Sur, Estados Unidos, se reunieron en el entorno de la iglesia donde el horror empezó. A medida que el nombre de sucedió, delante de miles de personas, el amor y la bondad de Cristo fueron compartidos. Recogiendo las palabras de la Iglesia de Sublime Gratia, dirigida a la nación en un mensaje que nos llevó a nuestro hogar: “También fue el día en que el Presidente de los Estados Unidos dictaminó que las parejas del mismo sexo que buscan la ‘igualdad matrimonial’ se sienten como si las personas cristianas conservadoras estuvieran levantando la baranda de la Confederación [Confederate Flag] mientras el presidente canta ‘Fui ciego mas hoy miro yo, perdido y él me halló hoy’” una alabadora violación del amor y la gracia. Tal acusación punzante de la Iglesia cristiana que acepta la definición tradicional del matrimonio es injusta, pero si refleja una ruptura que no puede ignorar. La Iglesia cristiana desea compartir el amor de Cristo que nos está esperando. Durante esa época que nos está esperando. Durante esa época. En este contexto, el amor de Dios por los hombres y mujeres de la nación y de la gracia. Tal acusación punzante de la Iglesia cristiana que acepta la definición tradicional del matrimonio es injusta, pero si refleja una ruptura que no puede ignorar. La Iglesia cristiana desea compartir el amor de Cristo que nos está esperando. Durante esa época que nos está esperando. Durante esa época.
find our bearings, whether about race or sexuality, is the cross of Jesus Christ—the story of God’s righteousness and merciful love. Love, as portrayed in the Bible, is not defined by human agency or opinion, but by God’s character. The love of God is poured out in Jesus Christ for a suffering and sinful world. When the church is living its identity, we embody the love of God in Jesus to the world.

Fuller Seminary seeks to be a faithful and thoughtful Christian influence, committed to fostering civil dialogue and long-term engagement with controversial issues. History warns us that Americans—Christian and otherwise—will be tested by whether our common flourishing as God’s people is affirmed. The love of God that seeks the flourishing of all. Therein lies the most transformative and life-giving hope—and we are committed to faithful theological conversation and witness that serve the church in the United States as well as the global church. For me, in times of radical change such as those we live in, the clarion call that resounds in my heart is to faithfully love God and neighbor with humble conviction, distinguishing magnanimity, and the same amazing grace “that saved a wretch like me.”

Recent in-depth coverage of the tragic injustice of Charleston. To be followers of Jesus is to be marked by a vision of justice—Christian or not—will be more prone to face injustice, intolerance, and persecution. History warns us that Americans—Christian and otherwise—will be tested by whether our common flourishing as God’s people is affirmed. The love of God that seeks the flourishing of all. Therein lies the most transformative and life-giving hope—and we are committed to faithful theological conversation and witness that serve the church in the United States as well as the global church. For me, in times of radical change such as those we live in, the clarion call that resounds in my heart is to faithfully love God and neighbor with humble conviction, distinguishing magnanimity, and the same amazing grace “that saved a wretch like me.”

We need to create cultural contexts where this law toward the other, toward those outside our tribe’s borders, is cultivated and modeled organically. A Culture Care environment will nourish and steward our abilities to dream even in the face of injustice, intolerance, and persecution.

“Poets, artists, and creative catalysts... (provide) remembrances of beauty that present justice in words, images, and songs that draw us in and captivate our attention until their truth can reach our hearts and transform our communities. Culture Care is the logical extension of our common resistance to injustice.”

—From Makoto Fujimura in Culture Care (2015)

Hi-Suki (2016), left, was inspired by a pear tree on Fujimura’s farm. makotojiyo.com
Walking with Jaday LaMadrid [MAGL student] through the Pasadena campus mall provides the rarest of tours—Fuller Seminary through the eyes of a child who grew up here.

"See there?" The woman who has returned to her childhood haunt as a student motions to the prayer garden at the far end of the mall. She pulls up a photo on her phone: the image is a little blurry, but the prayer garden is still recognizable. Three curly-haired kids stand shoulder to shoulder in front of the building as it was 12 years ago. "That's me," she says, pointing to the far one on the left. The one in denim overalls.

The timestamp reads "2003"—three years after her parents started dropping her and her siblings off on campus as a safe place to entertain themselves whenever work schedules conflicted. She was 14 when it started, a bored teenager without a smartphone, struggling to entertain a 6-year-old brother and 8-year-old sister for hours at a time. "We were immigrant kids," she explains. "It's not like there was really any family here to watch us.

Both parents served at the same church, yet studied at different programs—her dad getting his Master of Divinity at Fuller's Hispanic Center (Centro Latino) and her mom studying marriage and family therapy at a local university. They migrated from Mexico to the United States when Jaday was six. "Education was always the reason for being here," says Jaday, and the reason "we always had to be at Fuller just hanging out." On Thursdays and Saturdays, when ministry commitments of one parent overlapped with the class lectures of another, her mom left them, with a goodbye kiss, outside the David Allan Hubbard Library—at that time, the McAlister Library—not too far from their dad's classroom. Though she wasn't gone long, she gave them three commandments:

- "Don't climb the trees.
- "Stay in this area.
- "Don't stay in this area too long!"

Growing Up at Fuller

Caminando con Jaday LaMadrid [estudiante MAGL] a través del campus de Pasadena ofrece la más rara de las visitas al Seminario Fuller a través de los ojos de una niña que creció aquí.

"Mira allí?" La mujer que ha regresado como estudiante a su lugar favorito de la niñez señala al jardín de oración en el otro extremo de la plaza. Ella saca una foto en su teléfono: la imagen es un poco borrosa, pero el jardín de oración sigue siendo reconocible. Tres niños de pelo rizado, de pie y hombro con hombro en la parte delantera del edificio tal como fue hace 12 años. "Esa soy yo", dice, señalando el extremo de la izquierda. La que tiene overoles de mezclilla.

La marca de tiempo se lee "2003"—tres años después que sus padres comenzaron a dejarla a ella y a sus hermanos en el campus como un lugar seguro para entretenerse a sí mismos cada vez que los horarios de trabajo de sus padres estaban en conflicto. Ella tenía 14 años cuando empezó, una adolescente aburrida y sin un teléfono inteligente, luchando para entretenerte a su hermano de 6 años de edad y su hermana de 8 años de edad durante horas. "Nosotros éramos niños inmigrantes," explica. "Realmente no teníamos ninguna familia que nos pudiera vigilar aquí!" Ambos padres servían en la misma iglesia, pero estudiaban en diferentes programas. El padre estaba obteniendo su Maestría en Divinidad en el Centro Hispano de Fuller (Centro Latino) y su mamá estaba estudiando Terapia Matrimonial y Familiar en una universidad local.

Ellos emigraron de México a los EE.UU. cuando Jaday tenía seis años. "La educación siempre fue la razón de estar aquí," dice Jaday, y la razón "que siempre tenía que estar en Fuller simplemente pasando el rato."

"Los jueves y sábados, cuando los compromisos del ministerio de uno de los padres estaba en conflicto con las conferencias de clase, su mamá los dejaba, con un beso de despedida, fuera del David Allan Hubbard Library—entonces, la Biblioteca McAlister—no muy lejos de la clase de su padre. Aunque ella no se ausentaba por mucho tiempo, les daba tres mandatos:
And, mostly for Jaday, “Don’t talk to strangers.” So the LaMadrids treated the rules as any kids would: they broke them.

Jaday acted as lookout while her sister and brother swung from the lowest tree branches outside Payton Hall. They hid among the library’s special collections and chased each other through the prayer garden, starting reflective students withentrée giggles and the slaps of sneakers hitting concrete. And they sat on the benches waving at passersby—mostly international students. Students who took an interest in the children and started to look after them.

Some days Jaday’s mom would return to find them wrestling over a fork and a plate of bulgogi and kimchi. “There were always random people bringing us Korean food,” laughs Jaday. “I don’t know what Fuller students thought of us, but maybe they felt compassion because they always saw us there.”

These rich moments of a youth spent at Fuller spurred in Jaday a curiosity for other cultures. She grew to be amazed by the different countries, languages, and accents of friends she met on the mall. She developed a hunger to learn more—inspired by the fierce commitment of her mother, who she would find crying after morning as she slept at the kitchen table, a pile of translation books for a pillow: “She always had a better GPA than I did—and she didn’t even speak English,” says Jaday. “She’s been our example of what it means to study hard. She’s my hero.”

Such gleaming images, and an intimate knowledge of Fuller’s campus, planted in Jaday the idea of pursuing intercultural studies in college. “I’d go into Fuller’s library and study while waiting for my parents once I got older,” said Jaday, who was working on her own college assignments alongside doctoral candidates wrapping up their dissertations. “There were other people in the library who had their kids there—mostly Latinos. Often they would watch out for my siblings while I studied.”

“Being at Fuller all that time, and listening to my parents have theological conversations with their friends about the world’s needs—all of that led me to where I am now,” says Jaday. “Fuller has shaped me and, because of

“No se suban a los árboles.”

“Permanezcan en esta área.”

Y, sobre todo para Jaday, “No hablen con extraños.”

Así que los mandatos de la familia LaMadrids eran observados como cualquier niño o niña haría: los quebrantaban. Jaday actuaba como vigilante mientras que su hermana y su hermano se balanceaban en el árbol más bajo fuera del pasillo de Payton.

Se escondían entre las colecciones especiales de la biblioteca y se perseguían unos a otros a través del Jardín de oración, sorprendiendo a estudiantes reflexivos con risitas eruptivas y los sonidos de las zapatillas de deporte que golpeaban el concreto. Y, sobre todo para Jaday, “No hablen con extraños.”

Algunos días la mamá de Jaday regresaría para encontrarlos luchando sobre un tenedor y una plato de bulgogi y kimchi. “Siempre había gente al azar trayéndonos comida coreana,” ríe Jaday. “No sé lo que los estudiantes de Fuller pensaban de nosotros, pero tal vez sentían compasión porque siempre nos veían allí a los tres.”

“Fuller has shaped me and, because of...”

“Being at Fuller all that time, and listening to my parents have theological conversations with their friends about the world’s needs—all of that led me to where I am now,” says Jaday. “Fuller has shaped me and, because of...”

Tales imágenes brillantes y un conocimiento íntimo del campus de Fuller, sembraron en Jaday la idea de llevar a cabo estudios interculturales en la universidad. “Yo iba a la biblioteca de Fuller a estudiar ahí mientras esperaba a mis padres cuando yo era más grande,” dijo Jaday, quien estaba trabajando en sus propias asignaciones de la universidad junto a otros candidatos doctorales terminando sus tesis. “Habían otras personas en la biblioteca que tenían sus...”
Hermana y se cuidan unos a otros. Y cada vez que oramos, en el Centro Khes’ed. Unos a otros se llaman hermano y de un niño o niña,” dice Jaday. “Los niños tienen esto ahora me di cuenta de lo importante que es un padre en de la vida don que ella ve despertar en su ministerio propio. “Nunca si siendo formada junto al ministerio de Jaday. Ella se graduó a estudiar en Fuller para pastorear la iglesia que está ahora Genoveva LaMadrid, su propia madre, quien se sintió llamada a través de la nueva adición de Jaday al miembro del personal, programa de Rosita es “mucho mejor que el que yo fundé.”

“Cuando llegué aquí, los niños decían que querían ser traficantes de droga cuando crecieran o alguien que disparaba a la gente,” dice Jaday, quien está transformando esa mentalidad estrecha a través de modelos educativos y de tutoría que ha desarrollado gracias a sus profesores, muchos de los cuales eran esos estudiantes que estudiaban en la biblioteca de Fuller cuando Jaday era más joven. “Ahora los estudiantes dicen que quieren ser ingenieros o maestros.”

Rosita es una de esas adolescente que ha crecido a través del programa. Quería ir a la universidad, así como lo hizo Jaday para introducir clases en el Centro Khes’ed para niños de edad preescolar. Ella comenzó a trabajar con los niños pequeños y Jaday con orgullo afirma que el programa de Rosita es “mucho mejor que el que yo funde.”

La organización no lucrativa únicamente sigue mejorando a través de la nueva adición de Jaday al miembro del personal, Genoveva LaMadrid, su propia madre, quien se sintió llamada a estudiar en Fuller para pastorear la iglesia que está ahora siendo formada junto al ministerio de Jaday. Ella se graduó del Centro Latino con su Maestría en Teología y Ministerio en junio del 2015. El padre de Jaday, David LaMadrid (MDiv ’05), también se unirá a su esposa y a su hija en el ministerio mientras pastorea una iglesia en Tucson, Arizona.

La participación de sus padres lo es todo, un precioso don que ella ve despertar en su ministerio propio. “Nunca me di cuenta de lo importante que es un padre en la vida de un niño o niña,” dice Jaday. “Los niños tienen esto ahora en el Centro Khes’ed. Unos a otros se llaman hermano y hermana y se cuidan unos a otros. Y cada vez que oramos, nos aparramos de las manos y oramos como una familia.”
Hello, My Name Is

“Hello, my name is Bruce and it’s been three weeks since my last fish—on my honor.”

Hello, Bruce.

Bruce is a shark trying to convince himself that “fish are friends,” parodying an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting so familiar it can be found even in a children’s movie like Finding Nemo. It’s very well known, says Dale Ryan, associate professor of recovery ministry at Fuller, explaining that addiction recovery is “the largest explicitly spiritual popular culture movement in America since the second Great Awakening.” That explains why it is recognizable to film audiences young and old, but not why it is largely “off the radar of the evangelical church.”

The recovery movement “is rooted in the soil of American evangelicism,” Ryan says, “but it’s the bastard child we don’t acknowledge.” Even though self-reliance is explicitly rejected in AA, with people encouraged to turn their lives over to something greater than themselves, fellowships like it are commonly perceived as self-help-driven—a perception that makes some uncomfortable. Fuller’s Institute for Recovery Ministry provides theological foundations for recovery work when the “higher power” is Jesus: helping pastors not to be afraid of or ignorant about addiction, and encouraging leaders who struggle with it to model the honesty, integrity, forgiveness, and humility that the journey requires. At one time years ago, that included Dale Ryan.

The first AA meeting Ryan attended was for a class, and he arrived with a dose of seminary-fueled arrogance. “I felt pretty sure I was going to know more about God than anyone else,” he recalls, cringing. “Hello, Bill.”

A man named Bill stood up and introduced himself. As he testified, a striking moment of clarity came for Ryan. How was it possible that Bill, who admittedly knew next to nothing about God, was having a genuine grace-filled experience when Ryan didn’t feel anything in his relationship with God but shame? “In many ways, Bill was at least half a step ahead of me in spiritual maturity,” he thinks, than might be suspected. Many more, Ryan says, “They are kin to us. We are from the same tribe.” How many in the extended evangelical community were to reengage such a ubiquitous need—especially within its own communities. It’s intriguing to imagine what might happen if the evangelical community were to reengage such a ubiquitous movement, how churches might be transformed by deeper levels of truth-telling, and how—by being honest about struggles of all kinds—they might provide safe places for people in recovery. It’s especially interesting since addiction, as Ryan defines it, is “anything you do to alter your mood. That might include alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, marijuana, sugar, power, control, heroin—even religion.” That’s why the institute has a recovery emphasis for most master’s degree programs, a certificate program, intensive think-tank experiences for ministry leaders, and a variety of other programs including a newly forming Fuller Alumni in Recovery group. Because the need is far reaching.

Dean of Students Steve Yamaguchi attended his own initial group meeting more than 20 years ago, and he has enthusiastically invited pastoral colleagues to visit open AA meetings with him since, hoping to expand their imaginations of what spiritual fellowship can be. Most who joined him left awestruck and yawning. “I wish my church could be like that—so honest with each other.” There are millions of people around the world in weekly recovery meetings whose overt desire is to increase a conscious truthtelling, and how—by being honest about the need is far reaching.

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It was the trying not to drink that was killing me more than the drinking. I knew without doubt that drinking again would destroy me, so I lived in fear and dread with severe self-imposed abstinences. It eventually consumed my every bit of energy. I became increasingly demanding and rigid—a monster to those close to me. I was pastor of a growing congregation. Our thriving revitalization gained wide attention. At the same time, my spirit was dying. I could no longer sustain the work by the power of my will and flesh. In the middle of apparent “pastoral success,” I hit bottom—spiritually, emotionally, psychologically.

A deacon in the church welcomed me to his AA meeting. A group of guys whom I immediately judged as low-life losers came to be, over the years, the voice of God in my life. The 12 steps of AA gave me a whole new way to taste and feel Jesus. Truths I had studied and taught became palpable. I discovered a freedom from fear and shame that opens a way to love and joy. It’s life over death. I’m so thankful.

Matt Russell is affiliate assistant professor at Fuller. Throughout my life as my pain surfaced, I would numb myself to keep from feeling anything. There wasn’t a week at Fuller that I wasn’t scoring my drug of choice. I would disappear into LA at night and emerge in Fuller housing before dawn. I felt immense shame about it. I was leading worship at a church and All-Seminary Chapel, and I even won a preaching award. I was living such a duplicitous life—I didn’t want to, but I just didn’t know who to talk to.

Later as a pastor in Houston, I reached out to people with addictions, and as I realized how similar our stories were, I wept. I started going to meetings, but I was terrified that I would see someone I knew. Over time, I realized that façade needed to fade. It took some rigorous honesty, but I learned I wasn’t called first to be a pastor—I was called to be a fully alive and vulnerable person. I wouldn’t have learned that without these folks knowing my secrets and allowing me the space to fulfill my calling as a human being.

+ Matt Russell is affiliate assistant professor at Fuller Texas.
During my first teaching position, I was blacking out at parties, hiding booze, and lying about it. When my colleagues suspected that I had a problem and asked me to get help, I was furious. A few years later during a post-doc at Princeton, I was supposed to spend a year reading and writing, but I was drinking heavily instead. I realized this could be the year that I died—I just felt so hopeless. One night my wife saw me sneaking a drink, and I told her, “I’m an alcoholic.” She said, “What are you gonna do about it?” The next morning she prayed with me, and I called the number for Alcoholics Anonymous. As I walked to my first meeting later that night, I sobbed and sang over and over again, “Just as I am without one plea . . .” It was a profound spiritual experience. I went every day for three months. Those AA meetings were just liberating for me, and this September, by God’s grace, I will attain the goal of 40 years of sobriety. I truly believe the 12-step movement is preaching a sermon to the church, and it can expand our sensitivities to ministry and shed light on the realities of the human condition.

Richard J. Mouw is past president of Fuller and current professor of Faith and Public Life.

When I was a stepmother, I wanted to bring healing and health to my family. I thought if there was enough prayer and psychological expertise, it could be fixed. When we finally told our stepdaughter that she couldn’t keep using cocaine and living in the house, I hit rock bottom. When she screamed and swore at us as she left, I knew I had failed. My ability to wrap the family in love and heal everybody clearly had not worked. When we went to an Al-Anon meeting the next day, I felt so broken. One of the first things someone said was, “We can’t allow other people’s choices to rob us of our serenity.” I wept. I had no serenity; for years I cloaked my anxiety by trying to do everything right, but what I realized was my serenity—my grounding in Christ and sense of my own life—was missing. It was such a revelation; my own life was short-circuited as I had tried to fulfill the needs of others. Now in my work at Fuller I want to help people feel free from that misunderstanding of love.

Laura Robinson Harbert is dean of chapel and spiritual formation at Fuller. Al-Anon is a support group for families.
Hello. My Name is Dale

I didn’t go to my first AA meeting because I thought that I needed to— I went because it was a class assignment in seminary. I was in my last year of an MDiv, and I remember feeling like I had reached the advanced levels of Christianity. I took this spiritual trajectory of my spiritual life. After that evening as a turning point in the Power who was making it possible. What confused me was this: he was having a transformational experience, but I, so sure of my knowledge of God, was only experiencing shame. I marked that evening as a turning point in the trajectory of my spiritual life. After that night, I began to see that I had made an idol for myself—a god of impossible expectations—and I began to move away from self-reliance and arrogance to a more graceful place. I am deeply grateful for that.

Dale Ryan is associate professor of Recovery Ministry at Fuller

WHY THE CHURCH AND THE ACADEMY NEED RECOVERY MINISTRY

by Dale Ryan

ONE. Addiction is a big problem. According to the World Health Organization, addiction is a disease. Abuse of addictive substances is one of the largest public health problems on the planet. Alcohol, tobacco, and other mood-altering substances contribute roughly 13 percent to the Global Burden of Disease—twice the next largest contributor. It is a bigger public health problem than cancer, AIDS, malaria, or heart disease.

TWO. Christians are not immune to addiction any more than we are immune to the flu, diabetes, optic neuritis, or heart disease. Any doubts about Christians and addiction should be set aside in light of the above. The evidence, from which these stories are drawn, can be found at fiftimin.org.

THREE. Addiction is a systemic problem. In an addicted family system, that “problem” never belongs only to the addicted person. People who love an addicted person often develop lives just as unmanageable as those of the addicted person. There are parents, spouses, children, and siblings of addicted persons in every faith community who come to church hoping to find support for the central struggles of their lives. Being a faithful community requires us to develop practical, helpful resources for all of those impacted.

FOUR. Millions of people participate in 12-step fellowships. In its latest survey, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) reported 114,000 meetings globally. That’s just AA groups. There are dozens of similar programs for addictions of all kinds; fellowships that are commonly mislabeled as “self-help” groups, though the first of the 12 steps makes it clear that self-reliance cannot solve the problem. AA does not recommend “looking within” for solutions. Rather, it urges people to seek a relationship with God and to engage daily in a set of spiritual practices like self-examination, confession, making amends, prayer, and meditation. These are all spiritual practices with long histories in the Christian tradition, employed by people seeking to improve their conscious contact with God. There is a natural kinship between followers of Jesus and those who participate in 12-step fellowships.

FIVE. Spiritual practices at the core of the 12-step movement have been marginalized, or in some cases abandoned, by the Christian community. There was a time when the Christian community took confession, making amends, and repentance far more personally than we do today. Now, if we want to do these practices in a way that leads to a more faithful and fulfilling life, we can learn from participants in 12-step fellowships, who have a great deal of practical experience. This would require sufficient spiritual humility to be teachable; however, the spiritual benefit could be substantive.

Fuller prepares men and women to function in a global context that is profoundly impacted by addiction. We are committed to recovery ministry because we ourselves and our families are not immune, and we believe that the local church could be part of a solution for addicted people and the ones who love them. We cannot ignore the profound reality of addiction if we hope to be faithful to our calling, at Fuller, “these people” are us.

Gabriel Qi (PhD student) started reading historical novels in his native Mandarin language when he was six years old, and by the time he reached middle school in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, he had already graduated to translations of Western literature. “I wasn’t intimidated by foreign names like my friends were,” he remembers. Over the next five years, he filled his shelves with Chinese translations of Russian novels and his favorite French writer, Balzac, whose works were “an encyclopedia of different kinds of people of his time.” Gabe was following a passion for reading, but along the way he was also gaining a cultural education from books like Fathers and Sons or Le Père Goriot that helped cultivate in him an appreciation for different cultures.

A Way with Words

Gabriel Qi (PhD student) started reading historical novels in his native Mandarin language when he was six years old, and by the time he reached middle school in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, he had already graduated to translations of Western literature. “I wasn’t intimidated by foreign names like my friends were,” he remembers. Over the next five years, he filled his shelves with Chinese translations of Russian novels and his favorite French writer, Balzac, whose works were “an encyclopedia of different kinds of people of his time.” Gabe was following a passion for reading, but along the way he was also gaining a cultural education from books like Fathers and Sons or Le Père Goriot that helped cultivate in him an appreciation for different cultures.

However, reading wasn’t just a way for Gabriel to escape reality; it was also a way to connect with others through literature. “I like the quiet,” he says. “I don’t like being around people. I like being by myself.”

Over the years, as Gabriel continued to read and wrote, he became more involved in Chinese poetry. “I’ve always been interested in poetry,” he says. “It’s a way to express yourself.”

In the end, Gabriel’s passion for words and language has helped him to discover new perspectives on the world and has given him a deeper understanding of the people and cultures he encounters.
empathic understanding of others: “While we all put a lot of emphasis on the differences across cultures,” he says, “there are also a lot of commonalities that we human beings share.”

However, the reading that had exposed him to other cultures soon became a means to escape his own; Gabe was turning inward, preferring silence to relationships: “I didn’t want my relatives or mom or sister to talk to me. I preferred quiet.” It was in this deliberate silence that Gabe discovered poetry, especially the atheist poets writing after China’s Cultural Revolution. While his peers worked with academic tutors on the weekends, he was reading and writing poems with monastic discipline, filling notebooks with poems and shelves with notebooks—words that voiced his inner emotional life and stirred in him a longing for transcendence he could not otherwise name: “through my writing and reading I came to believe that there was a Ruler of creation beyond human intelligence and that humans need salvation.” Looking back, he says, it was an important season in his life—even if he’s embarrassed by the immaturity of his early work. “I just wanted to feel sad, but if I hadn’t written those silly poems, I’d still be naïve now.”

It was during a weekend trip to his cousin’s house when Gabe picked up another book that caught his attention. “There was a Bible in my cousin’s bedroom where I lived on weekends during my time at boarding school,” he recounts—a 1919 Chinese translation gathering dust in a trunk by the bed. He read six chapters of Genesis in that Bible before stopping. Looking back, Gabe calls the moment “completely unexpected.” It was a turning point, allowing him to begin to open up to the possibility of faith. And it was one of many experiences that eventually led him to a deeper connection with Christ.

Gabriel attends Fuller with scholarship support from the China Initiative—a developing program under the directorship of Professor of Religion Diane Obenchain. The initiative cultivates partnerships with the Registered Church in China and has plans to develop a master’s program fully in Chinese. This story marks FULLER magazine’s first Mandarin translation, courtesy of Gabriel Qi.
experience an "unexpected trigger," drawing him out of silence and toward faith. It was the first of many triggers he experienced, and God continued to give Gabe more—often in surprising places: vulgar fictional characters who cursed God and made Gabe wonder whom they were addressing; gospel verses smuggled into the popular novel *The Da Vinci Code* that resonated far deeper for Gabe than the story on the surface. “Two years later, I realized that book was heretical,” he says with a sheepish grin, “but the verses from the gospel quoted in that book were profound and deep”—and strong enough to provoke his curiosity about the faith they described.

Gabe took his love of literature and his interest in Christianity with him to Beijing, where he attended Peking University. “At that time I was anxious,” he says. “I wanted to be a poet, but I felt burdened to financially support my mom and sister.” While his mother encouraged him—“For now, your job is to be a student,” she told him—he still didn’t have a clear sense of where his studying should take him. He tentatively chose English, a subject that was more financially stable than poetry and more poetic than the hard sciences. “It seemed like a good compromise,” he remembers.

In one of his first English classes, Gabe learned his teacher was also a British missionary who felt called by God to teach English to Chinese students. Gabe sent him an email with a long list of questions, and they began to dialogue. “I didn’t know the difference between Jews and Christians,” he says. “It was all foreign—all different. I was asking my English teacher if I needed a circumcision!” And while he began reading Scripture again, archaic translations only added to the confusion: “Sometimes, when I didn’t understand the Chinese, I would see what the English translation said!”

Soon that professor invited Gabe to an English fellowship at a nearby church, and after he had been visiting for a few months, the congregation sang a song that struck Gabe as autobiographical:

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God will make a way
Where there seems to be no way
He works in ways we cannot see
He will make a way for me.
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It was an epiphany and a moment of deep relief; Gabe knew they were singing his experience. God had made a way for him—through his family who worked every day to give him time to read, through the words of writers and poets who had become his own cloud of witnesses, and through a passion for other cultures that led Gabe to study the very language filling that sanctuary with song.

That summer, Gabe volunteered at a camp for “leftover children” abandoned by impoverished parents who left to find work in the city. Gabe saw in their loneliness his own solitary childhood, and when they had “deep listening sessions”—a time of sharing stories and hopes—he listened carefully and shared his own experiences with them. It was a moment of empathy that triggered a new conviction: Gabe decided to become a psychotherapist. He declared a second major in psychology and, a few years later, moved from Beijing to Pasadena, where he now studies at Fuller’s School of Psychology.

He still reads all the time, but now he’s filling his shelves with books that help him integrate his wide experience into an approach to therapy: “It’s less about opinions or doctrines and more about the embodiment of love and action.” And now Gabe writes in a new way—the poetry has moved off the page into the therapy room, where he uses psalms with clients to help them translate their suffering into a language of praise.
Organized Noise
I t was just after midnight. Hunched in our Uber driver’s little SUV, we told the Austin native how exhausted we were after our first full day of exploring the chaos and excitement of the annual South by Southwest (SXSW) music festival. He listened intently as we talked about pinballing from concert to concert at bars and warehouses scattered throughout downtown.

He smiled, nodding as if he were watching someone discover a new favorite album that he’d known about for years. “By the end of the week, you’ll feel like you’ve been hit by a bus,” he assured us. “But it’ll feel amazing.”

The South by Southwest music and film festival, known simply as “South by” or SXSW, began in Austin, Texas, in the late ’80s when the sleepy capital was hardly a music industry town. Nearly three decades later, it has grown for one week every year. Over 2,300 musicians perform and celebrities seem to be going a million miles an hour musicians, audiences, fans, studio scouts, agents, media, and celebrities seem to be going a million miles an hour.

I can’t quite say I was a fan of the surf-rock-disco fusion, but the band was a reflection of an idea we talked about extensively in class the next morning and each subsequent morning: plurality as the order of the day. As Bruce Springsteen explained in his 2012 SXSW keynote speech, “There are so many subgenres and fashions: two-tone, acid rock, alternative dance, alternative metal, alternative rock, art punk, art rock, avant-garde metal, black metal, black and death metal, Christian metal, heavy metal, funk metal, bland metal, medieval metal, indie metal, melodic death metal, melodic black metal, metal core, hard core, electronic hard core, folk punk, folk rock, pop punk, Brit pop, grunge, sad core, surf music, psychedelic rock, punk rock, hip hop, rap rock, rap metal, indie pop, indie rock, heartland rock, roots rock, samba rock, screamo-emo, shoegazing stoner rock, swamp pop, synth pop, rock against communism, garage rock, blues rock, death and roll, lo-fi, jangly pop, folk music. Just add neo- and post- to everything I said, and mention them all again. Yeah, and rock & roll.”

A musician can add any sort of instrumentation to or create any kind of permutation of a given genre and it will not be dismissed. Some may like it, others may not, but it will get a real hearing at SXSW—a rarity in today’s musical landscape. It will get even more than that from students who attend from Fuller in order to think about the nexus of contemporary music and theology.

It is because of that diversity and multiplicity that one of our professors, Barry Taylor, was able to drive home a core message of his class: “This place can help you think about and understand how theology works in the world today.” Theologically, we have to learn to navigate the multiplicity of theological voices just as we learned to engage the diverse musical voices on display in Austin. But the music isn’t just a metaphor for multiplicity—it’s also a participation in it. Music doesn’t emerge from a vacuum. It’s organized noise that materializes out of specific contexts and gives us a way of participating in the longings and losses of those contexts. In that way, an Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros concert can be eerily similar to a worship set.

Over a breakfast of coffee and apple-wheat pancakes one morning at Kerbey Lane, an iconic diner in Austin, a few of us chatted with our professors about the Sharpe show. The consensus: it was a concert that made all of us want to make music. It got people standing and moving. It gave us a chance to experience and talk about the way music is much more than just a commodity. The way it can change a person’s consciousness or transform the ambiance of a space. And the way it can emotionally and physically drain us when we’re going to shows from lunchtime to after midnight, day after day.

Even though I was exhausted by the week’s end, the Uber driver was right: it felt amazing.
The SXSW music festival in Austin, Texas, draws musicians of every kind from all over the world who bring the city alive with every kind of music all day and deep into each night of the spring ten-day event. Every year Fuller’s Brehm Center offers an unparalleled immersive experience at this premier gathering of musicians on a citywide stage—with a billing that includes everything from an indie-guitarist at the Starbucks to Bruce Springsteen giving a keynote address and playing “secret” shows around town, and every imaginable musical experience in between.

There are many reasons to immerse in a unique, massive cultural event like “South by.” Primary among them is to think about theology in engagement and action with the diverse worlds where we actually live and minister. Part of the Brehm Center’s vision, and Fuller’s mission, is to equip people to connect the church and the world in vibrant and meaningful ways, to have missional impact. Our commitment to academic excellence is best evidenced when it results in transformative ministry in the real world.

It’s valuable to read about music theory or dissect popular songs in classroom environments, to determine our opinions about the worth and value of music relative to theology and faith in a seminar or study session. It’s quite another to engage music where it lives by taking our theological perspectives and letting them interact with performers and their audiences on the streets of a city. At SXSW, we hear music producers, songwriters, performers, artists, and music business people talk about the challenges and meaning of music-making, and we have access to discuss that with them and with each other.

The city of Austin with all its performers and performances becomes the text we examine together in our meeting place as a class, where we discuss what we have seen and heard. This is where we can do the tough and exciting work of making theology come alive. We confront the undeniable reality of pop music as a potent social glue, binding people together in community and experience. We explore ways in which church, faith, and theologies can engage meaningfully with a world shaped by much of the content of popular music—not just lyrics, but whole worlds that it creates, fan communities it stimulates, emotional contributions it raises, and the less visible but culture-shaping aspects of this enduring art form.

To be sure, a week in Austin at SXSW is not everyone’s cup of tea—it is demanding—but for any student interested in actively engaging faith and culture who has a favorite rock band, or who loves the blues or gospel, or has questions about music in general, SXSW 2016 is on the calendar.

Alberta Cross play at Central Presbyterian Church, one of many official venues at SXSW. This concert was followed by performances from James Vincent McMorrow and Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros. The church has served the Austin community as an iconic, carefully curated SXSW venue since 2006.
Shortly after its inception in 1839, the city of Sacramento exploded with the discovery of something shiny in the silt-filled waters of a sawmill. Prospectors came by the thousands, people looking for a fresh start or a quick buck in the Wild West. The Gold Rush also brought the attention of Christians concerned with the lawless nature of a town full of the newly and hoping-to-be-newly rich. Pastors began preaching in a grove of oak trees by the Sacramento River, the vital artery of the region, to welcome prospectors with the Good News. These quite literally trailblazing church planters and preachers formed a core of believers who coupled faith and works in a city riddled with disease and destitution. They spoke openly—passionately—against the racist treatment of Chinese immigrants, black migrants, and other disenfranchised groups, and advocated against California becoming a slave state. Though from Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist, and other traditions, these pioneering “founding fathers” looked past their differences for the sake of establishing the spiritual life of Sacramento. Bucking any traditional frameworks for ministry, these colaborers, these friends, did something revolutionary by that river.

Fast forward 150 years, and two contemporary cross-denominational pastors form a similarly revolutionary partnership in the stream of Sacramento’s religious heritage. Joy Johnson, a black woman from the Baptist tradition, came to Sacramento barely out of adolescence. Bret Widman [DMin ’12], a white man from the Evangelical Covenant denomination, made the move to California’s capital five years ago after working in a variety of ministries in the United States. Joy is a graduate from a seminary specializing in African American church traditions. Bret graduated from a more traditional seminary. Joy created and runs a nontraditional ministry for the underserved families of an apartment complex. Bret now leads a multiethnic neighborhood church. Despite their differences, these two share much—the same significant spiritual mentor, the same praise leader, a loud and infectious habit of laughter, and a love for the city of Sacramento.

Marked from an early age by her natural gifts in leadership, Joy was content serving faithfully in the background of the church, ignoring a still, small voice that said she was born for something more visible—an unfortunate reality for many women reared in ministries lacking an abundance of female leaders. Fortunately, that still, small voice also had flesh and bone in the person of Bishop Sherwood Carthen, an influential African American leader in Sacramento. With his persistent prodding for over 15 years, Joy finally embraced her gifts and the future that they implied. From that point of recognition, it was a fast track for her from seminary to ordination to church leadership—all under the care of her unshakable mentor.

The rails of Bret’s ministry were greased in a way that Joy’s were not, though he, too, had to cross many borderlines to complete his
journey to Sacramento. From seminary to church leadership to teaching, Bret came to California’s Central Valley by way of Oak- lane and Chicago and Canada before docking at River Life Com- munity Church in Sacramento as lead pastor in 2010. He also found a meaningful relationship with Bishop Carthen, who served as the vital bridge between him and Joy. When looking back on the influence of their shared mentor, Bret muses, “I’m still trying to figure out why Sherwood invested in me. I only knew him for five years, and I still can’t figure out why I got grabbed by the back of the neck!” Then, in 2012, Bishop Carthen was coleading one of Fuller’s Micah Groups for local preachers and invited Joy and Bret to join. Even though they were reluctant to add another commit- ment to their busy schedules, they both took his invitation seriously and showed up at the first meeting in February. And much like those founding pastors by the river 150 years prior, Joy recalls discovering her diverse brothers and sisters in a way that was undeniably appealing. “A lot of times pastors run past each other on the surface for years and never really peel into the backstory, the commonalities, and the things that we share.” Bret has said. The Micah Groups and witness to Bret and Joy’s friendship, reflects on the purpose of the Micah Groups. “Unless we are intentional, we can all be serving the kingdom, but our efforts are fragmented from each other. The Micah Groups flip this paradigm.” Designed as formation groups for preachers through Fuller’s Givens Institute, the Micah group dictum of seeking justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God shifted Joy and Bret’s learning paradigm from note-taking to community-building, “working on preachers instead of preaching,” Bret recalls. Naturally then, over time, as the Micah members grew in relationship, barriers shrank. One Sunday Joy would lead her congregation into minisubs and cross town to preach at Bret’s church. Another weekend Bret would teach at a cohort member’s church. Yet another, they would partner together along that great muddy river, and Bret knew it was a vision he had to share with Joy and the rest of his Micah Group. It quickly galvanized Joy and Bret with a confirmation that they were on a course that their beloved mentor had charted for them. That didn’t make it easy, but it confirmed that it was right.

Navigating the turbulence of race and reconciliation has been and still is a significant issue in Sacramento as it is across the nation. Bret and Joy have chosen, though, to build their bridges together. When the Ferguson verdict was announced in November 2014, Joy instinctively withdrew to mourn and grieve in private, but the by-then-completed Micah Group turned to her for leader- ship. White and black friends felt adrift facing such a tumultuous season. They told her, “We don’t know how to think about this until we sit in your space and hear from you. We need to know what you’re experiencing.” Without the friendships started in Micah, those leaders would be missing a critical member of the conversation.

Recently on the mustard-yellow Tower Bridge that spans the brown waters of the Sacramento River, reflecting on Ferguson, on Trayvon Martin, on the fractured nation, questions surface for Joy and Bret. Have we progressed in the past 150 years? Fallen back? How can we heal as a nation if the very relation- ships between black and white was birthed in the curse of slavery? Is it there that Bret returns to the image of those Wild West cowboys preaching on the banks of the very same river. He remembers sharing the story of Sacramento’s early religious life with a fellow community leader. That friend told Bret that, unlike other regions of America’s divided past, “It was good here at one point.” Charleston, Selma, Birmingham? there the path is different. There, the friend continues, “you have to start. You have to build.”

As Bret and Joy stand together on that bridge, the symbol- ism is not lost on them. “The thing that is hitting us so hard right now is we don’t see one another as human,” says Joy. “I don’t see you in my world. I’m not worshipping with you. I’m not talking with you. I might talk past you. I’ll see you at the grocery store, maybe pass by you in the movies, but I’m not talking with you. You’re not dwelling with me. You’re not sitting in my space. And the bigger thing is you’re not weeping with me, or suffering when I suffer.” Relationships, they agree, are the key. For Joy and Bret, Micah Groups formed the foundation of the bridge that connected the space between them. Spanning comfort zones and preferences, their kinship is evident to anyone who spends more than a few minutes in conversation with them. But it isn’t just happenstance. Mining towns don’t become bridges by happenstance. Intent, collaboration, and perseverance build safe passage over troubled waters. Joy and Bret know that. They are ready to lead people across together.
ly, with heartbeat. We choose energy and not violence.

Fuller Associate Professor of New Testament Love Sechrest moderated a recent event called “Do Black Lives Really Matter?” She urged, “Everyone has pain. We have to start by bearing it. We should not leap too quickly to the idea of reconciliation, as if all that is required is a willingness to hug it out. Sechrest made the convicting observation that evangelicalism is ground zero for racial segregation in the American church, and that Fuller bears the responsibility of leadership in addressing this injusticie. “We’re right here—this is the belly of the beast,” she told a rapt audience in her closing comments. “I am not about guilt. I am about building allies. We need your work, we need your labor, we need your tears, we need your hugs. Come on board.” Her challenges ended the evening and refocused our work ahead.

Brueggemann believes the groans and cries of Egyptians enslaved by Egypt “summoned God into their narrative.” As we put our own pain to speech, the incarnation of God is the transcendent energy that we evoke. God’s love for the world, born into our story, is our only hope for a victory as radical as racial reconciliation. William R. Pannell and Joy J. Moore, guest partners for this section, represent Fuller’s institutional will to continue on this road together—inaugurate as we all are to the journey. We humbly give speech to our pain and energy to our confratres as allies in this ongoing work at Fuller and the wider world it exists to equip.Quotes from the “Do Black Lives Really Matter?” panel—sponsored by the ASC Diversity Committee and the Black Seminarians Council—and from the Fuller Forum are scattered throughout this section. The Fuller Forum is available in its entirety online.

The above painting will be recognized by decades of students, alumni, and faculty familiar with the hallway outside the Geneva Room on the second floor of Payton Hall at Fuller’s Pasadena campus. Faintly cubist in style and palette, the brightly colored portrait seems to depict Christ outside racial boundaries. The Savior’s features, chiseled by a shaft of light from above, are multifaceted and multisecular—as apt mirrors of those to whom he offers the communion of his incarnational sacrifice. It is not a surprising statement to find adorning the walls at Fuller for so long.

Theodore G. Brueggemann says that “pain brought to speech turns to energy, and pain not brought to speech turns to violence.” We have seen the truth of this proven too often, too recent.
William E. Pannell is professor emeritus of preaching, having joined the Fuller faculty in 1974, taught for 40 years, and received emeritus status in 2014. The seminary recognized his tremendous service to Fuller and the whole church with the championship announcement of going to press in this season of upheaval is thought-provoking. Conversations have become more complex and people are skillful about engaging “race” and “reconciliation” at points in time when the historic plates of American culture are shifting. The realm among these conversations can be breathtaking. We should not be daunted but rather humbled as we attempt to further the conversation on race at Fuller because, as the Journal of the Pannell Center said the other day, “In a land of panels and conversations and just talking. It’s time to work. ‘Your lips to God’s ears, sister.’ —Editor”

JOY J. MOORE: Christian Scripture sets forth an agenda premised on neighborly love. Followers of Christ, and Jesus, are to be recognized by how they love one another. In the first century, Jews and Gentiles together bear witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ, demonstrated the presence and peace of God. Ultimately, the promise of the peaceful future of God will be realized when every nation worships together saying, “Jesus is Lord.” This is our ministry of reconciliation.

The church is the only institution whose chartering concept requires reconciliation across the most estranged of human classes, captive and captor, male and female, our cultural group and theirs. Yet the most persistent transgression of a nation confident to claim itself founded on biblical principles is cultural fragmentation. Church gatherings perfectly display America’s flagrant scandalous division by the socially constructed categories of race. Nowhere is this more evident than the segregation of blacks and whites.

Tony Evans, in the introduction of his book Overseas Emmanuel, submits that the reason there remains a problem with race in America is because of the church’s failure to understand the issues from a biblical perspective.1 The lingering reality of racial division offers the quintessential exhibit of the effects of perpetuating a false idea. For Christians, it is evidence of allowing a cultural philosophy to be carried into the Christian narrative. No human thought, with the exceptions of mathematics and parts of the natural sciences, is immune to the ideologizing influences of its social context, yet knowledge of the construction of the idea of race in modern Western thinking sheds new light on contemporary imaginations. Unaware of this false ideology originated, we regularly digest well-crafted lies in the guise of channels, entertainments, cultural whitewash, and communicated education. It then becomes how we read the events recorded in the ancient text. Rather than being called into a different community by Scripture, we see our broken communities as justified by Scripture.

Unaware of the philosophical narratives that have shaped our theological imaginations, our conversations and actions collapse under the weight of headlines that reveal the reality of the racial chaos within the United States. Sanford, Ferguson, Staten Island, Baltimore. Charleston. As the suffering continues, Christians must ask, “If we say we love a wonder-working God whom we have not seen, is it possible to love our neighbors whom we do see?” This question becomes more poignant when we remember the alternative story Jesus told when asked by someone well-informed.2 ‘Who is my neighbor?’ More than the question, the story was accepted as an alternative narrative to talk ourselves out of the fictions we have been told. In this theology section of FULLER magazine, Reggie Williams notes that “concepts like post-racial and colorblindness are inadequate to mobilize people for healthy, genuine social understanding that is capable of moving us past the problems of racializing.” Is providing the world a glimpse of God’s multilingual, multicultural community a mobilizing possibility?

We have inherited a world rifle with wax dysfunctional families, creating totalitarianism, diminished human rights, and a defunct system of incarnation. And yet it’s the church that epitomizes the brokenness of society on Sunday morning when we separate into worshipping communities that demonize those who don’t agree with us, disregard those that don’t act like us, and disregard those who don’t accommodate our systems of organization. The separation of church and state is a modern misadventure that does God no good. The idea of an afterlife where we don’t need to think about our problems on earth is a beautiful promise. But that promise is not the promise of peace in the present when one’s neighbors are busy doing things that are directly names the need for reconciliation as a confrontation with “principalities” that requires moving beyond the fear that “normalizes oppression.”

Historically, the evangelical church has been one of the most closed communities for diversity, particularly for African Americans. This is why men like William E. Pannell and James Earl Massey have been so important—people who were on the forefront of social justice civil rights issues as evangelicals. African Americans who intentionally profess to be Christian, as Christians, who actively involve themselves in social justice as God requires. These men represent the blacks who migrated across North America in an effort to avoid the disparities of Jim Crow in the South, men and women who fought on the front lines with Martin Luther King Jr., but also those who walked while evangelical and dealt with that tension as Christians.

When I was in elementary school, one of the first heroes that captured my attention was a woman named Harriet Tubman. Her story exposed me to an understanding of black Christianity that has sustained me as some question the authenticity of being Christian when so many of the practices of racism have been authorized by the church, quoting biblical texts. Tubman and other enslaved Africans demonstrated what it meant for the enslaved Africans to hear the slave masters’ religion and to summarily reject it. What they did next, as a displaced, marginalized, oppressed people, was to search the slave master’s Bible testified. In allowing the biblical story to become their story, the enslaved persons began to practice a better religion. It was that witness that enabled African Americans to practice Christianity. This is why we must ask, “If we say we love the Holy Spirit in our lives today enables our testimony of the Holy Spirit in our lives today enables Korenans and Kenyans and Canadians and Kentuckians to all recognize God’s work of reconciliation among us.”

JOY J. MOORE serves as assistant professor of preaching at Fuller Pasadena and an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church. Moore came to Fuller in 2012, providing the vision to establish the William E. Pannell Center for African American Church Studies. When not telling stories with a theological twist, she seeks to understand the impact of various media forms on how we assimilate information and what it does to our religious imagination.
As Juan Martínez describes, we, too, must first “realize how deep the divisions” are that exist in our society. Like Martínez, we must never forget that “God had a different dream for his people,” because what the Holy Spirit does to bring reconciliation among the people called Christian, God intends to do with all the world.

Ultimately, our aim is to draw attention to the biblical narrative from which comes the story of reconciliation. The biblical mandate is a reconciliation with God, with each other, and a reconciliation of the divided national ethnic groups of Genesis 11. We are living in a post-Geneva 3 reality that is God’s intended good creation turned inside out. At Genesis 11, the story takes a radical shift with a promise of reconciliation.

The biblical story tells of forming a community whose behavior is peculiar because it practices justice, favors mercy, and noticeably honors its God. Do not allow the familiar reference to Micah 6 to obscure the key idea: peculiar. Scripture is hauntingly relevant in its description of the idolatrous community that fails to be the peculiar people of God.

As in the ancient text, contemporary society experiences the tragedy of an internal collapse intensified by external assault. We’ve tried various programs, platforms, and promises, but too often the act of setting things right have not been submitted to the reign of God. Following the same instructions given in Micah 6 to the people, we, too, must innovate our way out of our current problematic situation and implement solutions that will work on a global scale. Ongoing clashes around the world remind us that ethnic and national divisions everywhere are just as volatile as in the United States, the Ukraine, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Yemen, Libya, Mexico, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Palestine, Israel, and Korea come immediately to mind.

Widen out from there to culture-war skirmishes from abortion to capital punishment, class divisions that span from Appalachian poverty to gated suburban communities, and gender issues that range from chauvinism and feminism to LGBTQ rights. One is tempted to believe that conflicts across previously affiliated affiliations, political alliances, and provincial attitudes will outlast our best attempts to reframe them. It must be said because, as Pannell says, “This is our work.” The scriptures contain the wisdom to walk this out.

Maybe the work of reconciliation requires the church to be like the “Methodist, mis- sionally minded, multiracial church in North Carolina” described by Love Sechrest. Having made the church a culturally homog- eneous gathering of folks just like ourselves, few congregations are reported to provide such an impressive “witness to the power of the gospel” that it would be “too hard” to consider that place as a church home. Many growing congregations that attract our youth call for living in such hard places. Reconcili- ation begins when Christians live out the gospel with such grace-filled welcome that hatred is transformed into love, anger is transformed into forgiveness, and segrega- tion is transformed into community. This is the New Testament vision. And it is no less a terrifying countercultural idea in the 21st century than it was when the apostle wrote: “If you belong to Christ, then you are . . . heirs to the promise” (Gal 3:29). It is my prayer that every reader of this is- sue would consider the voices speaking here not as persons of color trying to correct Ang- lo-American, but as brothers and sisters in Christ humbly attempting to address the re- quirement to practice justice, favor kindness, and love mercy even as we stand side by side against sin in our contemporary reality.

As each person, in the voice that God has giv- en him or her; witnesses to the transforming power of the risen Christ, we pray that the same Holy Spirit will enable each reader to recognize the sin that divides us and will em- power all of us to join together in mutual ser- vices that glorifies God. Our collapsing world desperately needs this reconciled witness from the people of God called Christian.

ENDNOTES

WILLIAM E. PANNELL: It is my contention that we are hanging on this whole reconciling race thing because we can’t get the relation- ship between conversion and ethics straight. Conversion never takes place in an ethical vacuum. We have an inadequate theology of evangelism on the one hand and impotence in the face of human suffering on the other. At stake is the integrity and future use- fulness of the global church. Conversion is a profoundly ethical event. The details issuing from it will work themselves out differently in each person, but any conversion truth of the gospel should lead one to accept certain ethical values not supplied by any other source. These values are uniquely associat- ed with the Holy Spirit, the scriptures, and God’s kingdom purposes.

Reconciliation is the ministry of the church. What we need are models that the Good News works, not some trend that evangelism is passé. Reconciliation is a biblical word, it is our word, and its ministry is our enterprise. The Judeo-Christian tradition is essentially ethical in its demands, the expression of the requirement of a holy God that calls people to be like Jesus. Fellowship with fidelity to such a God requires obedience, holiness, and justice in human relationships. For this rea- son conversion is an ever-present demand.

The theme of reconciliation has become a dominant one in our time because of pain. There are underlying grievances. A race war has been brewing since the first boat- load of slaves debarked on American shores and has been simmering since, with periodic eruptions such as those we distressingly see in the news of late. Animosity grows out of that unrelieved pain; reconciliation is the only way to peace. This challenge could result in the finest hour for the church. How- ever, why would anyone take the church se- riously when it speaks about reconciliation? We have no right to talk about this until we get our house in order. In a society charac- terized by alienation, our first responsibility is to love one another in the body of Christ.

Love precedes reconciliation, as Paul argues in his Corinthian letters—it was the love of Christ that was the wellspring of all his ac- tions. Yet we hardly know each other, let alone love one another! The impression I get from my colleagues in psychology, pastoral care, and counseling is that reconciliation is hard work! It requires confrontation and getting beyond mere words to true feelings and attitudes—many of which we may be unaware of. This presupposes we have done the work of getting in the same room together.

How can one sustain a movement of justice and reconciliation apart from love and a commitment to “holiness”? The great social reform movements in American society were anchored in holiness movements— what happened to the church’s passion for it? Lesslie Newbigin spoke of the church as the “community of the Holy Spirit” in his book The Household of God, but we seem afraid of the Holy Spirit for fear we will become Pen- tecostals. Jon Sobrino argued for a “spiritua- lity of liberation” in his book of that title, an- nounced by Jesus in the Beatitudes and the Kingdom of God.

This, he argued, would be the way to a prac- tical experience of God’s reign in our lives. Mircea Eliade was right in naming the issue of identity as the central motif of our times in Exclusion and Embrace. All sorts of tribal- isms exist to further this quest, all of them fortified and justified in the names of God. The Christian God is love but also holy— both are keys to an enlightened discipleship in the service of community and justice.
Ethics get short-circuited in evangelism to- day because the enterprise is dictated not so much by careful biblical exegesis as by cer- tain ideological assumptions within West- ern culture. Operating out of a hegemonic-ism, many non-Westerners see the divorce of social ethics from evangelism as a product of a bourgeois evangelicalism cut off from touch with its history and its basic docu- ments, with institutional expressions and prevailling assumptions that are largely rac- ist. The racism I mean is the unconscious ac- ceptance, the ideologically accepted, the institutions of the majority prevail- ing assumptions that are largely rac- ist. The racism I mean is the unconscious ac- ceptance, the ideologically accepted, the institutions of the majority prevail- ing assumptions that are largely rac- ist. The racism I mean is the unconscious ac- ceptance, the ideologically accepted, the institutions of the majority prevail- ing assumptions that are largely rac- ist. 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Fuller Theological Seminary is different. Anyone who has had the pleasure of walking the grounds of the main campus—located there within a mosaic of busy streets and elegant palm trees, or of attending any of its other urban campuses knows the difference. Now several decades after my Fuller days and with many years of involvement in the theological academy, I have an even greater appreciation of that difference. Fuller allowed me the space to think the faith freshly and consider anew what it means to be someone convinced by the gospel. At Fuller I was guided into an expansive terrain where I could redefine what meant to be an evangelical, but I think more to the heart of the matter, at Fuller I entered the deep and beautiful struggle of being a Christian intellectual.

Christian intellectual life is by no means the proper property of those who inhabit the theological academy or those who live their lives from the sight lines of pulpits or the comfort of counselor chairs. Christian intellectual life is the inheritance of every Christian and the calling on every believer to reflect deeply about their faith from the sites in this world that matter—where lives are at stake, and hope hangs in the balance. For me one crucial sits has always been where race and Christian faith have enfolded one another. Race and Christian faith have always played together within the Western world, woven inside of each other like strands of braided hair. We know this but we do not like to remember this, because remembering the tortuous racial past of the modern world is difficult remembering. That remembering obliges us to give an honest account of ourselves and giving an honest account of oneself is serious moral work.

This is precisely serious moral work that continues to escape the attention of many Christians in this America. We have never unbraid the strands of race and Christian faith, and because of this our Christian faith is deeply diseased. That we are Christians in not in dispute; that we understand what it means to perform our faith, to think as Christians—that is contested terrain. What we are in need of at this crucial moment are women and men who know how to think their faith, perform their faith in ways that untangle the racial imagination from the Christian imagination. What we desperately need at this critical moment are indeed Christian intellectuals.

The great literary theorist and philosopher of culture Edward Said asked what it means to be an intellectual today. His answer was famously, that an intellectual was one who had the courage to speak truth to power. The intellectual was one who fearlessly challenged the gods of this age and was even as a person of faith) a secular critic. The intellectual, he said, always stands between loneliness and alignment with the world and a repositioning of political identity. For me, this is the intellectual—intellectual today is to confront those powers, those principalities, if you will, that continue to distort our Christianity. Allow me to name three powers that a Christian intellectual must confront.

1. We must confront the principalities of whiteness.

a. We must confront the principalities of greed and violence.

b. We must confront the principalities of fear.

We have now reached a point where we can name what has not been adequately named, and that is whiteness as a principality. For a myriad of historical reasons, we have not had the conceptual ability to name whiteness for what it is—not a particular people, not a particular race, not a particular nation, but an invitation, a becoming, a transformation, an accomplishment. It was an accomplishment sought after by immigrant group after immigrant group coming to these shores hoping to strip away their ethnic past and claim an American future. Before that it was an accomplishment born of discovery of Europe, an American people who discovered their unsearched and unrestrained power over indigenous peoples to colonize and exterminate their worlds.

Before that it was an accomplishment born of Christian election and supremacist policies that removed Jewish people from the privileged position of being the people of God and replaced them with people who imagined their flesh (white flesh) to be saved and saving flesh.

Whiteness was and is a way of being in the world and a way of seeing the world at the same time. It was nurtured and grew inside of Christianity, its voice mimicking Christianity, saying sweetly. “This is what it means to be Christian.” But now we know that whiteness is not a given. It is a choice. Whiteness is not the equal and opposite of blackness. It is not one racial flavor next to others. Whiteness is a way of imagining the true, the good, the beautiful and the gods of this age and was (even as a person of faith) a secular critic. The intellectual, he said, always stands between loneliness and alignment with the world and a repositioning of political identity. For me, this is the intellectual—intellectual today is to confront those powers, those principalities, if you will, that continue to distort our Christianity. Allow me to name three powers that a Christian intellectual must confront.

2. We must confront the principalities of whiteness.

We are in bondage to the Empire all around us, living under the power of what it calls the royal conc- science. This is a consciousness marked by spiritual and oppression and the Empire shapes our consciousness and defines reality for us, it wants to convince us that we need to make our race and it’s all right to live as we are. There’s nothing wrong here. There’s nothing to be ashamed of. This is the first sign of anguish, a sign that not all is well, women who discovered their unsearched and unrestrained power over indigenous peoples to colonize and exterminate their worlds. We have now reached a point where we can name what has not been adequately named, and that is whiteness as a principality.

Some of the gods of this age are not the gods of this age: the gods of this age are indeed Christian intellectuals who challenge the harmed and formed and forming Christian intellectuals, and of a reality of formation that con- 

We must confront the principalities of fear.

We are in a summer drought. So I admitted my sin to you; it is the first sign of anguish, a sign that not all is well, women who discovered their unsearched and unrestrained power over indigenous peoples to colonize and exterminate their worlds. We have now reached a point where we can name what has not been adequately named, and that is whiteness as a principality.

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Whiteness is not a given. It is a goal. Immigrants who come to America now know this. Immigrants that came here in the beginning learned this. But we have forgotten this and have baptized our Christianity in that for- 

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“If there were images of Jesus as a black man, but I don’t know anybody who is very encouraging. A lot of African Americans who are not Christians think of Christianity as the white man’s religion and the Bible as a script to condemn slavery. But what if they realized that people in the Bible actually look like us? Then I would want to believe that Jesus came to save and not to enslave. The devil is in those gaps. The devil is in the silences. The evangelical church should have even more conversation—not just when something happens in the news and everything is catching fire and everybody else has to respond. This should be a constant conversation, especial- ly an institution that is dearly like Fuller.

“IT live in a context of having people gener- alize and make assumptions about me all the time. Do I look Asian enough? Do I sound Asian enough? I know some really good Asian people. I know some really good Caucasian people. We are all human beings. We are all people. We are all in the same boat in the world. It is absurd to think that health care should be taken away from poor people because they are too sick to work, or because they don’t belong in the country. It is absurd to think that workers should be reduced to in- dentured servitude or worse, slavery. But we have normalized those absurdities.

“I have a special collection of James Washington’s books. “
Resistance Fer’s Bonhoeffer-Williams is the author of a different Christianity than that within the Harlem Renaissance literature, particularly, he has found Christology described as “the color line.” Partic-
national identity on the unfavorable analysis of the intersection of race Illinois. His research consists of a professor of Christianity at McCormick I
were also African American. 1 A woman approached. She demanded to speak to an authority figure—someone above him, a woman who assumed she was white. Her demands followed an interesting line of thought; she was a Christian; she rec-
ognized Jesus as a white man, and equated him with people in power. It followed for her that as a white Christian, she didn’t have to answer to people who weren’t white. But she found herself sorely disappointed by the color of the military authorities she met that day. My classmate’s superior on that day was also African American. 2

That story illustrates one obvious way that race can be an obstacle to genuine social interaction by what Delores Williams describes as white racial narcissism. 3 I will argue that it can also be a pathway for healthy interaction. The difference between race as obstacle and race as pathway lies completely in our ability to recognize its presence in our daily lives in a way that promotes justice and validates commonality. Racialization is the imaginary process of assigning race, character traits, and human worth accord-
ing to specific physical features. It is the construction and maintenance of a hierar-
chy of humankind according to an idealized superior human being. 4 Racializing people circumscribes their reception and their role in society. Anyone paying attention to the news about black boys and court cases today will recognize that the struggle for equality and cohumanity in our racialized America is ongoing. The struggle is informed by lan-
guage like “color-blind,” and “postracial”—


to engage one another in a society where the complexities of race have negatively impacted on people’s social identities. The concepts like postracial and color-blindness are inadequate to mobilize people for healthy, genuine social interaction that is capable of moving us past the problems of racializing. Those terms are nothing more than white sup-
remacist adaptations to changing social dy-
namics. Race is a grotesque narrative about humanity that works like a virus, multiplying and adapting as it wreaks havoc on the public body. The notions of postracial and of color-blindness buttress efforts to refuse ac-
knowledgement of the continuing, powerful presences of race in society. The terms postra-
cial and color-blind function only to help the viral narrative of race persuade society that the supremacist notion of white humanity as normative truth is true. For Chris-
tians the problem of racialization includes our language of God and understanding of Christian moral living. We need language to address our racialized society in a way that promotes human being—no non-existent, she has en-
counters with God who meets her in the wil-
derness, most poignantly after her mistress conveys and gives birth to her own child, and Hagar is forced out of the community in Gen 21. God provides for her and her son so that they will survive the wilderness that is socially and physically death dealing. 6

The Hagar narrative serves as a practice of biblical appropriation to highlight that our ways of knowing God are always informed by our experiences in society. Social location informs our experience of life and shapes our cultural understand-
ing of God in ways that can be the stimulus for creative resistance to oppression, or be a sedative for benign accep-
tance of the dominant racialized depictions of God. It is only by attention to social location that we will be able to give real attention to “the least of these” within our communities, in obedience to Christ.

Reggie Williams explains the theological work of social location by reference to an ongoing epistemological process. Throughout the course of our lives we are constantly shaped by horizontal and vertical encounters. The horizontal is our social encounter, the place where all learning starts. We begin learning at home, and in our formative communities (like church), and within larger society. For people of color as racialized subjects in a white supremacist society, Williams argues that the horizontal encounter has historically been negative; white supremacy defines white humanity as normative humanity in order to carve out space for whites only, to distribute goods, and to create systems and structures for the benefit of people racial-
ized as normative white humanity. White supremacy is the historical pursuit of the idyllic community, framed by the social imaginary of an idealized humanity that informs politics, legal structures, how goods are distributed and how systems are created, and inspires the historical practice of ter-
ning people of color into compliance to assimilated inferiors. Historically, for people of color, the horizontal experience is the ex-
pulsion of white supremacy as a social or-

 vertical encounter is theological, and it describes the interpretation of God by the racialized subject. The vertical encounter to be explored here is the encounter with God from the perspective of the oppressed. The vertical encounter with God from the perspective of the oppressed has been one of creative, culturally derived sources for survival and resistance when God is understood to contradict the
In June of 2015, thousands joined hands to form a human chain across Charleston, South Carolina’s iconic Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge. They were a witness of solidarity with the congregation and families of the “Charleston Nine”—murdered at a Wednesday night Bible study at Emanuel AME Church. The demonstration, called the “Bridge to Peace,” was an ambitious plan to make a human chain across the massive cable-stayed bridge spanning the Cooper River. Some 3,000 people were required, and—to the surprise of organizers—many more joined. Signs defining the intentions of the marchers quoted Martin Luther King Jr.: “Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”

Navigating this binary means at least two things. First, it means advocating for justice and supporting the struggle for black lives, as well as acknowledging the privileges that Asian Americans enjoy. Suffering disenfranchisement as perpetual foreigners, many Asian Americans seek to be model minority citizens, which can take the shape of “honorary white status”—with accompanying privileges. In such cases, Asian Americans’ silence about black lives means complicity with the systems of racism. Second, without weakening the first, it means critiquing this binary as restrictive and dated, unable to deal with the complexity of what American identities have become. Can Asian Americans identify themselves as people of color in oppression, the filtering process results in a positive self-perception. The opposite can be said about the self-perception derived from an interpretation of God that reinforces the negative horizontal encounter and yields internalized racism. In the case when the horizontal encounter is validated by interpretations of God (as when Jesus is interpreted as a white man), God and society converge upon the racialized inferior subject to affirm a negative self-worth.

Attention to the epistemological work of social location is crucial for cultivating the ability to recognize the presence of race in our daily lives in a way that promotes justice and validates cohumanity. The lack of attention to social location keeps the work of racialization invisible and has historically imposed a theological hermeneutic from the dominant white idealized narrative as the sole universal understanding of God. Recognizing one’s social location becomes the “you are here” situating device in a racialized American landscape and helps to highlight the dangers of abstract universal thinking.

With a clearer understanding of cultural context and social location, it becomes evident that race has a historical impact on us, even if it is not a physical reality. We are all the product of complex sources of social experiences, community stories, customs, food, and music that make us who we are and shape what we know. We are contextually embedded within families, cultures, and communities, and our identities are shaped by these forces. The intersection of the horizontal and the vertical forms the mental grid that filters knowledge of God and shapes self-perception. If the negative horizontal encounter is deflected by the vertical (as is the case when Jesus is interpreted as identifying with people of color in oppression), the filtering process results in a positive self-perception. The opposite can be said about the self-perception derived from an interpretation of God that reinforces the negative horizontal encounter and yields internalized racism.

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and communities with histories that parents pass on to us in many ways of surviv-
al. We have made traditions, and traditions have made us. Only by honest awareness and conscious access of our embodied selves will we be equipped to validate and care for the cohunmunity of our neighbor.

After we recognize the situated nature of all learning, there remains a need to speak to one another about justice: across social locations and cultures, in a way that does not repeat the problem of disembodied universal moral reasoning. We must be able to bring more to the table of fellowship than our differences. Cross-cultural communication requires a healthy universal vocabulary to acknowledge our difference in a meaningful way, and allows honest dialogue from real people within real communities, rather than the imagined ones of our racialized hierarchical discourse.

Lisa Cahill and Michael Walzer are scholars whose work contributes to the efforts for a healthier universal language by what I am referring to as an empathic social encounter. Their work is not explicitly about race, but implicitly contributes to the conversation about social differences and moral analysis. Cahill is a Christian ethicist who advocates an inductive method of analysis. Cahill describes a “practice-based approach to moral discernment” in the place of abstract, deductive, impartial reasoning. She advocates that we do our reasoning from concrete, practical experiences of injustice and well-being to make “revisable evaluative judgments” about human flourishing.

According to Cahill, we recognize injustices in other cultural and contextual bases on experiences of them in our own context. Cahill recognizes this process as a universalization in the language of common or shared values.

Michael Walzer is a political philosopher who also advocates an inductive analysis. Walzer describes a moral minimalism: the “reiterated features of our thick maximal moralities.” A thick maximal morality is what we learn in our protective community, where we know the language of injustice and well-being in a particular way. Moral minimalism is the thin language of our public discourse that provides a minimal account of our particular, complex, fully developed maximal morality. Minimalism, unlike impartial reasoning, is not a claim to abstract or absolute universals: it is a cross-cultural language that remains intimately bound to the history and formation of its particular community. Together Cahill and Walzer describe a better, more realistic ethical discourse about universals that provides Christians with the means of reflecting on empathic experiences, moves from the particular to the universal, and corrects the misleading—universal to particular—approach of impartial reasoning.

Cahill’s practice-based approach to justice and peacemaking and Walzer’s moral minimalism, taken together, describe an inductive process that reiterates features of morality formed within the shared life of a community, in a way that other communities can understand. It is open to revisable evaluative judgments in the practice of pursuing the justice we are familiar with, done with fresh awareness of a justice we are introduced to, against the injustice we know and meet in another context. It is a mutually informative process that allows our real entry into other contexts in ways that are both relevant and revelatory for both contexts in the pursuit of Christlike justice and goodness.

This is a cross-cultural language of empathy: an empathic reality as opposed to an absolute reality that opens us to healthier interaction as people who are made capable of loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. An empathic reality becomes the manner in which we endorse another community’s struggle, we recognize their need for justice, truth, and rights from our own particular analogous struggle, and because it pays attention to what we know by practice, it opens us to revision in our ethics, while enabling new ethics for communities.

A theological concept, the empathic reality describes the shape of life it comes to us in Christ. Christ is our empathic representative who becomes a model of Christian discipleship by demonstrating the interaction that Christians are to have with one another in Christ.

I was shaped academically at Fuller by class-
room exposure to the method of biblical ap-
propriation that Williams describes and by the empathic work of Cahill and Walzer to advocate a better universal moral language. I am thankful for a theological education that encouraged me to pay attention to myself as an embodied person, (taking the incarnation of Jesus seriously as a validation of God’s love for the world we live in and the people in it). The work of loving our real neighbor means that we also must work to recalibrate what it means to be Christian, away from idealized notions of humanity and human community, towards a real-world experience of our neighbor as God has presented her to us, in Christ. I am thankful that I studied Christian ethics at Fuller with Glen Stassen, who helped me begin the recalibration process well.

ENDNOTES
1. Reggie Williams, Between the Black Jesus: Harlem Renten-
ism Theology and an Ethnic of Resistance (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014).
2. Dorene S. Williams, Stolen in the Wilderness: The Chal-
3. Cornel West describes the racializing of modernity by refer-
tance to a narrative gap in the teaching of white European histor-
s. See: Cornel West, Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-Amer-
6. Cahill, Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics, 12.
8. Cahill, Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics, 11.

“God’s response to the domination systems of injustice, slavery, and calculated pay-
ments is to give—to give of God’s self, to give of God’s love, and to generously pour of God’s Spirit into every heart. God’s response is to empower not a corporate capital-
ism but an ecclesial community, to provide not an ideology of the market but strange tongues that herald and inaugurate the coming reign of God, to enable not modes of society, but the localized community, to tell not an absolute story but a neighborly other-orien-
tative, to sustain not human arts but a flourishing creation wherein the love that lies down with the lamb, to legitimize not the entitlements of exceptionalism but a following of the Spirit in which ‘the fear of these’ are the most exceptionally gifted, and those who are most dispens-
able are indispensable. Come Holy Spirit!”

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YEARNING FOR RECONCILIATION

Mark Labberton

W

e sat in a circle in the living room of the president’s house at Fuller. Its windows overlook the lighted domes of Pasadena’s City Hall, the center of a beautiful town with a complicated and painful racial history. Fuller’s buildings can be seen a block away. The Jackie Robinson memorial statue is just out of sight. Various church spires punctuate the skyline, telling stories of communities of faith. Most black congregations are on the other side of the 210 freeway, where the sounds of faith mostly seem like the blues.

The faces in the circle of the living room were all male, current students from each of our three schools of theology, intercultural studies, and psychology. I was moved by their stories of being African American young men in Southern California, in Pasadena, and at Fuller Seminary. The personal and spiritual maturity those brothers embodied was significant, but so was their articulate honesty about their own difficult, erratic, and troubling experiences. Their shared bonds were palpable and encouraging, in laughter and tears.

I can’t imagine being in a better circle. Everything about a true, faithful, and courageous community of faith was in that room. Living and seeking God in a world of daily need and injustice, together trusting faith and pain to God who, in Christ, is our deepest brother, and yet who is also beyond our comprehension. Being entrusted with one another’s stories was a profound and vulnerable grace repeatedly given and received over our long evening together.

As human beings, we were made for this kind of communion, to be in this circle together. We were created by God to live and share in life-giving, honest, loving community. The ingatting reason for this particular conversation was our common knowledge that we all live in a world that is a place of fear, insecurity, racism, inequality, poverty, exclusion, and injustice. We were deeply involved in the making of a thriving relationship but our world is full of broken relationships.

EXCEPT FOR ONE THING

If only we weren’t human, reconciliation wouldn’t be such a problem. That is, if we had no emotions, relationships, memories, hungers, ideas, values, bodies, politics, religion, money, or tongues, conflict wouldn’t occur and reconciliation wouldn’t demand so much of us. But there never has been and never will be a time in human history when reconciliation is less than a primary human need and dilemma. That conversation in our living room left no doubt.

In this world of broken relationships, reconciliation-talk may be essential but it’s also risky. You don’t have to be in Darfur or the West Bank—you can be in the Mall of America or downtown Pasadena. Reconciliation is difficult. First, efforts at reconciliation do not necessarily make things better, especially where damaged relationships are involved. Second, reconciliation-talk can seem naïve or impertinent. Victims of violence, for example, are not helped when talk of reconciliation is little more than a cover-up for suffering. Third, talk of reconciliation raises the fear of injustice. Each of us measures our suffering, or that of others, in our own ways, but measure we do. Instead of justice, reconciliation can seem like a declaration of defeat. Fourth, diagnosing the roots of the brokenness is difficult because we are immersed in it, embedded in the context so thoroughly, that it is very hard and very difficult to understand what is happening. What to “us” seems so clear may or may not be so clear to “them.” Fifth, reconciliation means hard work. It involves venturing into what is seen and unseen, it means realizing that we really only experience life in our own terms and the “other” at an alienated distance.

At the root of any Christian understanding of reconciliation is a basic claim: at the jargounann of our relational and systemic brokenness lies a broken relationship with God. Put negatively, in a world made for thriving relationships, our broken relationship with God intrudes with our distorted relations with ourselves and with one another which, in turn, further distorts our relationship with God: Put positively, God’s loving capacity to make all things right, and all relationships reconciled, is the essence of the kingdom of God. When we face the extent of our personal and systemic needs for reconciliation, we may rightly despair.

RECONCILIATION CENTERED IN JESUS CHRIST

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (Eph 2:4–5). God in Jesus Christ has entered and undone those broken relationships and systems. Herein lies our ultimate reconciliation hope. When Christians talk this way, we are not suddenly changing the subject from “reconciliation” to “religion.” “This is no sleight of hand. According to the Bible, no one takes reconciliation more seriously or passionately than does God. No one is more invested in, nor more capable of, addressing the realities of broken relationships than God. The whole narrative of the Bible conveys the vivid and persistent steps God takes to bring about reconciliation for Israel or for the church—for the sake of the world. Jesus Christ comes as God incarnate to be the primary agent of reconciliation whether or not this is acknowledged and confessed by any of the parties involved. The more those involved seek to be in tune with Jesus Christ—to see, to know, and love as he does—the stronger and more hopeful the reconciliation efforts. “The One who alone makes all things new” vests our humanity with the capacities to do good in alignment with our true human identity and in the context of community.

The cross is no sweet epiphany but an act of grace dying for the sake of reconciliation. In the Gospels, Jesus’ story turns toward Jerusalem as the fulfillment of his call from the Father to give his life. When we face broken marriages, families, friendships, churches, towns, cities, and nations, the cross of Christ enables us to do so without naiveté. Christ died and rose again for the sake of the world. We need to see and understand what is happening. What to “us” seems so clear may or may not be so clear to “them.” Fith, reconciliation means hard work. It involves venturing into what is seen and unseen, it means realizing that we really only experience life in our own terms and the “other” at an alienated distance.

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determined that we cannot let go and that the responsibility for change belongs primarily to the other party far more than to us.

The christological hope of facing and living into this reality means there is no depth of need that is beyond the reach of our Lord's reconciling love. No suffering or broken relationship is outside the reach of "God [who] so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son" (John 3:16) that we might live in reconciled relationship with God, ourselves, and our neighbor. This underscores that the diagnosis of human need is more profound and daunting than we can easily see or fix. No wonder healthy relationships shudder for, "we cannot save ourselves." We don't get to sit in a circle in our living room and work up a simple answer to a broken world. We need to be saved from ourselves. "But God ..." is our only hope.

LIVING FROM A NEW CENTER

Christians are to be those who live converted to the hope of reconciliation in Christ. Conversion is the ongoing, reality-orienting development. Minority communities suffer at the hands of oppressive law enforcement. "The African American community has been subjected to repeated interpersonal, cultural, and systemic injustices for centuries. This goes on to define and distort every relationship. Confusing, confusing, and confusing, this is at the core of spiritual rebirth, being born again, being given life in place of death. We come to face it and learn by degrees as we move further into life in the heart of God."

Any person's ongoing conversion involves a life of following, imitating, and conforming to Jesus Christ, that is, a call to new relationships, and therefore, to a full participation in "the ministry of reconciliation." To become authentically reconciled to God involves reconciliation with our neighbors, we pray "to be forgiven, even as we have been forgiving;" "we cannot say we love God and hate our enemy. To receive the benefits of reconciliation moves us to offer to the same those around us.

Conversion language is something the church typically uses when it talks about those outside its ranks. But sitting in the living room circle with African American brothers as they told their stories of being "unsafe," "invisible," or "good as ghosts" in a dominantly white culture or even in Fuller Seminary, shouts out the need for deeper conversion inside and among the people of God as well. While the church cares about the conversion of society, it must display its own conversion deeper than it does.

To be a participant in reconciliation does not require our conversion, but our conversion does require our engagement in reconciliation. This is Christian work and witness every day. We "don't let the sun go down on our anger"; we "go and get things right with the one who has something against us before then making our offering." If we follow the one who rightly orders love, seeking reconciliation and justice in daily life is to be normative. We are not converted by our efforts of reconciliation, but it should be that we are converted for our efforts of reconciliation.

CONVERSION VISION

What we believe should affect how and whom we see. Then what do we, as disciples of Jesus, see as we live in this world? How do we see what we see? Why do we see what we see? What matters most and why? And most importantly, whom do we see or not see and why? The peculiarity of being followers of Jesus ought to show in our answers to those questions. Being part of the new community of God's people should make us see reconciliation issues among our highest priorities.

Jesus declares in the Sermon on the Mount that his followers are "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth." These metaphors assume darkness and death are everywhere. God's people are called to provide what is urgently needed and otherwise absent. Surely "light" (furtively-telling) and "salt" (de-stressing decay) are critical aspects of any true reconciliation. But do we live this way? "Light" can be hidden, and "salt" can be diluted, Jesus warns. Are we in the church exercising the agency of change that Jesus says is our very identity in a broken world?

When we sat with our brothers for that long evening in our living room, it was after many powerful events that brought our national attention to the declaration that "Black Lives Matter." Nevertheless, it was before the Charleston Nine had been killed at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, before the families of those nine offered shocking forgiveness, and before the first African American president led us all in "Amazing Grace." It was also before the Confederate flag was taken down from the South Carolina capital. Every act of reconciliation is always "after" and "before." The cross and resurrection have fixed it just there too, amid the most intimate, public, systemic kinds of brokenness and sin. That is just where we were in the living room, between what has been and what will be. The communion we shared together that night was filled with intertwining discouragement and despair that honesty and trust can allow.

Reconciliation is so hard, so needed, takes far longer, and is more illusive than we ever expect. But interwoven in our conversation was the assurance that the God who "holds all things together" will one day "bring to completion" the reconciliation that God alone can produce. The communion in the living room was a foretaste of that reconciliation.

It was not an evening of advocacy, but in their conversation those students cared enough about Fuller to hope for change and to let me know what would really matter to them. Several mentioned the importance of more African American faculty, especially more men. Others say how our commitment to a diversity of authors and of racial and cultural perspectives in class often didn't reach nearly far enough or feel truly integrated into the lectures or the classroom discussions. The academy still feels too white or non-African American for some to imagine themselves pursuing such a professional pathway, even though this was their dream. They recounted that some of their professors really listened and heard them when they spoke in class and this was life-giving to them, though painfully not all faculty communicated this.

As the white man who lives in the president's house and occupies the president's office, my story is different than that of my brothers who left that night to return to the vulnerable, sometimes violent world of racial prejudice and hatred. Unless the communion of that night is reflected in how we live and how we lead—in how is Fuller and how Fuller develops—then the gift of that night will be lost. We have a responsibility to be the greater evidence of God's grace at work in this season of our lives than if our seminar and conferences were the same. As the assurance of the communion of God that offers the true reconciliation for which we and our broken world yearn.

The African American community has been subjected to repeated interpersonal, cultural, institutional, and systemic forms of oppression that have inwardly and outwardly engendered power. Minority communities suffer at the hands of those who occupy violence and privilege continue to be a tactic of others. There is power both the visible imperialism of pacifying by using their privilege to content and restore those at the bottom of society. God desires that we connect, skills, talents, and abilities he has given us to engage actively and not remain passive to the plight of those around us. This must happen in our spheres of influence, offering a liberation for those who can move them to be active agents in their own lives.
Our political discourse has degenerated into anxieties about whether giving benefits to those people over there will take money out of the pockets of my kind of people over here, even when the changes are those from which we would all benefit. Most recently, cell phone video camera documents institutional disparities in the policing of communities of color, while the attendant media and political analysis for managing the ensuing protests rather than addressing the underlying causes of the hypertensured environment between law enforcement and unarmed blacks themselves.

The Obama presidency has been noteworthy in many respects and will be examined by political scientists for many years to come. But what believer could forget the controversy that exploded in 2008 campaign over remarks made by Obama’s former pastor Rev. Jeremiah Wright? I was deeply pained by the way this controversy exposed the racial divides in the church, but I was more devastated that the uproar filled the space of a much-needed inter racial dialogue in the church. That evangelical churches are more deeply divided by race than the rest of American society is well documented, 1 but the controversy over “racial reconciliation,” since I am now prohibited from using the term, only added insult to injury. Indeed, the idea of interdependency is at the heart of the New Testament vision for the church. The earliest narrative about the growth of the church in Acts emphasizes this intimacy, describing how believers shared their possessions with each other so that every need in the community would be met (Acts 2:44–47, 48–51). A similar picture emerges from the Pauline epistles, in Paul’s account of the purposes behind his relief project for the Jerusalem church. Invoking the Old Testament tradition of God’s gracious provision of manna for the people during their exodus wanderings in the desert, Paul exhorts those with abundance to provide for those who lack (2 Cor 8:13–15). Moreover, he urges his readers to mimic the generosity of people who gave while experiencing their own privations. All for the sake of being a means of grace to others in need (2 Cor 8:1–4).

Indeed, the idea of interdependency is at the very heart of Paul’s gospel. Paul’s discussion of Jewish and Gentile salvation in Romans 11 maintains that each group is implicated in the salvation of the other. He believes that Jewish rejection of the gospel opens the door to Gentile salvation and that the riches turning a sometimes deliberately blind eye to structural matters of inequality like poverty, education, health outcomes, criminal justice issues, and the like. I prefer to talk about “race relations in the church” as a category for this kind of work rather than to focus on “reconciliation” as an overarching theme. The former surely includes the latter and is broad enough to include a topic like restorative justice, a biblical concept that usually receives short shrift in evangelical discussions of race. In other words, the divisions we face today are too complex to be glibly dismissed as an alien, radical, polemic manifestation of our nation’s promise. Indeed, the idea of interdependency is at the heart of the New Testament vision for the church. The earliest narrative about the growth of the church in Acts emphasizes this intimacy, describing how believers shared their possessions with each other so that every need in the community would be met (Acts 2:44–47, 48–51). A similar picture emerges from the Pauline epistles, in Paul’s account of the purposes behind his relief project for the Jerusalem church. Invoking the Old Testament tradition of God’s gracious provision of manna for the people during their exodus wanderings in the desert, Paul exhorts those with abundance to provide for those who lack (2 Cor 8:13–15). Moreover, he urges his readers to mimic the generosity of people who gave while experiencing their own privations. All for the sake of being a means of grace to others in need (2 Cor 8:1–4).

...
of Christ among the Gentiles will inevitably provoke the Jews to embrace him (Rom 11:21–25). Paul’s emphasis on interdependence is even better known via the body-of-Christ metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12. In this text, mutual interdependence is integral to life in the Church and is not restricted to the subject of entrance into the community. Each member of the community is gifted with resources and abilities to improve the common good in the context of shared responsibility for each other. Living modestly in clothing private power was concentrated in an entity that production, migration, communication, and version of modern-based globalization—that advancements. Esther tells how an ancient political situation needs an ethical frame that work... the emerging world economic and as a careful warning against the catastrophic certainty and confusion similar to what the educational institutions. In the black church, the effects of racism has the additional benefit of protecting the body from being infected by a spirit of arro... I maintain that interdependence is critical for authentic, gospel-shaped race relations in the church. There is no doubt that there are any number of homogeneous churches of all colors that fail to embody the kind of interdependence that Paul had in mind in 1 Cor... Christians in the United States must recognize how race is inextricably bound up with the history of the birth and growth of the American church. The church is one of the few remaining institutions in the American scene that normalizes the effects of slavery, with most Christians preserving those segregated spaces in the interests of cultural comfort. Racially separate churches violate the interdependence that should characterize authentic Christian communities. Further, this individualism blocks churches from the blessings of gifts preserved in separate traditions. For example, aggregated white churches celebrate the confessions and the rich legacies of the intellectual giants of the faith, but too often preach a weak and disembodied gospel that reduces spirituality to symbolism, and which separates material concerns from moral choices and the pursuit of righteousness. In the black church, the effects of racism not only created intractable social, economic, and political disparities between blacks and whites, but it also subdivided black access to the intellectual tradition and history of the church. Hence, while the best of the black church tradition still preserves a full-bodied worship where spirit is real and connected with body in the pursuit of everycomity. The combination of socio-economic hardship and fractured moorings in the intellectual tradition of the church can produce a commodification of... The Book of Esther offers a valuable consciousness. was dangerously devoid of any ethical power was concentrated in an entity that... Since the strengths of the prosperity gospel now virulently sweep...ing the church in the two-thirds world and American cities alike. In other words, life in the body of Christ is impoverished because aspects of the transformative effects of the gospel have been preserved in separate segments of the church, each handicapped by the lack of the other.

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Interdependence is critical for healing racial schisms in the church because not only is there a Biblical verse that demands it, but because the lingering tragedy of our troubled racial past demands the greater sensitivity and acumen of faithfulness in this new day. Interdependence is to forgo an easy identification with the advantages of any one racial group. In this view, the church is not a homogeneous entity. It is a mosaic of distinct groups who, while maintaining their particular identities and characteristics, are fashioned into an interdependent, multiethnic and multicultural whole. For example, the unity of the body of Christ is realized in the oneness of believers who are gathered together in local churches.”

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*ENDNOTES*
2. For more information on the complexities of the racial struct...s of black and white evangelicals alongside the disdainful religious habits of these groups, see Shellen and Emerson, Black and Whites in Christian America.

“Sabbath has to do not only with rest, but it has to do with ecology, with family, with neighbor—it’s all included. Yes, Freddie Gray is included. Freddie Gray’s memory is included. [Palestinian martyr] Deacon Roma... was included. All those that we have reached a sad state of affairs when we cannot keep the Sabbath, we cannot keep the Sabbath is not being kept as an action of the soul that forgets the people who sleep next to us and is ashamed with justice ought to begin at home, but it does not stay there because you cannot keep the fourth commandment in a case. You can keep the Sabbath as long as you are in relationships, God’s command to keep the Sabbath reminds us of the inescapable, inscrutable, and relational nature of God’s demands on Christians and the world—an ecclesial community with a Christian ethos that courses driven Sabbath rest demands of Christianity.”

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Juan Francisco Martínez is vice provost and professor of Hispanic studies and pastoral leadership. Since coming to Fuller in 2000, Martínez has also served as associate provost for diversity and international programs and as director of the Center for the Study of Hispanic Church and Community. Among other topics, his current research focuses on the history of Latino Protestantism, Latino Protestant identity, ministry in Latino Protestant churches, Latino and Latin American Anabaptists, and transnational mission among US Latinos.

Martínez joined Fuller from the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City, Guatemala, where he served as rector for nine years. A Mennonite Brethren pastor, Martínez also has experience in church planting and teaching in both religious and secular venues. Most recently Martínez has published the books Churches, Cultures and Leadership (with Mark Lau Branson, 2011), Los Protestantes: Latino Protestantism in the United States (coedited with Jorge Maldonado, 2008), and Vivir y servir en el exilio: Lecturas teológicas de la experiencia latina en los Estados Unidos (coedited with Jorge Maldonado, 2008). Martínez joined Fuller from the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City, Guatemala, where he served as rector for nine years. A Mennonite Brethren pastor, Martínez also has experience in church planting and teaching in both religious and secular venues. Most recently Martínez has published the books Churches, Cultures and Leadership (with Mark Lau Branson, 2011), Los Protestantes: Latino Protestantism in the United States (coedited with Jorge Maldonado, 2008), and Vivir y servir en el exilio: Lecturas teológicas de la experiencia latina en los Estados Unidos (coedited with Jorge Maldonado, 2008).

Juan Francisco Martínez

M y parents were migrant workers when I was born. They later settled in Kettleman City, a rural farming community in Central California, where they became pastors and ministered for over 30 years. They were committed to working among migrant farm workers. The town had been populated by poor whites and a few African Americans. But by the 1980s it was becoming mostly Mexican and Mexican American. I would grow up, and later serve, in the San Joaquin Valley during a time of significant demographic change. That change created many social challenges. It was in that valley that I first encountered racial tensions and the power dynamics linked to those tensions. But it was also there that I first began to understand what it meant to believe that it was possible for peoples of different ethnic backgrounds to live together as the people of God.

It was in Kettleman City and Avenal, and later in Fresno and Patterson, that I began to understand that God sought something different among his people than the separations that we tended to live—separations that were ethnic, socioeconomic, and racialized. In my development as a leader, I had occasion to sit on different sides of these separations and realize how deep the division was. Yet God had a different dream for his people.

In Rev 7:9–10 God presents his vision, his dream for the future of humanity. It is written to encourage us and to challenge us to believe in the future he envisions. The passage has been variously described as a vision, a way of thinking about what God is doing through Jesus Christ, what God wants for humanity, and what we as the church of Jesus Christ need to be living today as sign and sacrament of God’s future. This vision has challenged me to work toward God’s dream and has given me a biblical framing for presenting the implications of that dream to others.

DREAMING GOD’S DREAMS

REVELATION 7:9–10

Juan Francisco Martínez

The town had been populated by poor whites and a few African Americans. But by the 1980s it was becoming mostly Mexican and Mexican American. I would grow up, and later serve, in the San Joaquin Valley during a time of significant demographic change. That change created many social challenges. It was in that valley that I first encountered racial tensions and the power dynamics linked to those tensions. But it was also there that I first began to understand what it meant to believe that it was possible for peoples of different ethnic backgrounds to live together as the people of God.

It was in Kettleman City and Avenal, and later in Fresno and Patterson, that I began to understand that God sought something different among his people than the separations that we tended to live—separations that were ethnic, socioeconomic, and racialized. In my development as a leader, I had occasion to sit on different sides of these separations and realize how deep the division was. Yet God had a different dream for his people.

In Rev 7:9–10 God presents his vision, his dream for the future of humanity. It is written to encourage us and to challenge us to believe in the future he envisions. The passage has been variously described as a vision, a way of thinking about what God is doing through Jesus Christ, what God wants for humanity, and what we as the church of Jesus Christ need to be living today as sign and sacrament of God’s future. This vision has challenged me to work toward God’s dream and has given me a biblical framing for presenting the implications of that dream to others.

BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

To understand this passage we need to remember the new thing God had done through Jesus. Jesus called his followers to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18–20). As the church began to preach in new areas, Jews and Gentiles had to learn how to be one people in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:14–16). This was a complicated task. Jews had a low view of Gentiles, something they were sure God had taught them. For example, we run into Peter in Acts 10. He had heard Jesus’ call to preach the gospel to all peoples, but when he is called in a vision to live into the future God is creating, his first answer is No. And when he enters Cornelius’s house, he begins by telling those that came to hear him that it is an abomination for a Jew to enter the house of a Gentile. What a wonderful way to start talking about the good news of the gospel!

By the time John writes the book of Revelation, the church is suffering. Being faithful to the way of Jesus has brought persecution upon believers. In the midst of suffering and martyrdom, some Christians are asking: Is the message of Jesus Christ true? Is there a future for us?

John writes Revelation to offer hope to those Christians. Throughout the book he presents two visions, two ways of interpreting their experience of persecution: one as seen from within (suffering) and one as seen from God’s throne (martyrs worshipping). The suffering is real. But is the suffering the final word? Is this all there is in relationship to that suffering? According to John both visions are “true.” But which of these truths will guide the believers who are suffering?

Revelation is a message of hope in God’s future in the midst of present pain. Specifically, Rev 7:9–10 presents God’s “dream,” the goal toward which the gospel aims. God’s future is presented to motivate believers to continue to live out the gospel in the midst of their present suffering. The current situation facing believers may be complex, but God invites them to be faithful because God is doing something bigger than what can be seen in the suffering.

THE HEAVENLY VISION

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Rev 7:9–10 NRSV)

John’s vision is one in which all the peoples of the earth are represented. He is emphatic about this. He presents a vision of people who are different, speaking different languages, from different ethnicities and from different places. Though those people are different in many ways, they have one thing in common. All of them have known God’s grace through Jesus Christ. Jesus brought victory through his death and gave hope for the future.

The Sacramento Tower Bridge was built to facilitate the entrance of heavy traffic into the capital city of California for commerce and a quick egress from it in case of war. Built in 1935, it was a major link in transcontinental highway 40, and was heralded with the release of 100 homing pigeons who carried the news throughout California. It spans the Sacramento River, the banks of which were the meeting place of an ecumenical coalition of religious leaders in the early “Wild West” days of Sacramento. They Band together across denominational lines to address the needs of the grid rush boom town, creating a unique heritage of diversity in the area, now being revitalized to address racial reconciliation through Fuller’s Micah Groups. (See story on pg.36.)

The people in Revelation 7 have a common purpose and vision that focuses them. They are worshipping God together. Those who had died as martyrs were now able to fully understand what God had been doing. Evil and human divisions would not have the last word in the community God is creating. The communities of faith that were developing among the various peoples that had accepted the message of the gospel were the sign and sacrament of what God wanted for all of humanity.

This is the message we read throughout Revelation. God’s vision of the future will be fulfilled. Human impositions will not have the final word, no matter how powerful. The...
LIVING INTO THE VISION TODAY

God’s vision or dream of the future is clear. The preaching of the gospel, the making of disciples, the forming of communities of faith from among all the peoples of the earth, serving others in the name of Jesus, living in light of God’s dream for the kingdom—these are what rights I had as a human being and a citizen, even in Montgomery, Alabama.”

The president of the United States are much better than they were 50 years ago when Dr. King made his famous speech. We have an African American president, and the world’s attention was focused on the United States society, the protection of these groups of believers reflected the diversity of their world and demonstrated new ways of intercultural relations. It was those same Christians in the Roman Empire who provided a home for Jewish children, who was providing a home for the indigenous people. The protection of those people was completely foreign to them. At times it also meant standing with the marginalized over against the attitudes of those who assumed that they had the normative way of understanding the task of being the people of God. (Of course, those people also seemed to be in charge of all of life in Central California.) But it also meant being a bridge between different peoples, helping the various communities begin to interact with each, instead of only reading each other in light of stereotypes.

Moving into the racially divided communi- ties of Inglewood and Compton in Southern California, Dr. King said that in the 1960s and 1970s raised a different set of issues. How does one work toward racial reconciliation among peoples that do not trust or understand each other, such as the white, African American, Latino, and Korean immigrant communities as they tried to make sense of the killing of Latinos at school in Los Angeles, and the riots that ensued when an all-white jury found the police officers involved in the beating of Rodney King innocent? How does one become an agent for reconciliation in such a charged environment? How do the Christians in each of these communities reach out to each other when their pain are so profound and their interpretations of what happened so different? How can communities of different groups conversations among Christians from the various communities, we found that it was the signs of unity that pointed us towards the point. The suffering seemed so much more real than the vision of peoples living together.

Living and ministering in Guatemala for almost nine years brought to the forefront the importance of being willing to speak directly into structural racism. The indigenous peoples of Guatemala are half of the population of the country, yet the vast majority of the wealth of the country is concentrated in the hands of a small group of white extended families. Racism is so overt in Guatemala that it is easy to overlook. (Little do some people realize that the indigenous are still referred to in Spanish as “indio.” The indigenous are still associated more with the label of “indio.”) The indigenous are still associated with the violence that is completely foreign to them. At times it also meant standing with the marginalized over against the attitudes of those who assumed that they had the normative way of understanding the task of being the people of God. (Of course, those people also seemed to be in charge of all of life in Central California.) But it also meant being a bridge between different peoples, helping the various communities begin to interact with each, instead of only reading each other in light of stereotypes.

“God’s dream, the type of dream that has guided my life and ministry. My ministry has been characterized as one that led me to the need of addressing the real differences in the San Joaquín Valley, which was part of the San Joaquín Valley—a space of racism and racialization. Even as a young pastor, it was clear that these differences really did divide the churches of my own denomination, the Mennonite Brethren. Ministry would take me far beyond the Central Valley of Califor- nia, but the issues could not be set aside. And pointing toward God’s eschatological future for humanity. God’s vision helps us see the hope of the future, even though it does exist now. It points us in the right direction.

Throughout history, Christians have been able to dream of humas living in better relationships. The early church scholars and leaders went to be the church together. As communities of believers developed in the Roman Empire and beyond, these groups of believers reflected the diversity of their world and demonstrated new ways of intercultural relations. It was those same Christians in the Roman Empire who provided a home for Jewish children, who was providing a home for the indigenous people. The protection of those people was completely foreign to them. At times it also meant standing with the marginalized over against the attitudes of those who assumed that they had the normative way of understanding the task of being the people of God. (Of course, those people also seemed to be in charge of all of life in Central California.) But it also meant being a bridge between different peoples, helping the various communities begin to interact with each, instead of only reading each other in light of stereotypes.

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So how does the son of migrant workers dream God’s dream for communities of faith that both the diversity and unity of the community of believers? My own sense of the task has evolved as I have seen the complexi- ty of the vision lived out in different contexts. How does one face the reality of racism and live out of the hope of the gospel?

In the racially and socioeconomically divided world of my childhood and early pastoral ministry, the most important task of the people of God seemed most difficult. The United States society, the protection of those people was completely foreign to them. At times it also meant standing with the marginalized over against the attitudes of those who assumed that they had the normative way of understanding the task of being the people of God. (Of course, those people also seemed to be in charge of all of life in Central California.) But it also meant being a bridge between different peoples, helping the various communities begin to interact with each, instead of only reading each other in light of stereotypes.

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"How many of you know we rarely make any kind of a change unless we have a crisis? How can you and I create moral and theological crises where we will all be asked to answer the age-old question that many freedom fighters before us have put into the public imagination: 'What side are you on? Are you on freedom's side? Or are you on the side of status quo that is necessary to undergird bondage and oppression?'

"Our congregations must reframe ourselves as more than a house to weekly worship. Our seminaries must become formation pipelines for pastors and Christian leaders who are freedom fighters and champions of liberation for pastors and Christian leaders who are.

"Our congregations must reimagine themselves undergird bondage and oppression? Our congregations must reimagine themselves on the side of status quo that is necessary to the public imagination: 'Which side are you to answer the age-old question that many logical crises where we will all be asked how can you and I create moral and theological crises where we will all be asked as a power basis of redemption and agape that is burning down their lives? Clergy, seminarians, and any form of physical engagement? You can fly the telenews with the remote control, uptime and criticizing and dehumanizing angry, hurtful, and traumatized young people who burn down a store, but you can't put your body in the game to help them put out the fire that is burning down their lives? Clergy, seminaries, engaging Christian education programs must develop a robust theology that collaborates the false doctrine between biblical understandings of righteousness and justice.

"Seeking justice in my city has been an act of faith that flows from a deep relationship with Christ but also a source of personal transformation as I dare to go upstream seeking to do justice. For through the ministry of justice God has shown me that we have many social conditions that I've asked him in prayer to change, he often changes me and then he empowers me to be an agent of change to transform these circumstances. Never forget, brothers and sisters, that the first act of revolution will always be interior—a revolution of our hearts, a revolution of our values, a revolution of our mind, a revolution of our ideas about who matters, who belongs to us, who our neighbor, who we're willing to listen to, who is our family, and what is my responsibility to leverage my power, my resources, and my agency for the public good?"

+ MICHAEL McBRIDE: pastor of The Way Christian Center in West Berkeley, California.

"BEING THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO DREAMS GOD'S DREAMS

Fuller Seminary represents the diversity of the global church. Every student from many countries graduate from here, ready to return to their countries of origin to serve more effectively. But the vision has historically been that of cross-cultural relations: "they" come over "here" or "we" go over "there." In this vision the encounters at Fuller are wonderful but temporary experiences that end when students return to their countries or contexts. The implicit assumption is that "them" and "us" are part of "pure" ethnic communities to which all return and in which all will live out their lives long-term.

But the more complex reality of global migrations and interracial encounter are not always as easy to live into. For example, a significant percentage of Fuller students who identify themselves as being from outside the United States live and minister in this country. Many of them have transnational identities and feel connected to more than one national context. Fuller represents not only a wonderful temporary encounter, but also the rich and complex reality of living in almost any major city around the world.

There are many reasons why it is difficult to live into God's dream. We interact in varying types of intercultural relations where different types of responses will be needed. Some of these encounters are new, while others reflect continuities of structural injustices. There are also real social and economic differences that affect how communities interact. And the biggest issue of all is the reality of human sin. We are still on this side of the final fulfillment of God's dream in Revelation 7.

Yet Revelation invites us to live into this dream in our world today. One of the ways I understand my task at Fuller today is to help students dream of becoming a new generation of believers disciple to serve others, in the name of Christ, in this changing world. Because of the globalized nature of our lives today, living out the Revelation vision includes preparing students to be agents of the transformation of intercultural relations in light of the gospel. The new communities of faith created by the next generation of graduates will be called to live out this vision within their communities, but also as bridges to other Christian communities, being the church so that people of other faiths, and those of non-faith, will be impacted by that vision.

As during the time that John wrote Revelation, there are many reasons today why one can doubt whether God's dreams or vision will become reality or whether human fears and sin will fundamentally guide our intercultural relations, even among Christians. Will Christians let Revelation 7 guide their vision of the future and their politics, or will political positions so color their reading of Scriptures that visions of God's dream will merely sound like the political platforms of those in power?

In a sense little has changed, though much has changed. God's dreams still seem far from the reality we live today. The denominationalism that formed me and ordained me is still struggling with some of the same issues as the global church. Structural racism is still the order of the day, even in countries that like to see themselves as particularly enlightened. And global migration is creating new types of encounters that challenge the task.

Yet this is the place and the time to live into this dream through the power of the Holy Spirit. The dream calls for believers to be interpreters of the complexities, bridges between peoples and groups, defenders and protectors of those who are marginalized, spokespersons for the causes of intercultural justice—people who will walk alongside, who will break down boundaries while defending those who are weaker, and who will speak truth to those in power.

God is inviting us to dream his dreams, to serve with the understanding that God's dreams are not the responsibility of one or another future is possible today. And so the son of migrant workers keeps dreaming God's dreams.

+ MICHAEL McBRIDE: pastor of The Way Christian Center in West Berkeley, California.

"We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't bother me much. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I present and future but I'm more interested in what I can see go up to the mountaintop. And I've looked over." I and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land. So I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

Martin Luther King Jr. in his speech ‘I've Been to the Mountain, 1963.'
Forgiveness and Justice: Two Keys to Reconciliation

Hak Joon Lee

The story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10) is a consistently fascinating read. It embodies many distinctive elements of a great story, a surprising twist, a shocking resolution, and a shocking restoration. In the story, a man of wealth and power cannot find a spot on the street among the crowds as he endeavors to get a good look at Jesus. This is partially because the man is short but also because he desires to be reconciled with God and people. This is after all the same Jesus who asserted, “The Son of Man came out to seek and to save the lost” (v. 10). More importantly, however, the story reveals the manner in which divine-human reconciliation is inseparably related to human-human reconciliation. It offers a much-needed correction to a popular evangelical misunderstanding of reconciliation that regards reconciliation as a purely personal transaction between God and individual(s). Jesus is here accused of being a friend of sinners by Pharisees, and Jesus’ decision to stay with Zacchaeus alienates him further from the entire community. This alienation includes Jesus’ own disciples, because the text notes, “All, who saw it, began to grumble and said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner!’” (v. 7). Jesus, a Jewish rabbi, was intentionally breaking social norms by associating with Zacchaeus. He was more than likely experienced hostility from some of his victims. The actual business of disengaging his web of past financial abuses and economic oppression far more challenging than simply making and keeping a pledge. Additionally, Zacchaeus would more than likely have found continuing in the tradition as chief tax collector difficult in light of his new ethical commitments.

The pledge of Zacchaeus (v. 8) is all the more shocking because of its stark contrast with the story of the young rich ruler who came to Jesus and was basically (Luke 18:20) asking about obtaining eternal life. This young rich ruler professed himself to the Lord, had kept the Ten Commandments from his youth and gave some indication of his interest in Jesus’ ministry. However, when given the choice between retaining his wealth and following Jesus, he “became sad: for he was very rich.” In the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus did not make the same request. Zacchaeus freelyvolunteered his acts of charity and restoration after his meeting with Jesus. His story strongly suggests that a rich person, even one guilty of crimes, can indeed be reconciled to God. In fact, Jesus sometimes it seems he calls out. Thus, like a child, this man of short stature climbs a tree along the street to look down for Jesus, and to his surprise, Jesus looks up at the despoiled outcast and calls him by name. Jesus decides to spend time at the home of the sinner of sinners. But perhaps the most shocking element of the story is its climax, as Zacchaeus pledges to give half of his possessions to the poor and to pay back those he defrauded four times what he took. The story of Zacchaeus is a story of reconciliation—Jesus chooses Zacchaeus as his house because he desires him to be reconciled with God and people. This is after all the same Jesus who asserted, “The Son of Man came out to seek and to save the lost” (v. 10). More importantly, however, the story reveals the manner in which divine-human reconciliation is inseparably related to human-human reconciliation. It offers a much-needed correction to a popular evangelical misunderstanding of reconciliation that regards reconciliation as a purely personal transaction between God and individual(s). Jesus is here accused of being a friend of sinners by Pharisees, and Jesus’ decision to stay with Zacchaeus alienates him further from the entire community. This alienation includes Jesus’ own disciples, because the text notes, “All, who saw it, began to grumble and said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner!’” (v. 7). Jesus, a Jewish rabbi, was intentionally breaking social norms by associating with Zacchaeus. Repercussions were sure to follow his action.

The story of Zacchaeus dramatically renders the manner in which divine reconciliation occurs and further reveals its appropriate motivations among those being reconciled. Zacchaeus’s pledge was motivated by neither legalism nor desire for personal perfection, but by God’s grace. Having been reconciled by God the costly grace of God demonstrated forgiveness and justice: two keys to reconciliation has far more challenging than simply making and keeping a pledge. Additionally, Zacchaeus would more than likely have found continuing in the tradition as chief tax collector difficult in light of his new ethical commitments.

What can we learn from Zacchaeus’s story for our own tasks of reconciliation? Zacchaeus’s act of reconciliation was a response to Jesus’ reconciliation. As Jesus took a risk and paid a significant price in reconciling with us, that same divine grace compels us to take a risk in reconciling with others. The story reveals that reconciling with others is rooted in the will of God: thus we should be motivated by God’s grace and by our gratitude rather than by guilt or shame. Guilt and shame do not make a person toward God; rather, guilt and shame produce procrastination, fear, and paralysis. The power of divine grace is far stronger than the power of guilt. God’s grace, though invisibileffective; it sets a new motion in our hearts. Once reconciled and forgiven, it convicts, compels, and convinces us away from the fear, anxiety, and shame toward the hope of reconciliation and a fresh start.

To highlight the effect this type of grace can achieve, I want to share with you a story of a Christian woman, Karina Browne, who assures us that the story of Zacchaeus is still possible today. Karina Browne was a theologian student at the Pacific School of Religion. Through one of her courses at the seminary, she was challenged to think about the meaning of reconciliation. Although she had heard about her own ancestors’ involvement with slave trade, she had never done much about it. Instead, she felt, Katrina began to dig deeply into her family history. By studying ledges, family diaries, and other historical documents, she discovered that her Rhode Island ancestors had run the largest slave-trading business in American history. Over three generations—from 1770 to 1820, the DeWolf family brought more than ten thousand slaves across the Atlantic Ocean, and they accrued astronomic wealth. As a result, they accumulated enormous wealth. And for two hundred years, the DeWollas produced many distinguished public figures, educators, respected businesswomen, and prominent Episcopal clerics. One of her ancestors, James DeWolf, was a United States Senator and was reportedly the second richest man in the nation at the time.

What do you do with this kind of sordid secret? Do you move on, as if it had never happened in God’s reach toward the Other, God does not abandon God’s own self. And there is evidence of the fact that God’s self-regarding version of God because God will not be mocked or trivialized or cheapened. But this reaches toward the other means that the relationship out of which we get justice, grace, and law is established. In the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus’ promise is inseparably related to human-human reconciliation. It offers a much-needed correction to a popular evangelical misunderstanding of reconciliation that regards reconciliation as a purely personal transaction between God and individual(s). Jesus is here accused of being a friend of sinners by Pharisees, and Jesus’ decision to stay with Zacchaeus alienates him further from the entire community. This alienation includes Jesus’ own disciples, because the text notes, “All, who saw it, began to grumble and said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner!’” (v. 7). Jesus, a Jewish rabbi, was intentionally breaking social norms by associating with Zacchaeus. Repercussions were sure to follow his action.

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To highlight the effect this type of grace can achieve, I want to share with you a story of a Christian woman, Karina Browne, who assures us that the story of Zacchaeus is still possible today. Karina Browne was a theological student at the Pacific School of Religion. Through one of her courses at the seminary, she was challenged to think about the meaning of reconciliation. Although she had heard about her own ancestors’ involvement with slave trade, she had never done much about it. Instead, she felt, Katina began to dig deeply into her family history. By studying ledges, family diaries, and other historical documents, she discovered that her Rhode Island ancestors had run the largest slave-trading business in American history. Over three generations—from 1770 to 1820, the DeWolf family brought more than ten thousand slaves across the Atlantic Ocean, and they accrued astronomic wealth. As a result, they accumulated enormous wealth. And for two hundred years, the DeWollas produced many distinguished public figures, educators, respected businesswomen, and prominent Episcopal clerics. One of her ancestors, James DeWolf, was a United States Senator and was reportedly the second richest man in the nation at the time.

What do you do with this kind of sordid secret? Do you move on, as if it had never happened
happened? Do you ignore it because you personally have had nothing to do with the slave trade? Katrina, as a Christian, chose a difficult route. She decided that as the other half of her family’s shameful history with the public, Katrina invited two hundred descendants of the DaCosta’s to join her on her trip to explore their family’s past. Only nine came. Together, they retraced the route of slave traders. They found that slavery was vulnerable in the slave forts of Ghana and the remains of a family plantation in Cuba. Along the way, the ten of them discussed the impact of the slave trade on Africa and America. A documentary entitled Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep South resulted from this 700-mile trip and their work together. I imagine Katrina experienced at least some blame and hostility from the communities they researched—from people who must have felt shame, guilt, and embarrassment. Katrina knows that she cannot share their family’s or communities’ stories.  

The story of Katrina Browne should inspire us all because it dramatically reenacts the core of the Zacchaeus narrative. Katrina’s action offers a small but powerful example of racial reconciliation in our country. Katrina Browne and her cousins chose to engage in the ministry of reconciliation. She understood that the story of the wrongs of her ancestors, although she could not compensate all the victims of her ancestors’ misdeeds (particularly when she does not know who they are), reconciliation at the minimum requires speaking the truth about slavery and making an authentic acknowledgment of the pain suffered by its victims. This is important because genuine reconciliation is impossible without the restoration of trust and trust is rooted in the truth, including the acknowledgment and confession of past wrongs. 

Some evangelicals think forgiveness alone is sufficient in achieving reconciliation because that is what God did in Jesus Christ. Their focus is often interpersonal peace, harmony, and love rather than justice, repair, and redemption of wronged communities. It is this limited view of the New Testament that has paved the way for Miroslav Volf to warn in his award-winning book Exclusion and Embrace, “forgiveness is not a substitute for justice.” Forgiveness without justice is cheap reconciliation. Genuine and lasting reconciliation is possible only on the basis of both forgiveness and reparations of wrongs. Reconciliation has two locks to open. One might say, if forgiveness is one key, then justice is the other. Forgiveness is the one half of reconciling work that a victim executes, while the other half, reconciling work that is reserved to the perpetrator. Only after having achieved both goals can true reconciliation occur. 

Dr. King’s legendary speech “I Have a Dream” is a short example of theological reconciliation. With a moving force, it envisions a new America that is racially integrated and reconciled not only legally but also spiritually and morally. King dreamed: “One day, . . . little black boys and black girls will be able to sit down at the same table with white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.” 

Although reconciliation was the goal of his movement, however, King did not preach a cheap, counterfeit vision of reconciliation. Most Americans do not know that his speech actually starts with a stinging criticism of white hypocrisy that had consistently denied the basic rights of African Americans and other people of color. King firmly rejects the status quo of racial inequality because it is a staggering black scar on the soul of the world you have inhabited. He solemnly declared: “There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The white mind and heart of America must see the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.” As much as his noble vision of the United States was genuine and compelling, his commitment to justice was equally firm and uncompromising. He urged the nation to look itself in the face of the quicksand of racial injustice and to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is the time to make justice a reality for all God’s children.” 

Scripture tells us that the ministry of reconciliation is not optional because reconciliation is the heart of the gospel. It is central to what Jesus achieved through his atoning death on the cross. If we are reconciled with God, then we are to reconcile with one another (2 Cor 5:18). These two reconciliations are not separate; one is incomplete without the other and God’s reconciliation is completed in our reconciliation with other people. Paul says in his letter to Ephesians: “For he is our peace: in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph 2:14).

Christians are called to be the ambassadors of reconciliation. An ambassador is one who is sent to another nation (a territory of sovereignty) as the representative of her own nation. She serves, but she is not of that nation. The Apostle Paul clearly notes: “An ambassador lives in the nation where she serves, but she is not of that nation. She is an alien by nature there, as she represents a different sovereignty and reality. An ambassador lives in the nation where she serves, but she is not of that nation. The whole point is that ambassadors are sent to other nations to live in the nation where they are stationed—while representing their own nation. The Apostle Paul understands that the ministry of reconciliation, he understood how much more reconciliation is a difficult, in fact foreign, reality in this world. However, through the ministry of reconciliation, we embody and represent the divine reality of shalom to this broken world. 

Reconciliation from a biblical perspective does not refer to passive absence of enmity but active presence of friendship. Hence, reconciliation cannot be forced, just as forgiveness and apology cannot be coerced either. To repair a broken relationship and move toward friendship, each party needs to go an extra mile than what the law requires. Reconciliation requires the courage to be vulnerable (a victim’s forgiving of her rights through forgiveness as well as forgiveness against as well as a perpetrator’s confronting his shames through truthful admission of the wrong). Therefore, the road to reconciliation leads toward Golgotha—denying oneself and carrying one’s cross, as Jesus did. And it is possible only through God’s grace.

Engaging in the ministry of reconciliation will likely render us vulnerable. We may run the risk of being extraced by our own community while receiving unfair anger and animosity from others. However, we should not be discouraged because we are saved not by cheap grace, but costly grace—the grace that moved Zacchaeus and Katrina Browne. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33[NASB]). And this assuring promise of Jesus Christ will always live with us as we engage in the ministry of reconciliation as God’s ambassadors in this world that is hungry for God’s grace and thirsty for friend-ship.

+ The author wishes to thank Jason Fallin for his assistance with a stylistic revision of this article.

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**Cameron Lee** is a professor of family and marriage studies in the department of marriage and family life in Fuller’s School of Psychology.
The power of a march is based in units of purposeful action. Whether composed of a mob, an invading army, or a vigilant neighborhood activists, a march—as opposed to a panel, a classroom, or a conference—is a collection, intention to put feet to words. It is a potent symbol in the Christian tradition, old as Jericho, where impenetrable walls of injustice were toppled by obedient marchers armed with silent prayers, trumpet blasts, a few well-timed shouts, and the Lord God Jehovah in their midst.

Bridges are often chosen as staging points for marches because they are architectural icons and they symbolize change. Those we’ve chosen to illustrate throughout the previous theology section are characteristic to each city: Selma, Charleston, Sacramento, and Pasadena.

We’ve used these images to imply a narrative arc from suffering to hope, as Romans 5:4 describes. Bridges have deep, multifaceted meanings in many cultures, and are often chosen as locations for symbolic actions from suicides to proposals of marriage.

Our marchers on page 40—William E. Pannell, Harriet Tubman, James Earl Mays, Martin Luther King Jr., Susanne Trupp, Rosa Parks, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer—never linked arms or crossed the same bridge. They have, however, gone before us in the faith, embodying Christ. In this way, they marched together every day of their lives. This great cloud of witnesses are too many to include here, growing daily: William Wilberforce, Yuri Kochiyama, Clementa Pinckney, Oscar Romero, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Richard I. Moore, Pope Francis, Brenda Siler McNeil, Lu Xuebo, José Angelini—all are hinted at by the unfinished drawings at the left and right of our marchers. The acts of these leaders, living and just, teach us when to be silent, when to pray, when to lock arms, when to stand firm, and when to march. They are among the council of many, from whom the Scriptures say we are to derive wisdom in the day of trouble.

The Colorado Street Bridge (1912) was built to ease the arduous crossing of the Arroyo Seco from Pasadena to Eagle Rock and is within walking distance of Fuller’s Pasadena campus. Its unique, pedestrian-friendly design attracts artists, lovers, and the melancholy—with over 150 suicides since it was built. (Charlie Chaplin’s film City Lights begins with the Little Tramp taking a melancholy out of jumping to his death from this bridge.) This illustration imagines all that Fuller has worked toward in the 70 years of its history in Pasadena, as well as our hopes for promoting future reconciling work of the gospel. Whether we march in Pasadena, Phoenix, or Atlanta, we take steps toward justice with every choice to see the invisible person, hear the imprisoned voice, or feel the undertone of sorrow that, by ignoring, undermines reconciliation.
Lord Brian Griffiths of Goldman Sachs discusses the relationships between faith and global economic contexts with Mary Vermeer Andringa, the CEO of Vermeer Corporation, during “Faith, Leadership, and the Global Marketplace”—an event hosted by the De Pree Center in 2015. (Left to right: Griffiths, Andringa, President Mark Labberton, and Mark Roberts. Hear full audio recording online at fullermag.com.)

“In the very first chapter of the Bible, God is revealed as the Creator, indeed, as a worker. Yes, in Genesis 1, God works. Now, to be sure, God’s work has a unique character. God works by speaking all things into existence. Yet this is work, real work. This truth is clarified in the last part of the first creation story where it says, ‘And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had done’ (Gen 2:2). If the notion of God as a worker seems strange to you, remember what Jesus said in John 5:17, ‘My Father is still working, and I also am working.’ . . . God is a worker, the first worker, the one who shows us the essential value of work.

“If God is a worker, indeed, the Worker, then we have the opportunity to be like God as we work. What we do today may be less glorious than speaking creation into existence, but, nevertheless, our work can be a conscious and worshipful imitation of God’s own work. Through our work, we can live into our calling as God’s people, sharing with God in the good work of helping creation to be fruitful and beautiful.”

VOICES ON Work

“For many of us who work, there exists an exasperating discontinuity between how we see ourselves as persons and how we see ourselves as workers. We need to eliminate that sense of discontinuity and to restore a sense of coherence in our lives. Work should be and can be rewarding, meaningful and maturing, enriching and fulfilling, healing and joyful. Work is one of our greatest privileges. Work can even be poetic.”

From Max De Pree, in Leadership is an Art, De Pree was for many years the CEO of Herman Miller Inc., whose iconic business furniture graces many Fuller offices. A sought-after lecturer and writer on work culture and organizational leadership, De Pree is a Fuller senior trustee. The Fuller Max De Pree Center for Leadership was established in his honor in 1996.

This content is curated from resources and ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Check online for full videos, articles, and more.
“Work is an expression of our worship, because all of life is a sacred act of worship. But, even if what we do changes, who we are and to whom we belong doesn’t. In all our endeavors, whether it is ministry and service related, a work assignment or the ways in which we live out our relationships, we are and to whom we belong, namely Christ himself, doesn’t change. Christ is the one in whom we can find all meaning and purpose, and to whom we can offer ourselves fully for the sake of what he calls us to.”

“Even the retiree who leaves after 25+ years will be called by God to another calling, even if their paid work experience is over. Every season of call, things look differently. While at the beginning of your career you may have had young kids, as you get into the middle or late part of life, those children will require less of you, and you will be released to serve (time-wise) in different ways. While in the middle of your career you may be travelling a lot, later on you may be able to stay more centralized, opening up your life to new avenues in that time and space. What we are called to do is be faithful in the season God has us in.”

“Every season of call, things look differently. While at the beginning of your career you may have had young kids, as you get into the middle or late part of life, those children will require less of you, and you will be released to serve (time-wise) in different ways. While in the middle of your career you may be travelling a lot, later on you may be able to stay more centralized, opening up your life to new avenues in that time and space. What we are called to do is be faithful in the season God has us in.”

“More specifically, those of us who can make choices about the types of work we do . . . can ask God to guide us in the best use of our skills and abilities in relation to work. Here’s where all the distinctions of personality, temperament, ability, and circumstances say a great deal to us about what we do with our work life. Making wise choices about this means we can make as strong a contribution as possible to the stewardship of the earth, the workplace, and the society at large.”

“Business has a vital role in seeking the well-being of human society, and in the God-ordained stewardship of all of creation. In fact, businesses have opportunities to contribute to this in ways that impact different dimensions of life than can be touched by churches, mission agencies, or other non-profit organizations. In other words, business activity is at the heart of the purposes of God—if it takes God’s purposes to heart.”


Leadership is an Art
Max De Pree (Crown Business, 2004)

Further Reading

Available Classes
Spiritual Formation and Discipleship in a Postmodern World (SFM)
Spiritual Traditions and Practices with Richard Peace (and other faculty) Integration of Spirituality and Urban Ministry with Joseph R. Colletti

The Spiritual Disciplines with Richard Peace


Leadership is an Art
Max De Pree (Crown Business, 2004)

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The Spiritual Disciplines with Richard Peace


“I believe that where God desires for us to go as believers is that place where we can do all of the music... there’s nothing wrong with having a hymn and a worship song and something that’s salsa-like, and then something with Jewish popular beats. It might not happen in your church in one service. Maybe you do have to have a couple of different services, but the issue is that the hearts of the people are saying, ‘We understand that our coming together is about God and not about our tastes...’ What we do when we get together, in order for God to be glorified, the flesh has to be brought down.”

(Diane White-Clayton, choral conductor of Faithful Central Bible Church in LA, sang and spoke at “An Evening of Worship and Liturgy in the African American Tradition,” sponsored by the William E. Pannell Center for African American Church Studies as part of its dedication gala. Pictured below (top to bottom) is a Centro Latino worship service, a panel about art and justice with Jars of Clay at Fuller Northwest, and a Korean Studies worship service—all examples of worship expressions at our campuses.

“Christian worship as a peculiar culture can be defined as a patterned relationship between God and humans and its embodiment in a liturgical manner and form. Moreover, this patterned relationship between God and humans and its embodiment does not have a fixed form, but is rather a process—an ongoing creative work of human beings. Christian worship is not a ready-made fixed form, but is rather a creative process, a holy conversation in a patterned relationship between God and God’s people. In this way, the poetic approach to worship assumes that worship can be understood as a specific culture in itself and a creative process for each congregation of embodying the holy encounter between God and God’s people.”

Jonghun Joo [PhD ’11], teaches at Africa International University in Kenya. In summer he co-taught “Practice of Worship and Prayer” with Ed Willmington in Fuller’s Korean Studies Program. The photo is of a dancer interpreting hymns at the Brehm Center’s Festival of Worship.

This content is curated from resources and ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Check online for full videos, articles, and more.
“Worship is this time when we are weaving all of our human stories—as individuals, as a community, as a world—into a divine story of redemption through Christ. It is in that intertwining, that entering into a narrative, that we can find hope and healing.

It can bring people from different places together as we recognize that we’re all part of one story, but if we don’t think about how we are participating or how we’re facilitating participation, it can just be a presentation.”

Nicholas Zehr (MAT ’09), a songwriter and worship leader, in an interview with Seventh-Day Adventist news magazine Review about planning services and creativity in worship.

“Is there a behavioral change in worship? Drawing on the undoing of the dust of exile and the welcoming into the garden of Eden, that communion is a joyful feast of the people of God. We are a people of hope who have a joyful message for the whole world.”

Catherine Gunsalus González, from her Brehm Lecture “Worship: What Does the Future Have to Do with the Past?” as part of the Centro Latino 40th anniversary celebration in 2014.

“What if the tensions and struggles we are facing represent a providential opening to recover spiritual resonance? Christian practices of worship are often criticized because they are captive either to simple traditionalism or to the search for new and entertaining forms of expression. In either case, there is healthy recognition that these forms ought to be carriers of spiritual power. We must recover an understanding of Christian worship as providing symbolic resonance and theological depth . . . for the symbolic depth of Christian practices might provide a winsome contrast to the superficial culture of entertainment that surrounds us, even as it also satisfies the spiritual longings of our contemporaries.”

William A. Dyrness in his book A Primer on Christian Worship: Where We’ve Been, Where We Are, Where We Can Go. 2015  /  ISSUE #4 RECONCILING RACE  /  FULLERMAG.COM
Spiritual Resources

Korean Morning Prayer Meeting
African Prayer Fellowship
All Seminary Chapel
Thursday Worship & Fellowship
Centro Latino Chapel

*available at Fuller Pasadena, more information online

Educational Resources

Worship that Changes Lives: Multidisciplinary and Congregational Perspectives on Spiritual Transformation edited by Alexis D. Abernethy (Baker Academic, 2008)
A Primer of Christian Worship: Where We Have Been, Where We Are, and Where We Can Go William A. Dyrness (Eerdmans, 2009)
The Conviction of Things Not Seen: Worship and Ministry in the 21st Century edited by Todd E. Johnson (Brazos, 2002)
The Dangerous Art of Worship: Living God’s Call to Justice Mark Labberton (InterVarsity Press, 2007)

Available Classes

Worship and World Religions with Sooi Ling Tan
Music, Peacebuilding, and Interfaith Dialogue with Roberta King
Theology, Worship, and Art with William Dyrness
Theological Method for Worship and the Arts with Todd Johnson
Worship Leadership: Formation and Skill with Ed Willmington
Worship Ministry on the Lord’s Day with Todd Johnson
Anglican Liturgy and Worship with James Henry Stevens
Practicing Worship and Prayer with Catherine Benotti (and other faculty)

LEADER: As we gather in this place, remind us that Christ’s prayer of oneness is still a dream that lies ahead of us. Forgive us for the energies we put into denominationalism, factionalism, and nationalism that draw your body in the world asunder.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

LEADER: For the churches represented in this congregation and in this choir, grant peace and continued hope for their ministries, and draw us together in your mercy, in your hope, and in your love.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

LEADER: The prayers of your children, the triumphant dancing, the shouts of praise will never ring as loudly, and move as rhythmically, or speak as poetically as when we will all gather together on that final day. Prepare our hearts for that joy and grant us glimpses of the blessed kingdom to come.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

LEADER: A prayer from the 2015 Festival of Worship, sponsored by the Pacific Center’s Fred Bock Institute of Music and the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. Bock Institute Director Ed Willmington is pictured conducting a choir of over 800 voices representing 40 different congregations.
Forgiveness is the mutual recognition that repentance is genuine and that right relationships have either been restored or achieved. It is not denial of the injury, avoidance of the conversation, pretense that it does not matter, generosity that overlooks the reality of actual wrongdoing, tolerance that permissively sidesteps the hard work to be done, superiority that rises above the other in magnanimous perfectionism. It is the hard, painful, vulnerable risking of sharing in the conversation on repentance.


“The persecuted church puts a primary focus on the victim’s healing and restoration while also pursuing the restoration of the aggressor and the community as a whole. I believe that Jesus’ cross is a clear example of this kind of ‘restorative justice,’ and this process has touched me deeply. We as victims and as aggressors are to carry out the ministry of reconciliation through repentance and forgiveness. This is why I think ‘restorative justice’ is an important concept for the ministry of reconciliation.”

Kyung Lan Suh, adjunct professor in the Korean School of Intercultural Studies program, shared her research on the Mennonite church and forgiveness at the ReconciliAsian Banquet last year.

“This session was eye-opening, and the women were sincere and honest with each other, and they truly heard and acknowledged one another’s hurts. The women felt heard and better understood, and they felt their hurt was acknowledged. This does not mean that they necessarily agree with each other, but that they learned to better listen to one another. The other side’s acknowledgment of one’s hurt is part of the forgiveness process, and it helps in the healing process. They left excited by the furthing of their relationships and the newly found openness they achieved as they were vulnerable with one another.”

Salim J. Munayer [MAT ’84] founded and leads Musalaha (an Arabic word that means “forgiveness” or “reconciliation”), a nonprofit in Jerusalem committed to restoring relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. This reflection is from their recent women’s conference on the theme of forgiveness.

“Forgiveness is a journey, sometimes a lifelong journey. We have no control over the end: some relationships will never be mended this side of heaven. Some offenses are so grievous that it is not within our power to forgive. And yet the journey must begin, for it is a journey toward our own freedom and peace.”

from the late Ray Anderson, professor of theology and ministry at Fuller [1976–2009], in his essay “A Theology of Forgiveness.” Pictured above is the gravesite of Jacob Rogers’s [MAT ’15] uncle and nephew. In the class Developing Communities in Muslim Contexts Jacob wrote on the long-term process of forgiveness—one he confesses is still a work in progress: “I cannot say that my deep-seated reservations are completely gone, but through study and understanding I am finding healing.”

“This persecuted church puts a primary focus on the victim’s healing and restoration while also pursuing the restoration of the aggressor and the community as a whole. I believe that Jesus’ cross is a clear example of this kind of ‘restorative justice,’ and this process has touched me deeply. We as victims and as aggressors are to carry out the ministry of reconciliation through repentance and forgiveness. This is why I think ‘restorative justice’ is an important concept for the ministry of reconciliation.”

Young Lan Suh, adjunct professor in the Korean School of Intercultural Studies program, shared her research on the Methodist church and forgiveness at the ReconciliAsian Banquet last year.
"Forgiveness is the process by which love and trust are reestablished in relationships. Forgiveness doesn’t consist of simple platitudes or superficial statements that are expected to make the past go away. It is not forgetting about serious damage or letting someone off who caused hurt without taking responsibility. It is not about subjecting yourself to an untrustworthy or unloving person who will just hurt you all over again. What forgiveness is about is the coming together of at least two people, after there has been severe damage or hurt in their relationship, to rewrite the story of love and trust in a responsible way that will make their relationships, and families stronger and healthier.”

“Hidden in the dark chambers of our hearts and nourished by the system of darkness, hate grows and seeks to infest everything with its hellish will to exclusion. In the light of the justice and love of God, however, hate recedes and the seed is planted for the miracle of forgiveness. Forgiveness thunders because I exclude the enemy from the community of sinners. But no one can be in the presence of the God of the crucified Messiah for long without overcoming this double exclusion—without transposing the enemy from the sphere of monstrous inhumanity into the sphere of shared humanity and herself from the sphere of the proud innocence into the sphere of common sinfulness, . . . In the presence of God our rage over injustice may give way to forgiveness, which in turn will make the search for justice for all possible.”

“Intergenerational Family
Families and Forgiveness: Healing Wounds in the
David Augsburger (Westminster John Knox, 1996)
Helping People Forgive

Resources
Forgiving the Devil: Restoring Relationships in Damaging Families Terry D. Hargrave (Glynn Tucker & DeVos, 2002)
Helping People Forgive
David Augsburger (Wheaton Publishers, 1998)
Families and Forgiveness: Healing Wounds in the Intergenerational Family Terry D. Hargrave (Broadman & Holman, 1994)
Finish Well: Aging and Reparation in the Intergenerational Family Terry D. Hargrave, with W. T. Anderson (Broadman & Holman, 1992)

Available Class
Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Clinical Practice with Terry D. Hargrave

My Story of Forgiveness
My story of forgiveness begins with my mother.
She was a wonderful, selfless woman—a woman of prayer, often on her knees in the early hours of dawn. Her Bible was worn through from reading. She was generous and kind, often giving her lunch to strangers on the bus. She was an evangelist who gave tracts to people waiting with her at the bus stop, who went up and down the aisles of her bus praying for other passengers. When I decided to go into full-time mission work, I knew she would cover me in prayer and love.

Early in 2010, my mother was diagnosed with cancer of the lymph nodes. I returned to the States from Taiwan to be with her during surgery, but afterward—even though she asked me to stay—I chose to go back because I loved this town and the excitement of my work. So, in the name of what God was doing in the world, I abandoned my mom.

This is one of the most painful moments of my life.

A year later the lymphoma had spread throughout her body. I returned to the States again and, for a year, I lived in the hospital with my mom, feeding and washing and caring for her as penance for my failure to love her more than my ambitions.

After I buried my mom in February of 2012, I entered into the darkest season of my life. I was overwhelmed by guilt—I couldn’t sleep, I didn’t eat, and my mind was teeming with thoughts of death and suicide. I was riddled with regret, pain, and grief. I should have stayed with her. I should have persuaded her to receive preventative chemo. She had given and given all her life and I had taken and taken. When she needed me, I had abandoned her. My heart felt like it was going to burst.

The first year of my mother’s passing was all at Fuller. I sat in an ethics class talking about the Beatitudes and the poor in spirit, the meek, those hungry for righteousness. My heart ached because I was feeling closer to hell than to the kingdom. My professor prayerfully told me what no one else did, that my selfish and self-centered choices were waking me up early every morning because they needed to be set right. The Holy Spirit was prodding me to recognize my offenses and to receive God’s forgiveness and my mom’s.

I went to my mother’s grave, where I sat weeping, confessing my sin. Though a friend who accompanied me prayed a prayer of forgiveness over my life, I walked away feeling the same. I still woke in the early hours, tormented by the same memories of chemo, radiation, needles, and surgeries. I still missed my mother and longed to feel her hand stroking my face. I still felt guilt, anger, sadness. But each time, a quiet voice in the back of my mind said, “I forgive you.”

I was selfish and self-centered. “I forgive you.” I considered myself more highly than others. “I forgive you.” I let ambition rule my life. “I forgive you.” I was selfish and self-centered. “I forgive you.”

I abandoned you when you needed me: “I forgive you.” I let ambition rule my life: “I forgive you.” I was selfish and self-centered: “I forgive you.” I considered myself more highly than others: “I forgive you.”

I should have stayed with her. I should have persuaded her to receive preventative chemo. She had given and given all her life and I had taken and taken. When she needed me, I had abandoned her. My heart felt like it was going to burst.

My mother left me a legacy of her cruciform life, where the weak are stronger, the generous have immeasurable wealth, the kind win people’s hearts, and forgiveness overcomes selfishness. My selfishness transformed by forgiveness. I am forgiven.
New Faculty Books and Journal Articles

We the People, Israel and the Categorical Nature of Jesus (with edition) and Study Guide
Tommy C. Sumrall, (2016)
Do the Good News Test New? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself
John Goldingay (Baker Publishing Group, 2015)

Fellows Book: Women and Evangelical Gnosticism in Conversation
edited by Richard J. Mouw and Robert L. Wolstencroft, 2015

HISTORICAL JOURNAL OF CHRISTIANITY

enlarged P. JOEL B. GREEN

THE MODERNIZED UTOPIAN MISSION THEORY: ROGER BLAINE AND 18TH-CENTURY UTOPIAS

Weinhold, known and loved for his casual style of dress,
New Fuller Faculty

KEON SANG AN
Assistant Professor of Bible and Mission
A School of Theology alumnus and most recently an adjunct assistant professor, Keon Sang An has previously served as a pastor in Seoul, Korea, as a preaching pastor at churches in Ethiopia, and as a professor at Evangelical Theological College in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

LAURA ROBINSON HARBERT
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
Argue worked with the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) for the past five years while pastoring at Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, and is now a School of Theology faculty member and applied research strategist with FYI focusing on youth ministry strategy and leadership development.

TINA R. ARMSTRONG
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
A Fuller alumna, Armstrong has been an assistant professor at Alliant International University, California School of Professional Psychology since 2011. Her research interests include minority women in academia, vicarious trauma, liberation psychology, and early childhood mental health.

TED COSSE
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
Alongside his new faculty role in the School of Psychology, Cosse serves as executive director of Fuller Psychological and Family Services (FPFS) and PsyD program director. When providing individual psychotherapy, his focus is with adults struggling with issues of meaning.

LAURA ROBINSON HARBERT
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
Already serving as dean of chapel and spiritual formation, Harbert adds a faculty title to her role at Fuller. She has 25 years experience as a clinical psychologist, and looks forward to study and teaching on the psychological and theological dynamics of spiritual formation.

KEON SANG AN
Assistant Professor of Bible and Mission

STEVE ARGUE
Assistant Professor of Youth, Family, and Culture

TINA R. ARMSTRONG
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology

A Fuller alumnus and most recently an adjunct assistant professor, Keon Sang An has previously served as a pastor in Seoul, Korea, as a preaching pastor at churches in Ethiopia, and as a professor at Evangelical Theological College in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

TED COSSE
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
Alongside his new faculty role in the School of Psychology, Cosse serves as executive director of Fuller Psychological and Family Services (FPFS) and PsyD program director. When providing individual psychotherapy, his focus is with adults struggling with issues of meaning.

LAURA ROBINSON HARBERT
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
Already serving as dean of chapel and spiritual formation, Harbert adds a faculty title to her role at Fuller. She has 25 years experience as a clinical psychologist, and looks forward to study and teaching on the psychological and theological dynamics of spiritual formation.

MICHAEL PASQUARELLO III
Lloyd John Ogilvie Professor of Preaching
Pasquarello taught at Asbury Theological Seminary for 14 years and served as a pastor in the United Methodist Church for 18 years. He sees himself as “a pastor with a PhD,” called to serve the church’s mission by teaching and equipping those who will be its future leaders.

STEVEN T. YAMAGUCHI
Assistant Professor of Practical Theology

Add to his role as dean of students, Yamaguchi anticipates more in-depth interaction with students in his new faculty position. He will teach on addiction and recovery and pastoral care, employing personal and professional experience to help students hear God’s call.

MICHAEL PASQUARELLO III
Lloyd John Ogilvie Professor of Preaching

ALREADY SERVING AS DEAN OF CHAPEL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION, HARBERT ADDS A FACULTY TITLE TO HER ROLE AT FULLER. SHE HAS 25 YEARS EXPERIENCE AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, AND LOOKS FORWARD TO STUDY AND TEACHING ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION.
Theological Seminary is one of the world's most influential evangelical institutions, the largest multidisciplinary 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, and collaborative leaders and thinkers. Our students study a diverse range of academic disciplines—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. With deep roots in orthodoxy and branches in innovation, we are committed to forming Christian women and men to be faithful, courageous, and collaborative leaders and thinkers. Our students study a diverse range of academic disciplines—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields. Fuller offers 18 degree programs at 9 locations—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through our Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as 20 centers, institutes, and initiatives. Approximately 4,000 students from 90 countries and 110 denominations enroll in our programs annually, and our 41,000 alumni have been called to serve in the ministerial, academic, and professional fields.
Jesus said the most conclusive evidence of gospel truth is our love for one another. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.” (John 13:35) The gospel demands more than words in response to the ravages of racism. We need prayerful action. By galvanizing independent churches to become communities of informed believers, we can mobilize a committed force to build bridges of justice and reconciliation.

We find deep encouragement in the stories of Sacramento pastors Joy Johnson and Bret Widman (see pg. 36), who met as members of “Micah Groups” at Fuller Theological Seminary. A Micah Group gathers a dozen church leaders in one community from diverse ethnic, economic, and denominational contexts to meet for two years, working toward issues of justice through the ministries of their churches. In a few short years we have built networks involving almost 1,000 church leaders in over 60 cities across the United States, Canada, the UK, France, Egypt, and South Africa. They show their communities the transforming love of Christ while providing a safe meeting point for church leaders with differing backgrounds to explore God’s will together.

When we consider the long road to reconciliation, we know it requires more than talk. Imagine what might happen if the “sleeping giant” of the church across America could be mobilized to act toward justice? Micah Groups is one of Fuller’s commitments to long-term, courageous action. If you’re interested in learning more, visit micahgroups.org.