Fuller Magazine, Issue 012, 2018 - Disruption

Fuller Theological Seminary

Lauralee Farrer

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/fuller-magazine

Part of the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/fuller-magazine/12

This Periodical is brought to you for free and open access by the Fuller Seminary Publications at Digital Commons @ Fuller. It has been accepted for inclusion in FULLER Magazine by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Fuller. For more information, please contact archives@fuller.edu.
My boat has struck something in the depths, something big.
Yet nothing happens! Nothing . . . only stillness and waves.

Nothing has changed—or has everything changed,
and here we are, in the middle of our new life?
Slender Mariposa, photograph by John Thompson, Professor of Historical Theology and Gaylen and Susan Byker Professor of Reformed Theology, 2018. Growing abundantly in the burn zone after Southern California’s 2017 La Tuna Fire, this flower conveys hope and growth in the midst of destruction. “Mariposas commonly explode in numbers after a fire,” says Dr. Thompson. “On the day I photographed this, I saw perhaps 400 mariposas in bloom in the charred Verdugo Mountains; this was just one of them.” See more of Dr. Thompson’s photography on p. 99.
In memory of beloved colleague David Kiefer because there is nothing so disruptive as death, and no time when the promise of resurrection is more precious.
Among my teenage instincts about the Christian faith was the sense that it was an elaborately religious scheme for soul control. It was, I thought, the outsider to the faith that felt me to be a form of social domination with its appeal. Blind social domination. I didn’t recognize being skeptical of the earnestness of Christianity I knew, but I did have the general sense that Christianity was faith coming in part in quieting life’s personal and social turbulence.

Out of intellectual curiosity, I began to read the Gospels the fall I entered college. I did so with a sense that the New Testament was an important cultural text, that I knew very little about it, and that, as on the road to becoming better educated, I should at least read it. I had no particular prejudice for or against its truthfulness, but I assumed it would explain the domination I had observed.

What shocked me was that Jesus was first and foremost a disruptor. His words and his actions clearly disturbed the social and religious norms of his day, and the people he attracted to him did not seem to fit the mainstream, but rather were on the fringes. Through unexpected and surprising host, healer, and friend. This was not what I expected. Though from time to time I was searching for God, nor that I had any interest in anyone or anything else but me taking or exercising control of my life. After all, I was just entering college! As I found myself drawn again and again to reading the Gospels, I was continually surprised by Jesus’ disruptive call for people to live as his disciples. It threatened my independence. Life in the kingdom of God was becoming one of the most disruptive things I could imagine. Jesus was not a quieting influence. He was an unsettling disturber of the peace of my life.

My childhood impressions of the Christian faith were of social control. What they conveyed to me was a fastidiously attention to the small things. Yet Jesus’ words and actions clearly disturbed the social and religious norms of his day.

Disruption

From Mark Labberton, President

Puse que explicaría la domesticación que había a ser una persona mejor educada, al menos de -

dad. Lo hice con la idea de que el Nuevo Testa -
evangelios el otoño en que ingresé a la universi-
As Fuller faces a time of unprecedented dis-
ruption, these are among the theological, per-
sonal, social, and systemic themes we need to
keep in focus. If we measure change starting
and ending with its most personal implica-
tions, we are more likely to drench in dissen-
tion and fear. But if we defer personal im-
plications, we are probably in denial. Turning
our backs on the ways disruption is experi-
ded in individual
impact, then we are likely to find ourselves vic-
iminated, victimized, in the reach of larger, imper-
sonal institutional forces.
We have written elsewhere (fuller.edu/ future) about some of the many inter-
national and exter-
nal forces at play in affecting Fuller now and
during its future. Outside of Fuller, we have
written inside much larger national and inter-
national disruptions in cultures, institutions,
and alliances. We are living at a time when
it seems entire landscapes are chang-
ing. Even institutions with vast endowments
like protective ecosystems are feeling the tid-
al waves of change affecting higher education
and theological education in particular. Even
more so does a school like Fuller, which has
a modest endowment that currently provides
us to be cautious about the storms of
disruption, culture, and church.
We are remembering that we are part of a
much, much greater and grander story than
“the latest in technology.” We are confident in
the deep and wide purposes of God in this
which technological change, for example, is
not a shock ni un impedimento al Dios que
está haciendo “todas las cosas nuevas”. Y queremos
apoyar a las transiciones tecnológicas que
empleamos para el bien de nuestro tiempo. La
riqueza de las cosas más pequeñas está
más enteras están cambiando. Incluso institu-
tiones con grandes amenazas de cambio,
como los ecosistemas protectores están sintiendo las olas
de cambio que afectan a la educación superior.
Y en la medida que Fuller se convierte en una
institución como Fuller, que actualmente tiene una
dirección moderada la cual ofrece no pocas
tensiones, siente el peso de todas las
naciones, también.

We are remembering that what is happening in the
country, in the academic and the church is
to be effectively incar
nated as

e socio-protecto, siente los efectos de todas las
necesidades y oportunidades en espera.

Estamos recordando que todos podemos
esforzarnos por entender por qué estamos
haciendo todo esto, sobre quién escuchamos,
obre las cosas que valoramos, sobre quién importa,
sobre cómo servimos. Estos son los puntos de transformación
que afectan en todas las direcciones, en cada nivel,
para cada propósito bueno y perfecto.

Esta es la disposición sobre la que todos podern
os cei que sucede en todos los niveles, para que la disrupción continúe en Dios
se mantenga. Con el ánimo de no desper-
diciar una buena crisis, esta temporada de
disrupción sea mayor y no menor si sirve a las
últimas palabras del Evangelio, todavía me
ha sido un contexto motivador para pregun-
tarnos cómo viviremos nuestra misión en un
contexto nuevo, con un perfil social diferente y
con necesidades y oportunidades en espera.

The disruptions of following Jesus are by no
means strained by a campus move and a time
before the end of the current academic year.
Esta es la disrupción sobre la que todos podem
os cei que sucede en todos los niveles, para que la disrupción continúe en Dios
se mantenga. Con el ánimo de no desper-
diciar una buena crisis, esta temporada de
disrupción sea mayor y no menor si sirve a las
últimas palabras del Evangelio, todavía me
ha sido un contexto motivador para pregun-
tarnos cómo viviremos nuestra misión en un
contexto nuevo, con un perfil social diferente y
con necesidades y oportunidades en espera.

Esta es la disrupción sobre la que todos podem
os cei que sucede en todos los niveles, para que la disrupción continúe en Dios
se mantenga. Con el ánimo de no desper-
diciar una buena crisis, esta temporada de
disrupción sea mayor y no menor si sirve a las
últimas palabras del Evangelio, todavía me
ha sido un contexto motivador para pregun-
tarnos cómo viviremos nuestra misión en un
contexto nuevo, con un perfil social diferente y
con necesidades y oportunidades en espera.

Esta es la disrupción sobre la que todos podem
os cei que sucede en todos los niveles, para que la disrupción continúe en Dios
se mantenga. Con el ánimo de no desper-
diciar una buena crisis, esta temporada de
disrupción sea mayor y no menor si sirve a las
últimas palabras del Evangelio, todavía me
ha sido un contexto motivador para pregun-
tarnos cómo viviremos nuestra misión en un
contexto nuevo, con un perfil social diferente y
con necesidades y oportunidades en espera.
Disruption is not new to Fuller: the ethos of the seminary has been influenced by it throughout the life of the institution, from its beginning. While maintaining an unswerving commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the intention to become a convening place of different points of view has built Fuller into the largest multidenominational seminary in the world. Fuller’s trajectory has widened in 70 years from a small set of distinctions to an increasing diversity of denominations, countries, theological perspectives, inclusion and equity for women and persons of color, and more—with the ongoing intention to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly in our pursuit of knowing God.

Perhaps the most pronounced of these disruptions—the decision to move Fuller’s campus to Pomona—was set in motion by the Board of Trustees after much deliberation on May 21, 2018, when the vote was confirmed to sell the historic Pasadena campus. At that meeting, a poem by Wendell Berry was read that compares the life of faith to walking toward the sun: a light so bright that it obscures and reveals. Looking back, “the very light / That blinded us shows us the way we came,” the poet says, orienting us toward an unknown future. We, “By blessing brightly lit, keep going toward / The blessed light that yet to us is dark.” That dual movement between uncertainty and grace is familiar territory to Fuller.

Looking backward can stabilize concerns about a future we could not have anticipated. By remembering the vision and risk, passion and mistakes, joy and courage of those who have given their lives to building the seminary, we can see the grace that lit their own steps—and ours in this new season. It is in this spirit that we begin this issue on “disruption.” On the following pages you’ll find three letters from President Mark Labberton, originally posted online at fuller.edu/future, that discuss the seminary’s future and decision to move to Pomona. Interwoven with these are brief memories of a few critical moments in Fuller’s history, to remind us that, as we take this next faithful step, we must follow an institutional tradition of facing disruption with creativity and conviction.
This is the first of several letters I will be sending you over the next few months. Since our world, and Fuller Seminary’s place in it, is at a historic moment of disruption and opportunity. I want to be sure you know what is going on and how we see the great vision before us.

Wherever you are on the globe when you read this, I feel confident that a whirlwind of change and uncertainty is both nearby and familiar to you. We all see and feel it. Whether in the headlines, in our homes, in our workplaces, in our ministries, or simply in our hearts, simultaneous and breathtaking change is whirling everywhere. That’s your context, and it’s Fuller’s context as well.

What former president David Hubbard said long ago is still true: “The Good Ship Fuller” is faithfully moving forward, even in the midst of high seas and stormy weather. Every day our faculty, staff, and students demonstrate that the gospel of Jesus Christ is still the hope of the world, and we continue forming women and men for the manifold ministries of Christ and his church. Right in the midst of the whirlwind, we are seeking to be faithful to this urgent and joyful mission.

What the whirlwind demands, however, is that we also take careful stock of what we are doing and how we are doing it. This has been Fuller’s instinct from the start—to trust the gospel of Jesus Christ, to ground our work in thoughtful and vigorous scholarship, and to take new steps of risk in order to be faithful. Discerning those steps is a primary challenge. Let me give you some examples.

You probably know our commitment to online formation and community began more than 15 years ago with our Master of Arts in Global Leadership degree. This beginning to Fuller’s distinctive online education remains a hallmark in the design and practice of values that are core to a Fuller education. That is why we are not offering courses that are merely for information distribution, but rather are working diligently to create small learning communities for true formation. We are grateful that the evaluations of our in-person and our online courses are virtually the same. This is an example of trying to be discerning in the midst of the whirlwind of technology.

We want you to know that after careful thought and prayer by our faculty and trustees, nearly all of our non-clinical master’s degrees will be fully available online starting this next fall. This flexibility provides our students and maintain a thriving ministry. With a passion to train people “to become steeped in the Word, so as to go out bearing the blessed news,” Old Fashioned Revival Hour radio broadcaster Charles E. Fuller—through his Fuller Evangelistic Foundation—purchased the properties a few blocks east of Pasadena City Hall where, as President Harold John Ockenga put it, the seminary could operate “in the midst of the thorns and thistles of this learning life” (Relating Fundamentals, 131).

P.S. As we assess all that this “whirlwind” will mean for Fuller, it’s important to me that you are informed. Please visit fuller.edu for regular updates.

Dear Fuller Alumni and Friends,

LETTER ONE

MAY 3, 2018

This is the first of several letters I will be sending you over the next few months. Since our world, and Fuller Seminary’s place in it, is at a historic moment of disruption and opportunity. I want to be sure you know what is going on and how we see the great vision before us.

Wherever you are on the globe when you read this, I feel confident that a whirlwind of change and uncertainty is both nearby and familiar to you. We all see and feel it. Whether in the headlines, in our homes, in our workplaces, in our ministries, or simply in our hearts, simultaneous and breathtaking change is whirling everywhere. That’s your context, and it’s Fuller’s context as well.

What former president David Hubbard said long ago is still true: “The Good Ship Fuller” is faithfully moving forward, even in the midst of high seas and stormy weather. Every day our faculty, staff, and students demonstrate that the gospel of Jesus Christ is still the hope of the world, and we continue forming women and men for the manifold ministries of Christ and his church. Right in the midst of the whirlwind, we are seeking to be faithful to this urgent and joyful mission.

What the whirlwind demands, however, is that we also take careful stock of what we are doing and how we are doing it. This has been Fuller’s instinct from the start—to trust the gospel of Jesus Christ, to ground our work in thoughtful and vigorous scholarship, and to take new steps of risk in order to be faithful. Discerning those steps is a primary challenge. Let me give you some examples.

You probably know our commitment to online formation and community began more than 15 years ago with our Master of Arts in Global Leadership degree. This beginning to Fuller’s distinctive online education remains a hallmark in the design and practice of values that are core to a Fuller education. That is why we are not offering courses that are merely for information distribution, but rather are working diligently to create small learning communities for true formation. We are grateful that the evaluations of our in-person and our online courses are virtually the same. This is an example of trying to be discerning in the midst of the whirlwind of technology.

We want you to know that after careful thought and prayer by our faculty and trustees, nearly all of our non-clinical master’s degrees will be fully available online starting this next fall. This flexibility provides our students and maintain a thriving ministry. With a passion to train people “to become steeped in the Word, so as to go out bearing the blessed news,” Old Fashioned Revival Hour radio broadcaster Charles E. Fuller—through his Fuller Evangelistic Foundation—purchased the properties a few blocks east of Pasadena City Hall where, as President Harold John Ockenga put it, the seminary could operate “in the midst of the thorns and thistles of this learning life” (Relating Fundamentals, 131).

P.S. As we assess all that this “whirlwind” will mean for Fuller, it’s important to me that you are informed. Please visit fuller.edu for regular updates.

Fuller is in the midst of the whirlwind but confident that Jesus Christ is our still point, that One who is leading and guiding us. We do not walk in fear; we walk in confidence in the unchanging One in whom we place our trust.

Will you please pray for Fuller as we seek God in a time of discernment regarding how to be wise, bold, and faithful in such a time as this? Our current Fuller community has been in this prayerful mode for over a year, and we believe some clarity is emerging. I look forward to sharing more when I write next because I want you to know what Fuller is doing and why. After all, you are part of us and we are part of you.

Anticipating the faithfulness of God,

Mark Labberton
Students visit the Crawers Estate to study for their courses that, due to zoning complications, were held 3.5 miles away at Lake Avenue Congregational Church (c. 1947–1953).

Years later, Fuller's campus moved to the location where it would spend the next seven decades. Above, bulldozers demolish part of Oakland Avenue to create Arol Burns Mall and what became affectionately known as "the Elbow," the unofficial entrance into Fuller Seminary's Pasadena campus at the corner of Oakland and Ford Place.
In my recent letter to you I wrote about the whirlwind of change in higher education, and the ways in which Fuller has been providing theological study in an era of profound disruption. At a time when many seminaries are closing their doors, I wanted to expand on my conviction that the spiritual formation our scholarship cultivates—in classic as well as innovative forms—is needed now more than ever. Fuller is capable of designing the path ahead; in fact, we are deliberately using new learning technologies to expand our traditional degrees without compromising our mission. Charles Fuller was an internationally known radio evangelist who started a seminary since then—from the launch of Fuller Seminary to California to join the Fuller Leadership Platform. Those who are not merely Christian student-athletes or musicians or movie-makers, but who want their lives, their work, and their conviction. As CEO of one of the great high-tech innovative companies, I live daily in the need to innovate or die. Fuller has constantly sought to deliver the work of world-class scholars, a businessman, and a professor of Reconciliation and Director of the Center for Korean Studies. I am thrilled to be engaged in this important work.

John Goldingay, PhD. David Allen Hubbard Professor Emeritus of Old Testament

In the coming year, the new Fuller Leadership Platform will be available to a much wider array of learners seeking personal, academic, professional, and spiritual formation. Since 2016 FULLER studio has been delivering our scholarly resources to a wider audience—millions of viewers whose primary interest is an enriched spiritual life.

As CEO of one of the great high-tech innovative companies, I live daily in the need to innovate or die. Fuller has constantly sought to deliver the work of world-class scholars, a businessman, and a professor of Reconciliation and Director of the Center for Korean Studies. I am thrilled to be engaged in this important work.

Pat Gelsinger, CEO of VMware

A deeply formed theological life is no less crucial today than it was when Charles Fuller and the other founders established the seminary in Pasadena decades ago. Fuller is positioned to define and lead a paradigm shift in theological study that matches boldly the changing needs of the world, but we must reinvent ourselves in order to do it.

“El mayor regalo que el Seminario Fuller me ha dado en mis veinte años de aportación y enseñanza es el acceso a muchos mundos más allá de Fuller. Cuando fui contratado como profesor de planta, después de servir como líder denominacional por una década, vine con la agenda de construir una senda hacia el conocimiento y la praxis global con el distintivo de Fuller: su capacitación crítica, multifacética, multicultural y misional. Estoy muy comprometido con esta capacitación de que Fuller camina hacia su futuro global.”

Oscar García-Johnson, PhD. Decano Asociado, Centro Latino

Such a reinvention also allows us to address institutional weaknesses. As one student put it recently: “It’s amazing what a whirlwind picks up and exposes.” Grateful as I am for this letter’s glowing endorsements, I must also acknowledge critiques of insufficient financial rigor, broken promises, implicit biases, and systemic injustices. Addressing these challenges must be part of the way forward. We will always live somewhere between the concrete and the aspirational, but this season of tumult gives us a continuing chance to be bold in crafting a future where the theology we study is fully embodied in our life together.

“제가 확신을 가지고 말할 수 있는 점은 풀러가 복음주의의 기본은 풀러신학대학원에서 25년전에 학생으로 있을 때 제는 필름의 공동체 정신과 학문적 기반으로 인해 크게 영향을 받았습니다. 제가 그 때 선택한 것은 그에 따른 여러 곳에서 담담한 계열 교수사역에 크게 영향을 미쳤습니다. 이제 다시 풀러의 플랫폼에서 일하려고 사역하려면 제가 확인을 가지고 알고야 하는 것은 필름이 제자들에 관한 기본 정신의 기반으로 다시 찾아오는 점입니다. 필름은 영화와 학문의 같이, 그리고 이론과 실천을 근본에 하는 학문적인 서술의 체제가 기독교지도를 제공하고 있습니다. 이러한

Sebastian Kim, PhD. Assistant Provost for the Korean Studies Center

As I travel and relate to leaders throughout North America and the majority world, my conviction has only strengthened regarding Fuller Seminary—it truly is one of the world’s premier institutions in developing leaders for the church. Fuller not only forms students with the truths, values, and character of Christ, but it embodies these things as an institution. I am excited about Fuller’s future, as it continually innovates to launch future generations of leaders and effective Christlike witnesses in a fast-changing and increasingly globalized world.”

Tom Lin, President/CEO, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship; Fuller trustee and alumnus

Our trustees have been weighing both the disruptive whirlwind and our call to action with special intensity over the last 12 months of tumult, town halls, countless private conversations, faculty and staff meetings, and as a diaspora in whole seasons of prayer and fasting as a community—we have been listening deeply to students, alumni, faculty, donors, concerned leaders, advisors, and friends of Fuller. We are united in seeking God’s wisdom at this very important intersection. I promise to write again shortly after the next trustee meetings, which are taking place May 20–21, so you will hear as soon as possible the next steps we plan to take for Fuller’s future. In the meantime, please join us in prayer for wisdom and God’s leading. I am thankful for you and anticipating God’s faithfulness together.

Mark Labberton

Please visit fuller.edu/future for updates.

...
The Pasadena Community Counseling Center (top, pictured c. 1964) was the precursor to the School of Psychology. In 1986, the school received its own home on the corner of North Oakland and Walnut, with the relocation of Stephen Hall and construction of Travis Auditorium and the School of Psychology building.

**FOUNDING A SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

“Black Saturday could be called Good Saturday,” H. Newton Malony, professor emeritus of psychology, says, since on that 1962 day Fuller’s trustees decided to pursue establishing a school of psychology (Psychology and the Cross, 15; see p. 24 for more about “Black Saturday”). Yet some theology faculty argued that importing an entirely new discipline through the new school would distract students from confessional faith and the life of the church. The proposed school also uncovered new thorny questions of how to understand the connective tissues between psychology and theology. Some believed that Fuller should promote an “overlay” approach, with students taking psychology classes at a neighboring school and overlaying a theological framework from seminary courses. Others suggested a unique “theo-psychology” that could replace psychology as an academic discipline. Still others suggested an integration model that would emerge as faculty and students weave their Christian commitments and therapeutic practices together—an approach that disrupted churches who were suspicious of therapy and an academic discipline often dismissive of faith. Siding with this third way, President Hubbard said, “We must launch this school on a scope of largeness,” and in 1964–1965, with the vital support of C. Davis and Annette Weyerhaeuser, the Pasadena Community Counseling Center followed by the School of Psychology were established, founded on a principle of thoughtful integration that continues today.

Pasadena City Hall, visible during the remodel of McAlister Library in 1977.
Over the last month, I’ve sent several letters describing the whirlwind of disruption that has upended graduate seminary education in the last few years, and the ways we have tried to shift those g-forces to the advantage of Fuller’s core mission. I’m writing now to tell you about a decision that has just been made (one that, amazingly, was first considered 50 years ago). After a long and careful process, our Board of Trustees has made the decision that, for the vibrant future of Fuller’s mission, we need to leave our campus in Pasadena and move to a new location. Our home for the last 70 years will make our home for the next 70 years possible. That’s where this letter is going—from that bittersweet decision to what I now see as an inspired way forward.

Let me go back to a time earlier in our deliberations, when the trustees gathered late one night on the mall of the Pasadena campus, recalling memories that stretched back almost to the beginning. My own thoughts wandered to my years as a student, to the beginning. My own thoughts stretched back almost forty years, to the beginning. I remember one particular suggestion being made early on. It was about changing the name of Fuller. “We need a name that would engage with the changing world and part our name from the kind of configuration and location in Southern California. That’s a very valuable name, but it isn’t enough for the level of change occurring. Trustees, senior leadership, faculty, staff, students, and friends of Fuller spent months in due diligence and fasting and prayer; we’ve come to believe that theological education is just as necessary for this new era as ever, but knowing we must take bold risks and have a bold vision in order to transform. It is unsettling, yet it is also essential. We still have taken careful time to come to a decision, holding rumors and speculation and even our own impatience at bay.

As with all stories of transformation, God has been leading. Yes, it has required boldness from our trustees, humility and imagination from our faculty, dogged loyalty from our staff and administrators, honest dialogue with our students, and prayerful trust from our alumni to innovate for a new day. But it is God who has redeemed a difficult season in our history, and we are as Fuller—anywhere in the world.

Seeing and anticipating God’s faithfulness,

Mark Labberton

Dear Fuller Community and Friends,

MAY 21, 2018

Top: Charles Fuller announces the launching of the School of World Mission in 1965. Bottom: Fuller students carry books during the remodel of McAlister Library in 1977.

LETTER THREE

Dear Fuller Community and Friends,

Our work together will always be located where the hunger for learning and theological scholarship meet. In a few years, when we celebrate our 75th anniversary, we will also celebrate a new era of ministry, grounded in a new city, and extending wherever we are as Fuller—anywhere in the world.

We believe this decision—along with other necessary bold moves—will address concerns about financial sustainability for Fuller, allowing us to actually invest in the future of theological education at a time of industry-wide disruption so great that many seminaries are closing. It will also empower Fuller to offer deep biblical scholarship in new ways for a different day. In the meantime, I assure you that our commitment to providing rigorous theological, psychological, and intercultural studies remains unchanged.

For the next three years, we gratefully remain in Pasadena: we are committed to leaving well by treating this place and its people with love and celebration. We have been blessed with a rich inheritance: now about time to use it to expand the mission established by our founder, Charles Fuller, decades ago. Meanwhile, we will be designing and building a new campus for the next era of theological education and spiritual formation.

P.S. Your feedback is very important. Please check for updates, ask questions, submit ideas, and find answers to FAQ on our web pages dedicated to this transformation at Fuller.edu/future. There you will also find a sign-up form where you can give us your email address—our preferred way of communicating.

Thank you.

Mark Labberton

SCHOOL OF WORLD MISSION NAME CHANGE

After September 13, 2001, Fuller’s School of World Mission was becoming more passionate about interfaith dialogue and engaging the Muslim world. “We were expanding our efforts in this area of such great importance,” Doug McConnell, the dean at the time, remembers. “At the time, changes in government policies and visa requirements made it difficult for our students to travel to the communities where they were called to minister, and countries wary of foreign influence would deport them as soon as they saw the words “World Mission” on their diplomas. In many cases, alumni faced threats to their lives, and in one instance, an alum was encouraged to start a training institute in an Arab country, only to have it revoked when he submitted his credentials and given 24 hours to leave. Changing the name of the school was both a way to respond to the changing world and part of an unexpected identity crisis.

After many months of faculty gatherings and deliberations, the school reached a decision to change its name to the “School of Intercultural Studies” in 2003. Many graduates were elated and asked for ways to change their diplomas; others felt the name change would erode the mission of the school. “We felt like we needed a name that would engage with the social contexts that people were going into,” McConnell remembers. “It was an adaptive change to the world we live in.”
The McAllister Library, remodelled in 1977 (pictured top left and bottom left), was augmented 31 years later, in 2008, by the David Allan Hubbard Library.

(Recognize the individuals in the top photo? Email us at editor@fuller.edu!)
DEBATE OVER BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

With political and theological issues pressing in on all sides, the trustees’ “ten-year planning conference” of December 1962 quickly fractured into what is now known as “Black Saturday.” For years, debates about scriptural inerrancy and the identity of the next president frentented, boiling over in this trustee meeting into a struggle for the seminary’s future. With President Harold Ockenga leading in his 1976 book Battle for the Bible, Hubbard responded with a special issue of Theology, News & Notes, clarifying Fuller’s position regarding Scripture as “the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” Hubbard wrote, “None of us denies the infallibility of the Bible; none of us claims the infallibility of our faculty. We are not perfect. We do not have to be. We have God’s sure word to guide and correct our steps; we have Christ’s sure grace to forgive our errors; we have the church’s continued goodwill as, for the glory of God, we fulfill our mission and theirs.”

DEMANDS FOR INCLUSION OF WOMEN

On April 26, 1976, six women staged a two-day sit-in at Preston Glenn Barker’s office to pressure the seminary to support female students in a more direct way. While women could attend some seminary courses as early as 1948 and had gained increased access to degree programs over the following years, by the mid-1970s, women were still vastly underrepresented across the seminary community. Looking back on the sit-in, participant Karen Barks Miller ’84 says, “Today we have an illustrious panoply of women faculty at Fuller. Then, we were looking for full-time, tenure-track women faculty in the School of Theology as there were none at that time, and for a new office that could be a nurturing advocacy for women students. We weren’t going to leave Dr. Barker’s office until there was action toward that,” she remembers. “It was not a tense experience for me, and he was amenable to what we were demanding. We stayed until we heard from him that this was going to happen.” Soon after, the seminary responded by establishing the Office of Women’s Concerns under the leadership of Libbie Patterson. Only two years later, the seminary and the Evangelical Women’s Caucus cosponsored the “Women and the Ministries of Christ” conference that over 800 women from around the world attended. “It became so popular we had to post people at the door to keep out those who were not invited,” Paul Pierson later recalled: “During the first few meetings emotions were high. Fear, anger, suspicion, skepticism, and even distrust were evident. But all was bathed in prayer.”

PROTEST FOR INCLUSION AND EQUITY

During Fuller’s 2018 Baccalaureate service, a group of students and alumni emerged from the prayer garden wearing surgical masks, pulling IV bag stands, and holding signs protesting racial inequality they had experienced at the seminary. Juan Martinez, professor of Hispanic studies and pastoral leadership, remembers the seminary response: “The Spirit is speaking” and “We need to listen.” The protest was a difficult moment for others, and a clear call to action for the leadership of Fuller. It illustrated the depth of disappointment among many Black students at Fuller, intolerance for “just words” that might prove empty, and demands for change. “Today’s protest at Baccalaureate was a ‘painful gift’ that bears witness to injustice suffered by our African American students,” said President Mark Labberton. “We are at a crossroad: Change must happen.”

PHOTO ABOVE: A Los Angeles Times story covers the controversial course in 1986.
What follows in this theology section are biblical and theological reflections from our faculty and other theologians who consider disruption from their areas of expertise. The essays are varied, at times contradictory, honest, substantive, and earnestly faithful. The illustrations use the analogy of volcanic activity to trace the journey from stasis to destruction and rebirth that is the arc of disruption. We hope these reflections provoke thought and insight for you, as together we seek to learn where God is leading in this season of disruption.

Lo que sigue en esta sección de teología son reflexiones bíblicas y teológicas de los miembros de nuestro cuerpo de profesores, profesoras y otros teólogos que consideran la “disrupción” desde sus áreas de especialización. Los ensayos son variados, a veces contradictorios, honestos, significativos y sinceramente fieles. Las ilustraciones usan la analogía de la actividad volcánica para trazar el viaje desde la quietud hasta la destrucción y el renacimiento, que juntos representan la disrupción. Esperamos que estas reflexiones provoquen pensamiento y reflexión en ustedes, ya que juntos buscamos aprender a dónde nos lleva Dios en este tiempo de disrupción.

이어지는 신학 섹션에서는 풀러의 교수진과 그외의 신학자들이 자신의 전문 분야 내에서 배려한 성서적으로, 신학적으로 성찰하고 있습니다. 때로는 모순적이지만 정직하며, 깊이있고, 진정으로 진실한 다양한 예제가 소개됩니다. 신학적 화학활동이라는 오늘날 사회과학의 경계를 넘어서며 아래로, 그리고 생명으로 이루어지는 과거의 고통의 과정을 보여주고 있습니다. 이러한 경험이 여러분으로 학문적 상대에 통합될 수 있을까 바라며, 이 과학적 배열에 하나님이 인도하시는 것을 함께 알아갈 수 있기를 바랍니다.

“Your Dead Shall Live”: Disruption and Resurrection in the Life of God’s People
Christopher B. Hays
p. 30

Shaken to Remain—Fuller Moves
Terry Grove
p. 32

After 70 Years—Exile or Exodus?
A Theological Reflection on Fuller’s Move to Pomona
Hak Joon Lee
p. 38

Disruptions Meet Practical Theology
Mark Lau Branson
p. 42

Healing Where There Is No Cure: The Disruption of Illness
Miyoung Yoon Hammer
p. 50

Spirituality: A Facet of Resilience
Annie A. Turk Nolty, Jared K. Rensberger, Donald S. Bosch, Natalie Herring, J. Galen Buckwalter
p. 54

The Blessed Disruption of Hospitality
Alexia Salvatierra
p. 58
**“YOUR DEAD SHALL LIVE”: DISRUPTION AND RESURRECTION IN THE LIFE OF GOD’S PEOPLE**

Christopher B. Hays

The Old Testament has its roots in two great disruptions: the collapse of the Late Bronze Age geopolitical system and the Babylonian Exile. These came at the beginning and end, respectively, of the independent national existence of Israel and Judah. So the story of the God of Israel emerged as it did only because of disruptions, and in the ancient Near East, political disruptions were commonly imagined as a state of death. The affirmation that the Lord brings life out of death became a foundational confession in both testaments: it remains the core of the Christian faith, particularly powerful in times of suffering and trauma.

Out of this great disruption, Israel eventually arose. It was able to emerge as a nation because there was a power vacuum in the ancient Near East. Although archaeology and extrabiblical texts can tell us very little about the flourishing inventive energies of Babylon, it would have been possible because Egypt and Hatti no longer dominated the land. Their collapse made room for the power of regional kings and for their court scribes, who developed national idioms and began to record the stories that have become our Bible.

The biblical stories about the people’s roots in Egyptian oppression, and of divine salvation—vividly attested in the Amarna Letters, these were merely fought over by the pharaoh and extensive networks of trade and diplomacy vivaciously articulated in the Amarna Letters, these few powers bedeviled the world. There were numerous cities in the narrow middle land, which was sometimes called “Canaan,” but these were merely fought over by the pharaoh and the Hittite emperor. They primarily used a writing system imported from Mesopotamia.

This world order would have seemed quite permanent after centuries, but it was not. It came to an unexpectedly quick and violent turn in the turn of the 12th century BCE. This was the period of the “Sea Peoples,” a group of marauders that seemed to have worked their way across the western Mediterranean coast. No single factor caused it, but rather a conflagration of profoundly new ideas about what they did. Texts like the Mesha inscription or saved from an uprising, thanks the emperor who saved him and sacrificed to him the power of revivification; an Amorite kinglet wrote to the Hittite Hattusili III: “You are giving life to a dead man.” Much later, the same Cyrus of Persia who returned the Jews to their land after the exile was called by Babylonian scribes “the lord by whose aid the dead were revived.”

As it happens, the biblical authors were not the first to talk in this way. There are numerous ancient texts from before the time of the Bible in which a regional ruler, restored to his throne after a rebellion, thanks the god who saved him and sacrificed to him the power of revivification: “God’s paradigmatic answer to disruption Ios 6:1–3; Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:4–14). The same God who destroyed the cities and censured them of their own people also gave them a new beginning: “Your dead shall live.” Isaiah promises Ezekiel: “In the latest and most extensive of the aforementioned passages, Jesus Christ became our Bible, rather than the prophet’s warnings. Although there is an ample amount of preexilic literature in our Old Testament, it is often reinterpreted from a postexilic perspective. Never again have the people of God looked back on their history in the same way.

Sometimes this reflection is explicit, as when Psalm 89:49 asks, “Where is your steadfast love of former times, O Lord, that you swore to your faithfulness?” or when Lam- ontations ends with the implicit question of whether God has “utterly rejected us, and is [as] angry with us beyond measure” (Lam 5:22). Other times, as in the book of Job, the questions and reflections on suffering are refracted through literary conventions. But in other cases the disruption icons large.

Arguably, the Old Testament itself took on its present shape and distribution of roles reflect the world. The very name of Israel (“God struggles/ contends”) reflects these origins.

The end of the Exile marks the beginning of the first time the Torah was given, and to be spared the difficult self-reflection and reorientation that we current- ly face. Probably no one will compare it like Israel and Judah, we’ve given a few centuries of rest in the land of Pomona after this and before the next disruption. Nevertheless, the present traumas beckon us out of potentially false forms of confidence and closer to the experience of God’s people throughout the ages.

The months to come are likely to find us torn between lament and praise. We aspire to the faith of Job in his time of mourning—a faith that was itself only aspirational, only the be- ginning of a conversation “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.”

ENDNOTES
2. Both of these reference the book Anchor Bible Rocks! A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Texts (Sheffield: AAR Press, 2014). A number of recent scholars have used trauma theory to under- stand the Bible, two examples are Craig L. H. Claiborne, The Bible’s Theatrical Vectors (Yale University Press, 2014).
Tommy Givens, who joined the Fuller faculty in 2010, is associate profes-
sor of New Testament Studies, teaching courses in Spanish as well as
English. In addition to New Testament studies and theological ethics, Giv-
en’s research interests include Christian nonviolence, political theory,
ecology, and scriptural reasoning for Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations. He
has authored the book We People: Israel and the Catholicity of Jesus, as
well as numerous articles in academic journals, and has presented widely
in his areas of expertise.

"Now therefore thus says YHWH of hosts: Consider how you have fared. You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never
have your full; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you earn wages ear-
ner to put them into a bag with holes. . . . For thus says YHWH of hosts: Once again,
in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the dry land; and I will
shake all the peoples, so that the treasures of all peoples shall come, and I will fill this

"See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if our ancestors in the faith did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven?! At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Yet once and for all I will shake not only the earth but also heaven.’ Now this phrase, ‘Yet once and for all,’ indicates the taking up of shaken things as made things so that things unshaken will remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we worship God virtually with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:25–29.

"So the power of the Spirit. Rome’s peace was a destructive lie and a cover, and Jesus was a disturber of that peace. Yet the disruptive God
promised so politically seductive to evangelicals that can be at once powerful and joyful, if we imagine what disturbs us as a prelude to
triumph, it teaches us to refuse a neat story of progress. It guides us to avoid a single story of disruption from the outside that absolves us
of responsibility, one that minimizes our failings in order to deliver a hollow, rhetori-
cally inflated promise of success, which has proven as politically seductive to evangelicals and others in the United States. It invites us
instead to learn to discern together God’s fiery hand in the disruption we are experi-
cencing, calling and enabling us to grow into a future of service in and from Pomona, one that can be as once powerful and joyful, if we
walk justly. In fact, this calling and enabling involves our ability to name what injustice we have contributed to the disruption moving us to
Pomona so as to address it in the shape Fuller takes as we move.

But calling out our disruptive institutional failings, as the prophet Haggai does in the passage quoted above, is hard. Fuller lives in part
by a forceful market that attracts people to appearances and assurances of “growth,”
and naming those mistakes specifically? How not to underestimate the presence of the judging and saving God in mundane disruption?

Growing from the First Testament, the New Testament is a book of witness to disruption. Disruption brought by oppressive Roman rule
and others in the United States. It invites us to Pomona so as to address it in the shape Fuller takes as we move.

The horizon of Fuller’s life in and from a hub in the United States is worthy of some excitement, even as it is full of uncertainty. The oppor-
tunity for Fuller to reform itself into the seminary needed for our time is immense.

Yet, with Haggai as our guide, we should avoid certain temptations in the evangelical air and institutional water that we have in-
erited, particularly the tendency to form a clean, master narrative of triumph. Instead, Fuller invites us to recognize multiple, truthful stories
woven in healthy tension with one another. We must be transparent about the fact that Fuller has been forced to pursue such a disruptive
move not only because of declining
enrollment but also because of a protracted lack of financial and institutional discipline, which for years overextended our school. The weather for Christian higher education has indeed been bad lately, but we have had a hand in making it especially bad for Fuller. What is more, general enrollment numbers have not been meaningfully engaged

Optically, the beautifully dark city of Pasadena. And without a viable and public plan for how Fuller will help rather than hurt efforts to stem in Pomona the same gen-
trification that has engulfed, whitened, and segregated Pasadena, we cannot say soundly that we’re moving to a more fitting place for Fuller, certainly not that Fuller will be good for Pomona. Amidst the current trends in higher education and the global and digital spread of the Fuller network, some of us may even be tempted to navigate the current dis-
ruption by minimizing the geographic place of the Fuller campus altogether, to use “place” only metaphorically in yet another iteration of the whole Christian tendency to withdraw from the body and the earth, only to colonize those in spiritual disguise. But we cannot do this while saying meaningfully that we are committed to the place and community of Pomona, which we must as Christians. And claiming what little roots we have developed in Pasadena, saying: “Fuller is a people rather than a place,” is no way to digest the grief of leaving.

Technological disruption, itself an expres-
sion of wider cultural shifts, is one of the major forces shaking Fuller and requiring us to ask afresh what sort of education Fuller must deliver. Pomona will not be the center of Fuller, much as our Pasadena campus has ceased to be. The stories of our campus life will be only some among others centered elsewhere by virtue of digital technology. The crucial work of Fuller that does take place on our new campus in Pomona, from class ses-
sions to media production to library research, to one-on-one meetings between professors and students, will not necessarily be rep-
resentative of what Fuller people are doing in other places. As we respond to the different needs of our many places, then, the contribu-
tions of faculty as researchers, writers, and classroom teachers will be part of a whole

The book of Hebrews invokes this ultimate shaking as the work of Jesus in the passage quoted above. It is a messianic eruption growing from its seed, the fiery quaking of Sinai that shook Israel’s life loose from the enslaving web of Egypt and set it on the path of promise. If these ancient ancestors in the faith did not escape the pressures of market pressures that encourage education-
al control and creation only from a remote market center in Pomona, with nothing but conformity and consumption anywhere else, we must grow soundly enough in our various particular places to have something worth sharing with other places. Will our work in and from Pomona be grounded and common enough? Will it be service?

Haggai does not leave his shaken generation or ours without hope, if we can see long and publicly enough with the truth of our failings so as to address them rather than reiterate them as we move ahead, if we can move justly. The Spirit of God remains with the people of God, the prophet says, so that we need not be further corrupted and fragment-
end by fear. He promised in his day that the God at work in the people’s partly self-indicted disruption would again shake the heavens and the earth, as God had in Egypt and in the invasion and exile of Israel, this time rat-
tifying all the peoples, of which we at Fuller today are members. The effect, as the work of God’s people proved common and serving, would be a life filled with the vitality and ma-
terial gifts of all the peoples. Our shared life in service to the one, uniting God can grow into joined places of splendor.

The disruption caused by the ideological and technological weather in conjunction with our own deep flaws is shaking Fuller and exposing some of what is shakeable about our seminary. As we move our main campus to Pomona, some of us may or may not collaborate according to our

The book of Haggai announced is finally the disrupting judgment of the risen Jesus, which is rattling everything that humanity has made on the earth, using even the disruption we have brought upon ourselves, so that only what has been transformed by God into the un-
shakeable will remain.
**AFTER 70 YEARS—EXILE OR EXODUS? A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON FULLER’S MOVE TO POMONA**

Hak Joon Lee

We live in an extraordinary time—a time of "the great disruption." From mass migration and urbanization to the digitization of our culture, changes are profound, touching almost every aspect of our lives. Of course, disruption and change are not new in human history. However, the level of transformation unfolding in our time is different from that of previous eras: it is global, interconnected, and is disrupting trade, politics, identities, values, and even the very nature of our social interactions and sense of identity. Indeed, the current disruption is axial in nature. Rarely in history has humanity experienced such disruption in terms of its magnitude, depth, and scope. A major source of this great disruption is globalization, which is driven by neoliberal economic forces and technological advances. The idea of a bounded community is increasingly obsolete in a global society, people can freely move around and interact with each other online without the mediation of states. They are increasingly disembodied from face-to-face relationships and communities; this mobility alters people’s experiences and habits as well as their sense of identity and social relationships. Thus, global civilization is entering a new, unknown era. In the midst of this change and transition many feel like Rip Van Winkle, a character in Washington Irving’s novel, who woke up after a long sleep only to find that the world had dramatically changed. In this era of profound disruption, nobody knows what the future will look like.

The great disruption has thrown humanity into the wilderness—a time of anxiety, fear, and emotional homelessness. Specifically, globalization deepens the gap between generations (baby boomers and millennials) classes (the rich and the poor), and racial-ethnic groups, which religious fundamentalists and exclusivists have used as their own extremist agendas. Brexit, the election of Trump, a rise in illiberal democracy and nativism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and Islamophobia are reactions to these radical disruptions taking place in our communities.

Globalization and interrelated disruptions are also radically impacting Christian churches and Christian higher education— including seminaries—in the United States and other post-industrial societies. As traditional communities and institutions are getting "shelled," churches and seminaries are also losing their appeal to people. Church membership is declining, more seminaries are closing its doors, and younger generations are turning their backs on Christianity. Disruption is profound; the traditional ways of theological education, and of thinking about and practicing the Christian faith, are not working for young generations.

**FULLER IN THE GREAT DISRUPTION**

Fuller is not exempt from the impact of this great disruption. It is wreaking up to the harshest changing realities of Christian higher education: financial pressures, declining student enrollment, and a shrinking public space for progressive evangelicals in society. The decision to move from Pasadena to Pomona is shocking and painful for many, as if God is calling us to step into an unknown land, to be shepherds of the church in this new place. Compared to our Pasadena home— with its internationally famous Rose Bowl, its blockbuster films, and its famous identity as a place in our communities.

Disruption is not unfamiliar to Christians. The Bible has many stories of disruption, and God is not afraid of disrupting God’s people. By nature, revolution is a disruptive event as it shakes our ordinary sense of life and customary understanding of reality. God’s call is always a challenge, and God’s calling implies time and space, a way that is more consistent with the covenantal vision of the Bible and the founding documents. With a goal of the renewal of America, his prophetic criticism and nonviolent campaigns touched on racial, economic, and international relationships and democracies. Under King’s leadership, the goal of the Civil Rights Movement was about more than dismantling Jim Crow. It was about changing people and society through the revolutionary transformation of values—what one votes, how one spends one’s money, where one lives, but also how one treats others, what one’s moral priorities are, and ultimately who one serves. Rather than channeling his message narrowly— to Black rights, King boldly cast his vision for humanity and America (the beloved community first and later the great world house where diversity in unity is practiced), and endeavored to renew and expand the American democratic tradition and Constitution by adding an economic bill of rights. His faith response to disruption
in the post-WWII world was to be an instrument of divine disruption for peace, justice, and love of humanity.

King’s response was not so different from that of Jesus and the early Christians. Facing the violent disruption of the Roman Empire, they responded with a radical new message of the kingdom. They were willing to disrupt the status quo of injustice, violence, and self-indulgence for the sake of a new world of common flourishing. Jesus mobilized the brown-skinned, grassroots, and underclass people of Galilee—a land of violence and collective trauma—with the new political economy of God’s kingdom.

Many, including white liberal theologians, accused King of moving “too fast” in his reform movement. However, when we look back upon this time, we see a nation missed an opportunity to radically address long overdue racial injustices (dating all the way to the time of the Puritans) and economic inequalities. We used resources for an ill-conceived war in Vietnam, where we spent half a million dollars for each Vietcong that was killed. Change delayed is now haunting us in the form of deepening poverty, racial tensions and conflicts, and urban decay. King’s last campaign, the Poor People’s campaign, was deeply misunderstood and treated as nonsense—just like Noah’s Ark—but who knows how salvation could have been if it were successful.

Our time calls for radical spiritual and moral transformation to address the root problems of our society. It has become increasingly clear that the status quo does not work, as it will lead to a deeper crisis, including the possibility of human self-destruction, either in war or ecological disaster.

For evangelicals, the great disruption (and its ensuing economic inequality and concentration of power) challenges us to reset the default mode of evangelicalism—its very understanding of the gospel and ministry practices—to put new wines in new wineskins. In the manner that King’s movement was for the renewal of America itself, Fuller, as a theological institution, is called to undertake this task of recasting the vision of ministry in the 21st century and proclaiming the holistic gospel of liberation and restoration that disrupts the status quo of greedy neoliberalism, decaying white nativism, and ecclisial anthropocentrism. The process inevitably requires the reinvention of theological education and the curriculum itself. This is not a small task, as it requires constant prayer, confession and repentance, intellectual rigor and new learning, and most importantly the gift of fresh inspiration from God. When we are able to achieve this goal, the move to Pomona will not be an exile but an exodus toward the promised land. Rather than being intoxicated or victimized by anxiety about an unknown, insecure future or nostalgia for the past, we need to dare to imagine a new future that is more authentic to the practice of our faith.

A difficult time is ahead of us. The journey will be a messy process with many push and pulls, actions and reactions. But I believe that God’s grace will be sufficient to guide us, with pillars of fire and cloud, as far as we trust God in this wilderness journey. Hence, we need to be faithful, courageous, and creative, as we are called to be creative disruptors of injustices and builders of God’s beloved community in this time of the great disruption.

ENDNOTES

1. For the nature and magnitude of disruption in the information age, see Francis Fukuyama’s book The Great Disruption: Human Authenticity and the Reconfiguration of Social Order (New York: Touchstone, 1995).

2. According to scholars, this is only the third time in history that humanity has experienced this magnitude of disruption first from hunting/gathering to agricultural, second from agricultural to industrial, and now from industrial to post-industrial.


5. H. J. Law, We Will Get to the Promised Land: Martin Luther King Jr., A Negro Pentecostal Spirituality (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006), 43–44.


Mark Lau Branson is the Homer L. Goddard Professor of the Ministry of the Laity and has taught at Fuller since 2000, focusing on congregational leadership and community engagement. He coordinates the MAP program in Practical Theology in Fuller’s School of Theology. Branson was ordained at San Francisco Christian Center, an African American Pentecostal church, and, in addition to serving on church pastoral teams, he has worked with several agencies active in education, community development, and community organizing. He is currently active as a senior consultant with the Missional Network in both the US and South Korea and is on the board of the online journal MissionalPractice.com.

DISRUPTIONS MEET PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Mark Lau Branson

LET’S pretend, for a moment, that strategic planning works. Or that the behavioral habits of your organization are consistently meeting expectations. Or that your society treats people as if they are created in God’s image. Or that your vocation, your work, and your income are all insync. Or that the theology you claim to believe, when practiced, has the outcomes you anticipate.

Now imagine counter-experiences. Think of situations in which carefully, prayerfully made plans failed to reach your goals. Recall situations in which the habits of your church or other organization tended to have unexpected outcomes. Consider ways your society or nation fails to treat people as God’s image-bearers. Reflect on disjunctions between the theology you claim, the theology you practice, and how God does not always prevent, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage the conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions?

When there is pain and fear involved, we ask: What happened? Who’s to blame? How do we fix it? What can we do to lessen the pain? My focus is theological. How do we think about God in the midst of disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions?

When there is pain and fear involved, we ask: What happened? Who’s to blame? How do we fix it? What can we do to lessen the pain? My focus is theological. How do we think about God in the midst of disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions?

When there is pain and fear involved, we ask: What happened? Who’s to blame? How do we fix it? What can we do to lessen the pain? My focus is theological. How do we think about God in the midst of disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions?

When there is pain and fear involved, we ask: What happened? Who’s to blame? How do we fix it? What can we do to lessen the pain? My focus is theological. How do we think about God in the midst of disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions?

When there is pain and fear involved, we ask: What happened? Who’s to blame? How do we fix it? What can we do to lessen the pain? My focus is theological. How do we think about God in the midst of disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions?

When there is pain and fear involved, we ask: What happened? Who’s to blame? How do we fix it? What can we do to lessen the pain? My focus is theological. How do we think about God in the midst of disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions?

When there is pain and fear involved, we ask: What happened? Who’s to blame? How do we fix it? What can we do to lessen the pain? My focus is theological. How do we think about God in the midst of disruptions? My concern here is not with the problem of theodicy, regarding whether God caused, or should have prevented, some disruption. Rather, in the aftermath of a disruption, how can we engage practices that help us discern God in the surprising situation, especially regarding new options?9

The stories that Luke provides in the book of Acts show us that disruptions of all types were common as God’s reign engaged the Roman world. Luke writes about stoning, civic unrest, arrests, shipwreck, and broken relationships. A brief look at chapter 16 shows several disruptions. Paul’s mission team is diverted repeatedly by the Holy Spirit as they travel westward. They arrive in Troas, which would be considered a worthy site, but Paul has a night vision, and expectations are disrupted as a discussion leads to a new itinerary toward Macedonia. Several days of expectant explorations in Philippi lead to nothing, then a Sabbath search outside the gates brings them into a conversation with a group of women. Lydia, a businesswoman and God-fearer, engages the conversation, welcoming her message and baptism for herself and her household. Evidently the vision of a “man from Macedonia” is a woman from Thyatira! Here as throughout Acts, God is always initiating—that needs to be at the center of our reflections on disruptions? 
for Carol there was a shift in contextual realities: for James there was a shift in his awareness concerning the church’s (and his) practices of ministry and the on-the-ground situation in his own neighborhood. So the disruptive challenges included matters of context and among the people, and the work for Carol and James (and their church) is to discern and test a way forward. I will clarify that central affiliation and description an approach to theology that is suitable for disruptions. So, it needs to be noted, practical theology is both an academic discipline and a way of discernment for churches and leaders.9

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AS DISCERNMENT
As an academic discipline, practical theology has emerged from a role frequently seen as subservient to other fields of study to become a field of rigorous work that refuses to separate theory from practice. At earlier times, subject areas that were considered more academic —biblical studies, systematic theology, church history— were considered to discover and formulate truths that were then applied to society. By that claim we bring our theories from practice to influence the church. This “theory-to-practice” method was even frequently adopted by those who taught in various ministry areas. As other areas of theory became valued by ministry professionals, such as psychology, sociology, organizational studies, and communications, professors and authors labored to create correlations among such disciplines. In that theory-to-practice mode, the “truths” of management or marketing or persuasion were linked, sometimes in questionable ways, with doctrines or biblical passages.

This situation is the result of modernity, in which the Enlightenment’s pursuit of certainty, universal truths, and human control were unabashed in how universities sought truth,10 all based on what Pascal named as if God is the primary agent (this is what is at stake in the theological concepts of grace, missio Dei, pneumatology, and soteriology), then central to our taxation is discernment and participation. Disruptions make this more acute, but they don’t change our calling. God is present and active, and we are invited to join.11

RATHER THAN A THEORY-TO-PRACTICE MODE, PRACTICAL THEOLOGY FRAMES OUR WORK AS PRACTICE-THEORY-PRACTICE. ACTUAL, NO ONE EVER BEGINS WITH THEORY; THAT FRAME IS AN ILLUSION. WE BRING OUR SCRIPTURE, THEOLOGIES, AND PRAXIS TO THE SITUATION. AS THE FIGURE ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE INDICATES, I SUGGEST A CONTROVERSCY-SEQUENCE, BUT IN REALITY THE PROCESS CAN BENEFIT FROM RESEQUENCI NG OR DOUBLE-BACK TO A PREVIOUS STEP, DEPENDING ON WHAT IS BEING LEARNED AND IMAGINED.

Rather than a theory-to-practice mode, practical theology frames our work as practice-theory-practice. Actually, no one ever begins with theory; that frame is an illusion. We bring our Scripture, theologies, and praxis to the situation. As the figure on the opposite page indicates, I suggest a counterclockwise sequence, but in reality the process can benefit from resequencing or double-back to a previous step, depending on what is being learned and imagined. This process of critical reflection emphasizes that we not only consider new information but also give attention to our own assumptions, including how those assumptions need to be questioned. According to Stephen Brookfield, “Someone who thinks critically can identify assumptions behind thinking and actions, check assumptions for accuracy and validity, view ideas and actions from multiple perspectives, and take informed action.”12 This is hard work and requires that we engage the process at both the personal and group level. A leader has the work of shaping an environment in which this process can be engaged—all focused on God’s current initiatives and our (perhaps stumbling) steps as believing practitioners.13

PRACTICES OF ACTION-REFLECTION
The disruptions that Carol and James faced called them to a participatory process that brought leaders and members into new, thoughtful, prayerful steps of research, study, storytelling, discernment, and experiments. In addition to expanding their descriptions of their current situations (step one), they created teams that pursued different aspects of research (step two). Some of this was online work, but both learned that as participants walked their neighborhoods, asking God to guide their conversations and awareness, they were drawn repeatedly into life-on-life encounters and saw how God was already at work in lives of their neighbors. (This shows the overlap between steps two and four) Each time their discernment teams gathered they spent time in Scripture, looking for how the Spirit would help them see connections between biblical texts and their own experiences (step three).14 Our church traditions also have resources in theology and history that can be brought into the group reflections.

Often, if the process includes learning from neighbors, step five will already have been engaged because participants needed to take...
steps into the neighborhood as part of their learning. Stop five is about drawing together what is being learned and imagined. The goal will experience wounds; leaders and other participants need to recognize and attend to those wounds as part of the process. Disruptions bring loss, meaning and data (such as social sciences). That theoretical work is important, but my priorities are on academic approaches to practical theology, see B. Miller-McLemore, “Contributions of Practical Theology,” In The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology, ed. B. Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, 2014), 1–20. My own studies are currently engaged with the growing diversity in this field: The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology: An Introduction (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2015) and T. Grove, Doing Local Theology: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), especially chs. 15.

7. As an academic discipline, practical theology does not always include this connection (that God is the primary agent) and purpose (discerning God’s current activities so that we might participate). Frequently it is about correlating conceptual matters of theology with other theoretical materials and data (such as social sciences). That theoretical work is important, but my priorities are on academic approaches that serve the daily life of believers, churches, and other groups of Christians.

8. The best way to explore God’s initiatives beyond their present circumstances and contexts. Because the center of practical theology is to discern God’s presence and activity (discerning God’s current activities so that we might participate). Disruptions bring loss, meaning and data (such as social sciences). That theoretical work is important, but my priorities are on academic approaches to practical theology, see B. Miller-McLemore, “Contributions of Practical Theology,” In The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology, ed. B. Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, 2014), 1–20. My own studies are currently engaged with the growing diversity in this field: The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology: An Introduction (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2015) and T. Grove, Doing Local Theology: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), especially chs. 15.


ENDNOTES


2. I want to note something else. When we think about disruptions, we tend to focus on what we consider to be negative experiences, but our lives can be disrupted by love, beauty, kindness, and other surprises. Such interruptions are also opportunities for critical reflection and potential new thinking and acting.

3. Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky name patterns of avoiding disruptions. They write that “Making adaptive change in leadership on the line (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), Robert Kegan and Lisa LiEWELL Kegan engage the challenges that disruptions bring to leaders and organizations and offer important resources for more adaptive adult formation in evidence-based (Boston: Harvard Business School, 2009), obviously the key theological priorities of this article are not engaged in these insightful works.

4. In Heifetz and Linsky’s Leadership on the Line, the important distinction between adaptive and technical challenges is explained. Alan Robacker’s Structuring for Maslow (Glovers Grove, IL: NP Academic, 2016) names the less of attention to God’s agency in churches, denominations, and other faith organizations. see especially pages 102–9.

5. The church in North American is currently experiencing a disruption regarding the ecclesial assumptions and patterns that have developed since the European context, see the excellent study by Craig Van Gelder and David Zacharias. Participating in God’s Mission, Theological Reflection in the Church in America (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).

6. Among missiologists, these questions are about “local theologies” or the work of believers regarding God’s local context, and their participation; see R. Schneider, Constructing Local Theologies (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990) and C. Sadnak, Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002).
HEALING WHERE THERE IS NO CURE: THE DISRUPTION OF ILLNESS

Miyoung Yoon Hammer

B
esides birth and death, illness is the only experience that every human will encounter at one time or another. Whether it is the common cold, a progressive disease, or terminal cancer, we are confronted by the limitations of our physical existence, reminding us that we are mortal and that “from dust we are and to dust we shall return” (Gen 3:19). Although health disparities exist and mortality rates among people of color and those with lower socioeconomic status are higher, in the end no one is exempt from illness and eventual death. And yet, in spite of this knowledge of our mortal existence, illness is considered to be one of the most disruptive events. Although illness cannot be compared in magnitude to the impact of events such as natural disasters or war, at the micro-level of individuals and the radius of family members and loved ones around them, the effects can be felt at a deep and profound level and, in effect, life-changing.

The primary reason illness is so disruptive is because among the many losses that occur with it, the most significant is the loss of control—control of our health, control of how we engage in relationships, control of our ability to be productive in our work, control of our capacity to care for those who need us, and control of being able to determine our future. In most Western cultures, where priority is placed on self-efficiency and self-determination, the unpredictable nature of illness and loss of control that ensues can result in fear, anxiety, and hopelessness about restoring a sense of normalcy and purpose. Furthermore, a person’s ability to find meaning in all that is happening becomes challenged, and it is often seen that the only way for a sense of normalcy to be restored is by eliminating the cause of disruption: that the illness be eradicated and all symptoms cease. In fact, this search for disease eradication and cure is at the heart of most clinical and research efforts within science and medicine. But what happens when the option for disease eradication does not exist? Can there still be healing?

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE AND THE PARADOX OF PEACE

The Christian narrative provides us with the answer—“Yes”—and a template for living into this story of healing in the context of no cure because it is not unlike the way we live with the hope of redemption amidst our sin. On this side of heaven, there is no cure for sin. We still suffer, we still experience pain, and we still grieve death. Christ’s death and resurrection did not eliminate sin on earth, and yet we believe in the promise for redemption that was made possible because of his resurrection. N. T. Wright writes, “The resurrection of Jesus is for Paul, the prototype of the new creation.”1 His death is a substitution for our eternal death and, in his resurrection, we have hope for our own in becoming a new creation.

As we consider what this means for our lives, we can look to Christ’s resurrected yet wounded body as an emblem of our redemption narrative. Just as the wounds remained in his resurrected body, pain and suffering remain in the Christian’s life. But what Christ’s resurrection did was to purge all power from those wounds. As Erin Dufault-Hunter writes, “Taken into the body of the world yet triumphant Christ, our own abrasions—whatever their source, whatever their form—also become ways we are known honestly, nakedly, and without shame. For God as loved this wounded world, John claims, that he takes those wounds into himself and thus strips them of disgrace.”2 Thus, healing means we live not with fear of the pain that is of this world, but instead with the conviction that God’s love has authority over all pain and the power to redeem it.

To believe there can be healing when there is no cure is an important consideration connected to the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family

for a first-time mother-to-be to facilitate a family’s approach their work with clients affected by illness.

This perspective helps me, as a MedFT, to believe there can be healing when there is no cure. It reminds me of the known benefits of these groups, they participate in the group. But perhaps the most noteworthy reason is that, in spite of the known benefits of these groups, they serve as constant reminders that life isn’t going as planned. In this developmental life stage of families with young children and adolescents, one of the primary tasks of a parent is to provide a balance of protection, structure, predictability, adventure, and a consistent secure presence. Parental illness compromises these expectations and disrupts notions of a normal family
life. Furthermore, when the threat of diminished capacity or death is real, this disruption impacts all dimensions of well-being—physical, spiritual, psychological, relational, and emotional. Thus, although as a professional I know how beneficial support groups can be, I understand why any parent would refuse to participate. It doesn’t always seem that the benefit of pain and uncertainties of illness outweighs expressing feelings and understanding the psychosocial impact of illness. Nevertheless, the psychological, relational, and emotional. Thus, although as a professional I know how beneficial support groups can be, I understand why any parent would refuse to participate. It doesn’t always seem that the benefit of pain and uncertainties of illness outweighs expressing feelings and understanding the psychosocial impact of illness outweighs the emotional exhaustion of processing the pain and uncertainties of illness.

To my surprise, the parent couples in my group were ready to talk and showed up with hard questions: “How do we talk to our children about death?” “How do we maintain normalcy for our children when our bodies. The terminal cancer became an impetus for their efforts to reconcile and heal their relationships and seek peace for themselves. Perhaps more importantly, their belief that they could seek healing was a way that they were no longer allowing the wounds of pending death to have power over them and their families and the remainder of their lives on earth. Almost 15 years later, I still think about the members of that group and the courage they demonstrated as they navigated one of the most disruptive seasons of their lives. There were many tears and not everyone made it to the end of the program. Our sessions were not easy, but they were good. The couples were finding ways to have hope in the midst of loss and, particularly for the two couples who were Christians, they were beginning to see how God was in even this. Not all of the members of the group came to this conclusion, but some of them declared that “cancer is a gift.” By no means did this declaration diminish how heartbroken they were for their children at the suffering, pain, and loss that accompanied the terminal cancer. They spent more quality time together and, as a result, they savored as much as they could. Would they exchange all of that for a life with their children? Probably. But that was not an option, and they eventually began to see the good that could come of their painful situation.

In fact, so many of the patients I have worked with have talked about illness (not always cancer) as a gift as they were confronted with their mortality, reevaluated their lives, and began to live differently. They no longer took the good things in life for granted and were less likely to tolerate the bad. They found many unexpected blessings in their “new normal” and were less likely to live with regret. I think my patients understand something that is fundamental to the Christian life. Living faithfully into the narrative as Christ’s people means we are spared disruption and the suffering, pain, and loss that accompanies it. Our faith and our hope are found in seeing the good that could come of their painful situation. In fact, so many of the patients I have worked with have talked about illness (not always cancer) as a gift as they were confronted with their mortality, reevaluated their lives, and began to live differently. They no longer took the good things in life for granted and were less likely to tolerate the bad. They found many unexpected blessings in their “new normal” and were less likely to live with regret. I think my patients understand something that is fundamental to the Christian life. Living faithfully into the narrative as Christ’s people means we are spared disruption and the suffering, pain, and loss that accompanies it. Our faith and our hope are found in seeing the good that could come of their painful situation.
There are no definitive answers to any of these questions, but the paradigm has shifted from a focus on people showing non-resilient behavior (a deficit-based vulnerability model) toward a focus on the cognitive and emotional negotiation and management of the sources of stress or trauma shown by resilient individuals. In other words, resilience is not simply a lack of psychopathology in response to difficult challenges, but rather an outcome of good survival through adversity, through a process of adaptation, which often results in psychological growth. The book of Acts is largely a case study in resilience. The early apostles experienced the seizing and execution of their leader, followed by exile, arrests, beatings, and further executions. Paul especially exuded resilience. He experienced repeated traumas, any one of which might have ended his career (or any way). He witnessed the stoning of Steven (Acts 7:54–60). He escaped a plot on his life by being lowered out of a window in a basket (Acts 9:23–25). He was beaten by an enraged crowd (Acts 14:19). And on and on. When Paul says “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13), we have to believe him. Yet many of the people who fail to overcome roadblocks in their lives are people of faith. It’s just that Paul’s statement that he can do all things doesn’t tell us how to do all things. So what makes individuals resilient? Resilience is an elusive concept, because it is impossible to know with certainty how we will react to future trauma. It is precisely this uncertainty, according to Peters, McEvoy, and Frisone, that produces stress—and, along with the uncertainty, a lack of a sense of control. We do not have access to the actual brain processes that result in resilience. So, to do scientific work on resilience, we look for things that are correlated with resilient behavior. We have learned that individuals who are most likely to be resilient have resilient cognitive and psychological features, and they engage in resilient practices that have been shaped by cultural and social resources as well as by specific life circumstances. In terms of the “big five” personality traits, extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness to experience are all correlated with resilience.

SPIRITUALITY AND OTHER ATTITUDES OF RESILIENCE
Promoting protective factors has been shown to be more effective in increasing resilience than reducing risk factors, even to the extent of becoming relatively immune or impervious to the negative effects of stress. Resilience factors exist at the individual, familial, and community levels and are formed developmentally over time. People who are more open to spiritual experiences and who have a positive outlook on life tend to display higher levels of resilience. Correlates of resilience also include prior successes, a commitment to personal or collective goals, an action-oriented approach, spiritual resources, a sense of purpose in life, social support, emotion regulation and physical activity, and the capacity for adequate sleep and nutrition.

We have found all of these characteristics associated with aspects of resilience in humanitarian workers. We can also see that Paul had many of these characteristics, which may have contributed to his extraordinary resilience. He was driven by his commitment to the goal of spreading the gospel of Jesus, which gave him a sense of purpose. He frequently cultivated the social support he needed, and he presumably had considerable spiritual resources. The World Health Organization has declared that “for many people, religion, personal beliefs and spirituality are a source of comfort, wellbeing, security, meaning, sense of belonging, purpose and strength.” Essentially, a belief system can provide relief, strength, and the power to overcome hardships, especially when there is a focus on a relationship with a spiritual being and on meaning making. The trauma itself can be a catalyst to delve deeper into spiritual and religious practices and beliefs, which in turn have been reported to often result in positive religious coping and posttraumatic growth. Are, inner peace, and hope predict a positive quality of life, while spiritual strength is associated with less stress. Having a purpose in life likely provides the motivation to “constructively learn from and reappraise negative events in an adaptive manner and avoid brooding and ruminative tendencies, so as to quickly resolves on one’s goals and purpose.”

THE BRAIN’S RESPONSE TO STRESS
Cortisol is a hormone that promotes survival during dangerous situations by facilitating the body’s autonomic fight-or-flight, physiological response system, improving learning and memory. DHEA also has positive effects on behavior and cognition such that, should Paul have experienced symptoms of posttraumatic stress, increased levels of DHEA may have played a role in his recovery. Evidence suggests that levels of DHEA are lower in depressed individuals. Although, in Paul’s case, they likely enhanced adaptation as his brain efficiently mobilized adaptive mechanisms. DHEA likely protected his hippocampus from cortisol, improving learning and memory. DHEA also has positive effects on behavior and cognition such that, should Paul have experienced symptoms of posttraumatic stress, increased levels of DHEA may have played a role in his recovery. Evidence suggests that levels of DHEA are lower in depressed individuals. Therefore, while cortisol and DHEA play different
I find meaning in my work), and Life Satisfaction Inventory (HRI), a measure developed for use with humanitarian aid workers. The HRI included 38 items that constitute seven factors, with items rated on a 7-point Likert scale with anchors of 1 (not at all), 4 (Somewhat), and 7 (Very). Correlational analyses found spirituality (e.g., ‘My life is enriched by my spiritual beliefs, practices, and/or experiences”) was significantly correlated with the DHEA/cortisol ratio at a strong level, whereas, unexpectedly, Adaptation of the Response to Stressful Experiences Scale, a measure developed for use with humanitarian aid workers. The RSES consists of 10 items, with scores ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Research has identified several characteristics, experiences, and practices that resilient people tend to have. One of these is spiritualism—which is a very broad concept (see Warren Brown’s comparison of religiousness and baseball in issue 5 of FULLER magazine). Do we know what kind of spirituality is most important in predicting resilience? Is it beliefs? Prayer life? Community Practice? There is room for a great deal more research in this area.

Perhaps the more important question is this: Are there things we can do to increase our resilience, other than after a traumatic event? Some of the psychological correlates of resilience are things we have no control over—the number and kind of stressful events we have already experienced, for example, or even traits of our personality. Other factors, however, such as our social support and physical and spiritual exercises, can be changed with dedication and motivation. This does not mean that such changes will immediately result in increased resilience. However, we, and many other careful researchers, are accumulating increasing evidence that the systematic and maintained promotion of protective factors is effective in increasing resilience.

It is an exciting time to be a resilience researcher, as we are turning our attention from the academic to the practical. Perhaps within a few years, we will know for sure which interventions tend to increase resilience for which specific person. In the meantime, increasing one’s spiritual resources is an appropriate step toward bolstering one’s capacity for resilience.

ENDNOTES

5. C. W. McEwen; “Psychobiological Allostasis: Theuessing and Allostatic Load: Implica-
10. Kent and Davis; “Resilience Training.”
15. Kent and Davis; “Resilience Training.”
THE BLESSED DISRUPTION OF HOSPITALITY

Alexia Salvatierra

“It is very biblical to enforce the law.” White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, on the morality of separating over 2,000 children from their migrant parents at the border (June 12, 2018, CBN News)

“It’s disgraceful. It’s terrible to see families ripped apart and I don’t support that one bit.” Rev. Franklin Graham, on the situation at the border (June 12, 2018, CBN News)

“It is not the fact that I choose . . . when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?” Isaiah 58:6–7

“There is one body and one Spirit . . . one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4:4–6

Anywho belongs to a large, extended family network that includes people living in poverty knows about that phone call. A member of the family needs help: whatever else is happening, it’s not acceptable to ignore the cry. It is the responsibility of every member of the family “not to hide yourself from your own kin.” We are taught from birth that we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers.

The biblical mandate to hospitality goes beyond the responsibility to blood family. First, the concept of family shifts when we understand that there is one heavenly Father who created us all. While there can be legitimate debate in the church over the difference between our sibling relationship as believers and our connections with those outside the faith, we cannot avoid the truth that we have some sort of family obligation to all human beings. We also recognize that our closest spiritual family includes brothers and sisters in Christ from other countries who are currently seeking our hospitality.

There are Christians fleeing terrible violence in Central America and seeking asylum in the United States. The majority of the families who were detained at the border earlier in 2018 whose children were placed in separate detention facilities were Central Americans seeking asylum. Over 40 percent of Hondurans and Guatemalans are evangelical, less than 15 percent of the population of Central America is non-Christian. Syrian Christians are also begging for refuge. Familiar justice is my shorthand phrase for God’s call to life as if we are a family. The truth is that we cannot escape being familial; we can only be a healthy family or a dysfunctional one.

Over 50 verses in the Old and New Testament call the people of God to offer hospitality, to welcome the stranger, and to share our resources. The call to welcome the stranger is not in itself an immigration policy. The development and maintenance of an immigration system is complex. Our current system in the United States is ineffective, illogical, and often unjust and inhumane. Bipartisan immigration reform proposals in 2007 and 2013 were supported by a broad spectrum of legislators; the 2013 proposal completed by “the gang of eight” (four Republicans and four Democrats) passed the Senate but was never brought to the floor of the House of Representatives. The Dream Act, which would provide an option for obtaining legal status to young individuals 12–30 years old, has passed, however, because telephone calls to legislators have been overwhelmingly negative. While most Americans seem to favor immigration policies that would be effective, fair, and humane, the issue is not important enough to their lives to contact their congressional representatives regularly. Those who believe that immigrants represent a threat to their well-being perceive the issue as critically important and contact their representatives regularly.

The resistance of the anti-immigrant forces and the indifference of most Americans are natural reactions. The call to hospitality is essentially disruptive. The customary process of using one’s resources to meet one’s own individual goals and care for one’s immediate family is disrupted by the request from outside to share. The knock on the door as the family sits down to dinner is inconvenient at best, exasperating at worst. The call from the family member in need can easily be a headache and a burden. The tired, poor, and huddled masses yearning to be free can easily represent a potential drain and threat to our families and communities. However, the call to hospitality has profound spiritual implications. Henri Nouwen, the great Christian author, says that one of the core movements of the spiritual life is the transition from hostility to hospitality:

“The first characteristic of the spiritual life is the continuing movement from loneliness to solitude. Its second equally important characteristic is the movement by which our hostilities can be converted into hospitality. It is there that our changing relationship to our self can be brought to fruition in an ever-changing relationship to our fellow human beings. It is there that we reach out to our innermost self to lead us to a reaching out to the many strangers whom we meet on our way through life. In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture and country, from their neighbors, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found. . . . It is possible for men and women and families for Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings.”

Alexia Salvatierra is a Lutheran pastor with over 40 years of experience in congregational and community ministry in both English and Spanish, including church-based service and community development programs, congregational community organizing, and legislative advocacy. An affiliate professor for Fuller’s Centro Latino and School of Intercultural Studies, she has also served as adjunct faculty for many other institutions. With Peter Heltzel she authored Faith-Rooted Organizing UnNetwork. She was founder of the Faith-Rooted Hospitality. The Blessed Disruption of Hospitality. The Dream Act, which would provide an option for obtaining legal status to young individuals 12–30 years old, has passed, however, because telephone calls to legislators have been overwhelmingly negative. While most Americans seem to favor immigration policies that would be effective, fair, and humane, the issue is not important enough to their lives to contact their congressional representatives regularly. Those who believe that immigrants represent a threat to their well-being perceive the issue as critically important and contact their representatives regularly. The resistance of the anti-immigrant forces and the indifference of most Americans are natural reactions. The call to hospitality is essentially disruptive. The customary process of using one’s resources to meet one’s own individual goals and care for one’s immediate family is disrupted by the request from outside to share. The knock on the door as the family sits down to dinner is inconvenient at best, exasperating at worst. The call from the family member in need can easily be a headache and a burden. The tired, poor, and huddled masses yearning to be free can easily represent a potential drain and threat to our families and communities. However, the call to hospitality has profound spiritual implications. Henri Nouwen, the great Christian author, says that one of the core movements of the spiritual life is the transition from hostility to hospitality:
While Christians have always struggled we do not own anything that we have; we give or share, the same Giver who provided with questions of responsible legitimate with our fundamental orientation must be open the call of hospitality is at its root a call to our society than they cost. 6 The majority of undocumented immigrants are employed under false Social Security numbers. The funds withdrawn from their paychecks go into a special account in the Social Security Administra tion that will never be returned to them even if their status is regularized.4 In 2012 a review of the impact of undocumented immi grants on Social Security, Stephen Gross, the chief actuary of the Social Security Administration, stated, “We estimate that earnings by unauthorized immigrants result in a net positive effect on Social Security financial status gen erally, and that this effect contributed roughly $2 billion to the cash flow of the program for 2010.” Apart from these taxes and the sales taxes that immi grants also pay, immigrants are much more likely to start a small business than non-immigrants. Hospitality is essentially disruptive. It requires that we remember our needy family members—family united by blood, by the waters of baptism, and by our common Creator—even at those moments when we want to focus our energy on our own individual goals. It calls us to open the door to the unknown, to see that the stranger may bear a blessing instead of a threat. It requires that we share our resources both in moments of prosper ity and when we only have two fish and three loaves of bread. These acts require faith, which is in itself the gift that makes the disruption of hospitality worth the cost. Whatever compels us to strengthen our faith in God is a blessing.

ENDNOTES

2. Sea Immigration, by Dale Hansen Bourque, in The Shepherd’s Guide Series, for an accurate, readable, and comprehensive introduction to the U.S. immigration system. Welcome the Stranger Justly, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate, by Matthew Soerens and Jenny Yang of World Relief, provides an excellent factual overview of the system as well as a Christian analysis.

The call to hospitality is rooted in four great biblical truths. To believe and to live by these truths is a font of blessing:

- God the Giver: “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” James 1:17
- The Paradox of Love: “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will find it.” Mark 8:35
- Being the Body: “If one member suffers, all members suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all members rejoice together with it.” 1 Corinthians 12:26
- The Blessing of the Other: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2
VOICES ON DISRUPTION

On the following pages, a number of members and friends of the Fuller community share their own reflections on disruption. Many express their thoughts and feelings about Fuller’s move to Pomona, others discuss issues of inclusion, and others share more personal stories. You’ll find a range of ideas here, representing the diversity that has always characterized Fuller Seminary.

Many voices appear here, yet there are many, many more across our community. Many worthy thoughts of their own. You’ll see some of these across the bottom of each page—words taken randomly from our social media feeds, primarily in response to Fuller’s campus move announcement.

On these pages you will find expressions of hope, discouragement, joy, sorrow, and much in between. We have intentionally invited voices that know differ in point of view, to allow for diversity and to grow from the various perspectives represented in our seminary life. We hope they will encourage you to be patient with your own disruptions, to see what you might learn from them as we learn from each other through this tumultuous time.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME ABOUT WHERE I LIVE?

Remember that almost everybody in the book of Acts is being compelled by the Spirit to go where they don’t want to go. The sign of the Spirit’s presence is not “Oh, I’m so thankful you’re here,” it’s “I don’t want you to go there.” That’s the sign of the Spirit’s presence. I think the fundamental reality is that we have especially resisted the Spirit when we think about place and where we live and geography.

We have had no serious thinking of discipleship in relationship to real estate, relationship to developers, relationship to land. We’ve had no serious discipleship in thinking about these things. We have allowed the entire world to be part of an economic calculation and not a gospel calculation. Everywhere that private properties become a new reality, everywhere that people are being taught to look out at their world through calculation and commodification, they’re losing their world. Whether it’s here or someplace else, if you are inside those calculations and they’re being mapped on top of old forms of segregation, the question of discipleship is not simply how you should live, but where you should live and how you should rethink your life in a place. That’s what I want people to do: to really start to think about the placement of discipleship. If the incarnation teaches us anything, it’s that God cares about place.

IF THE INCARNATION TEACHES US ANYTHING, IT’S THAT GOD CARES ABOUT PLACE.

In February 2016 I was invited to preach at Fuller’s All-Seminary Chapel. After much prayer, I was led to speak on Mark 6:45–52, titling my sermon “Our Response to the Challenge of Change.” I had no idea of the major changes taking place at Fuller at that time, and was surprised when several faculty and students thanked me afterwards for bringing a bit of encouragement to a difficult situation.

When I joined the Board of Trustees in January 2017, I entered into a process of disruption at Fuller caused by the necessity of change. I found my first board meeting—filled with discussion about Fuller moving from Pasadena—to be quite overwhelming. As a lifelong resident of Pasadena, I wondered what this would mean for the local community. Although I listened and tried to understand, it was hard to imagine our city without this institution at its center. I found it difficult to separate what my heart was feeling from what my head was hearing.

Then God sent me back to my message of February 2016. In the Mark passage Jesus, after feeding over 5,000, sent his disciples to the other side of the Sea of Galilee by boat while he went to the mountain to pray. Soon after, the disciples found themselves in the middle of a storm, needing to make it to shore without Jesus in the boat. What a disruption that must have been! Jesus ultimately saved the disciples, who had failed to control their situation. Why did they fail? “For they considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their hearts were hardened.” I was reminded that as difficult as disruption can be, from each one there is a lesson to be learned. God will be with us in the storm or he will meet us on the “other side.”

Now that the decision is made and Fuller is preparing to move to Pomona, I still struggle at times with the thought of Fuller being gone from my city. But then I remember past miracles—and am grateful to be part of a brand new thing.
Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, is in my extended family’s history. I was born in Pasadena when my father was a student at Fuller in its earliest days. My aunt was one of the first women to graduate from Fuller; she lived in Slessor Hall—today’s President’s Office. She met her husband, also a Fuller grad, on this campus. They have one son and one son-in-law who both graduated from Fuller. My brother and his wife met while students at Fuller; he even proposed to her on this campus. And I met my husband, John, when we began as students the same fall and lived in Taylor Hall, then Dorm 150. So at least three couples in my extended family met on this Pasadena campus and in these venerable buildings.

Pasadena and those old houses have always been part of my memories of Fuller. To be sure, buildings have been added and removed over the years. But the houses have always been there—often remodeled inside, but unchanged on the outside. The same is true of Payton Hall, where my office is. The more I visit other campuses, the more I realize how in need of upkeep these old buildings are. Heating and cooling systems don’t work well; ceiling tiles fall at random; windows don’t close. I have often joked that at Fuller we have our treasure—the people—in earthen vessels, namely, in those buildings that have always been part of us but don’t always serve us as well.

Still, I love this quirky Pasadena campus, those earthen vessels. They are part of my family’s heritage. It was here I found my vocation to become a scholar of the New Testament. Here I met my husband. On this campus our daughters played in the old game room and were part of Fuller’s old daycare. I have spent my entire teaching career here. I know that Fuller is defined much more by its students than by the treasure it bears than by the vessels that carry that treasure. But, to put it simply, I don’t want to leave those vessels. I don’t want us to go.

See, students have been the constant in my Fuller life. I once opined that a call to teach surely ought to be motivated not by the prestige of an Ivy League professorship but by a passion to work with eager students, regardless of circumstances. That much of my dream did come true. And wherever Fuller’s buildings happen to be parked in the next decade, I suspect the real continuity will remain where it has always been: in our students’ hearts for Christ and his church, and in the hearts of the faculty for them.

**JOHN THOMPSON**
Professor of Historical Theology and Gaylen and Susan Byker Professor of Reformed Theology. See Dr. Thompson’s photography on pp. 2–3 and p. 99.

Marianne and I met at Fuller in 1975 when we both lived on campus as first-year MDiv students. We were housed in Taylor Hall, known then by the charming name of “Dorm 150.” Subsequent years brought us together in marriage and almost immediately took us away to North Carolina for grad school. It was, perhaps, a dream come true when Marianne was hired as a beginning professor (with me joining a few years later) back at Fuller, to serve among our former teachers, whom we regarded as giants of the classroom. Until, of course, we saw how they could squabble during faculty meetings. The myth of Fuller faculty as giants died hard but swiftly, and we soon enough got to work with the real colleagues that God provided—by turns earthy and earthy, but always dedicated to caring for their students (often more than those students knew).

Through 30 years at Fuller, we never found the ivory tower that academics are supposed to inhabit. In its place were smallish and often dingy offices that we decorated with way too many books—but, always, the best adornment was the students who came to those rooms. My career highlight reel (still in production!) would have to focus on the “open office hours” I staged a week before every essay was due, when a dozen students in my office and more in the hallway would join me to wrestle with Augustine or Luther or Calvin or Barth, parsing their theology and laughing in the pleasure of past fellowshipping with present.

See, students have been the constant in my Fuller life. I once opined that a call to teach surely ought to be motivated not by the prestige of an Ivy League professorship but by a passion to work with eager students, regardless of circumstances. That much of my dream did come true. And wherever Fuller’s buildings happen to be parked in the next decade, I suspect the real continuity will remain where it has always been: in our students’ hearts for Christ and his church, and in the hearts of the faculty for them.
Jeanne Handoo  
Director of Auxiliary Services

My department is all about services. I’m in charge of housing, custodial services, the mail center, food services, telecommunications, transportation, all the copiers on campus, water delivery, basically all the daily operations. This year, I will have worked on Fuller’s Pasadena campus for 30 years, and I’ve been attached to the city for that long. When my husband was a student, we even lived on Ford Place right next to campus for many years. We still live close now, so I go home for lunch—I’m just six minutes away!

Since 2008, my department has had a hard time—we’ve been cut, cut, cut. In custodial services, we’re down from three full-time employees to two; in the mail center, we’re down from four employees to three. In auxiliary services, we are also down from two employees to one. Our custodians used to clean the buildings every day, and now it’s reduced to only once a week for the offices. There aren’t as many students on campus as there used to be, and things are slowing down. I’ve heard from Lalo, who provides food service, that not as many people are coming to the refectory. It’s scary! I’m sure other departments are experiencing similar things, and we’re all functioning with minimum resources.

I haven’t been to Pomona yet, but I do have lots of questions. What will we do about mail rooms? What will we do about housing? Will it be affordable? What about food services—are we going to have a refectory? Will we have housing for international students? Who will clean the new building? Will this give us a chance to update our systems and build the building we want?

It’s going to be hard for me, but I know it’s a necessary move in order to stabilize and balance the budgets. We’ll see how it goes!

---

Tom Hsieh  
CEO of SplinterRock Inc., Pomona Community Leader, and Friend of Fuller

The first disruption recorded for us was when God said, “Let there be light . . .” and thus God disrupted the status quo, the static, the darkness.

God disrupted my world when I asked where I should go to find him, and he said “Pomona.” That is where I now live, and where I have been working to “rebuild the walls” and to seek the shalom of this city to which I’ve been sent.

God disrupted my life as an executive making a six-figure salary when he gave my wife—a Fuller alum—and me the idea of living at or below the median household income, so that we could give the rest of our income away. And our lives have been so much richer.

Over a year ago, the Spirit prompted me to contact Lenny Moon and suggest that Fuller move to Pomona. I thought it was a crazy idea. But every month I’d send Lenny property listings in Pomona.

I’ve seen the work God is doing in Pomona: the political transformation, the economic transformation, the civic transformation . . . and I’ve been praying, “God, how will you bring about the spiritual transformation?”

Clearly God is disrupting Fuller, and Fuller will disrupt Pomona, even as God continues to strengthen Fuller to be a disruptive force throughout the world. God is not content to leave things as they are or leave us as we are. The “Agent of Change” continues to shine and disrupt.

---

What a great addition to Pomona’s educational institutions.” • “님이의 미래를 위한 봉사사임을 높고 기도하겠습니다 (I will pray for the future of Fuller).” • “So many factors, such a hard decision. Thanks Mark Labberton and board for laboring at this so diligently. I had thought someday I’d live in Pasadena but Pomona it is.” • “It’s humbling to see someone with Mark Labberton’s
Before I can think about the protest at my Baccalaureate as a disruption, I’m led to a question I face daily: Am I a disruption? Some think my black male body is a disruption to law and order: the incarceration rates of dark bodies—including friends and family of mine—are a testimony to this. Likewise, I have come to see that my truth is disruptive. Simply sharing what I experience as true is experienced by others as a disruption. Realizing this, I spend an excessive amount of energy trying to say what I think in ways that disrupt as little as possible.

I think, “I regret spending $1,600 on this class because the only required authors were white men, which communicated that white theology is normative while others are contextual. It made me wonder why I’m pursuing a degree if my thoughts will be treated as less relevant than those of my white peers.” But if I say this to a white person, I’ll make their life more difficult, I’ll disrupt their ease. So I say, “I would prefer a more diverse reading list.”

This is what it means to BE a disruption: I shy away from telling the truth because I have been taught that it makes things harder for white people. I learned to say this part of the truth, but not that part—or to say it with this tone, not that tone.

I joined in the protest at Baccalaureate embedded by brothers and sisters more courageous than I, and am honored to have been a part of it. Wearing a mask before my colleagues, I told the whole truth for 30 minutes as a student, I had to filter the education I was paying for because it had the potential to harm me.

Was the protest a disruption? Because it aimed to disrupt the status quo, it can be called a disruption. But that is a sad reality I don’t want to admit quite yet. It confirmed, again, that because I am black, the truth of my experience is still a disruption in white spaces.

I love Fuller Seminary. I know so many people who have been blessed by its long history of faithfully providing educational opportunities for all sorts of people from all walks of life. I see the move to Pomona as in line with its mission to continue to prepare people of faith to be obedient to God’s call on their lives. There are four qualities needed for leadership today: decisiveness, the ability to communicate, the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and the ability to relentlessly deliver on one’s mission.

The Fuller leadership looked at all the facts and made a decision that will enable them to relentlessly deliver on the incredible educational programs that define Fuller now and will define it in the future. I see them communicating thoughtfully and clearly on why this move from Pasadena to Pomona will expand their platform to make a Fuller education more accessible.

In 2020, more than 50 percent of five-year-olds in the United States will be non-white. In 15 years, universities must be able to be what the next generation of both non-white and white students need to thrive. Will this move to Pomona help Fuller to be ready for a more ethnically diverse future? I think so. Is it a bold move? Yes. Is it a good move? Absolutely. Fuller is people. People in Pasadena or Pomona—still on mission. Still at God’s service. I’m looking forward to seeing what God is going to unfold. We only know a little bit. Get ready for incredible years ahead—he is a God who wants the best of us, who goes before us, and who completes the work he has begun. And that is Fuller’s future.
I get up at 5 every morning to come to work in Pasadena. I leave at 6, catch the bus at 6:18, transfer to the Azusa station train, and get to work about 7:30. I’ve been doing this commute for 11 years. When we heard there was a possibility of Fuller moving to Pomona, my wife Lilian and I kept thinking, gosh, it would be nice to finally be close to work. We kept asking everybody—any word? Anything? We got excited and prayed that Fuller would move our way.

We started hearing more rumors that Pomona was the number one choice and our excitement grew, and when it was officially announced at the employee meeting, it was such a relief. I can finally be close to work! I know some people aren’t real happy with the decision, because there’s so much history here. Some I’ve talked to say that when Fuller moves, they’re not moving and will leave. I think that’s kind of sad. I understand the history, I know that change is uncomfortable, but I also see that this could be a positive.

Our church is right across the street from the new location. When our pastor shared the news about Fuller’s moving, the church was so excited. When he was a seminarian, a church nearby had a huge impact on him, and he’s hoping that our church could have that impact on future Fuller students in Pomona. I also got a chance to talk to the mayor of Pomona, and when I told him I was employed at Fuller, he told me how excited the city is about the news. We were here for a season in Pasadena, and now we’re entering a new season. When I look at the future of Fuller, I don’t see that as a disruption at all— it’s a blessing!

As I’ve been telling people, there are a number of reasons I’m enthusiastic about Fuller’s move to Pomona. They include its missional affordability for students, staff, and faculty, and the bright potential of the city itself.

One advantage of Pomona that I’ve not heard people talk about as much as I’d expect is its proximity to intellectual resources and partners: Pomona borders Claremont—their centers are about three miles apart, and this is surely the densest gathering of great liberal arts colleges in the western United States. That means scholarly peers, libraries, lectures, etc. Like most Fuller faculty, my work is interdisciplinary, and I’m so enthusiastic about being part of that. (I love you, USC, UCLA, HUC, and AJU—but thanks to LA traffic, we too rarely see each other.)

Make no mistake, this is a big change. There’s work ahead, and not a few challenges. One evening recently as I walked back to my office from dinner on Colorado Boulevard, I walked past the David Allan Hubbard Library, named for a beloved professor of Old Testament who wrote a book on the prophets entitled Will We Ever Catch Up with the Bible? I walked past lovely old houses built more than a century ago and palm trees planted not long after, in the golden glow of a Pasadena sunset. For all my optimism about Fuller’s future, I mourned a little. I comfort myself by remembering that the mission of God does not depend on location. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman: true worship is “neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem . . . but in spirit and truth.”

Having been allowed an inside look at the whole process, I feel very good about where it’s led us, and about our future. There are big waves coming. I’m grabbing my surfboard to ride them—and I hope other people will, too.
Since I was a non-degree student at Fuller 60 years ago, I have seen many disruptions that have occurred here.

With recent disruptions I find myself experiencing three emotions. The first is gratitude for all that I have received and that has been accomplished here. The second is regret that my comfort zone is being invaded and I can no longer enjoy the benefits in quite the same way. The third is one of anticipation of what new things God will accomplish in the days ahead in this and other places.

In anticipating the future, I hold on to Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of Proverbs 3:21–26:

Dear friend, guard clear thinking and common sense with your life; don’t for a minute lose sight of them. They’ll keep your soul alive and well, they’ll keep you fit and attractive. You’ll travel safely, you’ll neither tire nor trip. You’ll take afternoon naps without a worry, you’ll enjoy a good night’s sleep. No need to panic over alarms or surprises, or predictions that doomsday’s just around the corner. Because God will be right there with you; he’ll keep you safe and sound.

Disruption can refer to several types of interruptions: a rupture that breaks apart, an event that throws things into disorder, or something that interrupts the normal course of things. In reflecting on Fuller’s move to Pomona, it feels like we are being torn away from Pasadena, we may fear being thrown into disorder, and we are ending the longstanding history of having the Pasadena campus as our home base. Some of us have been invested in Pasadena as a location for Fuller. Even as we see God’s providence in this move, we lament.

Interrupting the normal course of things is often uncomfortable, but this disruption has a different meaning when the normal state has included inequity and exclusion. Disruption is necessary. We need to reset—not only in how we strategically approach inclusion and equity, but also in terms of who we are as a Fuller community. In interviews that I conducted in my role as Director of Faculty Spiritual Formation, faculty expressed a desire to feel more a part of the team and valued; they also noted feeling hurt, wounded, and a sense of injustice. Over the years and recently, our students and alums have articulated the challenges associated with experiences of racial injustice and exclusion and how this has undermined their educational experience. Although Fuller has made important contributions, it has not adequately embraced diversity, inclusion, and equity—i.e., justice that is free from bias or favoritism. The reset that is needed is not only relational, but systemic.

As I embark in my new role as Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity, I pray that God would transform us as we reset and embolden us to engage in a strategic process that results in inclusive and equitable change for faculty, students, staff, and senior administration.

In June 2018 longtime faculty member Dr. Abernethy was appointed Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity, a new position created, in part, to address Black student concerns by helping Fuller learn to better integrate practices of diversity, inclusion, and equity into its faculty, curriculum, and mission.

**MERLIN CALL**
Chair Emeritus and 50-Year Member, Fuller Board of Trustees

**ALEXIS ABERNETHY**
Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity and Professor of Psychology

Disruption can refer to several types of interruptions: a rupture that breaks apart, an event that throws things into disorder, or something that interrupts the normal course of things. In reflecting on Fuller’s move to Pomona, it feels like we are being torn away from Pasadena, we may fear being thrown into disorder, and we are ending the longstanding history of having the Pasadena campus as our home base. Some of us have been invested in Pasadena as a location for Fuller. Even as we see God’s providence in this move, we lament. Interrupting the normal course of things is often uncomfortable, but this disruption has a different meaning when the normal state has included inequity and exclusion. Disruption is necessary. We need to reset—not only in how we strategically approach inclusion and equity, but also in terms of who we are as a Fuller community. In interviews that I conducted in my role as Director of Faculty Spiritual Formation, faculty expressed a desire to feel more a part of the team and valued; they also noted feeling hurt, wounded, and a sense of injustice. Over the years and recently, our students and alums have articulated the challenges associated with experiences of racial injustice and exclusion and how this has undermined their educational experience. Although Fuller has made important contributions, it has not adequately embraced diversity, inclusion, and equity—i.e., justice that is free from bias or favoritism. The reset that is needed is not only relational, but systemic.

As I embark in my new role as Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity, I pray that God would transform us as we reset and embolden us to engage in a strategic process that results in inclusive and equitable change for faculty, students, staff, and senior administration.

In June 2018 longtime faculty member Dr. Abernethy was appointed Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity, a new position created, in part, to address Black student concerns by helping Fuller learn to better integrate practices of diversity, inclusion, and equity into its faculty, curriculum, and mission.
Online students now exceed the number of on-campus students at Fuller. The disruptive innovation of online education, however, has benefited some to the detriment of others. It has positively impacted me, because I would not have enrolled in Fuller’s MDiv program if I had been required to leave my ministry context in Brazil. At the same time it has meant, for example, that most on-campus students have been forced to take online classes because of insufficient enrollment in on-campus classes.

With online education increasingly becoming the rule, fundamental questions are raised for Fuller not only about how best to serve its growing online student population, but also about what traditional education at Fuller will look like in the future. Questions like these merit our deep self-reflection as a community: Should Fuller appoint a dean of online education to address the unique needs and concerns of online students? Should online professors be allowed to obtain tenure? Should Fuller allow students to pursue doctoral degrees fully online? Should Fuller make its online education available in more languages? How can Fuller have a greater impact in the communities in which its online students are located? Should Fuller encourage its administrators, faculty, and staff to travel periodically to communities in which large numbers of its online students reside, or encourage alumni and online faculty to mentor and network with online students from the same region? How can Fuller ensure that its online students have the same placement and continuing educational opportunities as its on-campus students?

These are just some of the issues Fuller needs to consider as it transitions from Pasadena to Pomona. The answers should impact not only the configuration of the new campus, but also how Fuller sees its mission to the world going forward. Although it may not be easy to navigate these thorny issues over the coming years, Fuller can be grateful for this opportunity to reset as an institution at a time when some of its peers have been forced to close. May God continue to bless Fuller as time when some of its peers have been forced to close. May God continue to bless Fuller as it goes through this momentous process of self-reflection and transition.

Disruption has been a central theme my entire professional life. It arrived as I started my career as an elementary teacher competing with thousands of recently dismissed teachers—many of whom carried a decade or more of excellence in the classroom. It continued when I switched my career focus from a classroom-centric K-12 plan to online graduate education. Perhaps harder still was letting go of a dream to be a classroom teacher and instead support other teachers from a distance. My dream was disrupted, and I often wondered why this was my reality.

My new role in teacher support arrived on the eve of arguably one of the most disruptive periods in the history of higher education. With the rapid growth of online learning, teachers are now increasingly finding themselves in a state of disruption. Each classroom is a variable that can now change with each term. Online learning has increased accessibility for countless students around the world, provisioning new opportunities for anyone with a stable internet connection. But this added opportunity also brings significant challenges and obstacles for teachers. The traditional classroom changed overnight and it now requires teachers to redesign the familiar.

This new normal was one I had experienced myself and one I could empathize with. God has blessed me with the opportunity to work alongside hundreds of amazing faculty as they reinvent themselves to teach online students. I get to help faculty reimagine, redesign, and dream anew. I absolutely love it.

The disruptive innovation of online education has benefited some to the detriment of others.
I do not believe the word “disruption” has a distinctly positive or negative connotation. But it can serve as the vehicle for change, where it has been located for over 70 years. Understandably, this decision has grieved many in the Fuller community, but it has also reinvigorated many others.

Even though some of the initiating factors to this decision related to financial and operational impact, I believe the potential opportunity for this reshaping of Fuller's strategic and missional impact across the globe is far more significant and multidimensional. Inherent in this decision to move is a mindset where Fuller will need to assess, prepare, and preemptively adapt for the uncertainty and continued disruption ahead—all while maintaining the purpose of Fuller's core mission.

This will clearly be a difficult task that may entail a herculean collaborative effort from key constituents within the institution, but it will force Fuller to go through an invasive and honest self-assessment of how we should host “form global leaders for kingdom vocations.”

Disruption breeds uncertainty, but it can also catapult us ahead into opportunity that was unsustainable prior to that disruption. As one of the most influential Christian seminaries in the world, Fuller has been provided this unique opportunity to reimagine itself and seminary education.

Disruption breeds uncertainty, but it can also catapult us ahead.

Fuller has announced that it will uproot its primary campus and leave a city where it has been located for over 70 years. Understandably, this decision has grieved many in the Fuller community, but it has also reinvigorated many others.

Even though some of the initiating factors to this decision related to financial and operational impact, I believe the potential opportunity for this reshaping of Fuller's strategic and missional impact across the globe is far more significant and multidimensional. Inherent in this decision to move is a mindset where Fuller will need to assess, prepare, and preemptively adapt for the uncertainty and continued disruption ahead—all while maintaining the purpose of Fuller's core mission.

This will clearly be a difficult task that may entail a herculean collaborative effort from key constituents within the institution, but it will force Fuller to go through an invasive and honest self-assessment of how we should host “form global leaders for kingdom vocations.”

Disruption breeds uncertainty, but it can also catapult us ahead into opportunity that was unsustainable prior to that disruption. As one of the most influential Christian seminaries in the world, Fuller has been provided this unique opportunity to reimagine itself and seminary education.

Disruption breeds uncertainty, but it can also catapult us ahead.

Fuller has announced that it will uproot its primary campus and leave a city where it has been located for over 70 years. Understandably, this decision has grieved many in the Fuller community, but it has also reinvigorated many others.

Even though some of the initiating factors to this decision related to financial and operational impact, I believe the potential opportunity for this reshaping of Fuller's strategic and missional impact across the globe is far more significant and multidimensional. Inherent in this decision to move is a mindset where Fuller will need to assess, prepare, and preemptively adapt for the uncertainty and continued disruption ahead—all while maintaining the purpose of Fuller's core mission.

This will clearly be a difficult task that may entail a herculean collaborative effort from key constituents within the institution, but it will force Fuller to go through an invasive and honest self-assessment of how we should host “form global leaders for kingdom vocations.”

Disruption breeds uncertainty, but it can also catapult us ahead into opportunity that was unsustainable prior to that disruption. As one of the most influential Christian seminaries in the world, Fuller has been provided this unique opportunity to reimagine itself and seminary education.

Disruption breeds uncertainty, but it can also catapult us ahead.
I come from Kenya, where we have a rich spirituality. But sometimes that spirituality has kept us from understanding mental illness. When someone is depressed, we say you need to pray, have more faith! If someone is hearing voices, we say it’s evil spirits; you need deliverance!

Yes, prayer is good, deliverance is good, but maybe psychotherapy, too, could work. Maybe medication, too, could work. Even after I came to Fuller, I didn’t think I needed therapy for myself. But God was nudging me—like when I went to China on a School of Psychology trip, and I saw one lady talk about her therapy experience with such a light in her eyes! The Lord gave me the image of a window with a lot of mud on it, and therapy cleared the mud so the light could shine through. I thought, “That is so powerful!” Eventually, I was convinced to try it myself, not necessarily because of a mental condition, but for my own self-growth. I was surprised at how much I loved the experience and what a sacred and growth space therapy became. I met God in ways that changed me, and as I saw myself anew, aspects of my self-identity were healed—I thought, “This is so beautiful! Why didn’t I start this process much earlier?” It was hard internal work that helped me embrace my humanity and be in touch with the parts of myself that I wanted to hide. This journey of becoming a therapist has meant embracing my imperfections, and that has allowed me to actually sit better with people, especially clients whose lives have been disrupted by mental illness.

The School of Psychology’s integration of theology and psychology has been a place of disruption and formation for me, and my call now is to take that message back to Kenya—and Africa. I want to be present when people are navigating disruptions related to their mental health and use what I learned to make a difference. My life was disrupted in a good way through therapy and journeying through the program. Now I want to take the lessons from that disruption back to my continent.

Disruption has not stopped us. It has propelled us to adapt, to be agile, and to resist.

Disruption has not stopped us. It has propelled us to adapt, to be agile, and to resist.
As an employee and fourth quarter MDiv student, I am fairly new to Fuller. In reflecting over the past year, I’ve been tremendously grateful to hear of Fuller’s long legacy in the Pasadena area and see its positive impact on the wider community. The network of relationships the seminary has among churches, hospitals, schools, and businesses is extensive and will be missed.

To be sure, I also lament alongside my fellow coworkers and peers for the uncomfortable, sometimes hurtful, changes experienced in the last few years and the changes to come as we move to Pomona. In other words, we carve out time and resources to invest in being present with our “people.” The deaf are community-centric, in that we attend church together, share potlucks and meals throughout the week, go grocery shopping with one another, celebrate birthdays, graduations, and Seattle Seahawk wins together. It’s the kind of family-oriented community that stays for the clean up after dinner, and are the first to pray and offer support when life happens.

That being said, with the many changes and the shift to online programs at Fuller, we’ve lost a lot of what it means to be present with each other. Indeed, we’ve come up with great ways to include online students and build relationships, but I think the journey toward being deeply present with one another has a long way to go. My hope is that these changes and disruptions drive us to be more present with one another as we grow and continue to prepare for Pomona.

I think the journey toward being deeply present with one another has a long way to go.

---

**GABRIELLA BONTRAGER**
Current MDiv Student and Office Assistant, Student Life and Services

**William Pannell**
Professor Emeritus of Preaching and Founder of Fuller’s African American Studies Program

We deplaned in Germany a half dozen Black evangelicals headed for the Berlin Congress on Evangelism in 1966. We were well acquainted, a neat handful of Black preachers who sought to represent the kingdom in the midst of an overwhelmingly white movement. A woman approached us and asked, “Is Dr. King on board?” “No, he is not,” James Earl Massey told her. During the years since, James and I would revisit her question now and then, feeling we still owed her an answer as to why Martin Luther King Jr. was not “on board” in Berlin—or at any other event where evangelicals worldwide gathered. The simple answer was that he had landed at a different foreign city, Chicago, to continue the civil rights movement there.

Not long ago we talked about that 1966 event. James laughed as he said, “Pannell, you and I are the last ones left from that gathering. The rest are all dead.” I teased him that that couldn’t be true. He ticked off the names of the others who were on that flight, and he was right. When I called his home this past June 24, I learned that there was only one left, and I told his wife that I would tease him for daring to leave me behind on my 89th birthday.

James Earl Massey was the featured speaker at the kick-off dinner for the opening of the William E. Pannell Center for African American Church Studies. We were to speak today, he would ask me how the proposed move of Fuller to Pomona would affect the center. I would tell him that it should be a welcome move. It will situate the seminary in the heart of a major urban center and a cluster of important educational institutions. It will locate Fuller in a culture more in keeping with its historic missional commitments. With visionary leadership from administration and the board, we should be poised to boogy for Jesus for years to come. That is what I would tell James Earl Massey. And he would be pleased as he smiled at me over the phone.

---

**Gabriella Bontrager**
Current MDiv Student and Office Assistant, Student Life and Services

**William Pannell**
Professor Emeritus of Preaching and Founder of Fuller’s African American Studies Program
¡Ya No Más!/No More!

my desire to “say something good” inhibits me
paralyzed at the keyboard, at the edge
all the weight of vulnerability traps me
left alone in the silence of my own longings
longings, or channels and rivers of anger at the lies
that nothing can change
that good intentions are what’s most important
that hurts feelings matter more than dead bodies
we are not allowed to speak the truth
because truth demands change or more lies
lies coddle many of us, they whisper
niceness is the right way, niceness
that poisonous word i was taught
to restrain and refrain from truth because
privileged people do not say rude things
you should be grateful for what you have
you sound bitter and resentful
nice people do not say rude things

and it’s rude to say our life exists at the expense of others
my life for your white, my black
my dollar for your peso my love for control
my life for your death my white for your black
my love for control
how cynical how hopeless, you may think
how unchristian of me to speak in this way
but stay with me, cause there’s hope stay with me
they call it hope that things don’t have to stay this way
hope that anger and joy can find one another and kiss
wrap one another in arms of love not afraid to say
ya no aguantamos más we can’t take it no more

estas mentiras y vidas se acabaron these lies and lives are over

FRANK SCOFFIELD NELLESEN
MDiv alum; read Frank’s poem in Spanish online at Fuller.edu/Studio

FRANK SCOFFIELD NELLESEN
MDiv alum; read Frank’s poem in Spanish online at Fuller.edu/Studio

FRANK SCOFFIELD NELLESEN
MDiv alum; read Frank’s poem in Spanish online at Fuller.edu/Studio

Times of change are anything but new to Fuller.

When I came as a student in 1971 and was soon faced with signing up for a homiletics class, the problem as I saw it was not that I was the only woman in the entering MDiv class; and I didn’t even know that James Daane, my professor-to-be, thought it theologically improper for women to preach. It was just that I couldn’t imagine a class less related to anything I intended to do, ever.

The strictly pragmatic reason I was taking the standard MDiv curriculum was because a Rockefeller “Trial Year in Seminary” fellowship would pay for courses then required by the PhD in clinical psychology, the program to which I had been accepted as the only woman in that entering class, too.

But homiletics?!?

I sat down to write my first sermon with, shall we say, a bad attitude. But God is full of surprises. In writing that sermon, it was as if I felt the heavens open, and my entire reason for being at Fuller changed and never wavered, despite my continuing with the psychology degree. Daane, whatever his views, treated me fairly and became a beloved friend. One day I dared ask him what he thought about a woman who felt called to preach. He answered memorably, “It’s not my job to define you. That’s God’s job.”

I never looked back: I was ordained as a Presbyterian minister (at a time when only about 3 percent of Presbyterian clergy were female), served gladly as a pastor for about a dozen years, and then was called to Fuller to serve as, you guessed it, a teacher of preaching.

Those early years at Fuller were precious to me. Looking at major changes is hard. But it’s not my job to define Fuller. That’s God’s job.

FRANK SCOFFIELD NELLESEN
MDiv alum; read Frank’s poem in Spanish online at Fuller.edu/Studio

FRANK SCOFFIELD NELLESEN
MDiv alum; read Frank’s poem in Spanish online at Fuller.edu/Studio

FRANK SCOFFIELD NELLESEN
MDiv alum; read Frank’s poem in Spanish online at Fuller.edu/Studio

MARGUERITE SHUSTER
Harold John Ockenga Professor Emerita of Preaching and Theology

TIMES OF CHANGE ARE ANYTHING BUT NEW TO FULLER.

My ministry with Fuller students is to provide housing at low cost here in Pasadena, two miles from campus. Will I lose this opportunity after the move? What are the chances of students wishing to commute 27 miles to Pasadena? • To my discussion with other presidents at peer institutions here at the Graduate Theological Union, I reflected that this is likely the way that Paul’s letters came...
LINDA BARKMAN
PhD in Intercultural Studies and MA in Theology alum

My relationship with Fuller began while I was serving a 30-year prison sentence at the California Institution for Women as the tragic result of a domestic violence incident. While a prisoner, I first earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology but, more importantly, I learned how to lean on Jesus—and for 28 years was the lay pastor for the prison psychiatric unit.

In 2003, as I was approaching the 50-year milestone of my life, a dear friend and mentor found Fuller’s Certificate of Christian Studies program for me: six master’s-level classes I could do through distance learning. Computers were not available in prison. I did my coursework by electric typewriter, cassette recordings, and snail mail. On completing that program, I had to submit an integrative essay explaining how Fuller impacted my vocation. The next thing I knew, Fuller had invited me into the MA in Theology program with the necessary classes offered by distance learning. The financial burden seemed impossible, but my friend assured me that God never calls us to do something he can’t afford to pay for.

When my friend could no longer help me financially, Fuller was there with scholarships. I was released from prison in 2010 with five classes left, and I graduated in 2012. Yet life still doesn’t go smoothly. I was not accepted into Fuller’s PhD program the first time I applied—but was placed in the ThM program, where I refined my academic skills while waiting to reapply. In 2014, I was accepted into the PhD program. Reaching back to my sisters in prison, I focused my research on the communication gaps between women prisoners and the Christian volunteers who minister to them.

I turned 65 on the day I submitted my dissertation. Remarkably, Fuller believes that a 65-year-old convict is redeemable and has invested in my future. So at an age when many are contemplating retirement, I find myself being called an emerging scholar whose future augurs well for her chosen ministry of teaching, writing, and advocating for women. I think this proves that God still works miracles.

Fuller believes that a 65-year-old convict is redeemable and has invested in my future.

I was a “missionary.” But I don’t feel qualified to be called a missionary. My missionary life was so painful that I left that life. I couldn’t endure the situation because my wife and I had moved five times—all internationally: Central Asia, South Africa, Cambodia, England, South Korea.

Whenever we went to a new place, I tried to settle down. I joined ministries and made many friends. I became a member of the community. However, situations always changed and I had to leave each place for various reasons—visa issues, conflicts, unexpected plans. What kind of life is this? Am I a missionary or an international sojourner? I couldn’t accept my life. It wasn’t what I had wanted.

One day, my suppressed stress finally burst out. I made an irreversible mistake to my wife. She came here, and we are now together again. It has now been two and a half years that I haven’t moved to other countries. But I am not sure how long it will continue. I still have an identity as a sojourner.

Someone may say that the Christian mission is to participate in suffering. Or someone may advise me about the vulnerability that comes with mission. Yes, Thank you. I know.

But I can’t deny that the disruption and the suffering are so painful.

Am I ready to join the missionary life again?
Three years ago, I experienced disruption in my own vocational call toward Christ when I felt God’s Spirit telling me to leave my place in the PhD program in New Testament at Fuller. After five years of hard work and preparation throughout my undergraduate work and my MAT, now God was telling me to leave all the progress I had made behind to begin in a new direction. My theological imagination was filled with anxiety and pressing questions: How did I end up in a place where God was calling me away from a life of serving him as a biblical scholar? And what could I possibly do now to fulfill God’s calling in my life?

I have since come to realize that God called me toward this particular season of disruption so that the years I spent in the theological academy might inform my present journey toward serving God as a theologically integrative clinical psychologist. This was not a path I saw coming—but following God’s call through this process despite my uncertainty has deepened my ability to trust in God’s providence. And what I can see now through the wisdom I have gained in this experience is that, over the course of a lifetime beholden to God, responding to disruption with faithfulness is the ultimate opportunity to place ourselves in a state of dependence on God, so that we can be a part of the kind of victory over our circumstances that only God can provide.

Over my last seven years at Fuller, I have witnessed our leaders’ faithfulness in placing the seminary’s future in God’s hands. I have every confidence that in moving to Pomona we are stepping into a season of disruption to which God has called us—but from which God will ultimately deliver us as well. For this reason, I am proud to be part of a community of God’s people at Fuller that is stepping confidently through our present season of disruption into the future God has for us.

Because I knew that God was holding the swing of my life, I could take huge risks without fear.

MICHAEL MAROSSY
MDiv alum and current PhD in Clinical Psychology student

In my childhood bedroom, I used to have a drawing of a young girl on a swing. Her head was thrown back, and her face displayed pure exhilaration. The two ropes of the swing were held at the top by a large hand, with the caption, “Will you trust me?” Included at the bottom was Proverbs 3:5–6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

In the midst of life’s disruptions, I would reflect on this drawing. Did I fully trust that God was in control? Could I be like this girl and actually enjoy the process?

Hence, when life disruptions occurred, I saw them as opportunities—to soar higher, to embark on a new adventure. My journey from a life of piano into full-time college ministry was influenced by a major disruption: I broke my finger on the first day of music conservatory, and my left hand was in a cast for six months. Another disruption came when my parents asked me to consider being the guardian for my youngest sister, who was living in Korea at the time with them. This leap of faith at the age of 24 opened doors into investment banking. More recently, my heart-crushing divorce was the disruption that forced me to evaluate my true desires, which guided me to become a marriage and family therapist at Fuller.

Each of these disruptions called me into discernment and obedience. Because I knew that God was holding the swing of my life, I could take huge risks without fear. And God was faithful to his calling, opening doors and surrounding me with support.

Taking these leaps of faith also meant preparation: countless hours of praying, researching, planning, studying, and making connections. Following God’s call not only involves courage and trust but also a lot of hard work. My prayer is that we at Fuller would see our current disruption as an opportunity to experience exhilaration and that we would devote ourselves to faithful preparation.

MIGUM GWEON
Director of Clinical Training for Marriage and Family and Instructor in Marriage and Family Therapy

Because I knew that God was holding the swing of my life, I could take huge risks without fear.

MICHAEL MAROSSY
MDiv alum and current PhD in Clinical Psychology student

In my childhood bedroom, I used to have a drawing of a young girl on a swing. Her head was thrown back, and her face displayed pure exhilaration. The two ropes of the swing were held at the top by a large hand, with the caption, “Will you trust me?” Included at the bottom was Proverbs 3:5–6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

In the midst of life’s disruptions, I would reflect on this drawing. Did I fully trust that God was in control? Could I be like this girl and actually enjoy the process?

Hence, when life disruptions occurred, I saw them as opportunities—to soar higher, to embark on a new adventure. My journey from a life of piano into full-time college ministry was influenced by a major disruption: I broke my finger on the first day of music conservatory, and my left hand was in a cast for six months. Another disruption came when my parents asked me to consider being the guardian for my youngest sister, who was living in Korea at the time with them. This leap of faith at the age of 24 opened doors into investment banking. More recently, my heart-crushing divorce was the disruption that forced me to evaluate my true desires, which guided me to become a marriage and family therapist at Fuller.

Each of these disruptions called me into discernment and obedience. Because I knew that God was holding the swing of my life, I could take huge risks without fear. And God was faithful to his calling, opening doors and surrounding me with support.

Taking these leaps of faith also meant preparation: countless hours of praying, researching, planning, studying, and making connections. Following God’s call not only involves courage and trust but also a lot of hard work. My prayer is that we at Fuller would see our current disruption as an opportunity to experience exhilaration and that we would devote ourselves to faithful preparation.

MIGUM GWEON
Director of Clinical Training for Marriage and Family and Instructor in Marriage and Family Therapy

Because I knew that God was holding the swing of my life, I could take huge risks without fear.
According to the Enneagram, I'm a 3. It means, among other things, that I'm driven to be productive, I hate to waste time, I object to being interrupted, and I find inefficiency annoying. But on April 10, 2018, everything in my life was disrupted.

My sister was in a near-fatal car accident in Austin, Texas. As she stood by the side of the road, a truck hit her at full speed, sending her body sprawling unconsciously through the air. She suffered damage to her brain, her carotid arteries, her ribs and liver, and her face was shattered and would need to be reconstructed. She was rushed to the ICU where she'd spend five weeks. Knowing we were needed close at hand, my family left our home in Houston in order to move into my sister's home in Austin. For five weeks, ten of us lived under the same roof, the grandparents included.

During this time, I saw my brother-in-law become physically ragged and my small children fall through the cracks. I saw my parents feel the burden of old age. My wife and I slept in bunk beds, in separate bedrooms, and struggled to stay connected. I fell behind on all my projects, and I battled a low-grade irritation at the instability of our days.

But I also witnessed other things. I saw fractured, embittered relationships become reconciled. I saw the body of Christ become God's sacrificial body. I saw a non-Christian friend break down weeping, crying out to God to heal my sister. I saw myself freed, for a spell, from the pressure I put on myself to measure my worth by my achievements.

And while there is still pain and plenty that cannot be recovered—along with an uncertain future—I have seen, and heard, and tasted, and touched the grace of God in my life, and in the lives of my family and friends and even of strangers, through the disruption, not despite it—and for that I can honestly thank God.

DAVID TAYLOR
Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture and Director of Brehm Texas

On April 21, 2018, my mother passed away after battling a brain tumor for seven long years. Her decline was excruciatingly slow. Initially she had six months to live; that stretched into five years. Eventually, however, the initial disruption of her diagnosis became my new normal. I was the son of the mother with a brain tumor. I guess this is what happens to disruptions with enough time. Now, however, I am the son of a deceased mother, and this has felt more acute.

For the deceased, death is the end or a new beginning. But for the living, death is a major disruption. Even though death is normal and expected, it is, in experience, the most unexpected and abnormal thing. I knew my mom's death was coming. But that phone call on April 21 was unlike anything I prepared for. "She's gone. She's really gone." Nothing prepared me for the chasm I felt in my heart. Even expected disruptions feel forcibly invasive.

SOOHO LEE
Current MDiv Student and Office and Project Assistant in the School of Theology Dean's Office

The shift from disruption to new normal is unpredictable: there's no way to rush it because there's no real deadline. One could try to rush the shift, but the shift would ultimately have its way: you'll either be reeled back or pushed forward, which can be scary because it can be uncomfortable. But the undying hope is that the shift will always be there—as long as there will be a new morning, the shift to new normal is possible.

For weeks, I didn't go to class. I didn't go to work. I couldn't read or focus. I couldn't plan or think ahead. And I did a lot of mind-numbing activity, such as watching reruns or building Legos. My life felt foreign. I would regularly ask, "What am I doing with my life?" or "Who am I?" Slowly, I was able to go back to classes and work. Reading became enjoyable again. I met with friends and learned to laugh again. The dawn of a new normal was rising, and the light absorbed what darkness tried to hide: disruptions become a part of the new normal.

The shift from disruption to new normal is unpredictable: there's no way to rush it because there's no real deadline. One could try to rush the shift, but the shift would ultimately have its way: you'll either be reeled back or pushed forward, which can be scary because it can be uncomfortable. But the undying hope is that the shift will always be there—as long as there will be a new morning, the shift to new normal is possible.
Who is Fuller?

Fuller Seminary is an evangelical, multidisciplinary graduate institution committed to forming global leaders for kingdom vocations. Responding to changes in the church and world, Fuller is transforming the seminary experience for both traditional and distance students through: (1) innovative, collaborative, and equitable teaching and learning models; (2) a diverse, intentional student body; (3) a global footprint through strategic partnerships; and (4) an economics of scale that provides access to a high-quality education more affordably than ever before.

Fuller’s mission is to form faithful Bible-based leaders who lovingly engage the whole of life, seek the good of the whole community, and courageously advance the reign of Christ. Fuller seeks to fulfill its mission through: (1) excellence in biblical scholarship, theological education, professional studies, and leadership development for the church and the world; (2) the Fuller Center for Academic Innovation and the Fuller Global Center’s worldwide network of churches, seminaries, and mission agencies; (3) strong, intentional research and publications; (4) strategic partnerships with churches, seminaries, and mission agencies; and (5) an eco-economically sustainable campus.

Fuller offers 17 programs of study and degree programs — with options in Spanish, Korean, and online options — through its Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as rich and varied forms of support for the broader church. Nearly 3,500 students from 80 countries and 110 denominations enroll in Fuller’s degree programs annually, and our 43,000 alumni serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businesspeople, and in a variety of other vocations around the world.

¿Quién es Fuller?

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

Fuller ofrece 17 programas de maestría y de grado avanzado — con opciones en español, coreano y en línea — a través de sus escuelas de Teología, Psicología y Estudios Interculturales, así como formas ricas y variadas de apoyo para la iglesia más amplia. Cerca de 3,500 estudiantes de 80 países y 110 denominaciones se inscriben en las propuestas de estudios de Fuller anualmente, y de nuestros 43,000 ex-alumnos muchos sirven como ministros, consejeros, maestros, artistas, líderes sin fines de lucro, empresarios, y en una variedad de otras vocaciones alrededor del mundo.

¿Qué ofrece Fuller?

Fuller, con sede en Pomona, California, está diseñado para formar líderes proféticos, con una visión de oído, que pueden despertar a la iglesia y el mundo. A través de la formación teológica, los estudiantes de Fuller se preparan para ser profetas que buscan el bien de la comunidad, que tienen un corazón de servicio y amor, y que buscan transformar el mundo en el nombre de Jesucristo. Fuller ofrece una amplia gama de programas de estudio y opciones de apoyo para la iglesia. Desde programas de maestría y grado avanzado en teología, psicología, y estudios interculturales, hasta programas de apoyo para la iglesia, Fuller tiene una amplia gama de opciones para los estudiantes y los ministros que desean servir en el llamado de la iglesia.
Apropos for a magazine disrupted by “disruption,” this editorial note does not start the magazine, but ends it with a note about colleague and friend David Kiefer, who has fallen asleep. He was faithful and precise and surprisingly tender, with a sense of humor that snuck up on you. We knew it was summer when David showed up in our office in casual shirts and hat; we knew it was fall when we saw him walking on campus in his smart suit and tie. He didn’t tolerate fools, he helped whenever help was needed, he lived a life of great meaning and significance for those who believe that our work here is to love God with all our hearts and souls and minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves. He had somes that he bore without self-pity; he was greatly respected, and in the last year of his life he found love and joy so unexpected and full that it actually changed the shape of his face. That made me so happy for him—so happy—that whenever I saw him I grinned and he grinned back. The last time we met he said, “Let’s have lunch and I’ll tell you the story of my love!” He married that love, Linda, late in August, and a few weeks later he was gone.

The emotionally charged weekend originally planned as moving days he spent in a hospital bed, his bride spent in vigil, the community spent in prayer, and some 17 Fuller friends spent moving all of his belongings. The extraordinary group of his staff and their families who pulled together to put muscle to their prayers would “not seek any sort of recognition for their service to our dear friend and his wife,” one said, and declined to be mentioned until another rightly said, “It’s a bit of good news to share with a community that could use some.” Yes.

I look forward to hearing the full story from David on the other side; in the meantime, rest in peace, dear brother. And thank you (you know who you are) for showing, as School of Intercultural Studies Dean Scott Sunquist put it, “the best of Fuller” to David’s loved ones.

Several of David’s colleagues thought it would be fitting to have a scholarship in his name because of how he loved students. Therefore, Fuller is establishing the David Kiefer Scholarship Fund. Checks can be made to Fuller Theological Seminary, and marked for this purpose.

LAURELEE FARRER is chief storyteller and vice president of communications.
Let the Buildings Speak. Did you have a memorable experience in one of our Pasadena campus buildings? Help us honor this space that has been our home for over seven decades by sharing that memory with us—what happened, when, in what building—at editor@fuller.edu.