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STORY Daniel Dama, pictured above, draws on his lifelong love for music and the arts to creatively share his faith with others across West Africa p.28

THEOLOGY This issue looks theologically at worship and art with a collection of articles curated by the Brehm Center's Todd Johnson p.42

VOICE Guided steps lead readers through the Prayer of Examen and a diversity of voices reflect on discernment p.76
Fire Mercy, 2007, by Lance Kagey and Tom Llewellyn. Lance Kagey was the featured Artist in Residence at Fuller Northwest for 2017–2018. “His work has enlivened the walls of our campus in thought-provoking ways,” says Shannon Sigler, executive director of Brehm Cascadia, who has been instrumental in developing the Artist in Residence program. “Because we believe that discipleship of the eyes is important for those preparing for ministry, each year the campus hosts an artist to share his or her work and to provide compelling art for our seminary community to engage. Our campus’s Artist in Residence Program was started in 2014 by Martín Jiménez.”

The poster here, and others throughout the magazine, are part of a guerrilla arts project, Beautiful Angle, created by Kagey and Llewellyn as a way of engaging the Seattle community. Working on a 1960s-era hand-crank printing press, they create a new poster every month using wood and lead type with hand-carved images, and hang them on telephone poles and buildings throughout Seattle with staples and wheat paste. Says Kagey, “We know people will see them there. We’re just as likely to talk about good pizza as we are to talk about the good news. We’ve begun a dialogue with the city we love.” See more of their posters on pp. 4, 11, 74–75, and 98–99.
“The senses are our bridges to the world. Human skin is porous; the world flows through you,” says John O’Donohue in his book Anam Cara. If the theology section of this issue reveals anything, it is how the expression of worship and art is embodied, and that this embodiment affects both what we absorb as the world flows through and what we release back into it. If astronaut Carl Sagan and songwriter Joni Mitchell are correct—“we are Stardust, we are billion-year-old carbon”—not only the world flows in and out like breath, but an eternal cosmos, too. If the imagination can stretch that far, is it so great a leap that we, first enlivened by the breath of God in Eden, still exhale that breath back into the world? Might our service be the simple act of breathing out the presence of God in a thousand places? This territory is not new to artists or worship leaders—or those called to intercessory prayer. I have referred before to this artist as intercessor, bridging the gap between suffering and hope (Rom 5:3–5) with one foot planted firmly in each. Why? No one in their right mind would remain in such tension by choice, yet some artists do so and hope (Rom 5:3–5) with one foot planted firmly in each. Why? No one in their right mind would remain in such tension by choice, yet some artists do so to become a bridge themselves, so that others might cross over them. “There is a kind of consciousness,” confirms Christian Wiman in his book My Bright Abyss. “[That] involves allowing the world to stream through you rather than you taking to intercessory prayer. I have referred before to this artist as intercessor, bridging the gap between suffering and hope (Rom 5:3–5) with one foot planted firmly in each. Why? No one in their right mind would remain in such tension by choice, yet some artists do so to become a bridge themselves, so that others might cross over them. “There is a kind of consciousness,” confirms Christian Wiman in his book My Bright Abyss. “[That] involves allowing the world to stream through you rather than you absorbing the stranger. We live in dialogue with the city, crossing the distance between thought and stranger.

“The purpose of theology—the purpose of any thinking about God,” says Wiman, “[is] to make the . . . aspects of the divine that will not be reduced to human meanings more irreducible and more terrible, and thus ultimately more wonderful.” This is why, he goes on to claim, “art is so often better at theology than theology is.” It most certainly is true that art tells a tale of God that theology cannot (to which most theologians will attest), and vice versa. But this seminary is peopled with those who embody both theology and art at once. Daniel Dama, whose beautiful visage graces the covers of this magazine and whose story is told within, is just such an artist, engaged in a unique dialogue with Seattle through the hand-printing and random hanging of original works around town. His art, found opposite this page and throughout the magazine, is thought-provoking and vital, but it is the artist himself who is in dialogue with the city, crossing the distance between thought and stranger.
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When I was a student at Fuller many years ago, a friend and fellow student took me one day on a tour of five California missions. On the broadest level, we could see that these complex, even controversial expressions of California history held a great deal in common. What my friend enabled me to see, however, was that beyond the superficial similarities were subtle and profound differences that reflected the distinct story of each tribe and location. The gospel was similar and different in each place. It was a lesson in paying attention.

Paying Attention

From Mark Labberton, President

Living as a disciple of Jesus requires paying attention in God’s name—to God, to our neighbor, and to our world. We exercise and express our attentiveness in countless and varied ways, and undermining it all is the pervasiveness of God’s own faithful attention. The God “who never slumbers and sleeps” attends with unfailing truth, mercy, and justice. Human beings have been created in God’s image to manifest God’s attentive care.

We do this as finite creatures, of course: the only way any of us can do so. Our limits and liabilities affect our capacities. Human beings are only ever localized and fallen beings. Technologists can make us feel a bit like we are multi-present, but we are in the end only here. Yet we are made in God’s image, with an ability to remember and to imagine, to rehearse and to anticipate, to live in only one place but stretch to what may be happening thousands of miles away. We analyze and synthesize. We see, but we see through a glass darkly.

Specialist observers come in many forms. Parents are chief among these, on whose shoulders the weight of our survival depends. So scientists, technologists, artists, and Bankers have in common that they are acutely attentive. How they see, what they see, and how they help the rest of us to see, feel, recognize, and understand are critically important. Strange, artists and art are sometimes perceived by people as disreputable. In fact, they are essential to our collective attention since at their best they will enhance, intensify, and pixilate what life manifests to and what we must respond.

We could not and would not be able to know our neighbor, ourselves, or the world around us without them.

When our attention is sharp, it is a gift we can share. When we are attentive, we can see how the world functions, how it works. Scientists observe, note, and probe to discover through their trained attentiveness what and how our world is. Artists and artistry reframe and intensify our attention. The province of the artist is peculiarly and remarkably to pay attention. What Mozart and Coltrane, or Michelangelo and Banksy have in common is that they are acutely attentive. How they see, what they see, and how they help the rest of us to see, feel, recognize, and understand are critically important. Strange, artists and art are sometimes perceived by people as disreputable. In fact, they are essential to our collective attention since at their best they will enhance, intensify, and pixilate what life manifests to and what we must respond.

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scientists, and mathematicians, and analysts, must have artists. And we also must have
and impotence, our beauty and horror. We show us we are human and depict our agency
is their passion and their burden. The arts
inaccessible, about subtleties and voids. This
creativity speaks about what is apparent and
attention to the visible and invisible. Their
what we perceive. Our artists pay obsessive
thought and emotion that refract and embody
and language. These are the effluences of
us without music, movement, visual arts,
(Banksy)
and parents and friends, politicians and poll-
actors, along with plumbers and launderers, fruit pickers and cooks.
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When my fellow alum Andre Henry [MAT ‘16] asked online if any white male friend would be willing to join him on his cross-country drive to move from Los Angeles to Orlando, Florida, I said yes. "It's more likely we'll be treated differently together than either of us will be treated alone," he said. When I asked him if I could help with anything before we left, Andre asked me to pick up a "baby on board" sticker for his car. As an African American, he said, "we're pulled over all the time, but we've learned this sticker or even empty baby seats help humanize us." We've learned. I winced thinking of how that knowledge came to be, how it was passed around like a rule of thumb—a technique I've never had to use. "I haven't had to think that much about how I'm perceived in the world—that seems like quite a mental load to me," I said. "Yeah, that's called racial stress, but you just get used to it, you know?" Andre said.

It was the first conversation of dozens, beginning the gift of traveling with Andre: a weeklong chance to see up close what it's like to walk through the world in his skin. "It's hard to deny the different experiences we're having when they're happening so closely together," he told me. Sure, we discussed race and theology and politics—we're seminarians, after all—but the real education came when we were treated differently in gas stations and fast food restaurants, when Andre's anxiety over a cop driving by would spill over into my seat, and even when we compared the music of our childhood (listen to the difference between Stevie Wonder and James Taylor, and you'll know why Andre is the better dancer between the two of us!). What might be an intimidating conversation on the fraught topic of racism anywhere else was softened by our friendship and those long bright hours in a dusty Kia, the road thrumming beneath us. "I don't get to take a break from this," he told me one afternoon, as we pulled away from a gas station where he was followed by the security guard. "I was born into a world where my skin has a certain meaning socially, and I have no choice in that matter. I can't just not be Black," he said. "Like you can't change the perception of those 30 people in that all-white gas station," I said. "Exactly, and that's the thing people miss. It's not just about how you identify yourself, right? There's also something about being identified." And that security guard identified my friend as a threat, I think to myself, staring at my own white hands on the steering wheel.

Traveling from family to Fuller staff and alumni and their own networks of friends along the way, we brought these conversations with us, grateful for the hospitality that could contain the stories we carried. "The cloud of witnesses isn't just people who've passed—it's those of us who are living, too," Andre said after our first day. "We're part of that cloud of witnesses, and I feel like we're experiencing the kind of hospitality that God would want us to practice." I still think about that trip and the hospitality that made it possible, how for one week that cloud carried us across the country—and how it still carries us now.

a cloud of witnesses

A cross-country trip reveals both the challenges of racial stereotypes and the blessings of hospitality

Written by MICHAEL WRIGHT
Photographed by BRANDON HOOK

Andre (left) and Michael (right) share a laugh before leaving on their trip upon discovering they’re dressed alike. They took audio equipment to record their conversations on the road; listen to excerpts of their reflections on race, hospitality, and more at Fuller.edu/Studio.
MONDAY
When we arrived in Tempe, Arizona, our first night, Tim and Katie Holand ushered us to a warm meal waiting on the dining room table. We were online friends first, and I quickly learned in person that Tim wasn’t an alum as I’d thought—but an “honorary Mouwist” and close friend to a number of PhD students who had studied under the president emeritus. Naturally, as a result, our dinner conversation on racism and politics was one of “convinced civility,” and it easily drifted into the living room, only interrupted by the joyful slobber of their Boston Terrier Gus (short for Augustine, of course). When we left the next morning, Andre told me, “It’s not just that we are welcome here, but our whole story is welcome here. We can bring the exact experience we’re taking across the country, and it’s welcome in their home,” he said. As we reached out to the Fuller community on social media for other hosts, we could feel that same welcome spilling out before us.

TUESDAY
We had no place to stay in Albuquerque, but thanks to Will Stotler-Lee, director of Fuller Colorado, we connected with Casey Church [DMiss ’13], who knew indigenous families in the area. After texting back and forth in the afternoon, we were about the address of our host family for the night: friends of Jon and Tawanna Lanz, two buckoat Hopi Christians with a home filled with heirlooms of their ancestors. When we arrived, we marveled at their kindness to two strangers and the friendships that delivered us to their front door. Over tea, Andre asked them about reconciling their faith with a history of oppression that often came at the hands of Christians. “It’s a long road—with so much history, where do you start?” Andre and I were having on the ongoing conversations with Andre and the Fuller studio team had written on Nicole’s walls around and thought of all the lives we witnessed through the week, imagining them around a single table. Thursday night, Tim and Katie Hoiland ushered us to a massive feast, “I don’t have my college degrees—my parents have my college degrees!” After Andre sang songs in the living room, we drove on to Columbia, South Carolina, grateful for Andre’s childhood friend Michelle, who stayed up until the early morning to welcome us.

SATURDAY
On our last day we decided to swing by Savannah, Georgia, stopping to see Andre’s childhood friends Isaac and Tatiana. Crossing over Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Andre reminded me that the town used to be a port city for the slave trade, a hard fact to ignore as we walked into a coffee shop inside a converted plantation house. Isaac and Tatiana told us that when a local church found a record book in the basement with an enslaved man listed as a tithe to the church, they had to decide whether or not they were going to bring the records up to the sanctuary. I wondered if that church had the courage to bring their painful history into the light—and if we had that courage, too.

SUNDAY
Our host Nicole Higgins [MACCS ’10] knew she wouldn’t be around when we arrived in Orlando, so she left us a key under the mat and fresh-baked cookies on the table. After such a nonstop road trip, walking through that door felt like a homecoming. Our FULLER studio team had written on Nicole’s walls, “If you were aEarlier magazine and studio.
BRANDON HOOK (BART ’12) is an art director at Calvin in Pasadena, California. More of his work at brandonhook.com.

On the way to Nashville we turned our car conversations into a live video feed, inviting the wider Fuller community to reflect with us as we discussed our different experiences in gas stations along the way, and how conversations about race shifted when we approached them through close proximity and friendship. As comments came in from students and alumni from around the nation, it was easy to sense that larger community beyond the edges of our single trip.

We arrived at my parents’ home outside of Nashville with another warm meal waiting for us—“It’s my birthday, with my family, members of their church, and alum Gary Mumme all gathering to hear us play songs Andre had written. “When I was a kid, I’d clean the house while my mom was away, turn a desk lamp into a spotlight, and surprise her with a show when she got home,” Andre shared. “They were family concerts, and tonight feels exactly like that.” When the songs were over, we talked in the space the songs created, inviting the gathering into the same ongoing conversation Andre and I were having on the road.

FRIDAY
When we arrived at Andre’s childhood home in Atlanta, we shared Jamaican patties, music, and memories of Andre’s late mother, Mackie. “This is my first time to come home without her being here,” said Andre, and her absence felt the holes. His sister gave me a tour of the house, including a living room with walls covered in degrees and awards. “Almost every Black friend I know has a living room where no one is allowed to actually live,” Andre told me, laughing. “I don’t have my college degrees—my parents have my college degrees!” After Andre sang songs in the living room, we drove on to Columbus, South Carolina, grateful for Andre’s childhood friend Michelle, who stayed up until the early morning to welcome us.

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BRANDON HOOK (BART ’12) is an art director at Calvin in Pasadena, California. More of his work at brandonhook.com.
Combining determination with a creative spirit, Meghan Easley helps new ventures do “extreme good” in their work.

Redemptive Entrepreneur

Written by KATHERINE LEE
Photographed by BRANDON HOOK
Meghan Easley [Mat ’06] has a memory from her elementary school days. She had just come home from school, and her father asked for her backpack. Taking out her pencil case, he began to tape a bunch of pencils together—and then gleefully declared, “I think I have it!” Meghan was puzzled. “You have what, Dad?” He explained that it was a prototype for a portable oxygen tank: one to replace the 60-pound albatrosses that at the time kept the infirm and elderly immobile. Dissatisfied with seeing such individuals having to choose between respiration or mobility, Meghan’s dad had just designed a solution. Eventually his pencil prototype went to market to become a mainstay of home healthcare, an industry he has remained a part of to this day. “My father has been a lifelong entrepreneur. I grew up with him seeing problems apart and recreating them to show me what’s possible,” Meghan says. It seems that it was catching, as she came to bring that same unorthodox, innovative spirit to her own graduate study and subsequent work.

When Meghan began as a theology student at Fuller, she thought she would end up pursuing a vocation in youth ministry. Her studies began well, but quickly became cumbersome to her. Starting to sense that youth ministry wasn’t the right path after all, Meghan felt stagnant and trapped. “It seemed to me that the program equipped you for certain tracks—pastoral or academic tracks that my peers all envisioned following after graduation,” she recalls. “Over time I realized I wasn’t headed in those directions. But I didn’t know where I was headed.”

She spoke with her sister over the phone and expressed her concerns. Her sister, convinced that Meghan was unhinged, told her to go to a startup. “I had never heard that term before, and I googled it and found a master’s program at USC in entrepreneurship.” “I had never heard that term before, and I googled it and found a master’s program at USC in entrepreneurship.” Meghan says. “The program was designed to help for-profit and nonprofit leaders bring business acumen to problems like poverty, violence, and other forms of inequity and injustice. That sounded great. But the deadline to apply was just two weeks away,” she says. “I grew up with him seeing problems apart and recreating them to show me what’s possible.”

Meghan was sold on the mission. In fact, bringing her dad’s innovative spirit to the table, it felt like her dual degrees had been her own prototype of preparation for this kind of work. “Praxis was the place where I met the ‘little whys’ that make good design possible—Fuller was the place where Meghan enjoyed the affirmation and exploration of the ‘greater whys.’” At USC, there were very few Christians in my cohort of 50,” she says, “and often the case studies we looked at on poor social entrepreneurship highlighted Christian organizations. But it wasn’t a hostile environment. My faith was pruned there, and I think it grew. I saw my colleagues struggle with the contours of social good outside of a Christian framework. And where they couldn’t root the work in the worldview that I held, my community at Fuller helped me to do so.” Moreover, her theological training helped her understand social entrepreneurship as not just simple renewal or social uplift, but as one of many extensions of God’s grace and redemption.

Meghan sees so much potential for the church and theological education to embrace our culture’s current enthusiasm about entrepreneurship. “Think of how much our world is shaped by it today! Uber. Facebook. Apple. We need innovative Christian voices in these industries,” she says with conviction. “I’m not simply talking about ‘how to be a Christian at my job.’ I mean that beyond our moral influence in the marketplace, we should also channel our energy to make the world more just, more whole, more beautiful. Why wouldn’t we want to do that? Why wouldn’t we want to shape the overarching values of our startup culture so that it is redemptive instead of exploitative? This can be a key part of our Christian witness.”

After Meghan graduated with both master’s degrees, she began dialoguing with a Fuller trustee who mentioned an organization called Praxis, founded in 2010 with a mission to advance redemptive entrepreneurship. According to Praxis, redemptive entrepreneurs are those who spend themselves on behalf of others, using their personal and organizational power to “bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness the prisoners” (Isaiah 61). They renew culture out of love for their neighbors, Praxis’s endgame is to produce such leaders by creating an ecosystem that supports them: mentors, wise funders, other practitioners, and the spiritual practices and resources required to launch redemptive ventures.

Meghan was sold on the mission. In fact, bringing her dad’s innovative spirit to the table, it felt like her dual degrees had been her own prototype of preparation for this kind of work. “Praxis was truly the first place where I met investors and philanthropists who weren’t just looking for
the kudos that come with responsible social responsibility, like so many are today,” she says. “They were—and are—focused on extreme good.”

Convinced this was the right environment for her, Meghan joined the Praxis team and moved to New York City. She now works in their Accelerator program, and she is quick to clarify that her work is more than just introducing founders to a community of investors and philanthropists. “It’s true that many come to us in their growth phase looking for philanthropists or funders. But after becoming a part of our community, they walk away with a reimagined sense of leadership,” she stresses. “They no longer feel the need to compartmentalize or ‘postpone’ their faith.” This type of spiritual formation seems to have real value: Praxis “alumni” ventures are staggeringly successful, with a 92 percent survival rate. Perhaps most significantly, they are making a tangible impact on people across the globe. Take, for example, two ventures that are part of Praxis’s network: New Story, a nonprofit created to address homelessness through affordable housing, and ICON, a construction technologies company created to revolutionize homebuilding. Because of their affiliation with Praxis, they have now joined forces to build affordable homes through 3D printing. In less than 24 hours, they can construct an entire home for a family in need for a mere $4,000. The prototype debuted at the 2018 SXSW Conference in Austin, Texas, and generated significant media attention. In 2019, New Story and ICON will build communities in several developing countries, utilizing local materials and labor and improving as they go through community engagement and feedback. Just as important is that they are not looking to monopolize the market. Their technology will be open source, allowing other organizations and government agencies to multiply the impact. The end result: more children of God living in safe conditions, freed from the exhaustion and fear of life in survival mode.

It’s quite possible to imagine Meghan herself as one of these Praxis alumni in the future. “We talk frequently about our own ‘cherished topic,’” the space where there is possibility for redemptive entrepreneurship but none yet present,” she explains. “I care a lot about sustainable food systems, maybe because my mother was a nurse and taught me to appreciate the significance of nutrition for healthy living. The need became clear to me when I was attending USC—a school that caters to the appetites of privileged students, yet right outside campus are poor neighborhoods with very few fresh food grocers. So perhaps I will focus on this challenge.

“I know that I can’t settle for the mindset that this system will always be broken,” Meghan insists. “I can’t accept that food deserts will always exist. That’s fatalism, not faith in the kingdom at hand. ‘No’ doesn’t always have to be the answer. We can fix these things.”

Such determination brings to mind that memory of Meghan’s father and his pencil case prototype: it was his natural expression of the creative impulse God has placed in each of us. Like her father, Meghan is committed to being the hands and feet of Christ in the world as he “makes all things new.”

“I'm not simply talking about 'how to be a Christian at my job.' I mean that beyond our moral influence in the marketplace, we should also channel our energy to make the world more just, more whole, more beautiful. Why wouldn't we want to do that?”

KATHERINE LEE [MAT '12] is the director of development for foundations in Fuller’s Office of Development.

BRANDON HOOK [MAT '16] is an art director at Caltech in Pasadena, California. Find more of his work at brandonhook.com.
HER FACE REFLECTING the digital glow, a teenager studies a projection of an oil painting by Canadian artist Tim Okamura called Courage 3.0. The teen’s eyes flicker over the image of a young Black woman clad in a man’s undershirt, coming to rest on the bundle cradled in the woman’s arms, a baby concealed by the lush folds of a blanket. Seated in a classical portrait pose in front of a graffiti-covered wall and crowned with a halo, the mother holds her chin high as her gaze points toward a distant horizon. The teenager, a young mother herself, finally describes what she sees: “To me, the way she’s looking, I see that the future is in her head.”

“Motherhood is so much more than just a physical relationship between a parent and child,” Fuller doctoral student Joyce del Rosario says. She sees something mystical in the bond that witnesses to the nature of God, especially in untraditional kinds of mothers and unique depictions of them. From Seattle, Washington, Joyce was raised in a bustling Methodist home surrounded by her extended Filipino family. “Growing up, I had random people in my home all the time,” Joyce remembers, recounting stories of Filipino aunties and distant cousins, everyone sharing responsibilities: men and women, across generations and blood ties. Joyce’s family was always growing and changing shape, giving her broad definitions of hospitality and community.

During her nine years on staff with Young Life, Joyce began to think about starting a family of her own as a foster parent. “Even if I was only able to house a child for a couple of weeks,” she felt, “those would be two weeks that child would be safe and warm and loved.” Though Joyce didn’t become a mother in this exact way, she began spending her weekends volunteering at a residential home for teen moms in the Bay Area of Northern California. There, she became captivated by the stories of the young women under her care.

To Joyce, these young women’s likes and dislikes, their family and immigration histories, their schooling, even their relationships to local and national governments were much more than mere details about their backgrounds or factors that may have contributed to their young motherhood. These were precious aspects of these women’s identities—and of their children’s identities—that Joyce saw as essential to understand and honor if she was going to minister to them well.

Some, but not all, of the young women had been virtually abandoned by their families and their partners. From varied socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities, they were in high school or working their way through their pregnancies, growing bellies tucked into the teenage uniforms of hooded sweatshirts or sundresses from the mall. No matter their circumstances, Joyce helped these young moms-to-be pack their hospital bags and prep their birth plans, ready to rush to the maternity ward at any hour of the day or night.

Joyce became the director of that home, a position she held for four years. Much more than the two weeks at a time she initially imagined spending as a foster mom, “I didn’t realize God would give me five years of foster parenting and grandparenting with I don’t even know how many families!” Joyce found, her own experience of fostering through leadership not
least among them.

When Joyce decided to pursue doctoral work in Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies, she transitioned out of her work with the teen mom home to move to Pasadena. Yet those young moms she cared for so deeply, along with the Filipino aunties and so many others who influenced her own upbringing, stayed in the back of her mind. She progressed through her coursework with only a general idea of her research interests until one day, in a missiology seminar discussion, she became passionate about the idea that Protestants need to broaden their conception of and ideas about Jesus’ mother, Mary—and that this could have powerful implications for ministry. David Scott, Joyce’s advisor, saw the light bulb go on for her.

“That’s your dissertation topic,” he told her—and she agreed. Recalling the insights her teen moms had about their responsibilities to their children and their position in the world, she wondered about the connection between the narratives of young moms, often the intended recipients of Christian outreach, and the unmarried, teenaged Mary, who was God’s own vehicle of outreach to all humanity. “We forget that Jesus first came to a teenage girl who was socially, economically, and even legally vulnerable. God chose to enter into community with Mary first,” Joyce says.

At her advisor’s encouragement, Joyce revisited her teen moms and others in the Bay Area to probe their responses to images—icons, many of them quite nontraditional—of the holy family. Indeed, images of Mary had the potential, Joyce found in her research, to evoke teenage reflection on more than just maternity, inspiring questions about culture and romance, the past and the future.

Shown an orthodox icon depicting Mary with large, lashless eyes set in a long face and with covered hair—was that a knit beanie tucked under the old-fashioned robe?—teenaged moms wondered about this mother’s apparent lack of femininity, giggling about the “dad way” she held baby Jesus. And speaking of dads, where was Joseph? Not all teen moms are single, but Mary often seemed to be.

Responding to a traditional portrait of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a Mexican American mother recalled a shift in the way she saw Jesus illustrated when she became a Christian and began attending a nondenominational church, where instead of having golden brown skin, Jesus was often decidedly white. But this painting of the Virgin draped in the star-studded emerald green traditional in Mexican Catholic imagery, radiating light with a whole-body halo, reminded her of the holy families of her childhood with flowing dark hair and bedecked in rich textiles.

And contemporary paintings like Courage 3.0 both illustrated the teens’ upbringings and spoke prophetically to their hoped-for futures. One young woman saw the way her own parents raised her to envision a future outside of their impoverished neighborhood, as well as the hope she had for her own child: “They would always take us to places where they knew it was not typical for people who live in a poor city to be,” the teen recalled. In Okamura’s painting, she felt, “it just looks like they’re going places with the confidence she has. That background has nothing to do with her life, even though she lives there.”

Joyce’s research questions elicited honest, confessional responses through visuals alone, responses about what it means to reimagine one’s self as a parent in the context of high school, or without a partner, or without a home—what it means to venture on a new path, perhaps alone, brimming with new love and still unsure of what might come. She works toward a holistic Protestant vision of Mary, bringing that to bear on ministry...
to teenage mothers. What might happen, Joyce wonders, if churches remember Mary in their ministries to young mothers with unplanned pregnancies? How many more conceptions of the holy family might we imagine, helped both by real-life stories of today’s teen moms and by rich, diverse imagery of the many different kinds of motherhood?

"Context matters," Joyce says of working toward truly compassionate ministry to the unique needs of young mothers. Using what she’s discovered in the teens’ connections to the paintings, she wants to foster ministries to both privileged church communities and the neighborhoods they seek to serve. Through images like Okamura’s, Joyce encourages congregations to creatively handle the tension of welcoming new life and family bonds that might seem out of place. And through such images, those privileged church communities might come to see a Mary that’s quite different from the white young woman so many picture her to be: she might be any ethnicity, and she might just be wearing a beanie under that robe.

The young moms Joyce interviewed recreate versions of the holy birth narrative independent of the biblical text and true to life—and true, Joyce says, to God’s redemptive vision accomplished through an unmarried mother. They just needed images they could identify with and aspire to, ones that illustrate the best of what they see in themselves and their babies: “strong, resolute, and fearless of what the present and future holds,” according to Joyce. As one of the young moms said: motherhood is holy, and “a hopeful picture.”

Chapala Bakery #2, Miguel Pichardo. This mural, located at Westminster Avenue in Pasadena, California, depicts the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, one example of many similar images of Mary painted on buildings throughout the Los Angeles area. RACHEL PAPROCKI (MAT ’14) is the manager of Fuller’s Writing Center. LINDSEY SHEETS is a video editor and colorist for FULLER studio.
Drawing on his lifelong love for music, Daniel Dama uses the arts to share his faith with others across West Africa.

Written by CARLA SANDERS
Photographed by NATE HARRISON
Daniel Dama is intensely committed to his mission: sharing the gospel across West Africa not just in words, but through the music he so deeply loves. “I want to save my people,” the Fuller PhD student says with passion—and, as a missionary with an organization called the Joint Christian Ministry, that means traveling throughout 15 countries, from Chad to Senegal, helping others know the joy he’s found in Christianity. It can be a tricky, often dangerous business, as just getting from place to place in a region that’s both arid and tropical, desert and jungle offers distinct challenges.

“Sometimes we have to book public transportation,” he says, “which means that in a small car meant for four people, they’ll put, like, 15. Sometimes the driver cannot even reach the pedals. Someone else—a passenger—has to press them. If the car breaks down, it will take four to five hours to get it fixed. If you’re on a bus, someone might give you a goat to hold. Sometimes we have to take a boat on a river, traveling hundreds of miles. Then, when we jump from the boat, we have to walk about 20 miles in the jungle. Sometimes you find poisonous snakes on the road. The mosquitoes are everywhere.”

“It’s very interesting,” he says with a smile, “to be a missionary in Africa.”

For this married father of four with a gracious, engaging personality, the path has been winding and littered with obstacles from his early days. Dama, as he is known to everyone, spent his childhood in Goro village in northern Benin, a small, close-knit community where his grandfather was chief. He is a member of the Fulani tribe, one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, numbering upwards of 25 million people. Because of his paternal lineage as a “noble,” he was expected to eventually follow in his grandfather’s footsteps.

Dama, however, had other ideas. He wanted to become a musician—part of a different caste in his region’s social hierarchy. “That caste includes goldsmiths, praise singers, musicians, cobblers, weavers,” he explains. “All are culturally at the service of the nobles, which my family was. He is a member of the Fulani tribe, one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, numbering upwards of 25 million people. Because of his paternal lineage as a “noble,” he was expected to eventually follow in his grandfather’s footsteps.

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As a child in Goro, he witnessed many ceremonial events that drew praise singers or “griots”—traditional musicians and storytellers—from the region, and he was intrigued. “My interest was focused on these musicians and their performances,” Dama remembers. “I always followed them, sometimes late in the night, in order to capture the way they performed. Later, I imitated them clandestinely because I would be rebuked if a family member should see me sing like men from the wrong caste.”

Dama began composing his own indigenous songs, and experimented with making bamboo flutes and small, guitar-like instruments. None of this was good news to his family. “My mother rebuked me terribly, saying, ‘Don’t be a curse for our lineage and family!’ My uncles and aunts likewise menaced me. All of that intimidated me beyond description. As a result,” he confesses, “I abandoned making music and accompanying praise singers”—heartbreaking as that was for him.

His love for music wasn’t the only way the young Dama buttressed heads with his elders. Another point of contention was his first name: Daniel. After his birth, American missionaries in Goro village asked for permission to name the new baby boy—and, surprisingly, his grandfather granted it. Throughout his childhood, young Dama deplored his name because it was so foreign and unusual. “I was very angry because I was the only boy with this name!” says Dama. “For years, I kept asking my grandfather to change my name, but he told me to keep it.”

Raised in the Islamic faith, Dama came to Christianity in his late teens, inspired by a man who’d been traveling to his village on a rickety old bicycle for 25 years sharing his Christian faith. Dama went on to earn a diploma in Theology and Religious Education from Baptist Theological Seminary in Nigeria, and—now feeling the freedom, away from home, to renew his interest in song—followed it with a bachelor’s degree in music. “Like Amos, I heard the call of God,” Dama recounts, “and I felt deep inside me that I had a message to take to my people via music.”

He further equipped himself to do just that by coming to Fuller, in Pasadena, for an MA in Intercultural Studies—an experience that expanded his perspective.

“At Fuller, students from all nations filled the classrooms, and we learned from each other and shared experiences,” he says with enthusiasm. “We learned about the power of listening and how to talk with people of other faiths. People have stories to share and things to say, if we will only create space for them. I discovered that talking about art and culture can be one way to start conversations and find common ground.”
When he finished his master’s degree in 2014, Dama took that knowledge back to West Africa—and founded the Fulani Christian Festival of Art and Culture, a three-day event that’s been held every year since. As he talks about it, he opens a video on his phone of a previous year’s festival. Men, women, and children crowd together on the ground in a covered area, sitting row upon row, waving, swaying, and singing along with the music. Woven cloth and leather hats and other items sold by festival crafters adorn them. On stage, performers sing, drum, and strum songs of praise. Among them is the tall, commanding presence of Dama, who leads the music, sings, and often plays drums or the hoddu, a small stringed instrument. He giefully taps the small phone screen with his long, elegant fingers and points to the children sitting cross-legged on the floor in front. “Look at the children, look at them!” he says. “I love to see the children—so happy, so involved.”

About two thousand people came from all over West Africa for that first festival—“even non-Christians sent their youth and children,” he notes. This delights Dama, because this was his hope for the festival: that it would, in a region where young people are sometimes recruited by radical groups, draw them into a different kind of life. Though certainly not true of most Muslims, Dama says, “there are extremists who say to Fulani youth, ‘Fight the West—fight the infidels.’ But at the festival, we are teaching them not hate but love. Art and culture are a common ground for everyone.”

The Fulani festival has been so well received that Dama was asked by the Minister of Culture to be an official cultural advisor, helping to oversee similar events for a wide swath of West Africa. He turned down the offer, wanting to devote himself fully to the missionary work that leads him all over West Africa—whether that’s crammed in a car, carrying a goat on his lap, or dodging snakes in the road—connecting with those of other faiths and cultures through both word and song. He carries with him music CDs, cassettes, and hymnals on his journeys, giving them out with Bibles, recorded sermons, and literature, all in the Fulani language.

“My people are hungry for something, but they don’t know what,” Dama says, and it’s his mission to help feed that hunger with his faith. To his great joy, he now has support from his family, too. Dama’s parents both became Christians, as did many other relatives—the same people who couldn’t understand his call to be a praise singer so many years before. “Today, my mother, aunts, and uncles sing the songs and dance to the music I make for the glory of God, who endowed me with this exceptional gift,” says Dama with delight.

What’s more, Dama now sees that first name he was given as one of the many blessings of his life. “Today, I am still Daniel, and am profoundly grateful for the name I carry. Because, like him, I am a warrior, and my weapon is the word of God. My name was very prophetic!”

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AN ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY

Longtime professor Al Dueck merges his interest in pottery with theology and psychology as a way of connecting head and heart

Written by MICHAEL WRIGHT
Photographed by NATE HARRISON
When Al Dueck was first interviewed for a faculty position in Fuller's School of Psychology, he brought his own handmade pottery to the Geneva Room for his theological examination. “It was one of my best bowls,” he remembers. “I placed it in front of me on the table and never made mention of it.” The faculty asked him about atonement theory, his Mennonite background, and more, and when the questioning was done, he picked up the bowl and started to walk out. “But Al—what about the pot?” a professor called out from the back of the room. He responded, “That’s how I integrate theology and psychology.”

Al grins as he recounts the story in his corner office some 20 years later, books and more of his own pottery lining the walls, the windows cracking as they cool from the direct sunlight. In one framed picture near his desk, his grandson’s hands rest on Al’s while he shapes clay on a potter’s wheel. “Art has everything to do with how you bring together spirituality and psychology,” he says. “It’s integration with an artistic sensibility.” After teaching for decades at the seminary, he’s demonstrated to Fuller over and over what that sensibility might look like.

When Al was installed in 1999 as the first Evelyn and Frank Freed Professor of the Integration of Psychology and Theology, he applied an artistic sensibility to his installation. Rather than only offering a lecture, he hosted an evening of music and poetry the night before in the Pasadena Mennonite Church. An accomplished cellist and pianist performed, the Mennonite poet Jean Janzen read from her work, and donor Evelyn Freed and ethics professor Glen Stassen both presented reflections on integration. “That was very exciting; all of these people were trying to do integration from their convictions in their own contexts,” Al remembers. At the installation service the next day, he lectured on the language of psychology and theology, framed by the tower of Babel, Pentecost, and “The Language of Fire,” a poem by Janzen commissioned for the day: “Now let our tongues, like leaves, fall from their careful hold, / our fists release, trusting the tree which bore us; / Christ in our roots and crown, Spirit-wind loosening…”

Word began to spread around campus about the professor who used pottery to teach about psychology and theology. In one chapel service, Al gave malleable clay to half the audience and dried clay to the other half to preach about the Incarnation and being open to the Spirit. He ended every “Introduction to Integration” course by bringing his potter’s wheel to class, giving each student a small piece of clay to mold in their hands as he worked on the wheel, offering a class-long meditation on the importance of centering, intuition, and faith. “We want certainty and therapeutic techniques that we know are sure to work, but as people made in the image of a mysterious God, there are parts of us that are mysterious,” he says. Like guiding clay into beautiful forms, “being a therapist is a creative process. It pulls on that which is not in consciousness, which is intuitive. And that demands a process of self-emptying by the therapist. It is all an incredible mystery.”

For Al, pottery was more than just a classroom illustration—it had become a therapeutic practice for himself decades earlier. “After several years in academia, I was living too much in my head,” he remembers. “I knew that emotionally I was missing important cues in my work as a therapist. Starting my own personal therapy was a process of softening, of moving from head to heart.” Soon after
beginning his own therapy, he discovered shaping clay on a wheel as a way to reconnect his mind to his body. Over time Al began looking not only to pottery, but to the arts in general as pedagogical tools to share with others and offer a valuable space for reflection. Now, from the classroom to the therapy office, he offers students and clients alike poetry by Wendell Berry or Mary Oliver, paintings by Marc Rothko or Chagall, and books like My Name Is Asher Lev and Madeleine L’Engle’s Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art to help them connect their intellect to their bodies and relationships. Storytelling, he believes, is essential. “In novels, I’m always seeking out glimpses of redemption. There’s also an implicit ethic on how to live one’s life,” he says. “Novels give me a concrete and imaginative display of human nature. We need a point of commonality between faith and healing, and I believe that stories are one such point of contact.”

Al is most energized when this artistic sensibility blends with his deep commitment as a Mennonite to justice and elevating marginalized voices. More than just engaging art and culture for himself, Al has traveled around the world empowering indigenous communities who seek to rediscover the values of their own art and culture. He’s taken students to Guadalajara and Mexico City to study state violence and the paintings of Diego Rivera. He coauthored a book with Gladys Mwiti on African indigenous Christian counseling and emboldening African readers to use their proverbs and stories in their own therapeutic practices. On one trip to Nairobi, an African therapist approached Al after Gladys’s lecture and said, eyes brimming with tears, “Is Gladys really telling us that it is okay for us to use our ancient proverbs in therapy? We were always told that as Christians we needed to leave behind our past.” Al answered with an impassioned yes. “An indigenous spirituality of psychology requires us to decolonize our understanding of culture—which we often assume is like Christendom,” he says. “We have to decolonize power constantly, not give it its desired rule. I want people like that therapist to discover they have a heritage of their own.”

More recently, through a generous grant given to Fuller’s China Initiative, Al has traveled throughout China to dialogue with scholars about psychology, religion, and developing uniquely Chinese therapeutic models. “It’s not just us lecturing—it really is an exchange. We have real dialogue,” he says. “That’s always my hope.” In one case, Al took Chinese American students on a trip, and he was energized to watch as the students discovered their own cultural background. “To hear them speak in their own voice gives me incredible joy, it brings tears to my eyes every time.”

Working on a wheel, a potter cannot force how the clay takes shape. Molding the clay takes intuition and stillness. “It’s a long process of learning, but there’s an incredible moment when under your hands the clay is centered, still and turning,” Al says. “T. S. Eliot would have called this the ‘still point of the turning world.’” Without this essential step, the clay will wobble in the potter’s hands or even lose balance and collapse on the wheel. “My bowls remind me of a communion chalice; there’s a cup, and then it flares out at the top,” he reflects. “There’s a hollowing out and an openness to transcendence.” He gestures beyond the bowls and toward the sky, standing in the middle of his office with two open hands. —

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WORSHIP AND ART

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ADORACIÓN Y ARTE
Por Todd E. Johnson

Shorty after the turn of the century, Eddie Gibbs, Fuller’s McGavran Professor Emeritus of Church Growth, declared that the 20th century was the era of the orator, but that the current century would be the era of the artist. Even before Dr. Gibbs made his proclamation, the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts was a part of Fuller. Its existence acknowledges a shift in our culture and world away from the dominance of words and texts to the preponderance of nonverbals. We daily encounter the world of symbols and art: from the logos that identify brands to the images, sounds, and poetic words we encounter in the media, in our homes, and in our churches. One needs only to review the changes in Protestant worship over the past 50 years to see how much nonverbals have increased in our worship services in both quantity and importance. Given Gibbs’s assessment, if Fuller did not have a Brehm Center, we would have to create one.

Our work focuses on the intersection of theological investigation, engaging the cultural shifts in the world around us, and studying worship with the intention of providing resources for its planning, leading, and execution—however traditional, however innovative. In that spirit, this theology section of FULLER magazine explores worship and art in the 21st century, considering a sample of theological themes that have emerged for our research and study on worship and the arts across Fuller’s three schools.

In the essays that follow, you will find explorations of a biblical touchstone for the use and understanding of art in ministry and for guiding artists of faith, the relationship between symbolic competence in and out of church, and the importance of having an awareness of current cultural trends. Other essays will explore the power of cross-cultural communication and community building through art in a world where the distance between local and global is becoming reduced, as well as the emotional and spiritual impact of practices and symbols on the faithful at worship. Finally comes a word of challenge for all to take an active role in creating and caring for the cultures we inhabit.

Ultimately, we hope to resource and inspire thoughtful, appropriate strategies for living one’s faith in this new age amid all its challenges and possibilities.
Sometimes it is the most ordinary things that evoke the most extraordinary responses. This is the case with things we do or encounter regularly because they become such an intimate part of our lives. When they change, or when their interpretation changes or is called into question, we often experience enough discomfort to respond—often with great emotional heft. Such is the case with kneeling.

KNEELING: POSTURE AND PIETY

First Lutheran is a thriving church in the center of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The vitality of this historic church is evident in the robust attendance it draws at three weekend services. So robust, in fact, that it is undertaking a renovation of its worship space to better accommodate the congregation and its services. First Lutheran’s worship runs the spectrum from a Saturday night service accompanied primarily by piano, to a more formal organ and choir service early Sunday morning, to a service led by a worship band later Sunday morning. Its existing space accommodates the most traditional second service well, but less well the first and third, given the arrangement of the chancel and seating. Further, because of its central location, it is often the host of civic gatherings such as high school and college choir concerts; the congregation hopes to continue to accommodate such events in its new space. Being a growing church with a broad worship bandwidth requires a space that can accommodate the entirety of that bandwidth well—and then some, in this case.

Surprisingly, it is the core of First Lutheran’s worship, not its breadth, that created the most interesting challenge for their renovation plans. Although their services vary in music style and expression, they are all standard “Word and Table” services—that is, each service gathers the people together to hear the Word of God read and preached, and then invites them to communion at the table. In this church, people are invited forward to receive the bread and cup of the Lord’s Supper by kneeling at a rail around the table. Their renovation raised the question of whether it might be more expedient to offer the communion elements to the communicants standing, because serving can take quite a bit of time with each recipient kneeling. Maybe they should not use a communion rail in their new space? This raised the question, “What does it mean to kneel?” Answering that question is a challenge. Kneeling is a ritual gesture that is a symbol, not a sign. A sign would have only one meaning or referent. A stop sign on the street or road means “stop.” A symbol has more than one meaning or referent. If you put a stop sign in a frame and hang it in an art gallery it could mean many things, leaving it open to multiple interpretations—and no one single interpretation might be more correct than another.

Kneeling at communion has a history. Kneeling has long been a posture of humility and contrition, often used when offering prayers of confession or as a sign of respect in Judaism. The Lord’s Supper was in its earliest expressions a meal concluding with the sharing of a common cup and bread as a sign of unity in Christ (1 Cor 10:16). In this case people probably received it reclining at the table, as was the customary posture of dining then. Over time, the practice of gathering for an evening meal shifted to gathering for a morning service for the reading and preaching of Scripture, followed by the reception of the cup and the bread alone as a fossil of an earlier meal. In this case, people most likely received it standing after they

**MUCH ADO ABOUT KNEELING**

Todd E. Johnson

Todd E. Johnson, a faculty member at Fuller since 2005, currently holds the Brehm Chair of Worship, Theology, and the Arts and is theological director of the Brehm Center. His scholarship includes writings in the arts, homiletics, liturgy and ritual, and spirituality and mysticism. An ordained minister in the Evangelical Covenant Church, he has a wide range of experience in education, ministry, and social services. Some of Johnson’s works include Performing the Sacred: Theology and Theatres in Dialogue, Common Worship in Theological Education, and the multimedia resource Living Worship. He earned both an MA and PhD in theology at the University of Notre Dame.
These students’ imaginative disembodied practices of the and physical negotiations sub- and theology enhance student part of their seminary training, and theology exercises a whole- engage. Hence, their thesis of God, others, and self. For of art making, these thesis has failed to satisfactorily终结 a vocabulary of movements, South Side informed his knowl- and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend and pattern alluded to the pos- array of fabric choices by color and caring minister. For others, it may not become familiar and allow us to attend
THE ART OF PEACEBUILDING IN A DIVIDED WORLD

Robert R. King

I was driving to an evangelical church with my Israeli-born friend, Summer. It was a typical balmy Southern California evening. But then he launched into a well-known expression of prayer: “Peace, peace, oh my heart—Lord, peace”—a song that drew out a wistful longing and nostalgia for everyone in the audience. Summer (whose given name is Samir) and I first met in a Middle Eastern music ensemble that brings together people originally from North Africa and the Middle East with others to enjoy the music of their various cultural heritages. Like that group, this event would celebrate Middle Eastern music as we entered the church, I found lighthearted laughter and joy as a diverse group, among them both Muslims and Christians, anticipated the evening’s concert.

The concert began with a West African prayer from Senegal performing on the kora, a zittering harp. The concert proceeded with more Middle Eastern music, followed by an informative intermission. One of the church leaders explained how a number of local churches had been coming together to help Syrian refugee children get established in their local schools and find a place within the larger Southern California community.

To round off the musical evening, a long-established Jordanian immigrant of Palestin- ian descent came forward and began playing his oud. As a Christian, he sang, “Neloom, selam, pewsheli sabawes” (“Peace, peace, oh my heart, my Lord, peace”)—a song that drew out a wistful longing and nostalgia for everyone in the room. Next, he sang “How Great Thou Art,” alternating between Arabic on the verses and English on the chorus, with the intention that everyone in the audience could participate at some point.

But then he launched into a well-known Arabic folk song, totally shifting the dynamics of the concert. The song evoked a nostalgia of better times and of being at home. Slowly and with growing momentum, the Middle Eastern newcomers moved to the front and started to dance, men clapping hands and holding them high in the air with large smiles on their faces. Then the church members and the local community gingly came forward, attempting to join in. Young women in their hijabs brought out their smartphone cameras to capture the excitement. It was a sponta- neous moment where multiple barriers were breaking down. Joy and delight abounded.

That night, an Arabic folk dance migrated along with the refugees into a local church half a world away from its origins and brought joy and hope to all involved. The church, located not far from where an Islamic terrorist attack had just taken place, not only sponsored a benefit concert that evening, they also fostered a peacebuilding event via music-making. What, then, are the dynamics behind the performing arts and peacebuilding?

PERFORMING ARTS AND PEACEBUILDING

In today’s global era, when sounds of violence and conflict mute sounds of joy and delight in God-given life, “musicmaking” and the performing arts are joining hands in innovative approaches to peacebuilding. This takes place through the building of healthy relationships, central to working toward peace.

As John Paul Lederach argues, “Peacebuilding requires a vision of relationships.” He maintains that there must be a capacity to imagine “the canvas of mutual relationships and situate oneself as part of a historic and evolving peace.” Peacebuilding and mutual relationships will collapse. Enter the performing arts. They function as agents for building relationships.

Not only do they foster moments of imagining mutual relationships, but they also have the potential to propel people into experiencing one another as human beings.

KNEELING: INTERPRETING THE ORDINARY IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

Kneeling serves a function that跨越 the current state of affairs in light of what the flag represents. Beyer suggested kneeling. Kneeling was a sign of solidarity.

One kneels out of respect for a fallen comrade on the battlefield. Our own daughters, in their lacrosse and soccer games, would “take a knee” when a fellow player was injured and being attended to. The players agreed to kneel: hoping that it would communicate what they intended: a demonstration during the National Anthem, not a protest of the anthem, flag, or country. The next game, Kaepernick and Reid knelt on the sideline during the anthem while Beyer stood beside them, hand over his heart.

The practice of kneeling went as viral as the anthem. For example, the 49ers, but did play in the preseason. Witnessing the results of genocide in Darfur, a gesture that would respect the flag, yet and racism. He concluded his letter, “I look forward to the day you’re inspired to once again stand during our national anthem. I’ll pretend the act in “nonpolitical” terms, such as showing respect for a fallen comrade, a sign of sorrow, a sign of respect for a fallen comrade, expressing their memories over the years, that our hearts before minds, feeling before meaning, making these very delicate and not-as-ordinary conversations indeed.

But then he launched into a well-known Arabic folk song, totally shifting the dynamics of the concert. The song evoked a nostalgia of better times and of being at home. Slowly and with growing momentum, the Middle Eastern newcomers moved to the front and started to dance, men clapping hands and holding them high in the air with large smiles on their faces. Then the church members and the local community gingly came forward, attempting to join in. Young women in their hijabs brought out their smartphone cameras to capture the excitement. It was a spontaneous moment where multiple barriers were breaking down. Joy and delight abounded.

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Significantly, Lederach observes the following:

The artistic five minutes, I have found rather consistently, when it is given space and acknowledged as something far beyond entertainment, accomplishes what most of politics has been unable to attain: it helps to return to our humanity, a transcendent journey that, like the moral imagination, can build a sense that we are, after all, a human community.

Building a sense of human community through the arts emerges out of a range of metaphors that allow people to rise above the actualities of their current life situations.

PERFORMING ARTS AND EMBODIED METAPHORS

In peacebuilding, the performing arts serve as embodied metaphors on multiple levels. Not only do they metaphorically speak into our inner lives creating spaces of imagination, but they also move us into experiencing and interacting with one another. The strength of the performing arts is just that: they are meant to be experienced, often moving people into deeper levels of communication. Thus, the arts contain the capacity to impact peoples and societies in ways that transform their relationships. Building a sense of community was one of the major outcomes from the concert that evening.

How was this accomplished? The performing arts fostered a unique mixture of metaphors and poetics. Each musical piece and associated activities generated metaphor upon metaphor, creating a web of symbols. The performance of song, for example, unified the metaphors inherent in the lyrics, melody, harmony, the type of instruments used, and the inclusion of dance, plus appropriate clothing. This confluence of metaphors combined in exponential ways that resulted in an overarching embodied metaphor of human relationships.

The concept of “musicking,” which embraces all activities related to a concert, helps us further understand this aggregation of embodied metaphors. At the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, for example, serving Arabic coffee as global attendees enter the Moroccan concert hall functions as a gesture of hospitality. Going further into the auditorium, after finding one’s seat among a sea of peoples from around the world, the focus turns to the Al Kindi Ensemble with the Munshidins (whirling dervishes) from the Damascus Mosque standing next to the Tropos Byzantine Choir of Athens on the same stage. Here are two contrasting faiths, historically at odds with one another, sharing the same stage, creating an embodied metaphor of the possibilities of coexisting as neighbors. Such embodied metaphors point toward building healthy relationships among global neighbors. By coming together around a common cause, music and the performing arts open up social spaces where “relationships are built and interaction takes place.”

PERFORMING ARTS AND SOCIAL SPACES

Performing arts require social spaces, which become arenas for relating with one another. We know that “Performance is a rich and complex social affair wherein group meaning is processed and negotiated.” It is in the social interaction of a performance event that people experience and create new meanings and attitudes toward their global neighbors. These are spaces where peoples from totally different walks of life can come together. They foster safe spaces of relating and processing relationships, both good and bad, in public settings. When encounter and engagement with peoples of different groups are sensitively entered into, shifts in attitudes toward one another take place and an openness to attachment toward global neighbors is initiated. I call these social arenas “Musical Spaces of Relating.”

“Musical Spaces of Relating” foster negotiating relationships across a continuum of five different levels and stages. Relational attitudes and behaviors range from exclusion and enmity to willingly relating as neighbors. They include: (1) enmity and exclusion toward people who are different, (2) encounter with others, (3) engage, (4) embrace, and (5) relating as neighbors. A brief analysis of the Syrian Benefit Concert described earlier demonstrates the dynamics of these five stages.
Middle Eastern ways of life and identity. This previous long-term contact, such as newly developed, the long-term locals could begin occurred and the concert participants moved ing vocal exclamations, common to much faiths, nationalities, and languages. The important. Indeed, a people’s cultural music benefit concert provided a space to meet the needs of newcomers while also providing an opportunity to share common interests and, above all, demonstrate a willingness to be together.

Stage 3. Escape. Musical performance became the main reason for coming together. Inviting West African and Middle Eastern perform- ers to share their unique music was a sign of generous hospitality. The host churches recognized a people’s “home” music as significantly important. Indeed, a people’s cultural music is a key part of their identity. As the evening began, the long-term locals could begin to sense the distinctive differences between music cultures. They were entering into Middle Eastern ways of life and identity. This became especially evident when the concert moved beyond mere listening into participato- ry elements of dance, music, their common humanity through performing arts like music-making, and thus experience the possibilities of living together as neigh- bors.

MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS IN A DIVIDED WORLD

In today’s challenging global climate, music and other performing arts offer social arenas for engaging and embracing our neighbors. They promote peacebuilding through perform- ing events—for example, “musicking”—that allow people to experience being in each other’s presence through non-aggressive and non-threatening means. People come together, often experiencing profound moments of joy, respect, and dignity. Relationships are initiat- ed and allowed to thrive. The truth of Mirsco Volon’s admonition rings true: “We must not isolate ourselves from others but to engage them, indeed, to contribute to their flourishing, as we nurture our own identity and to attend to our own well-being.”4 Learning about our neighbors, in this case through “musicking,” created pathways for relating as neighbors, listening to them, and initiating dia- logues that foster sustainable communities of peace—and loving them as ourselves.

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3. Christopher Small maintains that “music” is an action verb, what he calls “musicking.” Thus, “to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance.” See his Book Musick- ing: The Meaning of Performance and Listening (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 8.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 123.

7. The Fez Festival of World Sacred Music is a nine-day event that takes place annually in Fez, Morocco. It brings together a global audience around music, religion, and dialogue. The festival is named after the Fez region in Morocco and was founded in 1981. For further information and this year’s program see https://fezmusicfestival.com.

8. Lunden. Imaginative, 93.


10. Ibid., 205–7.


Fuller’s community is what you might call a diverse ecology. An ecosystem is comprised of the physical elements that sustain life and various cultures to be involved in the decision-making, design, and leadership for the service, adding in each one’s experience, style, and tradition. It is easy to get caught up in the idea of multicultur- alism, but monocultural, where repre- sentation turns into tokenism, while we purposely select diverse leaders to help avoid such pitfalls. This intentional diversity is equally part of our liturgical ecology.

This is the diversity that makes up Fuller’s liturgical ecology, and like all ecologies, there must be a sustainable balance to allow all parts of Fuller’s community to thrive. In making worship choices for Fuller’s chapel, there is freedom that comes from not having one particular liturgical tradition to follow. This allows us to honor all traditions when it comes to prayers, postures, and the use of music and other performing arts. This ecological perspective of living and being together helps us see the possibilities of living together as neigh- bors.

THE DIVERSE ECOLOGY OF FULLER’S CHAPEL

By Julie Tai and Edwin Williamson

Julie Tai is director of chapel, overseeing all aspects of Fuller’s weekly services.

Edwin Williamson is director of the Fred Bock Institute of Music, which is part of the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts.
THE CATASTROPHIC POETRY OF THE CROSS

Kutter Callaway

It’s the starting point for any theology worth its salt.

In fact, if Christian theology is unable to address the core questions that haunt the contemporary cultural imagination, it might as well say nothing at all.

These were only a few of the thoughts running through my heart and mind one Sunday morning at church not too long ago. Our congregation was singing songs of worship like we always do, and as is often the case, my wife and I were standing with our daughters in the row just behind our good friend and her three young children.

Still, this Sunday was different than most. After enduring a battery of tests, radiation therapy, and a stem-cell transplant, our friend’s leukemia, which had been in remission for nearly two full years, had now returned. And no amount of singing would change that.

Of course, because of their age, neither the children nor ours were fully aware of what it all meant. So while they laughed and sang around which the entire theological project of proclamation, the words we sang shifted into a form of divine interrogation:

Katherine was there, not her sister, who had gathered together that day to sing songs to a God who seemed to be impotent, or indifferent, or just plain absent in the face of tragic circumstances. Rather, through music, poetic utterance, and corporate singing, we were bringing to speech what countless other women and men of faith were also voicing on that otherwise unremarkable Sunday morning.

In concert with this great cloud of witnesses, we drew upon the power of metaphor and poetry to articulate a “groaning too deep for words” (Rom 8:26)—an elemental cry of desperation, borne from an experience of the catastrophic, aimed directly at the Divine.

A strikingly similar cry of lament crossed the lips of Jesus himself while hanging on the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34; Ps 22:1). Jesus was quoting Psalm 22; but surely he was expressing this very notion—that something profoundly theological might be taking place in the name of atheism. In doing so, we have stumbled upon a somewhat surprising realization—that something scandalously “atheological” is also taking place in the name of theology.

The only problem is that we need a new set of lenses to see it, much less come to grips with its many implications.

We are talking about: “He must be calling for Elijah.” Our praises had become lamenters in their offering.

Wait a minute. That can’t be right, can it? Are we really supposed to take Jesus at his word here? There is of course no easy answer to this question, but Paul calls the cross a “scandal” for a reason (1 Cor 1:23), and it isn’t simply because the idea of God abandoning God is logically counterintuitive.

Instead, as Jürgen Moltmann has suggested, the scandal of Jesus’s experience of god-forsakenness is that it makes theology out of us—all-believer and unbeliever alike.

Did not unbelievers who have a reason for his atheism and his decision not to believe a theologian too? Atheists who have something against both God and faith in God usually know very well whom and what they are rejecting, and have their reasons. Nietzsche’s book The Antichrist has a lot to teach us about true Christiani - ty, and the modern criticism of religion put forward by Feuerbach, Marx and Freud is still theological in its anti-theology. Beyond that, moreover, is a greatest atheism which wrestles with God as Job did, and for the sake of the suffering of created beings which cries out to high heaven denies that there is a just God who rules the world in love. This atheism is profoundly theologi - cal, for the theodicy question—if there is a good God, why all this evil?—is also the fundamental question of every Christian theodicy which takes seriously the question that the dying Christ thrusts at God: “My God, why have you forsaken me?”

For some time now, my colleague Barry Taylor has been probing this radical, too challenging notion—that something profoundly theological might be taking place in the name of atheism. In doing so, we have stumbled upon a somewhat surprising realization—that something scandalously “atheological” is also taking place in the name of theology.

Given our broader interests in the theological significance of art, aesthetics, and popular culture, the working title for our project is “The Aesthetics of Atheism.” The primary aim of this project is to demonstrate what it looks like to engage in a robust, mutually enriching conversation with atheist artists and contemporary cultural artifacts, not simply because they offer us a concrete point of departure for theological reflection, but also because there is something about art and aesthetic experience that is integral to the entire atheological enterprise. Which brings us back to Jesus’s cry on the cross.

As Jesus’s death by crucifixion demonstrates, the juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible ideas (e.g., God forsaking God) is often too counterintuitive, too radical, too challenging for our staid sensibilities. It’s partly why people almost always misunderstand what Jesus is saying, especially religious folks. His final words of apostasy are no different. In spite of the fact that he is quoting well-known Scripture, it seems that no one within our orbit has any idea what Jesus was talking about: “He must be calling for Elijah.” Yes, let’s see if Elijah comes to rescue him!” (Mark 15:35-36) But may also be why, for everyone who was not a firsthand witness to these events, the only appropriate response to the death of God was, in- and continuous to be art, music, image, and narrative. Indeed, there has been no shortage of artworks focused on the crucifixion, whether historically speaking as in our post-theistic context. And it is likely because there really is no better (or other) mode by which humans may capture, express, and otherwise explore such a profound incongruity than in and through these poetic means.

In other words, both the death of God and the divine apostasy it entails expose the limits of any theology that exclusively employs epistemological reasoning or deductive logic. Approaching Jesus’s cry on the cross in this way is like attempting to determine how much a piece of music weighs. It’s a category mistake. Along similar lines, to suggest that, in crucifixion, God became an atheist—even if for a moment—is not to accuse the Father or Son of blasphemy, nor is it to dubble in illogical untruths that lead to some other kind of heresy. It is rather to reject the logic of the atheism/thesism polarity altogether, acknowledging instead that a distinct kind of poetics resides within the heart of the Christian faith—a mood or sensibility toward life that seeks new coordi - nates in the wake of the death of God.

G. K. Chesterton made a similarly subver - sive claim in his aptly titled Orthodoxy.

When the world shook and the sun was wiped out of heaven, it was not at the cru - cifixion, but at the cry from the cross: the cry which confused that God was forsaken
FORMING ARTISTS, STRENGTHENING CHURCHES

Shannon Sigler

Sounds of an electric guitar, loud and distorted, emanate from a broken-down sauna building in the woods next to the Winnetah River. Hardly a suitable recording studio, it smells like cedar and sour tobacco. I knock on the door, but John doesn’t hear me. He keeps grinning on the guitar as though that was his theme song and that knock made his record. The river noise is in there, too.

I’ve learned a lot from John since I first met him, when he was a new Christian. He’s always been a musical prodigy. His band, Lonely Forest, toured with Death Cab for Cutie, and he recently released an album—“Cascadia,” can be an interesting place to do ministry. One of the most unchurched areas in the nation and a land of religious “nones,” it is a place of few boundaries and norms. Tradition is inherently suspect. We ask John, can he be a “Christian” artist?

James in the Gospel of John was an artist who painted a little while sharing a song that would eventually become the first he wrote for a worship album. This is the album he was finishing up recording in the sauna that day.

I was spending two weeks with five artists and five pastors at the Grunewald Guild Artist Retreat Center in Leavenworth, Washington, as part of the Brethren Center’s Cascadia Residency Program—in which artists are invited to be “Artists in Residence” at churches in the greater Seattle area. The two-week art-making retreat was the culmination of a year of relationship-building, and theological education with our cohort of five churches. The Cascadia Residency cultivates generative relationships between artists and ministry leaders who are mutually dedicated to the artistic renewal of the Pacific Northwest region and its churches.

The Pacific Northwest, or “Cascadia,” can be an interesting place to do ministry. One of the most unchurched areas in the nation and a land of religious “nones,” it is a place of few boundaries and norms. Tradition is inherently suspect. We ask John, can he be a “Christian” artist?

John approached me after our first worship time together and asked if he could have a copy of our liturgy. He had struggled for years to find a sacred space for his art—an album—an album of fear, joy, gratitude, emotion, and questions. The liturgy gave shape to his creativity. And our community of diverse traditions helped him shape it. Worship began to shape his individual art, just as his art had given embodiment to the liturgy. Since then, he has told me often how grateful he is for the way we have used our arts—propelling us—into the story of God. Artists began to shape our worship in revitalizing ways.

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Each evening during the retreat, our cohort participated in the ancient ecclesial rhythms of Gather, Word, Response, and Sending, using the lectionary as the source of our Scripture readings. This simple liturgy around our team—artists and pastors from diverse congregations that included our church among Non-Denominational, Evangelical Covenant, and Free Methodist. Not surprisingly, most of our artists—and some of our pastors—had never encountered these rhythms or the lectionary.

Slower, over the course of the two weeks, our artists identified ways to live into our liturgy. Our musicians reworked hymns; visual artists brought compelling objects from the outside for reflection; an author recast Psalm 23 through multiple creative lenses. Magical things began to happen. The lectionary texts and liturgical pattern of Christian worship gave the artists a space to play, to innovate, and to embody. They began inviting us—prophets of God’s word in the world, and that artists have much to teach to church leaders about how to cultivate living experiences of Christian encounter. We believe artists can plug us into the story of God—and equip our churches to do the same in the midst of a cynical and individualistic culture.

Liturgical patterns of worship have become a place where humans can ask hard questions. Worship becomes a place for both deep joy and expansive pain, for guitar fuzz and uncomfortable emotions. We are allowed to be transformed by the cross of God as we experience our personal stories being engulfed by God’s story. The church needs artists, and artists need the church. And sometimes they need a run-down sauna by the Winnetah River.

Many strong and loud voices would have us believe otherwise—that matters of faith are simple and straightforward and that we all exist at one or the other end of a very clear polarity. Either we are orthodox “believers” or heterodox “nonbelievers,” “believing” or “faithless,” “theists” or “atheists.” The recent return of both secular and religious forms of fundamentalism has only made this polarization worse. The New Atheists may not believe in the God of religion and sacred texts, but they share the same penchant for absolutizing their claims to knowledge and truth and taking it against all those who see the world differently. It’s no small wonder that both camps are often opposed to the arts. Artwork and artists can plunge us into the story of God. Artists can also be “believers.” And this is vitally important.

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If Chesterton is correct (and I think he is), then the core of our culture is that we have not as much a demonstration of supreme faith, but of divine abandonment. As such, it constitutes a “rationalize,” or otherwise “logically explain” Jesus’ despairing cry into the God who had so obviously forsaken him. Put differently, whether we are “believers” or not, life’s meaning remains elusive and opaque—always just out of reach. And that’s why, when my little community of faith discovered that none of our own would once again have her life turned upside down by cancer, all we could do was cry out in anguish for the story of God and the story of grace and hope that artists can help tell. We were lacking a story. And John: he took her recast 23rd Psalm into the story of God. Artists—propelled us—into the story of God. Artists can plunge us into the story of God.

ENDNOTES


2. A book by the same name will be available later this year as the lead volume in the Brethren Center’s New Engagements series, coedited by Fortress Press and coedited by Fortress Press and Columbia Press.

**PSALMS: A BIBLICAL MODEL OF ART**

W. David O. Taylor

Protestant Christians, evangelical Protestants in particular, are known as people of the Word. Although the arts have played an important role in Protestant history, especially in their hymnody, they have usually played a subsidiary role to the word-based, cognitive-oriented activities that favor facts over stories and reason over imagination. But this implies a false dichotomy between the Word and the arts. It also might fail to perceive the aesthetic nature of the Bible and the manifold ways in which the revelation of God comes to us through artistic media. So while the Bible matters to Protestants, one might ask: What exactly does it mean to have a biblical vision for the arts?

The answer to this question hinges largely on which scriptural text is privileged as a departure point and used to authorize a practice of art making. Do we begin with Genesis 1 and 2, with its story of the primordial creation and the command to cultivate the garden and construct a theology of arts from there? Do we start with Exodus 31 and the Spirit-empowered work of Bezalel? Do we build off the narratively constitutive work of Jesus in the Gospels? Perhaps Hebrew poetry does this through similes, parallelism. These are the ways that a poem communicates in ways that say more, more intensely, more densely, and more musically than does ordinary language. Hebrew poetry does this through similes, elliptics, rhythm, hyperbole, assonance, and parallelism. These are the ways that a poem means a thing in the psalms. Consider the beginning of Psalm 8, for example.

_**O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth,**_ Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! **. . . When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained . . .** (Psalm 8:1,3)

_“Your name” and “your heavens” sound almost the same in Hebrew. In Hebrew, the sound of those words shows us how the heavens, with its stars, moon, and sun, spell out the name of the Lord, an intimate, personal presence. We would fail to catch this nuance if we did not attend to the way in which poetry works. That’s what we’re looking for today? In the Hebrew mind, prose is not seen as a more faithful way than poetry to get at the truth—of God, of humans, of the world. They’re both capable of doing so, but they do so in their own distinctive ways. By implication this means that poetry is more reliable or appropriate means of communication than discursive prose, or proposition-al forms of expression._

Second, the psalms traffic in metaphorically rich language. A metaphor is a figure of speech whereby we speak of one thing in terms of another. In the psalms, the knowledge of God is not to be discerned on the other side of metaphor; it is discerned through the metaphor. Take “the Lord is my shepherd,” for example. The Lord is not of course an actual shepherd by profession, like a Tunisian goatherd. Nor is the point simply to say that the Lord generically cares for his people. The metaphor of shepherd involves much more than that. As Old Testament professor John Goldingay reminds us, the image of a shepherd in Israel was not a gentle one. Shepherds were rough characters who at times had to become ruthless killers to defend their flocks. 4

The metaphor of shepherd evoked memories of Moses. It evoked associations with Israel’s exodus. It evoked an image of wildernesses where sources of water were scarcer and wild animals endangered the safety of sheep. It evoked non-cozy pictures of great kings, as sovereign lords, who treated the people as vassals. Evoking all these images, the metaphor of the Lord as Shepherd involves a surplus of meaning. Yahweh shepherds his people with a “fierce tenderness,” as Martin Luther once put it. If metaphor is one of the defining characteristics of the arts, as plenty of philosophers suggest, then with the Psalter on our side we can say that the arts remain central to the work of Christ in the world. The arts open up the world of metaphor and symbol that engages our imaginations about a God beyond our full comprehension, while nonetheless offering us the true knowledge of that God.
we could dramatically recite Psalm 147 and... in a moment of silence, and Matilda, who had never before heard great romantic poetry spoken aloud, was profoundly moved. “It is like music,” she whispered. “It is music,” Miss Honey said. The point is this. We could write a theology book about injustice—and we need such books. But it is in the singing of Psalm 7 that we grasp injustice. We could preach a sermon about the loss of a friend, and Lord knows we need those sermons. But when we read Psalm 88 responsively, we know it from the inside. We say, yes, it’s just as intensely painful and tragically sad as that. We could talk about the majestic, highly exalted character of God; or, more kinesthetically persuasive, just our minds. The arts, accordingly, invite our whole selves to know and love God.

Fourth, the psalms operate within “the territory of smelling, tasting, feeling, seeing, hearing. If we wish to know how a psalm means, then, we need to say it or sing it out loud. We cannot simply read it silently. A psalm’s meaning occurs through sensory means, in this case through its musicality—which is of course what all poets might tell you, including Miss Honey from Roald Dahl’s story Matilda:

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The point is this. We could write a theology book about injustice—and we need such books. But it is in the singing of Psalm 7 that we grasp injustice. We could preach a sermon about the loss of a friend, and Lord knows we need those sermons. But when we read Psalm 88 responsively, we know it from the inside. We say, yes, it’s just as intensely painful and tragically sad as that. We could talk about the majestic, highly exalted character of God; or, more kinesthetically persuasive, we could dramatically recite Psalm 147 and find ourselves saying, oh yes, I see now. In all these ways meaning comes through the sensory aspects of the poem, not beyond or despite it. This is true, I suggest, for all the arts. Knowledge involves our entire self, not just our minds. The arts, accordingly, invite our whole selves to know and love God.

Fourth, the psalms operate within “the tradition of David.” That tradition includes both the individual poet and the community. There are three kinds of poets that we find in the Psalter: (1) those who are named and known, (2) those who are unnamed but known by the guild to which they belong. In the Psalter we have poems by David and in the spirit of David. We have poems by the guild of temple musicians—the Korahites, for instance. We also have poems by individuals who remain anonymous. Whether known or unknown, the poets whom we find in the psalms give voice both to their own concerns and to the concerns of the community. It is not one or the other. It is both. The heartbreaks of mamas and daddies, the hopes of young and old, the fears of the working class and the anxieties of the ruling class, the little people and the famous people; the artist and the non-artist—everybody somehow, somewhere gets a voice.

This is true for artists today, in particular for artists of faith. Though contemporary works of art will not have the authority of Holy Scripture, many believing artists today feel inspired by God to use their gifts to both speak to and speak for the church. Some of those works, like the poetry of Venantius Fortunatus, the stories of Dante Alighieri, and the songs of Mahalia Jackson, speak to and speak for the church. Some of it is in poetic form, some other in visual, some in music, some in dance, some in all of these places. Some of it will be known only to the artist. But in the economy of God, all such artists matter, all such art needs to be made.

These, then, are five characteristics of a community practice of art as we witness it in the psalms.

THE PSALTER AS AN ANALOGUE FOR FAITHFUL ARTISTRY TODAY There are two things that we will not get in the Psalter. We will not get a single key idea about art and faith that, in turn, magically translates into the biblical charter for artists of faith today. Nor will we get a blueprint for faithful artistry that absolves us of the hard work of discernment. What we will get, I suggest, is something much better: a vision of a community of artists, of all kinds, in all times and places, who over a long period of time make art for God’s sake and for the sake of the world. These artists give expression to things that matter deeply to them, but they also give expression to the deepest concerns of the community at large. They do so in poetic rich, aesthetically intensive, and contextually meaningful ways. They do so in ways that both comfort and disturb, in faithfulness to the Word of God. If a biblical vision for the calling of artists is on offer, then, I can think of few better places to discover that vision than the book of Psalms.

ENDNOTES
When you read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing King Nebuchadnezzar’s order, what do you imagine? As you scroll through the pages of Daniel’s third chapter, what are the things that stand out? Do you notice that this corrupted idol worship is attached to a musical presentation? Do you reflect on the age of these young men or their status as minors and political prisoners? Can you visualize the streets leading to Babylon, where the idol was erected? How does this play back in the DVR of your mind? There is a generation of African American preachers who are utilizing their own cultural experience and formation to reflect on the pages of Scripture in a unique way. Their hermeneutic is a refreshing new expression birthed in cultural formation. At the same time, however, it is a continuation of the theological enterprise of critical interpretation begun by early African American believers.

Studying this enterprise begins by affirming that all humans are cultural beings and that culture is essential to human life. Some scholars have written on the impact of culture—popular culture or various aspects of culture—on the church and believers. Very little, however, has been written about how the specific impact of culture plays on African American churches and preachers. The African American preachers and pastors referenced here are diverse and represent one of the most powerful cultural phenomena in recent history: Hip Hop culture. Hip Hop was part of the background, if not the foreground, of their formation. Research into how Hip Hop culture has been formalized for African American preachers who engage it is revealing.

Those engaged in this research report that Hip Hop allowed many of them to see the realities of their own neighborhoods and families in the mainstream for the first time. It was a validating and liberating experience to see and hear someone describe, poetically and prophetically, the existential plight of their daily reality. Some have even expressed their introduction, or “coming,” to Hip Hop in salvific and spiritual terms. For them, this cultural expression of urban minority life was second only to the liberation of salvation found in Jesus. Hip Hop culture was something to be shunned for the sake of being a good Christian. It was, on the contrary, part of their culture and an expression of their reality. It is important to note that, in its genesis, Hip Hop culture was an expression of prophetic defiance against the systematic oppression of African Americans and Afro-Caribbean immigrants, who found themselves deliberately cordoned into underserved and over-policed ghettos overrun with crime, drugs, violence, and corporate greed. Hip Hop became part of the experience and worldview of these preachers and, as such, the colors the way they view Scripture.

A brief historical summation will be helpful here. Gayraud Wilmore and James Evans explain how the first African American Christians arrived on their faith. It was not a simple matter of assimilating slaveholding Christianity, as some assume. Rather, it was a critical examination of the hypocrisy of brutal, oppressive White Christianity that forced African slaves in America to retain remnants of their own spirituality and worldview and actually forge their own Christian faith. They saw the pages of the Bible as God’s book and loved all humans and acted decisively to liberate God’s people from oppression. African Americans dared to affirm their own humanity as part of the image Dei and to affirm God as the liberator of the Bible. Generations later, James Cone looked at Scripture and also saw a God who was on the side of the oppressed in every generation; he saw a Christ who identified with the poor. Cone concluded that this Jesus must be Black in his christological importance and identification with the oppressed. For Cone, a Black theology must consider the Black experience as necessary to any valid interpretation of Scripture. This hermeneutic became a cornerstone of Black theology. Cain Hope Felder and James Evans would expose on this hermeneutic and boldly affirm, with Cone, that the lived Black experience must be taken into account when reading Scripture. The next generation of scholars would build on this foundation, going further to examine—and even critique—this hermeneutic. Kelly Brown Douglas questioned if this hermeneutic of the Black Christ did not pave the way for women of color to be ignored. Her interpretive and boldly affirm, with Cone, that the lived Black experience must be taken into account when reading Scripture. The next generation of scholars would build on this foundation, going further to examine—and even critique—this hermeneutic. Kelly Brown Douglas questioned if this hermeneutic of the Black Christ did not pave the way for women of color to be ignored. Her interpretive and boldly affirm, with Cone, that the lived Black experience must be taken into account when reading Scripture. The next generation of scholars would build on this foundation, going further to examine—and even critique—this hermeneutic. Kelly Brown Douglas wondered if this hermeneutic while continuing in the tradition.

The McDonaldization of the American Church: Charismatic Preaching and the Challenge of Commercialism

The current political climate, they see the targeting of black and brown bodies, they see Black Lives Matter protestors. The contemporary world of the preacher folds into the ancient world of Scripture as time seems to collapse upon itself in the enterprise of exegesis and homiletics. These preachers use titles, lyrics, and metaphors from Hip Hop because they literally see them in the text. They see the ancient world grappling with the same evil and the same manifestations of that evil that the preachers and their congregations are experiencing. To be clear, this is not a process of taking a passage of Scripture and finding contemporary correlation. Rather, this is a Hip Hop, urban lens through which these preachers read the Bible. It is not an option or an additional feature. It is part of the very hermeneutic they bring to the text.

ENDNOTES

9. Evans, We Have Been Believers.
11. R. Wallace, “From Black Theology and Black Power to Postcolonial Theology and Hip Hop Power: An Extension and Socio-Philosophical Conceptualization of Cone’s Theology in Conversation with the Hip Hop Generation.” Black Theology 8, no. 3 (May 2010): 327–40.
12. Cleophas Laffitte describes this meeting that occur in Black preaching as follows: “To put at the heart of black preaching, one has to understand the interconnectedness between scriptural texts and African American life experiences.” See C. L. Laffitte, The Heart of Black Preaching (San Marino, CA: Westminster John Knox, 2000).
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMBODIMENT IN WORSHIP

Alexis D. Abernethy

In his book Ritual in Early Modern Europe, Edward Muir describes the shift that took place with the invention of the printing press and its effects on the Protestant churches that arose out of the Reformation. Muir describes a division between the lower body, with the passions and feelings it contains, and the intellect and objectivity of the upper body, privileging the upper over the lower. For many Protestant churches this resulted in word-centered worship services, with most actions in worship involving speaking or singing—if not listening to words. Since then, Protestants of all stripes have expanded their worship repertoire but in some ways still privilege words above all else. Yet we enter worship as embodied creatures. How does this fact shape our experience and understanding of worship?

My students, colleagues, and I study the psychology of worship. One of the questions we pursue psychologically is this: “What factors contribute to spiritual transformation in worship?” Several mechanisms have been used to explain emotional responses to music from a psychological perspective, including cognitive appraisal, rhythmic entrainment, visual imagery, and emotional contagion. In our first psychophysiological study of worship, we hypothesized that emotion would be associated with an embodied experience in worship. We referred to this as the “deep structure of worship” and outlined four key dimensions:

1. **We see the need for God’s people to attend to and remember that revelation. We see meaning arising from “an experience of the song they are ministering.”**
2. **We thereby recognize the roles played by (5) the person or people producing the sound, (4) the person or people hearing the produced sound, and (3) the social and, specifically, spiritual context in which production and hearing occur.**
3. **The “meaning” of any vocal sound, then, must be understood as co-constituted by performative as well as semantic/structural features.**

Debra Dean Murphy highlights the complex cognitive, emotional, bodily, and spiritual process involved in worship as she notes the following:

- **The “knowledge” imparted in worship... is a knowledge that can be known only in the doing of it. It is, at heart, bodily and performative. We are habituated to and in the knowledge of the Christian faith by the ritual performance that is worship, so that a deep unity between doctrine and practice is taken for granted.**

Worship is not simply cognitive; rather, it is a performative religious process that includes our hearts, minds, and bodies. Ritual fosters this deep unity between doctrinal beliefs and embodied practice. Worship, in other words, is seen as the actions and experiences of the entire person.

**PERSPECTIVES ON WORSHIP**

H. Wayne Johnson emphasizes the importance of a revelatory focus in corporate worship. He referred to this focus as the “deep structure of worship” and outlined four key dimensions:

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**PERSPECTIVES ON EMBODIMENT**

One of the most universal embodied modes of worship is singing. Embracing a broad perspective on the role of embodiment in music, John Blacking notes that “music is a synthesis of cognitive processes which are present in culture and in the human body: the forms it takes, and the effects it has on people, are generated by the social experiences of human bodies in different cultural environments.” This perspective underscores the importance of not only an integrated bodily and cognitive process, but also the cultural context. Noteworthy here is both the universality of embodiment— that every culture’s music assumes embodiment—and its particularity: that every culture understands, values, and executes embodiment somewhat differently. Yet embodiment has even further levels of complexity, as again illustrated through music and described by Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones:

We thereby recognize the roles played by (5) the person or people producing the sound, (4) the person or people hearing the produced sound, and (3) the social and, specifically, spiritual context in which production and hearing occur. The “meaning” of any vocal sound, then, must be understood as co-constituted by performative as well as semantic/structural features.

They argue that vocal meaning arises from “an intersubjective acoustic space” and any effort to articulate it must include a reconstruction of this context. Understanding musical expression in worship would therefore include understanding the producers of the sound, the listeners, and their social context. For worship leadership, this would include the song leader and his or her process of preparation: the social and, specifically, spiritual context of song production. Patrik Juslin describes these qualities as going beyond the performance and considering “the nature of the person behind the performance.”

The focus of worship needs to center on who God is and what God has done. The attention of people should be directed toward God and his presence rather than the personality, charisma, or even musical skill of the worship leader. The response to worship should include a deepened obedience to and love of God.
Music perception is associated with embodied movement—a breathing and rhythmic gait. Patrick Shove and Bruno Repp have noted, for example, that “the listener does not merely hear the sound of a galloping horse or bowing violinist; rather, the listener hears a horse galloping and a violinist bowing.” Further, recent neuropsychological studies emphasize the role of body movement in music production and performance. Such movement would be easily perceived in response to music as much as jazz or contemporary Black gospel music, but it is perceived as well in music that evokes less perceptible bodily movement—that is, a kind of empathetic bodily motion—that is, a kind of empathetic embodied cognition. Even something we do so regularly as listening to music opens into a multilayered embodied experience each time we do it.

Cognitive and social psychology are making important contributions to our understanding of embodied cognition.14 Gibbs defines embodiment in the context of the field of cognitive science as “understanding the role of an agent’s own body in its everyday, situated cognition.”15 Paul Niedenthal and her colleagues describe the embodiment process in body-based (peripheral) and modality-based (central) terms.16 They offer the example of empathy: based on understanding another person’s emotional state, people are able to recreate this person’s feelings in themselves.

Margaret Wilson differentiates “online” and “offline” embodiment,17 and Paula Niedenthal and her associates elaborate this further:

The term “online embodiment” and the related term, “situated cognition,” refer to the idea that much cognitive activity operates directly on real world environments. . . . The term “offline embodiment” refers to the idea that when cognitive activity is decoupled from the real world environment, cognitive operations continue to be supported by processing in modality-specific systems and bodily states. Just thinking about an object produces embodied states as if the object were actually there.18

IMPLICATIONS FOR WORSHIP

Applying this categorization of embodied movement to worship, the worship leader must then have an online experience of embodiment with their music. This might be a preparation process during which the song leader spends intentional time with the Lord meditating on the biblical meaning of the song. The worship leader would engage with the material and apply it to her life and social context. During worship, the song leader would seek to recreate an experiential space that connects with the song. Throughout the process, offline embodiment helps prepare the worship leader to minister and aids the process. There may be additional features of online embodiment. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the song leader recreates the experience in her mind and body and also creates anew in partnership with the congregation. Online and offline embodiment both occur.

A traditional view of preaching, expressed by Karl Barth, is that the preacher is a herald who speaks God’s words. The personability and preacher’s relationship to the words are unimportant. In contrast, Ruthanna Hooke argues that revelation does not occur in this way.19 She notes that “the voice of God does not come to us in a way that directs us to use our human voice to act in response to the voice of God.”20 She notes that it is the role of the preacher to mediate the word of God in verbal and nonverbal ways: to become a herald who speaks God’s words. The preacher’s point is to direct attention toward God rather than using themselves to draw people. They also describe a 2:7 commitment to preparation, viewing spiritual preparedness for worship as an ongoing orientation and desire in daily life to be more yielded to God.

This description by worship leaders reveals how the preparation process facilitates their ability to be attuned to God as they lead worship. In a similar way, our engagement with God through Scripture reading, prayer, and meditation on the biblical text allows us holistically and helps us in our desire to worship him in spirit and in truth.

ENDNOTES

17. Ibid., 16.
THEOLOGY

THEOLOGY

include and museums; books he has authored numerous conferences, universities, Washington, and the Tikotin Museum has been exhibited at galleries around 2009, he received the American painter, writer, and culture shaper. A Brehm Center, is a respected abstract , director of the , Refractions, and “I The philosophy of “Culture Care” assumes, with Bill Brehm, a world of abundance. Culture wars begin when the notion of scarcity prevails. Common sense seems to indicate a Darwinian model of a zero-sum game of survival. But could there be an alternative? Do we dare even to ask that question? It’s not just benefactors and those with abundant resources who live with the per- spective of the universe. Surprisingly, it is most often artists who live in the assump- tion of abundance, despite what the world tells them. They have to. In order to create anything, one has to assume that we are not just “fixing” the universe “righting it back”; instead, we are creating a new universe.

In Isak Dinesen’s story Babette’s Feast, Babette, a haggard 19th-century refugee exiled to a fjord in Norway, assumes abun- dance despite the darkness and obvious scarcity that envelops her. “A great artist is never poor,” she emphatically states. “The feeling of inferiority imposed on human beings and, even more critically for us, our church culture—do not often exhibit these qualities, but instead seem driven by fear to choose to rest on traditions of beauty and co-opt their creativity. Such a process begins with epistemic healing. What is a colonized culture to heal from? The answer is the colonial wound: in the modern sentimental sense, but the Hebrew sense of affective will—choices made to achieve one’s desire, and the capacity for “mindfulness of self,” mind the capacity for cognition and reflection, and strength the capacity for embodied action. This heart-soul-mind-strength reality of personhood is at its best when it is oriented toward loving God and, as Jesus emphasizes, loving neighbor. To care for culture, then, is to care for those cultural patterns, artifacts, and institutions that most fully allow humans to express their love for God and neighbor.” — Andy Crouch, Author, Speaker, and Fuller Trustee

The most influential “culture care” text ever written is Deuteronomy 6:4-9, known by its first Hebrew words as the Shema Israel:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Repeat them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Here we find all the essential elements of enduring culture: artifacts and patterns of life, external discussion and internal reflection, personal commit- ment and multigenerational transmission. The people of Israel, now dispersed throughout the world, “keep these words” to this day. And because Jesus of Nazareth underscored the importance of the Shema—adding the command to love the Lord with all one’s “mind”—it is not just Jews, but Christian believers as well, who see this as the greatest commandment.

This text, as taught by Jesus, also gives us the best compact definition I know of what it is to be a human person. A person is a complex interrelation of heart, soul, mind, and strength, designed for love. We combine heart (not just emotion in the modern sentimental sense, but the Hebrew sense of affective will—choices made to achieve one’s desire, and the capacity for mindfulness of self), mind (the capacity for cognition and reflection), and strength (the capacity for embodied action). This heart-soul-mind-strength reality of personhood is at its best when it is oriented toward loving God and, as Jesus emphasizes, loving neighbor. To care for culture, then, is to care for those cultural patterns, artifacts, and institutions that most fully allow humans to express their love for God and neighbor.

Andy Crouch, Author, Speaker, and Fuller Trustee

Makoto Fujimura’s concept of culture care as the “restoration of beauty as a seed of incarnation into the cosmos of culture . . . a well-nurtured culture becoming an environment in which people and creativity thrives” may well mean a stra- tegic undoing of Westernized visions of culture that limit non-Western human beauty and co-opt their creativity. Such a process begins with epistemic healing. What is a colonized culture to heal from? The answer is the colonial wound: in the words of Walter Mignolo, “the feeling of inferiority imposed on human beings who do not fit the predetermined model in Euro-American narratives.”

Culture care in the context of the Global South, then, may be imagined as the recognition of the image Dei in the erasures of coloniality—and the propagation of an ecology of ancestral and contemporary knowledges coexisting as embedded beauty, goodness, and truth in stories, artifacts, and independent cultural histo- ries for centuries acquired by the logic of Western late-capitalism.

— Oscar García-Johnson, Assistant Provost for Centro Latino and Associate Professor of Theology and Latino Studies

Makoto Fujimura, director of the Culture Care Initiative at Fuller’s Brehm Center, is a respected abstract painter, writer, and culture shaper. A presidential appointee to the National Council on the Arts from 2003 to 2009, he received the American Academy of Religion’s “Religion and the Arts” award in 2014. His work has been exhibited at galleries around the world, with recent major exhibits at Waterfall Mansion Gallery in New York, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, and the Tikotin Museum in Israel. Fujimura has lectured at numerous conferences, universities, and museums; books he has authored include Culture Care, Reflections, and Silence and Beauty.
I mean, I'm here. So what am I doing?
The Prayer of Examen is a spiritual practice of reviewing the day to retune ourselves to the sacred in ordinary life. Usually lasting 15–20 minutes and done in the evening, the prayer prompts us to remember God’s presence, express gratitude, reflect on the day, and prepare for the day to come. The following pages use contemplative imagery captured from daily life with our coworkers to show how the prayer’s application is both organic and accessible. We encourage you to read slowly and prayerfully, using the pages as an opportunity to practice this ancient prayer in your own life. Find more about the prayer online at Fuller.edu/Studio/PrayerofExamen.
Where could I go to get away from your spirit? Where could I go to escape your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there. If I went down to the grave, you would be there too! Psalm 139:7–8

Stop, breathe deeply, and know that you are in God’s presence. God has been with you since the beginning of your day, in every detail. As you prepare to look back on your day, ask the Holy Spirit to shine the light that will clear your vision—so you might see what God wants you to see.

“Where could I go to get away from your spirit? Where could I go to escape your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there. If I went down to the grave, you would be there too!” Psalm 139:7–8

ASK GOD FOR LIGHT
Every moment in your day is a gift from God. Be thankful for all of it, even the smallest things: a patch of blue sky, the music in your headphones, a smile from a stranger. Allow gratitude to draw you into the fullness of your life.

“I will thank you, Lord, with all my heart; I will talk about all your wonderful acts. I will celebrate and rejoice in you; I will sing praises to your name, Most High.” Psalm 9:1–2

2 GIVE THANKS
Think back over your day. Who you were with, where you went, what you did—however ordinary. Notice the sights, sounds, smells, conversations, thoughts, and feelings you experienced. What interested you? What discouraged you? List your attention to those moments, and offer them to God.

Psalm 139:1–3

"Lord, you have examined me. You know me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up. Even from far away, you comprehend my plans. You study my traveling and resting. You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways."
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit." Psalm 51:10–12

As you consider your day, reflect honestly on the moments you felt out of tune with God—something you said, a missed opportunity, some way you wish you had acted differently. For what do you need forgiveness? Do you need to make things right with someone else? Look at your shortcomings, and allow God to heal them.

4 FACE YOUR SHORTCOMINGS

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.” Psalm 51:10–12
I raise my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. The Lord will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming—from now until forever from now. Psalm 121:1–2, 8

5 Look Toward the Day to Come

As you end your day, look to tomorrow. What are you expecting to happen? What are you looking forward to, and what concerns you? Ask for God’s help in the future. To open your eyes, your ears, and your heart to see where God is working. Remember that God will again be present in all things large and small, guiding you toward fullness in your life.
“If we will not balance knowing with an open-ended not-knowing, nothing new seems to happen. We have to be trained to do it. The only two things strong enough to accomplish this training in us is suffering and prayer—the two golden paths that lead us to a different shape of meaning, a different sized universe, a different set of securities and goals for our lives. And always toward a different, more grounded, deeper understanding of the risen Christ.”

Mary Ellen Azada, executive director of Fuller Careers and Personal Development, reflecting on the road to Emmaus, suffering, and discernment. Listen to her whole sermon on the FULLER sermons podcast. From mission work to unexpected illness and vocational changes, the following voices reflect on discerning God’s will in the midst of complex lives—one step at a time.

Standing above the city with their arms outstretched, Emily (MACC ’09) and David Romero pray for the city of Tegucigalpa, in Honduras, and for discernment as they minister to the children of the city. Learn more of their story at FULLER studio’s short film “Journey to Jubilee,” available on Fuller.edu/Studio.

Lord, bless our community richly and abundantly

Bendice nuestra ciudad. Señor

Bendice todos los ministerios que somos parte del cuerpo de Cristo para que el crecimiento pueda ser visible y palpable en nuestra ciudad

a fin de que nuestra comunidad pueda experimentar la transformación y el cambio que vienen de ti, Señor.

Dios Todopoderoso venimos a este lugar.

Venimos ante tu presencia, Padre.

Al ver la ciudad desde esta montaña, queremos pedirte, Señor que extiendas tu mano de bendición y misericordia.

Y a medida que extiendas tu mano de bendición y misericordia, permite a nuestros gobernantes ver con claridad, Señor, que Tu los estas llamando, y que Tu obras de manera que ellos tengan la oportunidad de recibir tu bendición y la habilidad de discernir claramente entre lo bueno y lo malo.
TOD BOLSINGER: “We both connect on the notion of building your way forward. We have to put things into practice, but also attend our way forward. We have to listen as we go. As Christian leaders, how do we cultivate the discernment that can help us decide on the way forward in our lives? What does it mean to work hard as unto the Lord as opposed to our flesh, and how do we hear the voice of the Spirit while we’re building?”

DAVE EVANS: “An overwhelming number of Christians are looking for the will of God that looks like blue lines on an AAA map—this is the way to go; there is one preferred answer to my life. And I don’t think that’s what the Scriptures mean, particularly the Sermon on the Mount. If we reframe this so that the will of God is to live into the way of Jesus, which will include accommodations for failure and mistakes and what have you, we keep growing . . . that’s the next invitation of the Spirit where I am not where I should have been? Rather than discerning the right answer, I’m trying to discern the presence of the reality of God in this moment.”

And God, who protects us so graciously, invites us back into his quiver, where we can realize it is not by our own competencies or might alone that we are able to participate in whatever God is doing in and for the world.”

“Mercy, lovingkindness, unfaillng love, boundless. Now what’s the context here? David knew what he had done and knew what he had done was wrong, but the prophet Nathan had to come along to really put his business out into the street. This was hidden. God sent Nathan to really lay it out. Some of our sins are in plain view, but with other dimensions of our sins, we really need help to see the magnitude of them. Do you have someone in your life like the prophet Nathan who will tell you the truth about yourself?”

“ACCORDING TO YOUR COMPASSION, BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS.”

“According to your compassion, blot out my transgressions.”
Awareness means suffering; awareness means pain—because we’re becoming aware of a lot of things that we as human beings don’t always want to be aware of. So healthy awareness as one matures is first of all an awareness of my own brokenness, my own limitations, my own separateness from God, my own need to reconnect. To the extent that one can start with ‘I’m incomplete, and there’s a greater plan. I can’t get there on my own, I can’t get there without being in relationship with other people or with God,’ that is the beginning of wisdom. That is the beginning of an awareness that I’m not my own god, that I need help.

It’s not like we have to get everything right, that we have to know exactly what God wants before we take some steps. Because part of discernment is taking steps. Maybe we only know one step to take or two, but we take steps. And it’s in the context of stepping that we see we’ve made the wrong step or that there are other steps to take.

In the book of Acts, there are three ways in which discernment—or openness to what God is doing—show up.

PRAYER: It’s in prayer that people discern and align themselves to what God is up to.

ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHERS: Interestingly, it’s also in Acts that people discern what God is up to by engaging with others outside of themselves. They learn something about what God is doing by engaging in mission—which helps them read the Bible differently.

SCRIPTURE: Prayer, engagement with others, and Scripture go hand-in-hand, and they help the church discern where it is that God is going and how they might align themselves with what God is up to.

We have to be able to listen to God, but I also think we have to learn to really listen to our own hearts and what’s happening within us. Otherwise, what we think is God might be us. So there’s discernment of learning to listen to God, to our family, to each other; I often think of that as attentiveness. Attentiveness is the opposite of distraction. So in the history of Christian spirituality, there’s a lot that’s written about being attentive, being attentive to God. A lot of times we think of being attentive as something we do when we’re quiet. We’re listening to God, so we have to be in this quiet room or on a retreat. But here the context makes such a difference again. For me, it’s also learning to listen in the midst of the city.

“The vision need not be clear, and I dare say the vision will not be clear. All that we need to know is the next step. This is where we are called to be obedient to the vision. Indeed it is only in that next step, and the step after that, and then in the one after that that we can be obedient. But beyond the dimness of our vision, beyond our perplexity or exhilaration, beyond our doubts, our dreams, our study—out there someplace in the future, the God who called Paul to Macedonia and Peter to Caesarea is calling us all to meet the Lydia’s of our time, to meet Cornelius, to meet God—yes, to meet God in Lydia and Cornelius. So be it, amen.”

Joel Gonzalez, celebrated church historian and author, reflects on Paul’s changing vision on his second missionary journey and encourages new and graduating students alike that though the vision may not be clear, “God will orient us in the future.” Listen to his full sermon, given as part of Centro Latino’s 40th anniversary celebrations.

“The thing about our lives is we stare into the unknown future, and we walk forward, and this is part I think of trying to make sense of things. It gets really complicated when you try to figure out what counts as God’s favor, what counts as a sign? When I make determinations about what God hopes for me, and I make them based on God’s character, I’m on solid ground. But if I look at my life and say what did I deserve and was this because of faithfulness, I find that’s probably either narcissism or a very imprecise kind of hope.”

Kate Bowler, associate professor of the history of Christianity in North America at Duke Divinity School, offers thoughts on Mark Labberton’s podcast about the struggle for authentic faith in the midst of suffering.

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2018 RECENT FACULTY BOOKS

18 Plus: Parenting Your Emerging Adult
Donald A. Hagner


Do you have a fond memory of the Fuller Pasadena campus? Help us honor these buildings— all that we’ve learned and the relationships we’ve built here—by sharing your stories at Fuller.edu/Building.

My name is Asher Hammer, and Misyoung Yoon Hammer’s my mom. For those of you Pasadena people, I live just across the freeway from Fuller, across the street from the Mexican supermarket, Vallarta. That being said, Fuller is just a hop, skip, and a jump from my house, and ever since Mom and Dad started letting me walk places (this is before I got my bike) I would spend my summer days walking down to Fuller.

I would always bring a little allowance-money with me, and after a customary tip to the Fuller Pasadena campus?

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talking to a stranger, and ended their conversation in prayer—how often do you get that call?"

Listen to the exuberant, compassionate prayers of my team who perceived this role not as a mere job, but as a ministry that God had placed them in.” Jarrod Phipps [MDiv ‘17] remembers. “Each shift I would

With each call, students would write down requests—anxiety about moves and pastoral work, weddings and divorces, children’s futures and the loss of loved ones—and once

lengthy conversation, laughing at the goodness of God to connect us in such an incredible way.”

to his guest, and we began to talk in our home language—Shona,” Ken remembers. “I could sense the furtive glances and utter disbelief in my colleagues as we shared greetings and a

Narrow cubicles line the edges of Fuller Seminary’s Call Center where student callers raise funds—unremarkable in appearance, windowless, and lit by fluorescent lights. When Director of Annual Giving Katlin Schuler visited the office she got it right for use by a new team of people in the fall, a blast of vibrant colors on the back wall caught her eye. “On the left a sign said ‘prayer requests,’ and on the right it said ‘prayed for,’” she remembers. “The whole wall under that section was covered with post-it notes with handwritten prayer requests.”

She had come to clean and, instead, discovered a global ministry. "The wall was covered in post-it notes—prayer requests in multiple languages—a prayer callers would often share with those they called.

For many, student callers were praying in that hidden room with alumni and donors from around the world. “Many of the Call Center employees were international students,” Katlin says, “so the room was crowded with men and women—professors, bankers, pastors in their home countries—who would call with the same passion they had fundraising for their own ministries overseas.” At each station, Call Center employees would not only raise money on behalf of the seminary, but also pray over the phone for those they were calling and keep track of those prayer requests.

"Every call was like listening to a firsthand account of how God had been working through the generations of Fuller’s ministry,” Frances Arduin’s (MASC ‘14) recalls. After Ken-Chilevo (MDiv ‘18) told a pastor on the phone that he was from Zimbabwe, the man humbly exclaimed he was housing someone from that very country as a guest. “He handed over the phone to his guest, and we began to talk in our home language—Shona,” Ken remembers. “I could sense the furtive glances and utter disbelief in my colleagues as we shared greetings and a lengthy conversation, laughing at the goodness of God to connect us in such an incredible way.”

With each call, student callers would write down requests—anxiety about moves and pastoral work, weddings and divorces, children’s futures and the loss of loved ones—and once they’d prayed, the post-it would move, reminding the students to continue praying long after the phone call was over. Seeing the ministry opportunity, the callers were moved with a psychologist on long-distance counseling techniques. “It was in my colleagues’ presence that I learned how to pray again,” Jarrod Phipps recalls. “Each shift I would listen to the exuberant, compassionate prayers of my team who perceived this role not as a mere job, but as a ministry that God had placed them in.”

"It’s like phone charity, you could feel the gravity of those prayers,” Katlin says, looking at the post-it notes in her hand. “To think that our students picked up the phone, started talking to a stranger, and ended their conversation in prayer—how often do you get that call?”

By Michael Wright [MAT ‘12] who is editor for FULLER magazine and studio. In the image above, intercultural studies PhD student Uchenna Anyanwu shares memories of the Call Center with Kaitlin Schluter, then director of annual giving. The prayer wall behind them includes prayer requests and the Lord’s Prayer in multiple languages—a prayer callers would often share with those they called.
INSIDE THIS CITY IS A HUMAN. INSIDE THIS HUMAN IS A HOLE. INSIDE THIS HOLE IS A CRAVING. INSIDE THIS CRAVING IS LOVE TRYING TO OCCUR.
After graduating with a master’s degree in 2014, Daniel Dama (p. 28) started the Fulani Christian Festival of Art and Culture back in West Africa. That confirmed his commitment to “peacebuilding through music,” he says, prompting his return to Fuller to do doctoral work. Stories like Dama’s connect our worldwide community, and even when he leaves Pasadena again, Fuller will go with him wherever he goes. In a season of preparing to move our main campus from Pasadena to Pomona, it’s heartening to remember that successful transplants of Fuller Seminary have happened as many times as we have graduated students: some 43,000 times Fuller has been uprooted and replanted, widening the global reach of leaders formed for Christian vocations around the world.