STORY  Rick Reynolds, pictured above, sees himself and the image of God in those experiencing poverty and homelessness in Seattle  p. 18

THEOLOGY  This issue explores the theological realities of "suffering with" through a collection of articles curated by Cynthia Eriksson  p. 34

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From the Very Beginning
the Word Was with God
by Dao Zi. Wash-ink painting, 83”x20” x 3, 2017. Dao Zi, artist, poet, and critic, says of his work, “ink painting is the art of transforming blood into ink! the most unselfish love manifested, the most unworthy person reborn, with world outlook renewed, ink painting is no longer ink but new life.”

Dao Zi was one of eleven Chinese Christian artists, from both mainland China and the USA, hosted by Fuller’s China Initiative on April 25-27, 2019. A symposium was held in which the artists shared their spiritual journeys in words and visual art. Their works were exhibited on campus through June 15.

See more of Dao Zi’s work on pp. 11 and 98–99.
I don’t want to do a deep dive on suffering, Associate Professor of Psychology and PsyD Program Chair Cynthia Eriksson told the FULLER studio editorial advisory board last year. She preferred to focus on what it means to “suffer with,” she clarified, rather than delving into what it means to suffer alone.

So began an investigation—for her and her colleagues who have graced us with their writings in this issue’s theology section—on what it means to accompany those who suffer. Familiar territory to Dr. Eriksson, who specializes in, among other things, posttraumatic stress disorder. “In the deep work of trauma recovery,” she once wrote, "understanding the human response to tragedy and grief is especially important. This knowledge orients us to a position of grace as we work to create places of safety, rituals of grief and connection, and opportunities to connect for trauma survivors. Walking with others through trauma, attending to our own trauma, and engaging in God’s healing work can certainly grow us in mutual transformation.”

There are several stories in this issue, too, as with every issue of FULLER magazine, of those who have given their lives to walk with the suffering and found their lives enriched for it. Every cup of suffering is full, I have heard it said, acknowledging that pain is not only universal but a basis for such Christlike empathy. In an era when suffering is, for some, a strangely motivated competition, “suffering with” breaks the trends of individualism and inches us toward communal life and the transformation Dr. Eriksson writes about.

Mutual transformation is the goal here at Fuller—part of our ethos as well as an element that defines our aspirations, especially in the era of disruption that we are facing. Our choosing to “suffer with” connects us deeply with the incarnation, reverberating the love of a God who chose to become human—God with us—so that we would not be alone in the sometimes dark journey toward hope.

LAURELIEE FARMER
we chief storyteller and vice president of communications.
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Some of the most profound dimensions of being human revolve around our experiences of suffering. We all suffer. No one lives without suffering. Our experiences may vary greatly, the degree or intensity of the difficulties, our internal or external capacities for sensitivity and endurance, the resilience and empathy of our family and community will all make enormous differences. At the very least, however, we know that nearly everyone does better in suffering if we have someone “suffering with” us—if we have compassion.

When the Apostle Paul reflects with unguarded candor on his own suffering in the opening of his second letter to the Corinthian church, he is doing more than just describing his afflictions. He is theologically and pastoring the Corinthians, who face their own suffering. All of his afflictions, and theirs, are caught up in the suffering of love that God has suffered to comfort us, and who, in turn, calls us to comfort others in their pain.

We are not only those who “weep with those who weep,” of course. We also “rejoice with those who rejoice.” But it is definitely meant to be both. While all suffer, suffering does not automatically breed a readiness to suffer with others. This is where Paul lifts up the suffering of Jesus as the precursor that has touched the lives of all those in Corinth. We are to be motivated and enabled to suffer with others not just because we also suffer, but primarily because we who in Christ know One who suffered with us and gave us comfort. This is the soil from which Christian compassion is explained and fortified.

People ask me if I miss being a pastor. I understand the question, but it assumes difference more than similarity between being a president and being a pastor. I believe what mattered most to me personally about being a pastor is what still matters most to me about being a president: the standing of standing with others in their story of suffering, and of everything in between. These are the

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

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places where I most often see and experience the presence of God, and where I find the most grounded reminders of why the gospel, and why theological education, can matter so much. Sometimes because of being a president, and sometimes despite being one, I have the privilege of suffering with others. The suffering love of Jesus towards my suffering has stretched and opened my heart in compassion, certainly not because of my role or title, but because of my raw neediness that Jesus holds with tender, healing love.

It seems hard to look around at our world and not see suffering in every direction. When the plague devastated 14th-century Europe, it was often the Christians who most distinctly stayed in the cities to care for the dying—an instinct borne of knowing the God of all mercy and compassion. Whenever this has been the church’s reputation, the gospel has been authenticated.

And when such love is not our reputation, or even worse, when it is the opposite, it is no wonder that our gospel is repudiated.

All who follow Jesus must ask: Have we been loved by God in our suffering? If so, then suffering with our suffering world is our vocation. God’s people can and must embrace and embody it, or we apparently have no good news.

que lo que más me importó personalmente siendo pastor es lo que todavía me importa siendo presidente: el privilegio de estar al lado de otras y otros en sus historias de gozo, de sufrimiento, y en todo el entremedio. Esos son los lugares donde veo y experimento con más frecuencia la presencia de Dios, y donde encuentro los recordatorios más fundamentados de por qué el evangelio, y por que la educación teológica, importan tanto. Avace por ser presidente, y avace a pesar de serlo, tengo el privilegio de sufrir con los demás. El amor sufrido de Jesús hacia mi sufrimiento ha abierto y ampliado mi corazón en compasión, y no por mi rol ni mi título, sino por mi franca necesidad de que Jesús me sostenga con su amor tierno y sanador.

Es difícil no mirar alrededor del mundo y no ver el sufrimiento por todos lados. Cuando la plaga arrasó con la Europa del siglo catorce, con frecuencia eran las personas Cristianas quienes permanecían en las ciudades para cuidar de los moribundos—un instinto nacido del conocimiento del Dios de toda misericordia y compasión. Cuando la reputación de la iglesia ha sido esta, se da validez al evangélio. Y cuando este amor no es nuestra reputación, o peor, cuando es lo opuesto, con mucha razón nuestro evangelio es repudiado.

Todos y todas quienes siguen a Jesús deben preguntarse: ¿Hemos sido amados por Dios en nuestro sufrimiento? Si es así, entonces nuestra vocación es sufrir con el mundo sufriente. El pueblo de Dios puede y debe abrazar y encarnarlo, y si no lo hacemos, es porque aparentemente no tenemos buenas nuevas.
A Hug
AND
a Coke

Flight attendant Kristalyn Simler finds that small acts of hospitality can have a significant impact.

Written by JOY NETANYA THOMPSON
Photographed by NATE HARRISON
assisted living facility.

Never knowing what will come up, Kristalyn employs her adaptable temperament in these conversations, ready to bend and flex and offer her own steady smile. “People have commented on how peaceful I am,” she says. For her, ministry is simply “loving people where they are at—literally in the jump seat, but also their place in life.” She rarely flies with the same coworkers twice, but she’ll often follow up on meaningful conversations with a little note in their office mailbox, offering encouragement or saying that she’d prayed for them.

Kristalyn’s ministry of encouragement in the small things extends just as much to the passengers on her flights. From the Midwest to the South, the East Coast to Hawaii and Alaska, the routes she flies offer opportunities to interact with people from all different cultures within and outside of the United States. A graduate of Fuller’s MA in Global Leadership program, she credits her cross-cultural communication courses for preparing her for this part of the job. “It was very applicable to what I now do on a daily basis,” she says.

She also found the broad program to validate all of her natural gifts, like a passion for social justice and loving people from different cultures. “The reason I got a degree in global leadership,” she explains, “is because I’ve always had a heart for the whole world.”

As she describes her job, it’s clear that Kristalyn finds real joy in truly seeing others—paying attention to what makes them unique or what burdens they might be carrying. Even though working on a flight can be extremely fast-paced, “I take the time to look at people,” Kristalyn says. Handing out beverages, she tries to make eye contact with passengers who seem down, or give an extra cookie to a person she senses might sometimes be overlooked. From the Spanish-speaking grandma traveling alone to the moody teenager on a family vacation, Kristalyn tries to connect with whoever ends up on her flight. “I just want to let people know that I see them.”

Sometimes, seeing her passengers means handing out Kleenex, other times it’s laughing at their jokes. She references Romans 12, where Paul writes about rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn. Kristalyn remembers one flight that affected her deeply early in her flight attendant career, traveling a route the airline calls “the milk run” because it stops at

As Kristalyn J. Simler (MAGL ’11) approached her 40th birthday, she started to feel that her time at Young Life International, where she’d worked for 13 years, was done. While she wholeheartedly supported Young Life’s mission to “reach the furthest kid out,” she sensed the need to expand her ministry. She’d heard someone say, “How can you love the world that God loves if you haven’t seen the world?” and it sparked something in her. “I just knew in my heart that I wanted more people to know who Jesus is,” she says.

With these feelings stirring, Kristalyn returned home from a work trip to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and saw a sign advertising that Alaska Airlines was hiring flight attendants. She’d never considered working for an airline, but the moment seemed God-inspired—and she decided to go for it. “I literally saw a sign and never would have thought about it otherwise,” she says. For such a dramatic career change, Kristalyn didn’t experience shocked reactions from friends and family; rather, everyone from her husband to her friends expressed confidence in her choice. “You’re perfect for it,” they told her. “Growing up,” says Kristalyn, “my mom used to say she should have named me Kristalyn GO instead of Kristalyn Jo! I always loved going places; I love people and people watching.” She has a track record of making unconventional and sometimes adventurous life choices, from living in Costa Rica for several years with her husband and having her first child there, to deciding to adopt a second child. While working for Young Life International, she almost never said no to a work trip. Becoming a flight attendant at age 40 made sense to her and her community and, four years later, she hasn’t regretted it.

True to her spirited nature, Kristalyn boldly ventured into her new vocation, where her ministry is just as intentional as it was while working for Young Life. “The ministry part comes in the jump seat, sitting and talking with other flight attendants,” she says. “Everyone is going through a lot and you never realize it.” Well, you never realize it unless you ask how they are doing, as Kristalyn so compassionately does. Instead of picking up a book or making small talk about flying schedules, she makes a point to ask how their day went before getting to the airport, or if anything had happened the day before. That’s when the stories pour out: one recently divorced coworker quietly shares the ups and downs of securing child care, while another confides that he had just helped his aging father move into an assisted living facility.

Never knowing what will come up, Kristalyn employs her adaptable temperament in these conversations, ready to bend and flex and offer her own steady smile. “People have commented on how peaceful I am,” she says. For her, ministry is simply “loving people where they are at—literally in the jump seat, but also their place in life.” She rarely flies with the same coworkers twice, but she’ll often follow up on meaningful conversations with a little note in their office mailbox, offering encouragement or saying that she’d prayed for them.

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many remote Alaskan villages along the way to its final destination. This particular milk run took place shortly after a small sightseeing plane crashed in Alaska, and Kristalyn’s flight was full of passengers whose loved ones had died in the crash. “It wasn’t a direct flight for any of those people to get out and go directly home, so we had to go three more little stops on this milk run,” she says. She still gets choked up thinking about it—remembering one woman who’d been celebrating her wedding anniversary and lost her husband in the crash; another who had been on a trip with her grown children and husband was now flying home alone. Kristalyn walked the aisles, offering tissues and a listening ear. “I was hugging passengers,” she recalls, clearly moved by the experience. “I was like, ‘I don’t know you and I’ll never see you again, but you’re in the depths of despair, so I can at least give you a hug and a Coke.’”

Another memorable time had Kristalyn rejoicing with those who rejoiced on a plane chartered by a cannery based in Alaska. The flight was full of mostly men heading up for a short but brutal season of hard work. “Many didn’t know English fluently and I wondered if they fully knew what they were getting themselves into,” Kristalyn recalls. On such charter flights, the canneries work with the airline to provide certain food and beverage selections for the passengers, and sometimes they don’t provide anything at all. But this one time, the flight had been catered incorrectly, and Kristalyn was able to provide her passengers with the finest she had to offer from the first-class galley—which she served to them on elegant plates with real silverware. “At first everyone declined my offer, thinking they had to pay,” she says, “but once they understood they didn’t have to, I just filled their trays and laid it before them.”

As they began to eat, she watched as many sat a little bit taller, Kristalyn remembers. “Even now as I recall that trip, it brings a big smile to my face and makes my heart crunch a little bit,” she shares. “They were thankful, gracious, surprised, and joyful. It was a gift to give the unexpected to people who weren’t expecting anything.”

It’s that same attitude that has allowed Kristalyn to have a fulfilling ministry in an unconventional career as a flight attendant. She brings to each flight a similar posture: thankful, gracious, joyful—not expecting anything, but treating each person, each experience, as a gift.

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Rick Reynolds shares how in choosing to look at—and not past—the poor, he’s seen himself and the image of God.

Written by ANDRE HENRY
Photographed by NATE HARRISON

“We don’t think of ourselves as being garbage generators,” Rick Reynolds (MAT ’85) chuckles while explaining the work he stumbled into at Seattle’s Operation Nightwatch. “We got somebody hauling it off for us, whereas people sleeping outside don’t have that luxury.” His work has required him to look deeply at those who are often invisible to mainstream society, which he says has been a transformative experience.

Operation Nightwatch is a faith-based compassion ministry that seeks to reduce the impact of poverty and homelessness. Before joining the organization 25 years ago, Rick was attending Seattle Pacific University, training to become a school teacher. However, after one quarter of student teaching, he decided to drop out of the university’s School of Education. “It was my senior year; I only had two quarters to finish up, and after one quarter of teaching, I hated it,” he explains. “I have nothing but the highest respect for people who can manage a classroom. The problem was that I had a high tolerance of chaos, and that doesn’t work in a classroom.”

Afterward, Rick’s vocational path led from Seattle Pacific to Fuller’s Seattle campus.

During his first quarter in seminary, Rick seemed to find his calling with Operation Nightwatch. Although he was not yet ordained, he bought a clerical collar to wear while passing out pizzas to Seattle’s poor as a volunteer with the organization. “Nightwatch said if you’re on an ordination track, which I was, they didn’t have any qualms about letting you wear the collar,” he explains. Ten years later, Rick became the organization’s executive director.

To combat homelessness, Operation Nightwatch provides some basic survival services, including a dispatch center that feeds and provides access to shelter for about 120 to 140 single adults. They also have an apartment building for 24 formerly homeless seniors. “It’s very simple housing, kind of dormitory-style,” Rick explains. “But it’s a permanent rental, so people have a bed, a dresser, a refrigerator, a place to call home, and a community around them, which is really great.” He says that these basic survival services are essential for people experiencing homelessness to get stable. Otherwise, “they tend to go from being a one-time homeless person to being periodically homeless, because they have these recurring problems, to being somebody who’s stuck on the street.”

Twenty-five years into doing this work, Rick says he has seen significant changes in the relationship between the city and its homeless population. He remembers that years ago it didn’t take long for people to move from a shelter into some kind of permanent housing. “But as the downtown and closed-in neighborhoods have become gentrified, a lot of people have been priced out,” he says. “And so that’s when despair sets in, hopelessness and then drugs and alcohol become more of an issue, and mental health issues start to surface. It’s pretty heartbreaking, really.”

Rick speaks of the divide between the city’s homeless and mainstream people as “sadly ironic.” He tells a story to illustrate that those with homes are not so different from the homeless: “The newspaper covered how an area of town was being cleared out by the authorities, and likely needed to be. The mayor was proudly showing off the mess that had been left behind by ‘filthy homeless people’ on the little greenbelt area,” he recalls. “But buried on another page was an article about a 10 million gallon sewer overflow into Lake Washington that barely ruffled anybody’s feathers at the time. Ten million gallons of sewage from people...
living in houses dumped into a local lake, but we’re going to focus on the half ton of garbage that homeless people left behind, because they are forced to sleep outside and don’t have anything to do with their cars and bottles and effluent.” He says he wishes people could see that “human beings are human beings, and everybody’s worthy of dignity and respect. They all have the stamp of God on them.”

The problem, Rick suggests, is that cultural lenses of prejudice often make it difficult for us to recognize the image of God in the poor. “They’re all created in the image of God, and that’s the thing: I want people to look, and not just look past.”

Working with the poor has required Rick to truly look at the poor and to confront his own prejudices. His first year on the job with Operation Nightwatch, he had a memorable exchange with a man named Ronnie. To Rick, Ronnie fit all of the stereotypes that many assign to the homeless: “He was loud, obnoxious, drank, heard things that nobody else could hear, and was getting barred from one shelter after another.”

One night, while standing in front of the shelter with his homeless friends, Ronnie asked, “Pastor Rick, ain’t I beautiful?” Telling the story, Rick pauses for a second. “He’s looking at me with this big crooked grin on his face,” he recalls. “I said, ‘Ronnie, you’re beautiful.’ I’d come up next to him to try to do an old seminary buddy hug. And he throws his arms around me. He’s hunched down. He’s six inches taller than me. His cheek is pressed up against my cheek. Pulls back, kisses me on the cheek, and off he goes to shelter, into the night.”

He admits that he was initially “self-congratulatory” about that exchange with Ronnie. However, upon later reflection, he had an epiphany: “Sometimes I’m the ‘Ronnie.’ I’m the one who doesn’t smell so great. I’m the one who doesn’t act right. You know? That homeless guy has got every bit of God’s grace on him that you have.”

Rick suggests that if we are intentional about looking at the poor, we’ll also have our prejudices challenged, much like his were with Ronnie. “We have these assumptions about people standing on street corners. Panhandlers are who we see,” he says. “But if you just keep your eyes open, you’re going to see homeless people that go to work every day, and homeless people that are doing the best job they can to stay out of trouble, and are peaceable, funny, intelligent, talented people.”

Sometimes Rick has run into a homeless person he knows through Operation Nightwatch at their workplace. “They’re horrified that I’m going to out them, because there’s such a stigma attached to being homeless that nobody wants to let anybody know, and they don’t want their families to know,” he says. “Some of them have families out of town; they’d be mortified if they found out a loved one was homeless.”

After two and half decades, Rick still understands the temptation many of us have to look past the poor. “There’s an awkwardness when you encounter somebody who’s maybe panhandling or sitting around. And we all kind of do that little dance around them, and we don’t want to look too closely,” he says, recalling how he recently tried to avoid eye contact with someone panhandling at a stoplight. That awkwardness only intensified when he saw that the panhandling man was someone he knew. “I’m still trying to overcome that avoidance. It’s something that everybody needs to get over.”

If we can manage to get over that, Rick says, he hopes that people can graduate from “the acknowledgement of the poor to basic humane treatment.” He suggests keeping an extra bottle of water in your car to pass out, or a soft granola bar—“because a lot of these guys can’t chew very well; they don’t have good teeth.” And then, he continues, “maybe moving beyond charity to advocacy: speaking up when they’re making it illegal to sleep in your car, or banning sidewalkioting.”

He believes in the power of looking at—and not past—the poor to gradually transform us, because he continues to experience that transformation himself. It’s why, he says, 25 years later, he’s still excited about his work with Operation Nightwatch. Rick dreams that, perhaps, a commitment on the part of everyday people to refuse to look past the poor could lead to a world without tent cities. “I don’t know what the way forward is,” he says. “I don’t know how it’s going to happen, but I believe that God’s future for us is that there’s equity and social justice and care for all human beings.”

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At the Wooten Center in South Los Angeles, Naomi McSwain uses education to help young people thrive

Written by JEROME BLANCO
Photographed by LINDSEY SHEETS

I t's south Los Angeles, on 91st and Western, a row of six storefronts faces the humming streets. A colorful mural is painted along a cinderblock wall on one side, detailed with the words "love, understanding, compassion." On the other end of the mural is a plea: "Please stop the killing because the pain is forever." Even from the outside, one can sense the weight of the work done in the Al Wooten Jr. Youth Center.

Inside the youth center is a series of interconnected rooms—winding and maze-like in order to connect what used to be six separate retail stores. University pennants line the hallways. Tacked to a bulletin board are college plan worksheets filled out by students from third to twelfth grade, detailing their career aspirations and goals for higher education. Naomi McSwain (MAICS '09), executive director of the center, explains the comprehensive after-school and college prep programs the nonprofit offers. Their CollegeTrek and Summer Fun Camp activities are all based on California's subject requirements for high school graduation and university admissions. Along with homework assistance and tutoring, the center offers world languages and culture, performing and visual arts, and SAT prep workshops. Summer classes have featured aerospace engineering and computer animation with curricula, materials, and instructors provided by NASA and Disney. Over 350 kids, from all over the South LA area, are helped by one or another of their programs annually.

Naomi knows the center is involved in crucial, life-changing work. But she has her own personal ties to the center, too. Alton Wooten Jr., for whom the center is named, was her cousin, killed at random in a drive-by shooting—a gang initiation—in 1989. He was 35. Well loved, he was seen by family and friends as "everybody's big brother." The center was born out of his family's determination to establish something in his honor that went against the spirit and system of violence that ended his life. Naomi says, "We couldn't let him be just another statistic."

The late Myrtle Faye Rumph—Al's mother and Naomi's aunt—founded the Wooten Center in 1990. To honor that going against the grain of violence that plagued the LA area, including the civil unrest in 1992 over the Rodney King beating, "I was at Florence and Normandie that night," she says. She'd lived minutes away.

Later, she left South LA to cover gang violence in Pasadena. She wrote on killing after killing, churning out stories until it burned her out. She felt her stories offered no solutions—the rapid nature of the news cycle didn't grant her the space or time—and they even exacerbated the problems of violence by sharing information that gangs ended up using to retaliate. She remembers helplessly holding the mother of a victim, a woman she was meant to interview, as the woman wept in her arms. "I never picked up my notebook," Naomi says of that moment. The trauma of her work eventually led to an emotional breakdown, and her editors told her to take a month off. She spent the time in therapy, then in prayer. "I told God I wanted to use my skills to help, instead of writing all these stories that weren't going anywhere." She quit her job and, soon after, decided to further her education. "To learn more about children and children's programming," she says, "that's how I ended up at Fuller." It was the inaugural year of the Children at Risk program in the School of Intercultural Studies. "It gave me exactly what I was wanting to do as a reporter," Naomi says. "To think more critically about the problems and develop solutions."

But arriving at youth center work wasn't a straightforward path for Naomi. While she was involved in the center at its founding, she left to pursue a career in journalism—reporting, for years, on the violence that plagued the LA area, including the civil unrest in 1992. She didn't consider a return to the Al Wooten Center, merely because of how far it was from Pasadena. She wrote on killing after killing, churning out stories until it burned her out. She felt her stories offered no solutions—the rapid nature of the news cycle didn't grant her the space or time—and they even exacerbated the problems of violence by sharing information that gangs ended up using to retaliate. She remembers helplessly holding the mother of a victim, a woman she was meant to interview, as the woman wept in her arms. "I never picked up my notebook," Naomi says of that moment. The trauma of her work eventually led to an emotional breakdown, and her editors told her to take a month off. She spent the time in therapy, then in prayer. "I told God I wanted to use my skills to help, instead of writing all these stories that weren't going anywhere." She quit her job and, soon after, decided to further her education. "To learn more about children and children's programming," she says, "that's how I ended up at Fuller." It was the inaugural year of the Children at Risk program in the School of Intercultural Studies. "It gave me exactly what I was wanting to do as a reporter," Naomi says. "To think more critically about the problems and develop solutions."

After her studies, she felt pulled back to youth center work and set her sights on multiple nonprofit organizations. She didn't consider a return to the Al Wooten Center, merely because of how far it was from her home. But, in the midst of her search, she received a call from her aunt. The center's executive director was leaving, and they needed somebody for the interim. "I never entered my mind that I would end up back here,"
Naomi reflects. “I thought I’d be here for two or three months. I’ve now been here since 2010.” Naomi has put everything she’s learned into practice. The solutions she craved and wrote about extensively at Fuller came to life in the center’s work. Her graduate thesis, “A Missional Approach to Gang Prevention in Los Angeles,” serves as a framework for much of what the center does. Naomi credits her studies for teaching her the importance of contextualization, which has defined how the center serves its students. “How do you contextualize? Learning about the kids, seeing what they want, and then basing your programs on that,” she says. “We preach the concept of homework and studies,” she explains. “After the homework is done, it’s time to study!” Study, at the center, means working on individual challenges and sharpening weak areas, or delving into research on whatever subject interests the student. “It’s college prep,” Naomi says. “Learn how to research, to study, to be disciplined.” The practice has taught kids to use a critical and constructive lens to view their world—to identify problems and create solutions. “A problem the kids identified was junk food,” Naomi says. “Too much McDonald’s, too much Jack in the Box. Their solution was a community garden!” Now they grow lettuce, tomatoes, and kale, right by the basketball courts at the back.

Everything the center does in its after-school program is project based. Instead of math or science lectures, the kids have math and science labs—time to learn through practice. “The kids love it,” Naomi says. She glows while recalling their kids’ success stories. She remembers Juan, who came to the center as a nine-year-old, pants sagging low. “He’d tell everybody, ‘All of my friends are O.G.s’”— shorthand for original gangsters—“and that was all he knew,” she says. “We had to show him something else.” Juan came to the program regularly, and Naomi laughs as she describes the moment he walked into their job fair, years after his first day, transformed: in a tie, vest, and belt, his shirt tucked in. “He’s doing well now,” she says. “He graduated last year.”

Naomi is ready and willing to deal with the more challenging kids too. She thinks of Debra, saying, “she reminds me of the old me—lout, boisterous, obnoxious, rude, belligerent.” Debra did everything she could to get herself kicked out. But it takes “baby steps” to get to...
change, Naomi says. After months of resistance, Debra agreed to fill out a college plan, smiling about the idea of college after the center took her on a tour of UCLA. “I’m always fine with the rambunctious ones,” Naomi says. “I love to talk to those kids because I was that kid.” In her office, she keeps pictures of herself from her gang years. “That’s not you, Miss Naomi!” kids say. But she assures them she’s that girl. “Then I show them my degrees. I say, guess what? You can change too.” Even with the ups and downs, she says, “I can’t think of a kid here—and I hope it never happens—that went bad, or went the other way. They always improve. Of course they’re going to improve if you’re nurturing them. Between education and showing them opportunities, that will change their life. If that’s not ministry, I don’t know what is.”

She remembers a young man she interviewed when she was still a journalist: a gang member who’d survived being shot by an AK-47. “What are your goals and dreams?” she asked him. “I want to be a truck driver,” he told her. “so I can drive far away from here.” “A place to go for something to do,” Naomi says, capturing the spirit of what the center offers kids like this young man, who said he’d joined a gang because he had nothing else to do. “If he’d been in an after-school program,” she says, “maybe he never would’ve gotten into a gang or been shot.” Instead of violence, she says, “We have to give them something else.” Through the Al Wooten Center, Naomi strives to offer that something else day by day. “This is mission work in South Los Angeles,” she says. “It’s saving lives.”

“I’M ALWAYS FINE WITH THE RAMBUNCTIOUS ONES. I LOVE TO TALK TO THOSE KIDS BECAUSE I WAS THAT KID.”

Learn more about the Wooten Center at www.wootencenter.org/supporters.

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ONE SECOND CHANCE AT A TIME

At Dale House, Jim Oraker helps at-risk teens find a second chance

Written by ALIX RILEY
Photographed by NATE HARRISON

I t all started with the runaways, the kids who ended up on the decidedly unglamorous streets of Hollywood in the late sixties. Jim Oraker (PhD ’70) was training lay counselors at First Presbyterian Church to serve in a coffeehouse ministry called the Salt Company, and in the “crash houses” that offered teenagers and young adults a brief respite from a broken life. “I kept being drawn to the street,” he says, “I wasn’t drawn to the pulpit, but I was drawn to the people.” He saw the possibility within these at-risk adolescents and, he says, “I got hooked.”

He trained the church workers to listen to young people, to be empathetic, warm, and genuine. “I saw the importance of that,” Jim says, “and I said, ‘That’s what I want to do.’” He dreamed of creating a live-in setting where young people could experience the healing power of Christian community. After receiving his MDiv and then a PhD in clinical psychology from Fuller, he had his chance to make his dream a reality. In 1972, Jim joined his friend George Sheffer III and his father, George Sheffer Jr., when they founded the Dale House Project, a residential treatment center for troubled young people, in Colorado Springs. Jim served as the training director, and today, as an “almost retired” psychologist, he still serves on the project’s board of directors. “I think we’ve all been amazed at how effective it’s been,” Jim says, “and it’s still going strong.”

Dale House, which received its initial funding from a Lilly Foundation grant, began under the auspices of Young Life, the parachurch ministry where Jim had been on staff as an undergraduate. It is now a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, named for the...
downtown street where the facilities are located. “We didn’t want any fancy psychological names,” Jim says.

“All of our kids have grown up in such a way where neglect, abuse, and trauma have just been a part of their lives,” says Ted Woodard, executive director of Dale House. “Year after year after year, and kid after kid after kid, it’s just unbelievable the stories of what our kids have suffered, what they’ve been through, what they’ve really had to do to survive.” He notes that although they have been victims, they also have had victims. “Our kids have committed so many crimes,” he says. “Every kid that’s here at this particular point in time is either here for assault, burglary, or robbery.” It’s normal for the Dale House residents to have grand theft auto, carjacking, home burglaries, or shootings on their records, says Ted.

They stay, on average, from five to ten months. During that time, some complete a GED or take classes at the local high school, community college, or vocational school. Others work at off-site jobs, or in the Dale House urban garden. They develop skills in banking, budgeting, grocery shopping, and cooking. Just as important, the residents build relationships with their peers and with the live-in staff.

“Relationship is the key to intervention—that’s the psychology word—for young people who are lost,” Jim says. “It has a pretty solid theological basis, but also a psychological basis.”

This model uses an integrative approach drawn from Jim’s studies at Fuller, influenced by family systems theory, Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book Life Together, and what Jim describes as a “theology of a second chance.” Dale House offers a form of community that the young people may never have experienced. “On a daily basis, they’ll see trust. They’ll see compassion,” he says. And they’ll also experience accountability. When a problem arises, the staff will lovingly say, “We need to talk about this.”

Ted, the executive director, tells the story of a young man whose relapse into drug use meant he had to leave Dale House. When Ted and another staff member picked the young man up at his workplace to take him back to jail, they allowed him to explain the situation to his boss, giving him the dignity of leaving his job well—something he had never done before. After finishing his jail time, he returned to Dale House, and left with his court-ordered restitution paid, $2,000 saved, and his relationship with his mom restored.

This same ethos of communal accountability infuses the way the Dale House staff and the board operate. “We have times of training, times of sharing, and times
for confronting,” Jim says. “In the tough times, we try to handle it as a family.”

The staff, known as primary care workers, are recent college graduates who serve for a year as they prepare for careers in such fields as chaplaincy, social work, and education. Many have gone on to study at Fuller through a partnership arrangement with the seminary: “What I wanted to do was train counselors who would live in this setting and become role models,” Jim says, “but also who were clinically trained and theologically sound. What I really enjoy is the people who come and are being trained by us to go out and do likewise.”

The staff work with referring agencies, teachers, probation officers, and court-appointed guardians. But they are also responsible for leading devotions, speaking at the Sunday “family night,” and modeling Christlike behavior. “We’re talking about incarnational ministry,” Jim explains. “We use it in action, not only in theological language.”

That ministry also involves caring for the staff, who can feel overwhelmed by the stress of dealing with behavioral challenges, and the long shifts required for supervising their assigned residents 24 hours a day. If they need extra time off or counseling, they get it, Jim says.

Initially, Dale House dealt mostly with drug issues, but as the culture has changed, the severity of the problems has increased dramatically. A few years ago, shots were fired into the facility in a drive-by incident. The executive director eventually learned the identity of the shooter, and reached out to him while he was in custody. “It’s gone from light street work to very serious social work” involving young people coming out of incarceration, Jim says. Some have been involved with gangs. Most are referred by the Department of Human Services and the Division of Youth Services, which provides for the care of youths committed by the courts. But the intense issues they bring haven’t diminished his empathy for them.

The problems of abuse, neglect, and trauma aren’t new. “It’s always been difficult for some kids growing up,” Jim says. But now, “from junior high on up, it has become much more pressure packed.” Technology often exacerbates the problems. Kids who lack strong family support become attracted to unhealthy relationships, as they always have. Now, Jim notes, computers and smartphones have given young people easy access to a dark and destructive side of the culture, including increasingly violent content. Bullying, both online and in person, has intensified. “It’s pretty difficult for kids to even believe they’re likable,” Jim says. But the Dale House team has a different perception: “We see them as young people who were given to us by God.”

The concept of relational healing has informed other aspects of Jim’s work and personal life. He developed and served as cochair of the Colorado Psychological Association’s Colleague Assistance Program (CAP), designed to support psychologists in distress as the result of personal, financial, or professional problems, such as a client filing a complaint with the state licensing board. He also chaired the American Psychological Association’s Advisory Committee on Colleague Assistance. Even in that context, he focused on providing good relational care as well as good advice. He described the beginning of the consultation process in a 2007 interview with the APA Monitor on Psychology: “Oftentimes, we’ll meet in a coffee shop and just start talking. The first interview is to kind of quell their fears and assure them we have people who will stick with them,” he says.

He and his wife have belonged to one small group or another since their days in Pasadena, and he’s a big supporter of the small group model that many churches have adopted to encourage members to care for one another. He also meets with six of his former Fuller classmates every July in Southern California. They began calling themselves “the bucket boys” after one of them described the annual reunions as one of his “bucket list” items.

Jim’s heart, though, still reserves a special place for lost and discarded young people, just as it did more than four decades ago. There have been success stories, like the Dale House alumnus who became a successful businessman, and now hosts a barbecue for the staff and residents each year. But, Jim adds, “There have also been losses.”

One of his great joys is to see individual lives transformed as the community bears witness to the healing power of the gospel. Such change, he says, “is the movement of the Spirit.”

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DEJANDO DE ALEJARNOS
FROM WITHDRAWAL TO SUFRIEND WITH
by Cynthia Eriksson
Guest Theology Editor


Jesús es movido a compasión. Jesús llora y clama. Jesús va a la cruz, y Jesús alcanza con perdón el dolor de la traición. Jesús sufre: "¡Sangrando por mi pueblo!" (Mt 27:46).

Por eso es tan importante el sufrir en comunidad con los demás. El sufrimiento con los demás tiene muchas posturas. Puede ser un compromiso de hacer el viaje juntos. Jude Tiersma Watson y Chris Albisurez describen el don de la transformación mutua que fue posible por el vulnerable intercambio de historias dolorosas y de trauma. Mary Glenn escribe sobre el desafío único de caminar con quienes experimentan el dolor del suicio.

El sufrimiento con los demás también puede ser un liderazgo honesto que modela el dolor y la incertidumbre. Como Eun Ah Cho nos desafía, no servimos a nuestra comunidad ni a Cristo cuando mantenemos a otros alejados de nuestros sufrimientos. Sarah Ashley Hill describe la importancia de mostrar el desordenado viaje del dolor, en particular para los líderes en lugares donde el trauma está incrustado en la vida diaria. Ed Willmington, a su vez, nos llama a sufrir con aquellos que están sufriendo por el bien del evangelio.

¿Cómo caminamos en presencia de verdadera alegría y verdadero dolor? Daniel Lee nos recuerda que debemos sufrir abiertamente con Dios, con lamento e imprecación. Alexia Salvatierra examina la visión latinoamericana del sufrimiento, ofreciendo una perspectiva del sufrimiento redentor que conduce a la liberación. Nos anima a considerar la disciplina de hacer espacio para la obra transformadora de Cristo en nuestras propias vidas, incluso cuando abrimos nuestros corazones para sentir, versificar y digerir el dolor de los demás.

La esperanza es, en el vivir y el sufrir con los demás con lo que crecemos, "sabiendo que el sufrimiento produce paciencia, y el carácter produce esperanza" (Rom 5:3–4).

Hay esperanza. Es en el vivir y el sufrir con los demás con lo que crecemos, "sabiendo que el sufrimiento produce paciencia, y el carácter produce esperanza" (Rom 5:3–4).

La esperanza no se retira. ¡Permanece!"
W rite “tenderly” that was the prompting thing I felt from God as I prayed for the umteenth time for guidance on how to write this article. I heard it in my heart: “Tenderly.”

Friends, this is a challenging journey. The call to “suffer with” in the role of pastor, therapist, counselor, or chaplain that holds great joy and great sorrow. You have seen the best and the worst of people. The really difficult thing (that likely no one warned you about) is that you cannot go back. You cannot un-hear the stories that you have heard. You cannot un-know the types of evil and abuse that have been perpetrated on people dear to you. You cannot un-see the images of destruction, violence, or mutilation that have been in your heart. You hold the reality of human life and human pain in your heart.

Depending upon your cultural and social location, the reality of evil and pain may be a challenge in different ways. If you have lived in a relatively peaceful life (as I have), you may have insulated yourself from an awareness of vulnerability or threat. Hearing the stories and seeing the pain diamantes that defense. If you are part of a community facing ongoing violence, attending to the needs of your people is a daily task. Taking the time to consider your own pain, or the cumulative impact of so many stories may feel impossible. Navigating the space of suffering and trauma as a Christian leader in your community—shepherding and teaching, counseling and comforting, facilitating, compassionate—can be exhausting.

Our theologies may even contribute to the vulnerability with which we approach suffering. In the human desire to avoid pain, we may create theologies that suggest that God does not want us to feel pain. How did my Protestant, white, middle-class church upbringing teach me that God wanted me to feel good? When did suffering and pain become something that indicated a lack of God’s presence, or a lack of God’s strength? The reality is that being human brings suffering. Caring for one’s fellow humans is painful.

The COST OF SUFFERING WITH
Henri Nouwen challenges readers to count that cost in his small but powerful book *Can You Drink the Cup?* 1 When James and John, the sons of Zebedee, press Jesus with their desire for a position of privilege and attention, Jesus asks them, “Can you drink the cup?” (Matt 20:22). Nouwen writes, “Jesus is the cup of sorrow, not just his own sorrow, but the sorrow of the whole human race. It is a cup full of physical, mental, and spiritual anguish.” Nouwen invites the reader to reflect on the actions this question implies: drinking, lifting, and drinking the cup in its fullness of joy and suffering. This is not only the suffering that we ourselves face, this is the capacity to drink the suffering of others—to suffer with.

to God in lament or intercession. If you find yourself ruminating at other times, move to activities that require attention and build positive emotion (such as exercise or a productive hobby) or seek connection in relationships (and avoid isolation).13

As you reflect on the skills and resources you have developed to support the call of suffering and healing, ask yourself these questions:

• What rhythms of rest and work have you found to sustain yourself?
• What spiritual practices have you adopted to root yourself into the foundation of Christ’s love?
• What friends and colleagues have opened their hearts and ears to your cry of lament and doubt?
• What resources have you discovered that name the pain in language that helps you know you are not crazy?
• What habits do you have to draw you out of rumination?
• Now ask yourself, am I practicing these?

These are not simply questions; they are productive hobbies (or seek connection in relationships) to God in lament or intercession. If you find moments of God’s presence, the gratitude for ordinary miracles, or the internal transformation of character that the Spirit works. As witnesses to this healing, we can also find the strength to bring our own pain to God and others. Through mutuality God’s transforming power continues to shape us.

TheJOYofSUFFERINGWITH

The extraordinary promise in answering the call to “drink the cup” is that it is a cup of both suffering and joy. That is the paradox: in feeling the pain, joining the suffering, or “drinking the cup,” we find comfort and joy. Nouwen writes, “Drinking the cup,” we find comfort and joy. As you reflect on the skills and resources you have developed to support the call of suffering and healing, ask yourself these questions:

• What rhythms of rest and work have you found to sustain yourself?

Nouwen writes,

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! He is the compassionate Father and God of all comfort. He’s the one who comforts us in all our trouble so that we can comfort other people who are in every kind of trouble. We offer the same comfort that we ourselves received from God. That is because we receive so much comfort through Christ in the same way that we share so many of Christ’s sufferings. So if we have trouble, it is to bring you comfort and salvation. If we are Comforted, it is to bring you comfort from the experience of endurance while you go through the same sufferings that we also suffer. Our hope for you is certain, because we know that as you are partners in suffering, so also are you partners in comfort. [2 Corinthians 1:3–7]

This is an active, healing, mutual transformation. In fact, notice that Paul uses the plural pronouns to remind us that both the comfort and the suffering are communal experiences.14 It is embarrassing to admit that for per-middle-class privileged women, I held an illusion that being “comforted” by God would allow me to move from feeling and thinking to acting. As we suffer with others, we are comforted, invited to transformation, and moved to act in solidarity. The suffering sparks our indignation, the consolation reminds us of the hope of the kingdom coming, and God’s presence brings the joy that sustains us. This is a tender journey of mutual healing that ends with joy.

ENDNOTES


3. Ibid., 30.


11. Ibid., 156.

12. Ibid., 157.

13. Ibid.

14. Nouwen, Can You Drink the Cup, 43.


16. On October 30, 2018, at the Fuller School of Psychology Panel on Black Psychology, Theresa Bryant Davis made the ways that White Western psychology focuses on coping with symptoms of trauma, rather than creating change. See also T. Bryant Davis, Thriving in the Wake of Trauma: A Multicultural Guide (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000).
RESPONDING TO SUICIDE WITH THE MINISTRY OF GOD’S PRESENCE

Mary Glenn

Standing committed suicide, please call SASR.

The text flashed across my phone while I was sitting in my Tuesday night Bible study. It is the kind of text I have received countless times before, and it is never easy to read. A 14-year-old Chinese boy from an immigrant family killed himself. As the local senior police chaplain, I was called in to provide support, grief care, and help to school personnel. When I arrived at the school the next morning, I was asked to meet in the vice principal’s office with the student’s teacher and guidance counselors. These staff members were in shock, wrestling with grief and guilt. They asked the “what if” questions: What if I had missed something? What if I could have stopped him from doing this?

One of the student’s teachers stated, “There is nothing you can say that will convince me that it isn’t my fault. I missed the signs. I could have stopped it.” I felt the weight of those words and wanted to relieve this teacher of that sadness and guilt. Yet what someone feels in that moment is real—as real as it can get. I cannot talk someone out of feeling regret for what they could have done, but what I can do is listen with care, offer compassion, and help people understand the dynamics of suicide. My role as a chaplain is to support leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34. There were more than twice as many suicides (43,838) in the United States as there were homicides (19,362).1

The concern is not just for completed suicides, but also for suicide attempts. It may never be known why an individual takes—or attempts to take—his or her life, or what influences those reasons. There are, however, some warning signs we can watch for. For more information on assessing the risk of individuals for suicide, see the sidebar that accompanies this article.

SUFFERING WITH

On my first day as a police chaplain, I received a first call out for the news of a young man’s death to his family. He had, tragically, jumped off the roof of the local movie theater’s parking structure. My chaplain partner and I arrived at the family home to deliver the death notification to the mother and father—both a relative visiting from Hong Kong and the only English speaker in the home. After we shared the news with the relative, she overcame with shock and grief, and we gave permission to the parents who still didn’t know what was happening. When the parents comprehended the news of their son’s death, they were distraught. As chaplains, we provided presence, care, and resources. Since neither I nor my chaplain partner spoke Cantonese, we connected them with the local Chinese funeral home. These “care-givers” helped them culturally process the death and accompanying issues such as shame and grief. There are different types of responses each of us can give and roles we can play as care-givers, walking with others through their pain and loss.

Care-givers can provide space for the multitude of feelings that result from a suicide. When individuals commit suicide, the community may ask the “why” questions: Why did this happen? Why couldn’t I stop it? Why didn’t I see the signs? As care-givers, we can remind people that suicide is one person’s decision. Family and friends may feel responsible and blame themselves, and at the same time be angry that this person did not give them a chance to help.

Anger is part of the grief process and a normal reaction to suicide. There may have been signs of distress before the suicide, however, it is almost impossible to know exactly what a person is thinking unless they are fully open about those thoughts. One person’s suffering, sadness, and decisions have repercussions that reach deeply into the community. Neither the “what if” nor the “why” questions will bring the person back. It is important, however, that each person have the opportunity to be honest about their feelings stemming from the loss of their loved one and the decision that loved one made to die.

Everyone grieves differently. Grief can be shaped by one’s family of origin, experiences, culture, ethnicity, community, and personality. It is important to be sensitive to how others grieve, not comparing their process to one’s own. People need space and time to mourn. Funerals and other rituals help people share their grief and collectively remember their loved one. Yet the public nature of these services might be difficult and complicated in the case of a suicide, with the complexity of pain and uncertainty that loved ones may feel.

FROM SUICIDE COMPLETION TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

In the aftermath of death by suicide, friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors can be left confused and sad. We can help people work through their emotions by acknowledging what happened, asking about their feelers, and being open to hearing the variety of memories they might share with us of the person.

As we walk with people in the aftermath of suicide, they may long to return to the days of old, before their loss. We can encourage them to gradually move into their new normal and find ways to keep taking steps forward in the midst of their loss. Yet recovering from losing a loved one to suicide takes time, and there is no guarantee that the survivor will be stronger after this, nor that full healing will be the outcome.

A few years ago I responded as the police chaplain to the suicide of a popular, beloved, 16-year-old African American student. His mother had committed suicide five years before him.2 He was involved in sports and school clubs and was loved by both students and teachers. I led debriefs for teachers, students, friends, and family. The memorial service drew almost 1,000 people from the community. As chaplains responding to the crisis, we worked in partnership with school staff, parents, crisis counselors, and others.

Everyone grieves differently. Grief can be shaped by one’s family of origin, experiences, culture, ethnicity, community, and personality. It is important to be sensitive to how others grieve, not comparing their process to one’s own. People need space and time to mourn. Funerals and other rituals help people share their grief and collectively remember their loved ones. Yet the public nature of these services might be difficult and complicated in the case of a suicide, with the complexity of pain and uncertainty that loved ones may feel.

During the service, we spoke from John 12:24: “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” We handed out stalks of wheat and encouraged everyone present to live to their lives to the fullest. The memory of this young man now lives in us. We encouraged them to tell others that they care for them and to reach out to those who may feel hopeless.

When the seed dies, hope, life, and purpose can result. Grieving and remembering together is an important step in the healing process. Life can come from loss, and death and pain can be redeemed.

MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

Care-givers walk with others through their suffering and can provide safe places for them to be heard, known, and loved. In my early years, my grandmother played a key role in my life. No matter the pain in the world or in our family, she communicated safety and value through words, prayer, and presence, which I carry with me today as an adult. This ministry of presence—"being with”—is foundational to my role as a law enforcement chaplain. The love and presence of God are embodied as we spend time with the other person in their moment of crisis and time of suffering.

A ministry of presence can bring comfort and express care without words. This sacramental presence encompasses physical, emotional, and spiritual care. It is a revelation of Jesus’ care and compassion through listening and being with. During the baptism of Jesus, the Father speaks affirmation and value over Jesus in Matthew 3:17, saying, “This is my son, whom I love, and for whom I am pleased.”
Beloved Son, with him I am well pleased.” A ministry of presence communicates the beloved value of God over each person no matter where they are on the faith journey. One of the most important things we can say and do to help someone feel safe and secure is to remind them of their core identity as God’s beloved son or daughter.

We are a voice of hope.
As we walk with individuals through their grief, we can speak of God’s hope and future in their lives as a first step in helping them work through pain. A ministry of presence gives space for their pain without promising that everything will be okay. From my training in suicide intervention, response, and prevention, here are a few examples of things we can say so that our ministry of presence brings hope rather than harm:

“I am so sorry that you are going through this. I am here with you now; you are not alone.”

One of the most important things we can say so that our ministry of hope is genuine is to remind the person that everything they are feeling is real, and we need to create healthy space for feelings such as guilt, shame, anger, and sadness to be expressed. Be aware that some cultures practice within an honor and shame construct.

HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF THE DEATH IMPRINT. When people see or experience something traumatic, the brain takes a picture of what has been seen or what can be imagined. That death imprint lingers. Smells, sights, and sounds might cause the memory and pain from that event to be recalled. Be patient and sensitive with others when this happens and prepare them for this experience.

WALK THROUGH THE DEATH IMPRINT WITH THE MULTIFACETED REALITY OF GRIEF. This includes helping others assess their process in dealing with loss and death and engaging in self-care practices. Recommend articles and books on loss and grief.

AS A CARE PROVIDER, BE AWARE OF AND WALK THROUGH YOUR OWN GRIEF. Caregivers also need to process their grief and engage in self-care. Walking with others through their grief can result in compassion fatigue for the caregiver.

BEGIN BUILDING, OR STRENGTHENING, A PARTNERSHIP OF LOCAL CAREGIVERS. Caregivers also need to process their grief and engage in self-care. Walking with others through their grief can result in compassion fatigue for the caregiver.

RECOGNIZE, IDENTIFY, AND ENGAGE WITH CAREGIVERS. As we care for people, they may feel like they could have done something. Going down that road won’t bring them back. The person made a decision and took their own life. The emotions people feel are real, and we need to create healthy space for feelings such as guilt, shame, anger, and sadness to be expressed. Be aware that some cultures practice within an honor and shame construct.

1. OFFER A MINISTRY OF PRESENCE. We can embody the peace and presence of God by being present with others, sitting with people in the midst of their pain, creating safe spaces for others.

2. BE NOT AFRAID TO ASK THE QUESTION, ARE YOU OKAY?

3. IT’S NOT OKAY, BUT IT WON’T ALWAYS BE THIS WAY.

Cliches we use with others can bring more pain. The fact that this individual was in pain and took his or her life changes the loved one’s life forever. Yet things won’t always be this way. Eventually loved ones begin to rebuild life after loss.

4. RECOGNIZE, IDENTIFY, AND ENGAGE WITH CAREGIVERS. As we care for people, they may feel like they could have done something. Going down that road won’t bring them back. The person made a decision and took their own life. The emotions people feel are real, and we need to create healthy space for feelings such as guilt, shame, anger, and sadness to be expressed. Be aware that some cultures practice within an honor and shame construct.

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9. REMIND OTHERS THAT GOD IS WITH THEM. In the midst of the loss and pain, we must remember and remind those we are caring for that God is always with us. Psalm 31:27 says, “You are my hiding place; you shall preserve me from trouble; you shall surround me with songs of deliverance.”

10. SPEAK OF GOD’S HOPE! Even when hope is elusive, it is there and encourages others—and us—to see what is ahead.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Albert Y. Hsu, One’s Search for Comfort, Answers, and Hope
C. S. Lewis, A Grief Observed
New Hope Grief Support Community: www.newhopesyc.org
Jerry Sittser, A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss

There is no one thing we can do to help individuals dealing with depression and suicidal thoughts. Being present, be calm and safe, actively listen, ask questions, don’t judge, accept their feelings, be compassionate, acknowledge, and understand, remind them of your care for them, reassure them that there is help, develop a plan with them to get help (e.g., connect them with other resources; go with them to meet with a counselor). A person contemplating suicide may feel lost, overwhelmed, hurt, confused, alone, and disconnected. All people have needs for attachment, affirmation, and a sense that their lives matter. Do not commit to walk with them and remind them they are not alone.

When faced with disappointment and rejection, feelings may deceive people into believing things are worse than they real are and may convince people that there is no hope. Suicide becomes a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Sometimes the best thing we can do—and perhaps the most consistent support we can offer—is to give people an anchor of hope as we walk with them through their pain.

SUCIDE PREVENTION
Mary Olsen

Being aware of the risk factors and indicators for suicide can help us come alongside those who might consider taking their own lives. Potential risk factors include drug or alcohol abuse, isolation, family changes, a family history of suicide, experiences of loss, neglect, or abuse, incarceration, and exposure to trauma. Indicators to watch for in friends or loved ones are behavioral changes, feelings of hopelessness, a lack of value or purpose—and, most seriously, an expressed struggle with suicidal thoughts or development of a suicidal plan. If someone asks you to keep a secret about his or her contemplation of suicide, that is a promise you can neither make nor keep.

Here are some things we can do to help individuals dealing with depression and suicidal thoughts: be present, be calm and safe, actively listen, ask questions, don’t judge, accept their feelings, be compassionate, acknowledge, and understand, remind them of your care for them, reassure them that there is help, develop a plan with them to get help (e.g., connect them with other resources; go with them to meet with a counselor). A person contemplating suicide may feel lost, overwhelmed, hurt, confused, alone, and disconnected. All people have needs for attachment, affirmation, and a sense that their lives matter. Do not commit to walk with them and remind them they are not alone.

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RESOURCES
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK / suicidepreventionlifeline.org
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org
Ask Suicide Screening Questions Toolkit: www.sfhrh.org/guides-at-work/ ask-suicide-screening-materials
Karen Mason, Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors (Shamanskis, E., InterVarsity Press, 2014)

ENDNOTES
2. One study revealed that teens under 18 who lost a parent to suicide were three times more likely to commit suicide than children and teens with living parents. See “Children Who Lose a Parent to Suicide More Likely to Die the Same Way, Study Finds,” ScienceDaily, April 23, 2010; www.sciencedaily.com.
3. In some cultures, loyalty to community and tradition can be valued above individual feelings. Anthropologist Ruth Benedict says that in a guilt culture, you know you are good or bad by what your conscience feels, but in a shame culture, you know you are good or bad by what your community says and whether it honors or excludes you. See J. Fish, “Guilt and Shame,” Psychology Today blog post, September 20, 2016; www.psychologytoday.com.


5. Suicidepreventionlifeline.org

6. Talking about suicide in a faith context can make nor keep.

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고독한 고난의 우월감에서 다불어 고난의 절망으로
조은아

이 글은 목록 두 가지로 구성된다. 첫째, 고난, 고난에 대한 고려, 그리고 고난에 대처하는 방법에 초점을 맞추고 있다. 이 글은 두 가지 목록의 두 가지를 모두 고려하는데, 첫째, 고난에 대한 고려, 그리고 고난에 대처하는 방법에 초점을 맞추고 있다. 정해진 목록의 두 가지를 모두 고려하는데, 첫째, 고난에 대한 고려, 그리고 고난에 대처하는 방법에 초점을 맞추고 있다.

고난에 대한 고려

고난은 우리 모두가 겪어야 할 불편하고 어려운 과정이다. 고난에 대처하는 방법은 다양한 방법이 있지만, 그 중에서도 가장 중요한 것은 겸손한 상호 의존의 삶을 향하여 우리는 서로를 필요로 한다. 겸손해지기 위해서는 우월감과 적대감을 지우는 것이 필요하다. 고난에 대처하는 방법은 다양한 방법이 있지만, 그 중에서도 가장 중요한 것은 겸손한 상호 의존의 삶을 향하여 우리는 서로를 필요로 한다. 겸손해지기 위해서는 우월감과 적대감을 지우는 것이 필요하다.

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‘한’에 대한 논의는 왜냐하면 그것은 라틴어로 하느님의 영감을 나타내는 뜻이기 때문이다. 히브리어로는 ‘하나님’의 영감을 나타내는 ‘Sakim’이 있다. 1일 주님의 말씀을, 우리 모두가 진정으로 이해하는 데 도움을 주는 감정적인, 신령한 노래들을 모아서 하나님이 주으신 말씀의 영감을 갖추는 데 도움이 될 것이다.

그렇게 함부로 이용되어서는 안되는 감정이기 때문에, 우리는 온통이 하느님의 말씀을 구사하며, 그 말씀이 우리 삶에서 어떻게 우리를 도와줄지 정립하는 것이 필요하다. 감정적이라는 것은 단지 감정을 표현하고, 나아가서는 그 감정을 표현하는 자의 삶이 어떻게 하나님의 나라의 질서를 지키는지에 영향을 미친다는 뜻이다.

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한국에서 그리스도의 탄생을 기념하며, 이설한 거룩한 부활절을 지켜야 한다. 그 밑에 우리 모두가 '한'에 대해 고민해야 한다. 하느님의 말씀을 구사하며, 그 말씀이 우리 삶에서 어떻게 우리를 도와줄지를 정립하는 것이 필요하다. 감정적이라는 것은 단지 감정을 표현하고, 나아가서는 그 감정을 표현하는 자의 삶이 어떻게 하나님의 나라의 질서를 지키는지에 영향을 미친다는 뜻이다. 

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Deeply marked by its history of persecution, the Korean church has underlined not only the exclusive belief in the cross and the suffering of Christ for redemption but also the irrevocable blessings found in its own Christlike experience of suffering. The characteristic response of Korean Christians to suffering alone is not a sin. As a matter of fact, God uses his people in isolation in order to shape and transform them. We are to embrace this and stay in isolation until God sovereignly pulls us out of it. 40 Nonetheless, we should not overlook our mission to communal suffering—suffering together in and with Christ, and suffering together with one another within the larger body of Christ. Suffering reveals who we really are. Inviting others to come and help us when we suffer, therefore, requires humility. Humility needs to be learned and it cannot be learned in isolation. For one to overcome hubris, he or she needs to be connected to others. After all, one cannot be humble when standing alone. We need one another to be humble and experience what it takes. To be humble takes courage, courage to become vulnerable and be seen as vulnerable. Similarly, trust needs to be learned and it cannot be learned in isolation. For one to overcome distrust, he or she needs to be in relationships. After all, one cannot know what trust is and what it takes when one is standing alone. The idea of community is a counter to standing alone, as it provides a source of support.

The Korean church needs to restore humility and trust. In humility and trust, it needs to be helped in its own suffering. It needs to listen and respond to Jesus, who calls us “out of estrangement and into a redemptive relationship.” 36 Korean Christians need to realize that we are not called to be solitary Christians in suffering. After all, it is impossible to come to Christ without coming into the fellowship of his body. 41 We have not only the person who sees, hears, and suffers with us but also have one another. We not only have the person who helps us in our weaknesses (Rom 12:13; Rom 8:31), but also have one another to carry our burdens (Gal 6:2) and help us find grace (Heb 2:18).

It is always heartbreaking to see leaders, though called to share God’s grace, manage to live a life in superficial relationships. They may teach others about suffering in Christ while dealing with unresolved questions and issues on their own in isolation. The relational realities of the life of the people of God should be restored within the Korean church in both seasons of joy and suffering. They should be challenged and supported “to approach the throne of grace with confidence” so that they may find grace as they mutually and interdependently participate in one another’s sufferings (Heb 4:16). TOWARDS A LIFE OF RECIPROCITY IN HUMILITY In Scripture, we see the people of God in relationships in both times of joy and suffering. In the Old Testament, for instance, we see Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Joshua both rejoice and suffer apart from the people of God. Joshua was commanded to survive in the desert. Joshua and Eleazar also rejoice and suffer together as they conquer the land and distribute it among the tribes. Though for a relatively short time, Mordecai and Esther also rejoice and suffer together to preserve the Jewish culture. Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua, and Nehemiah also work together, informally and formally, with both tears and laughter to rebuild the temple of God. Also, we see Nehemiah and Ezra rejoice and suffer together to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem.

The New Testament is also filled with God’s people rejoicing and suffering together for Christ’s sake. More than anyone else, we see strong mutual relationships built between Paul and so many of his brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul did not work alone, rejoice alone, or suffer alone. Instead, he invited others to be part of what he was going through as he participated in Christ’s suffering. Humbly and trustfully, Paul urged his brothers and sisters in Christ to join him in his struggles (Rom 15:30).

We are God’s people called to a life of reciprocity. There are many “one another” commands found in the New Testament. We are commanded to love (John 13:34–35), receive (Rom 15:7), greet (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Pet 5:14), submit to (Eph 5:21–22), forbear (Eph 4:2–3), love (Col 3:12–13), forgive (Eph 4:32), care for (1 Cor 12:24–25), and confess to (Gal 5:9), bite and devour (Gal 5:14–15), provoke to anger (Eph 4:26–27; 5:11), and speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph 5:18–20; Col. 3:16).

Further, we are commanded to be servants (Gal 5:13–14) and hospitable (Rom 12:13) to one another, bear one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2), and pray for one another (Acts 9:31). Also, we are commanded not to judge (Rom 14:1), speak evil of (James 4:11), murder against (James 5:5), bite and devour (Gal 5:21–22), provoke (Gal 5:22–23), envy (Gal 5:25–26), or lie to (Gal 3:3–10) one another.

Both in joy and despair, we are called to live a life of the Fruit of the Spirit, which cannot be pursued apart from our relationships with one another. We are called to live in a community—more specifically, a community of grace. God wants us to live a relational life of faith, hope, and love, even in our sufferings.

CONCLUSION The Korean church has been faithful in suffering together with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Rom 12:15; Col 1:25–26). However, under the influence of Han and Sakim, Korean Christians in general—and leaders in particular—seem to have become accustomed to suffering alone, isolated from the rest of the body of Christ due to their pride, reluctance to acknowledge their need, and lack of vulnerability. This may begin with good intentions of not wanting to burden others. However, it can grow to be a blind spot that eventually leads us to “pride suffering alone.” Voluntarily choosing to suffer alone may not necessarily begin with an intention to become self-centered or self-seeking. Nonetheless, if one continues to fail to comply the need to be helped, one can grow self-confident and self-glorying.

It is my earnest prayer that more and more Korean Christians and church leaders will move from taking pride in suffering alone toward humbly allowing others to suffer with them. Surely sincere hope that the Korean church model how God’s people in suffering can help and be helped in vulnerability to find grace as they participate in Christ’s suffering in and for the world.

Chris Albisurez immigrated to the United States from Guatemala as a teenager. The deep pain in his life drove him towards skating and graffiti writing on the streets of Los Angeles. His reconciliation with God has led him on a long healing journey and he longs for others to find that same restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of restoration. He believes that art can be a key element in the healing of restoration.

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The Holy, Exquisite Mutuality of Sharing Suffering and Joy with Others

Jude Tiernan Watson with Chris Albisurez

I first moved into a vibrant yet struggling immigrant neighborhood in central Los Angeles in 1988, responding to an invitation to join God in a forgotten corner of LA. The neighborhood was then only known, if at all, through media images of gangs, drugs, and violence. The sights, sounds, and smells of this new place—a taco trucks, vendors selling drugs, or corn on the cob, and a courtyard where kids played together while moms laughed and chatted—drew me in. It was only as I lived here longer and began to put down roots that the stories of struggle and pain began to emerge—stories of personal and family pain, but also of the need to flee homelands where violence threatened the lives of children and adults. I had known what to expect, and was surprised by my neighbors’ gracious welcome and, over time, the deep ways my own life and faith would be shadowed and transformed through sharing life together in our neighborhood.

A few years into this journey, Roxana, one of the girls I was mentoring and who had her own life of struggle, introduced me to Chris Albisurez. Recently arrived from Central America, having fled north when he feared for his life, Chris was lost, lonely, and desperate. He wandered the streets of LA on a skateboard, writing his name on walls to find relief from the unrelenting pain in his life. “Writing on walls was my way to express,” he said. Chris began sharing his life with me. Every week he had more stories of pain and trauma that had never been spoken. We spent hours together. Chris talked while I listened prayerfully, holding his story, the ground I made holy because God was present with us and between us in the sharing.

We could not have imagined 25 years ago the deep sense of bonding and belonging we would come to share, the exquisite mutuality of the relationships among all of us, including my husband, John. Chris and I now have three beautiful children that call me Oma. But at that time, it felt like a great risk into a deep unknown, with no certain way the journey would lead. Recently Chris and I reflected back on those years.

Jude: One of the things that was striking was how your posture actually changed. I remember meeting you at a Carl’s Jr. You were waiting for me, and when I got there you were sitting erect. I had never seen you sit like that before.

Chris: Right. There’s shame. You knew when pain happens to you there’s a certain amount of shame and like nobody cares. I’d carried that for almost 20 years in my life and nobody had ever said, “Let’s talk about this.”

Jude: I felt really honored that someone would share their story with me. It also felt like a risk. Chris started getting in touch with his anger, completely understandable. Rage, really, about the things that happened to him. I remember asking God, “Did I meet Chris just so I could visit him in prison for the rest of my life?” I was very aware that he could have been killed on the streets, or he could have done something to someone and regretted it his whole life. He had that much rage.

It was never a question for me, but an awareness I lived with. . . . Now we can look back on those years; we talk about the good times and how we have the kids, but at that time it was hard.

Jude: The at the beginning, it was like I just got to marry God and I went into the honeymoon phase. But then I remember picking up a news magazine and reading about this young girl. I think she was three or four years old, in New York, and apparently her mother had put her in a closet and she died from starvation. And the article was very explicit on the things that she went through. I read it all, and all you could do was just cry. I felt really honored that someone would share their story with me. It also felt like a risk. Chris started getting in touch with his anger, completely understandable. Rage, really, about the things that happened to him. I remember asking God, “Did I meet Chris just so I could visit him in prison for the rest of my life?” I was very aware that he could have been killed on the streets, or he could have done something to someone and regretted it his whole life. He had that much rage.

It was never a question for me, but an awareness I lived with. . . . Now we can look back on those years; we talk about the good times and how we have the kids, but at that time it was hard.

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We shared life and meals together. My while I was drowning in my struggle to...will suffer deeply as well. And the joys that come are also deeper.

Suffering draws us closer to God. This is the mystery of Philippians 3:10, the fellowship of sharing in the suffering of Jesus.

This fellowship of sharing in suffering goes...joy and sorrow mingle together in this world. Life...taken the ashes of God. God brings beauty from ashes. God has taken the ashes of my life and brought healing and joy and created beauty.

During this season, my comfort also came...in Mary. Before long I began to identify with the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

I had begun to ponder the life of Mary and meditate on the Magnificat when the girls I...growth and pain grew my trust. I learned new rhythms that formed me more deeply—those that gave me eyes to see God’s presence around me and the ability to lament the sorrows I encountered. These practices became my lifetime. We in InnerChange were also deepening in our spiritual practices at this time, so this was a communal journey of going deeper with God in the midst of ministry.

Through developing deeper formation practices, I came to see that understanding faith and suffering “out there” was not enough. I began to see my need for increased self-awareness. What did I bring to this context? How did my own culture and social location impact what I saw, how I interpreted reality, how I felt and acted? I had moved to a social location very different from my upbringing, but what did I bring with me? What cultural expectations about life and faith did I carry? When John and I married in 1995, his differing lens as a middle-class African American continued to help me see my blind spots, reflecting to me my own need for healing, I was able to better understand and experience the pain of others, but also to enter the vulnerability of our own pain being exposed. We do not suffer alone but as part of the diverse beauty of the body of Christ.

My desperation led me to a spiritual director. Sister Ann guided me toward practices that helped me live in the posture of Mary, practices that sustained and grew my trust. I learned new rhythms that formed me more deeply—those that gave me eyes to see God’s presence around me and the ability to lament the sorrows I encountered. These practices became my lifetime. We in InnerChange were also deepening in our spiritual practices at this time, so this was a communal journey of going deeper with God in the midst of ministry.

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Father Gregory Boyle refers to this as his movement from “savior” to “savor.”

We might come into ministry with some illusions of being a savior, but we learn to savor the relationships, the sharing of life together. Exquisite mutuality comes from the mutual relationship and into our networks. This is the image I hold in my heart.

ENDNOTES
1. This phrase is borrowed from Father Gregory Boyle in Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 171.
2. This conversation is made up of selected sections from a recorded interview with Chris Albisurez, August 18, 2018.
Tengo un vívido recuerdo de mi infancia, hay Los Ángeles, adornadas con imágenes verdaderamente sangrientas del sufrimiento de Cristo. En particular, recuerdo las imágenes en la que mientras la sangre corre por su rostro. Otra muestra un sargento angustiado del corazón bastante realista con varios orificios. Ésas imágenes están conmemoradas en mi memoria a un desfile de Viernes Santo en la Ciudad de México, donde las cruces se adornan con velas devocionales que se podían comprar en la tienda de comestibles de mi vecindario de la compra de artículos que que prácticamente ignora el Cristo resucitado, tanto en las que Cristo está acompañado por personas que sufren. “En la tradición cristiana primitiva, el amar al prójimo es actuar como una iniciativa divina para resistir el mal y encarar el movimiento del Espíritu Santo hacia una vida abundante para todos. Con esa perspectiva, la iglesia no se verá tentada a asociar el sufrimiento con la falta del amor de Dios, sino que es una ruptura que debe llevarse con paciencia, sino que lo verá como un contexto en el que “las obras de Dios pueden mostrarse” (Juan 9:3). Tal como Jesús aprovechó la oportunidad del sufrimiento para mostrar el poderoso amor de Dios, las iglesias latinoamericanas están utilizando la realidad de su dolor para el movimiento de misional integral (misión holográfica) en América Latina—para demostrar el compromiso de Dios con el shalom de nuestras comunidades y la justicia que descende como un río poderoso en nuestra vida común.

The lived experience of suffering can act as a lived spirituality that continues to thrive in certain places in Latin America—both as a means of challenge and as a source of liberation and social transformation.7

7 While orthopatosis may be a relatively new term theologically, it describes a lived spirituality that continues to be equally culpable in reinforcing a base teológica que sumirá a la tierra en una gorra de veneno, a los que implican, que las iglesias pentecostales no han abrazado las formas católicas de dolor, a menudo han alentado a los hombres a erradicar el ciclo y trascender al mundo en lugar de ver a Dios como un agente activo de shalom. Nancy Bedford usa el término “analgesia” para referirse a una espiritualidad que contrasta con las imágenes de dolor. Las imágenes que componen el sufrimiento, ese sufrimiento está implícitamente relacionado con el movimiento de la gente por la justicia, mientras que los colores brillantes exudan esperanza y alegría. Estas imágenes contrastan marcadamente con las imágenes de dolorismo que encontré cuando era niño y que aún están generalizadas en muchas áreas de la vida y espiritualidad hispana.

Puedo conocer a Dios a través del sufrimiento si es dolorosa experiencia vivimos a Dios, una experiencia que alberga. La palabra “salva” que prácticamente ignora el Cristo resucitado, tanto en las que Cristo está acompañado por personas que sufren. “En la tradición cristiana primitiva, el amar al prójimo es actuar como una iniciativa divina para resistir el mal y encarar el movimiento del Espíritu Santo hacia una vida abundante para todos. Con esa perspectiva, la iglesia no se verá tentada a asociar el sufrimiento con la falta del amor de Dios, sino que es una ruptura que debe llevarse con paciencia, sino que lo verá como un contexto en el que “las obras de Dios pueden mostrarse” (Juan 9:3). Tal como Jesús aprovechó la oportunidad del sufrimiento para mostrar el poderoso amor de Dios, las iglesias latinoamericanas están utilizando la realidad de su dolor para el movimiento de misional integral (misión holográfica) en América Latina—para demostrar el compromiso de Dios con el shalom de nuestras comunidades y la justicia que descende como un río poderoso en nuestra vida común.

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H owever exactly did Job speak correctly about God? Job does not stop at “the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21) after his cata- strophic misfortunes. While Christians often reference and even sing about this almost superhuman act of wondrous grace (consider the popular worship song “Blessed Be Your Name”), it simply is not how the story actually goes. Job literally spends the next 34 chapters accusing God of injustice, seeking to take God to court, and calling for someone to vindicate him against God and his friends, who try to talk some sense into him (Job 3–37). Job’s friends reason with him that the Lord is the almighty, all-wise, all-just God and that Job’s righteousness does not stand a chance in the divine presence. Just confess that you are wrong. Job 1 In God’s holy presence, who can stand? All we can do is repent and obey! They sound God-inspired; their words might not be able to even tell the difference. With God, the only way of knowing who God is is to experience God directly.52 In 1 Corinthians 2:9–11, the apostle Paul speaks of God who both condescends to us and raises us up so that together we can have a covenantal relationship, a genuine cov- enant interaction.

A GENUINE COVENANT INTERACTION

In the history of doctrine, we see how a prior theology that radically centered God, while true and right, can be misconstrued and lead to unintended consequences. Swiss reformed theologian Karl Barth, in his critique and break from the liberal theology of his profes- sors, zoomed in on the problem of anthropo- centrism. The liberal theology of his time deceived itself into thinking that we can speak of God simply by speaking of humanity in a lead voice. This theological tradition emphasized humanity and its experience at the expense of God.49 To speak of it in Jewish theological terms, we overspiritualize and point to the Almighty. Thine are the true covenantal partner and not just a com- pliant servant. Barth did not stop there. He realized that divine revelation does not allow us to ignore humanity at the expense of God either. Just as we cannot reduce God to an object for humanity, we cannot reduce humanity to an object for God.48 To speak of it in Jewish terms, we overspiritualize and point to the true God who we can talk to back. God wants a true covenantal partner and not just a com- pliant servant.

THE CURSES OF GOD’S PEOPLE: DYNAMICS OF A GENUINE COVENANTAL INTERACTION

Daniel D. Lee

reflected genuine interaction.6 Using the language of the book Double Particularly: Karl Barth, Contextuality, and Asian American Theology, Daniel D. Lee has a master of theology and Asian American ministry. Since 2010, he has been the key force behind the Fuller Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry. In the Korean Presbyterian Church for example, he has served in societies and roles in both New Jersey and Southern California. Lee is author of the book Double Particularly: Karl Barth, Contextuality, and Asian American Theology.

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and lament, of talking back and taking up space in the relationship. When we are not able to own and express our disappointment, frustration, and anger towards God, but instead repress them, a number of negative consequences occur, including distance from God. While he is speaking more generally, Canadian theologian Douglas John Hall’s insights about the impact of a society’s inability to acknowledge suffering serve as a guide to the dynamics that occur on three levels: personal, communal, and social.1

First, lack of lament towards God can result in the inability to accept and articulate personal suffering. Often, the repressed will use spiritual language, praising God and witnessing to God’s healing, all the while hiding the deep pain within. Just as Job’s friends believed, this repression is considered spiritual and pious as though it is what God wants.

Second, not only do we fail to process our own suffering, but we will fail to enter into the suffering of others. A lack of genuine covenantal interaction between us and God directly impacts the kind of communal life that we can have together. If I repress my own suffering with the spiritual language of repentance, trying harder, or “blessing the name of the Lord,” then that is precisely the advice that I have together. If I repress my own suffering with the spiritual language of repentance, trying harder, or “blessing the name of the Lord,” then that is precisely the advice that I might give others as well. And when they fail to do so, I will judge them like Job’s friends judge Job. I believe that our suffering is about serving God no matter what, without doubt, faith struggles, or anger and disappointment, then we must all present a false self to each other as we do to God. In such a world there is no community, only a pseudocommunity in as truth, I realized what kind of a god God is. Discovering that God, I changed.

We often think that the theological contributions of a particular context are limited to those insights given to us by our cultures or situations. However, this is a shallow understanding. Often the greatest theological contributions of our context come from the struggle with our context. Because status, relationship, and honor can matter so much in certain Asian American contexts, I have found this truth about the importance of talking back to God to be one of the most profound theological lessons critical of my presumptions on God. Many Asian Americans believe they have a cultural heritage of honor and respect for our elders. In some cases this heritage is a great treasure, while in others it creates a suffocating oppression. Either way, the idea of expressing anger and disappointment to God sounded shocking to me. Also, given all the pressures to be a “model minority,” succeeding in a White normative world, Asian Americans can feel like they should be law-abiding overachievers—not a very good context for lament or protest. Precisely for these reasons, when the importance of talking back finally sunk in as truth, I realized what kind of a god God is. Discovering that God, I changed.

As an Asian American theologian, I often wonder what it means to listen to God in our place. What are the common errors (and rare wisdom) that can be found in the story of Asian America? I have found this truth about the importance of talking back to God to be one of the most profound theological lessons critical of my presumptions on God. Many Asian Americans believe they have a cultural heritage of honor and respect for our elders. In some cases this heritage is a great treasure, while in others it creates a suffocating oppression. Either way, the idea of expressing anger and disappointment to God sounded shocking to me. Also, given all the pressures to be a “model minority,” succeeding in a White normative world, Asian Americans can feel like they should be law-abiding overachievers—not a very good context for lament or protest. Precisely for these reasons, when the importance of talking back finally sunk in as truth, I realized what kind of a god God is. Discovering that God, I changed.

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1. Whatever Barth’s limitations are other areas, evangelical scholar Bernard Ramm notes that his contribution to streamlining classic Reformed theology must be acknowledged, especially given that fundamentalist and evangelical scholars of the time couldn’t do so. See B. Ramm, The Evangelical Heritage: A Study in Historical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 111.

2. Jürgen Moltmann discloses the error of affirming God at the expense of humanity in theism and having humanity at the expense of God in atheism, as opposed to a truly covenantal God revealed in Christ. See J. Moltmann, The Crucified God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 249-252.


9. The original quote attributed to Martin Luther, but made popular by Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s reference, is, “The name of the godless man can sound more pleasant in God’s ears than the hallelujah of the pious.”

flippancy. However, when life makes no sense, it’s important to know that God is bigger than our anger, disappointment, and doubt. We can talk back to God in an authentically I and Thou fashion. Though initially confusing within my Asian American context, ultimately it is redemptive and God-honoring to discover, paraphrasing Luther, that “the curses of God’s people can sound more pleasant in God’s ears than their hallelujahs.”

AN ASIAN AMERICAN WITNESS

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**COMPOSING A LAMENT FOR THE PERSECUTED: SUFFERING WITH THE SUFFERING CHURCH**

Edwin M. Willmington

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:10)

I have had a fulfilling life as a musician in various roles: worship leader, pastor, composer, and professor. I have also been aware of some of the realities of Christian persecution. However, the two realities rarely intersected until, during what was an other, wise normal worship service, my musical self and my understanding of persecution began a journey of convergence. In that service, the pastor provided a short commentary on Christian persecution in the world. A couple of weeks later I was still pondering the issues of persecution, realizing that I didn’t know much about it, and wanted that to change. The discoveries I made changed my world view significantly, they even led to the composition of a major musical work.

My research began in Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies. Former dean Scott Sunquist has written a book on Christian mission and suffering, and professors Evelyn Reuscher and Mel Rebech shared a wide-reaching set of experiences and writings on topics pertaining to persecution. Scott White, the global outreach pastor at Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena, became a willing and knowledgeable resource, synthesizing what I began to hear over and over in my study and conversations. He pointed out that many people who live in persecution often feel a sense of God’s call to remain in their difficult circumstances, but they have two messages they want other Christians to hear: “Please help us; and please don’t forget us.” However, I knew, that for the most part, we really don’t pray for them often, and we do forget them. The realities of persecution seem far away—usually observed as remote news stories. Besides that, persecution is not a popular topic that naturally arises in day-to-day conversations, or even inside the walls of our churches.

It is difficult for a comfortable church in the United States to imagine the magnitude of Christian persecution around the world or the risks and pain experienced by brothers and sisters in Christ. Consider these facts:

- 215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution in the countries on the World Watch List. This represents 1 in 22 Christians worldwide.

- North Korea is ranked No. 1 for the 17th consecutive year as the most dangerous country for Christians; however, Afghanistan is now a very close second.

- India has experienced a dramatic rise in persecution, moving from No. 15 in 2017 to No. 1 this year. Radical Hinduism and Indian nationalism are driving factors in the increasing levels of threat and instability Christians face.

- “Please pray for us, and please don’t forget us.” As the weight of my understanding grew heavy, I wondered what I could do as a musician to raise awareness of the realities of persecution, which were becoming knit into my own experience of faith. I wanted to somehow join the musical tradition of lament that streamed from ancient times to the present. In A Sacred Sorrow, musician and author Michael Card filled an entire book with reminders that Job wept, David wept, Jeremiah wept, and Jesus wept. Then asked why shouldn’t we weep as well? Further, the fact that their weeping was “sanctioned by inclusion in our Holy Scriptures” is “a continuing and reliable witness that weeping has an honored place in the life of faith.” The biblical Psalms are a well-known musical repository of lament from which Christians have drawn to express sadness over many centuries. From the cross, Jesus chose to quote a portion of Psalm 22 in the greatest moment of sorrow history has known: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Weeping for grief, loss, pain, and injustice is a significant part of biblical literature and Christian faith.

Music has been a longstanding way of expressing lament. Classical composers such as Handel, Bach, Purcell, and Monteverdi have all utilized minor and modal tonalities, descending bass lines, and the puccissimo form that is used today. Most composers use a triad, which etches deep into the ear of the listener to express lament. Classical composer Samuel Barber used a canon in the most played forms of lament after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Some of these same techniques have been accessed by popular composers such as George Harrison, Steven Tyler, and Ray Charles. The African American tradition has a full repertoire of songs of lament, from slave and civil rights songs to music for worship. After losing his wife, gospel songwriter Thomas Dorsey wrote “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” which became one of the most performed pieces of music at personal and national times of mourning.

After hearing that initial sermon about the persecuted church, I spent more than two years sitting with personal accounts of persecution and studying musical elements traditionally used in lament. What developed was the composition of a major work of music for choir, soloists, and orchestra, Consolation for the Suffering. Through it, I, with the expectation of understanding the issues of Christian persecution, but it also became my way of suffering with those who suffer, weeping with those who weep. Composing it sometimes meant sitting in silence, other times banging on the piano; still other times it meant manically skipped meals, sleepless nights, early mornings, and plenty of tears. It was both a wonderful and cathartic process of creation, trying to express in music what I was experiencing as I read, listened to, and absorbed the issues of Christian persecution.

In Consolation, I provided space for Eun Ah Eric, and Lillian to tell parts of their stories. The musical responses allowed for lamenting reflection on their stories—a requiem, a lament, of sorts, for the living. It became a wrenching cry for mercy (Kyrie eleison), a plea for the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world (Agnus Dei), a prayer for God to deliver us from evil (the Lord’s Prayer), and a petition for the angels to welcome those who lost their lives for their faith into their heavenly home (In paradisum).

Our Christian faith teaches us of a coming day of victory based on our hope in Christ. Astonishingly, many who suffer persecution...
find hope through their suffering, and often discover a strengthening of faith. In fact, per-
secution is not always viewed as a negative
by those who suffer, with many seeing it as
a part of their call to follow the mission of
Christ. Tim Keller asserts that “suffering can
strengthen our relationship to God as nothing
else can.” 12 This is supported by the fact that
high rates of persecution tend to coincide with
high rates of new conversions to Christianity.
History has proven many times that outward
persecution may be a positive catalyst for a
latent church.
There is an inherent tension in grasping for
strands of hope in the face of immense suf-
ferring because of one’s faith, a tension that
finds its example in the cross of Jesus Christ.
Yet the cross heard in the psalms of lament and
tears heard in the psalms of lament and
Weave words of hope and expectation into
our Lord. (Romans 8:37–39)

At its conclusion, Consolation for the Suffering
provides a hymn that sends us into the reality
and gives us a glimpse of the ultimate result of
“God of justice, love and mercy,
With compassion, let us care;
May your kindness set them free. 12
Brothers, sisters, all who suffer,
May your kindness set them free.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Listen to selections from Consolation for the Suffering, and watch testimonies from Fuller
community members on what it’s like living as
Christians under persecution at fullerstudio.fuller.edu/consolation-for-the-
suffering.

The Consolation for the Suffering audio recording and DVD of the concert premiere are
available at jubalhouse.bandcamp.com/.
I am a Black, Christian woman. I am a wife, mother, advocate, and psychological assis-
tant. I am a daughter of the Black church and a student of Western psychology. I have often felt I was living in two worlds, and as the product of both, I now have the privilege of translating between those worlds and serving as an advocate and ambassador from within.

I am so grateful to have been educated in spaces that lifted up the importance of inter-
terultural understanding and engagement. However, that discussion on engagement often came from a particular point of view. The conversation seemed to identify the student as Western, White, and dominant, and the ministry recipient as “ethnic,” darker, and minority. Thus, the discussion centered on who chooses to be exposed to, and the responsibility of violating the trauma, the more likely one will develop lasting symptoms of traumatic stress. Empirical evidence shows that ethnic minorities in urban areas are disproportionately exposed to community violence and its related stressors. It makes sense, then, that in communities where there are layers of trauma—systemic, generational, familial, direct—we see the impact of prolonged and repeated exposure to stress. Individuals are exposed to suffering on multiple levels: in bodies weary from too many interactions with the autonomic physiological stress response, in families seemingly compelled to repeat generational patterns of hurting and being hurt, in minds convinced that the world is unsafe and unpredictable, and in communities that are so often doing the work of therapists, without the educational preparation or finan-
cial compensation.6

In the following paragraphs, we will explore how communities can shine the light of truth on the impact of trauma (naming), model health- and help-seeking behavior (proclaiming), and actively work to foster environments that are conducive to support and healing (embracing). Since my disserta-
tion studies and subsequent outreach have focused on churches comprising primarily of ethnic minorities, especially urban Black congregations and parochial organiza-
tions, I will frequently reference insights gleaned from those contexts.

EQUIPPING TRAUMA SUPPORT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Research shows that exposure to at least one traumatic event is fairly common. And those who are exposed to traumatic events do not always develop symptoms of disorder. However, with trauma there is a dose-response effect: The more trauma one is exposed to, and the more frequently violating the trauma, the more likely one will develop lasting symptoms of traumatic stress. Empirical evidence shows that ethnic minorities in urban areas are disproportionately exposed to community violence and its related stressors. It makes sense, then, that in communities where there are layers of trauma—systemic, generational, familial, direct—we see the impact of prolonged and repeated exposure to stress. Individuals are exposed to suffering on multiple levels: in bodies weary from too many interactions with the autonomic physiological stress response, in families seemingly compelled to repeat generational patterns of hurting and being hurt, in minds convinced that the world is unsafe and unpredictable, and in communities that are so often doing the work of therapists, without the educational preparation or financial compensation.7

In communities impacted by repeated exposure to trauma and prevented from getting help due to stigma or lack of access, what tools can we share in the work of cultivating churches that promote holistic health, including mental health? We can use the preexisting power of our words, our leaders, and our church bodies to model truth-telling (naming), help-seeking (pro-
claiming), and social support (embracing). In naming, proclaiming, and embracing, local churches can change the conversation around the suffering that lurks, undiscussed, in the corners of our communities.

NAMING: IDENTIFYING TRAUMA IN UNDERSTANDABLE WAYS

Names are powerful—small words that carry worlds of history. To call somebody by their name is to recognize them; it is to see them, acknowledge them, and call attention to them. Naming the pain in our lives can be just as meaningful. There is power in identi-
fying something for what it is, in naming it. Even if what has happened is so common as to seem almost normal, trauma and suffer-
ing are not normal. The horrible things that happen to us are not okay, even if we are okay. And when we use the clarity of our words to see, acknowledge, and call attention to the traumatic nature of the suffering happening in our communities, we show the trauma to the world to insinuate we are doing well with what we can deal with. In the middle of that stakeholder meeting, a community leader raised his hand and stated, “You are asking what you can do in our com-

In my clinical and outreach work, I regu-
larly have the privilege of being led by someone in the eyes after reviewing questions like these and saying, “That’s trauma.” It always comes as a revelation, a paradigm shift of how they see their world and the things that have happened to them.

Trauma and suffering wreck the most havoc in the dark, when unseen and undiscussed, disguised in typicality and silenced by stigma. Our first steps are to name the trauma, to call it out, to speak its name, and to share it with the world.

In the Headington Research Lab, led by Cynthia Eriksson, doctoral students carried out the Urban Project, which focused on trauma among local churches in times of suffering. In the middle of that stakeholder meeting, a community leader raised his hand and stated, “You are asking what you can do in our communities about trauma, but the people I work with wouldn’t call it trauma. They would just call it life.” His statement mirrored similar experiences in my clinical work; I asked my clients, “Have you experienced trauma?” and they responded with confusion in their eyes. But when I returned, after supervision, to ask about specific traumatic events, I often had to pause to stretch my hands from writing so much.

EQUATING TRAUMA SUPPORT TO THERAPY

Researchers have called trauma survivors “living laboratories.” Those who are exposed to trauma are often called “wounded healers” or “living laboratories.” Yet, even in the midst of communities that are already faithfully laboring in those environments that are conducive to support and healing, we see obvious flourishing, resilience, power and beauty. The realities of the suffering of many communities demand a multigenerational approach to healing, some-
thing which has often been embedded and championed by local Black churches. For generations, Black people have turned to their pastors and local churches in times of need. Even now, long before a person comes into my turquoise-tinted office, seeking help from a veritable stranger, they are more likely to first seek help from the men and women who have been loving and leading them for years.

So why should we empower pastors and leaders to address mental health issues instead of teaching them how to triage and refer? Because we must give the tools to the people who are already doing the work. Let me tell you a story.

When I was newly married, I was alone in our apartment when I thought I smelled gas and noticed the stove wasn’t working. I called the gas company and they came right away. The technician was kind and performed a thorough inspection of all the necessary equipment. It became quickly apparent that my pilot light was out. He told me that fixing the pilot light is something he could teach me so I could do it on my own. If something more complicated occurs, I could call him, and they would use their expertise to fix it. I cannot fix a gas leak nor do I need to; but I can now fix a pilot light. So it is with the education of our ministry leaders. They are not therapists and do not need to be (though they are often doing the work of therapists, without the educational preparation or financial compensation!). And some of the steps ministry leaders can take when they serve in churches impacted by trauma will be featured in this section.

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As we work in our churches to reveal the truth of suffering and normalize talking about it, a recognition of pain and trauma necessitates a response. Given the pattern of underutilizing services, those who are suffering from serious, complex mental health crises need our help. For those who may need professional services like therapy or medication, seeking the suffering is to normalize helpful and health-seeking behaviors. If you have sat under any preaching, you know what it means for someone to proclaim. Local pastors, at the helm of strategic and essential ships in our communities, are skilled in proclaiming the truth from their pulpit. Encouragement, rebuke, discernment, revelation: every Sunday, their words fall on the ears of those who are suffering from serious, complex mental health crises. If you have watched, you know that it is okay for Black people, even those with a robust faith, to seek out therapy. So that’s what I did. Afterward, many people approached me discussing a secret experience with therapy, a sense they might need therapy, or appreciation for finally hearing a discussion of God and mental health in the church. My message was trusted and accepted because I was first validated and invited by the pastor whom the congregation had told of my suffering for many years.

From the pulpit, Black pastors proclaim the freeing power of God’s truth. For decades, they have also led the way in changing that which isn’t right, beautiful, lovely, or true in our communities. As a result, programs encouraging physical health offered by Black churches have been more successful than other community public health efforts. And now, the time is ripe for pastors to use their authority and platform to validate the usefulness of accessing needed mental health services. Ministry leaders can do this through explicit Nash motivations to their congregation to go out and seek help if they need it or, through sharing stories of health- and help-seeking. Story is a powerful communication tool and has long been employed by pastors to connect biblical truths with our modern lives. Pastors can use their own stories or the stories of loved ones that demonstrates a recognition of a problem, seeking out professional help, and getting that help.

PROCLAIMING: GIVING PERMISSION TO GET HELP

As we work in our churches to reveal the truth of suffering and normalize talking about it, a recognition of pain and trauma necessitates a response. Given the pattern of underutilizing services, those who are suffering from serious, complex mental health issues may not readily respond by seeking out the help they need. For those who may need professional services like therapy or medication, seeking the suffering is to normalize helpful and health-seeking behaviors. If you have sat under any preaching, you know what it means for someone to proclaim. Local pastors, at the helm of strategic and essential ships in our communities, are skilled in proclaiming the truth from their pulpit. Encouragement, rebuke, discernment, revelation: every Sunday, their words fall on the thrifty ground of the congregation. This is the very reason that pastors are the prime candidates to boldly call the suffering out of their silence: they can use their role and what they already do so well to shed light on the hidden pain of trauma.

Recently, I was asked to speak at a convention of predominantly Black churches. When I asked the person who had invited me to speak what kind of information would be most helpful, the pastor responded, “I want you to tell them that it’s okay for Black people to go to therapy.” I pushed back, asking what other topics might be helpful, but the pastor was insistent. The most important message I could communicate that day was that it is okay for Black people, even those with a robust faith, to seek out therapy. So that’s what I did. Afterward, many people approached me discussing a secret experience with therapy, a sense they might need therapy, or appreciation for finally hearing a discussion of God and mental health in the church. My message was trusted and accepted because I was first validated and invited by the pastor whom the congregation had told of my suffering for many years.

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EMBRACING: MEETING THE SUFFERING WITH PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Lastly, in an effort to create a church culture of being trauma-informed and help-seeking, we can mobilize our church bodies to ensure we are providing support in the most helpful ways. In the first two sections, I highlighted what ministry leaders can do to begin to help the suffering by naming the truth about trauma and pro- claiming the right to get help. I recognize that pastors are often so overburdened with wearing multiple hats that they may have nothing left to give. But a healthy church can use the human resources that exist in the church body to create a network of support. It is important to realize that in many churches, these networks naturally occur and already exist. Here, I specify how we can help empower parishioners to help right where they are, diffusing the responsibility and lessening the individual burden.

When I gave birth to both of my children, many members of the church responded in supportive ways. Some of the support was systematic (a gift card from the church, given to all new parents), but most of the support was a little help from individual members. Someone brought me food after my 26-hour labor left me unable to walk and my husband knocked out from exhaustion. Another person came to sit with me at home when my husband returned to work, and actually put food in my mouth while I bounced a fussy baby on an exercise ball. When families have babies or when somebody dies, our communi- ties rally to provide support. Everybody provides a little help, and the family is able to survive through a tough transition. I wonder what it would look like if we responded to those in mental health crises with the same practical support. What if we brought meals to those in a major depressive episode and unable to get out of bed? What if we drove people to seek out our mental health, by a variety of sources of suffering. We can shatter stigma as we proclaim our right and responsibility to seek out our mental health, by a variety of means, including therapy and medica- tion. We can empower ourselves as the local church body to see and support each other in every practical way. We can be the hands and feet of Jesus to those who are suffering.

ENDNOTES

1. This article is a response to information thoroughly explored and developed in my dissertation. Specific ref- erences are detailed and can be found in that manuscript. Some additional specific references are listed here in the endnotes as examples. See S. A. Hill, “The Role of the Local Church in Addressing Trauma in African-American Communities: An Expression of Relevant Empirical Litera- ture” (PsyD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2017).


“People have always resisted whiteness from the very beginning. People have always resisted the loss of a life in place, resisted being designated racially, resisted their lives being commodified, resisted being forced to live inside of a global system of exchange, death, and money, and resisted as long as they could the relentless systems of education and evaluation that supported these things. And they did it by drawing on the only tool they had available: their identities.”

Willie Jennings, Fuller trustee, and associate professor of systematic theology and Africana studies at Yale Divinity School, speaking at the 2017 Missiology Lectures on “whiteness” as a sociocultural framework

“I tell a lot of Asian American students that, even though your family might have come in the last ten years, you become a part of a larger group of people. Your history goes back 150 years in America because you become a part of this Asian American experience. I’m a part of this whole Asian American racial experience. The fact that different ethnic groups come together and form the Asian American identity. I know so many Asian Americans who are relatively recent immigrants that weren’t there in the ’40s, who don’t really think about Japanese Internment as their story. They feel like, ‘that happened a long time ago, it doesn’t really matter,’ without realizing the fact that the past is always with us. It’s not just my family. It’s not just my own particular history. You can’t escape the fact that race has been so central to our formation as a country. I think it is deeply theological. It’s historical. It’s sociological. It’s cultural—it’s all these things together. It’s actually 150 years long. It’s not just my family history. I’m a part of this bigger story.”

Daniel D. Lee, assistant provost for the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry, reflecting on a trip with members of the Fuller community to the Japanese internment camp in Manzanar, California; pictured is a reconstruction of a guard tower that loomed over the camp

This content is curated from ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Visit this focus section in Fullerstudio/Studio for links to full videos, articles, and more.

“There were some who believed the clergy needed to be there to bring God to the Ferguson uprising, but I met Black Jesus at Ferguson. I met the dark-skinned Jewish carpenter who was birthed by a teenage, unmarried woman in the hood. And I was reintroduced to this Jesus who was constantly bringing disruptive fire to the systems and powers, using the prophetic truths of Scripture, acts of healing, and deep commitments to the poor and the marginalized. I found anew the dark body who was unfairly arrested, convicted by a kangaroo court, sentenced to die, and then executed by the empire of his day. This Jesus, the prophet, the healer, the liberator, the organizer, the exorcist of both individuals and systems, was already hanging out in Ferguson when we showed up. So it wasn’t like we was bringing Jesus, it was more like Jesus was waiting for us to get there. And it was this Jesus who I heard declare, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ This Jesus invited me to follow him.”

Michael McBride, lead pastor of The Way Christian Center and national director of Urban Strategies and LIVE FREE, on the Black church and resisting structures of white supremacy, at the 2018 Black Public Theology Symposium

“Toda la teología es contextual, y nuestra comprensión de nuestro llamado estará marcada, ¡inevitablemente!, por nuestra historia, nuestro hogar, nuestra gente, nuestra cultura. Y eso es parte de la marea y belleza de ser el cuerpo global de Cristo, donde algunos de los puntos ciegos de una persona pueden ser detectados por otra persona porque tenemos ojos para verlos.”

“All theology is contextual, and our understanding of our calling will be inevitably marked by our history, our home, our people, our culture. And that is part of the wonder and beauty of being the global body of Christ, where some of a person’s blind spots can be detected by another person because we have eyes to see them.”

Ruth Padilla DeBorst, vice-rectora académica, Comunidad de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios, speaking at the 2018 Centro Latino Lectures on transcending divisive walls

“How can we say that we know ourselves without understanding our context? To say that being a Christian and being Asian have nothing to do with one another goes against how we have been created in our own particular histories. You can’t escape the fact that race has been so central to our formation as a country. I think it is deeply theological. It’s historical. It’s sociological. It’s cultural—it’s all these things. It’s the water that we swim in.”

David K. Yoo, professor of Asian American Studies at UCLA, on race and politics, in his talk at the Public Discipleship event hosted by Fuller’s Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry

“The ability to see is connected to the ability to love. If you don’t see me, you can’t love me. If I seem to you to be something close to Chinese, even though I am Korean-American, and you only have categories for Chinese and cannot see who I am—you can’t love me either.”

Daniel Lee, assistant professor for the Center for Asian American Theology and Ministry and assistant professor of theology and Asian American ministry, on the often neglected Asian American experience, in his address at the 2017 Missiology Lectures
“There is something with owning the deep particularities. Owning the deep particularities does not do us a disservice but actually serves a greater good. When I own a deep particularity, that’s a testing of our existence. I don’t live every existence, but other people challenge me then—Are you going to make space for me, too? Is your ethic and your framework going to make room for my life, too, and my thriving?”

Lisa Thompson (pictured right), assistant professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, on the power and role of proclamation, in her address at the 2018 Black Public Theology Symposium.

“Salvation and whiteness. These terms point to a history that we yet live within. Whiteness as a way of being in the world has been parasitically joined to Christianity that is also a way of being in the world... It was the fusion of these two realities that gave tragic shape to Christianity in the new world at the dawn of what we now call the modern colonialist era, or as scholars like to call it, colonial modernity. It is precisely this fusing together of Christianity and whiteness that constitutes the ground of many of our struggles today. The struggle against aggressive nationalism is the struggle against the fusion of Christianity and whiteness. The struggle against racism and white supremacy, and some aspects of sexism and patriarchy are the struggle against this fusion. The struggle against the exploitation of the planet is wound up in the struggle against this joining. So many people today see these problems of planetary exploitation, of racism, of sexism, of nationalism and so forth, but they do not see the deeper problem of this fusion. Which means they have not yet grasped the energy that drives many of our problems.”

Willie Jennings, Fuller trustee, and associate professor of systematic theology and Africana studies at Yale Divinity School, on uncoupling the Christian faith and “whiteness,” in his lecture at the 2017 Missiology Lectures.

“Five centuries of a history loaded with colonial modernization projects, and Occidentalism have left Latin American countries today at a certain standard of living typically referred to with the labels of developing or ‘third-world’ countries. So, that separation, that hierarchy leads us to experience life from a particular place. Some call it the margin, others call it the periphery, and others call it poverty. I am thinking about a different term, a term that I call ‘trans-Occidentalism,’ which alludes to the fact that on the one hand we are Westerners, but on the other hand, we are non-Westerners, and both at the same time. In such a collaging encounter, we are more than any one of these two. I believe that doing theology out of this paradox makes us rethink—rethink to live out of this paradox makes us rethink—to live again in different ways. To rethink does not only mean to review the historical processes that have given us identity and a description of our social condition, but it also implies to recreate.”

Oscar García-Johnson, assistant priest for the Center for the Study of Hispanic Church and Community, and associate professor of theology and Latina/o Studies, on FULLER studio.

“The kneel-ins during the Civil Rights Movement failed because even if you could get Black bodies inside a segregated white church, you could not force the church’s white members to treat those Blacks like Christians. Nor could you do anything to make so openly racist congregations a desirable place for Blacks or anyone committed to interreligious fellowship to want to worship there.”

Valene Cooper, associate professor of religion and society and Black church studies at Duke Divinity School, speaking about segregation in the American evangelical church at the 2018 Black Public Theology Symposium.

“Cinco siglos de una historia cargada de cierto colonialismo y colonialidad, de proyectos de modernización, de proyectos occidentalizadores que nos tienen hoy en cierto nivel de vida donde se nos llama algunas veces a los países de Latinoamérica países en vías de desarrollo o países del tercer mundo. Entonces, esa separación, esa jerarquía nos llevan a nosotros a experimentar la vida desde un lugar muy particular. Uso le llaman el margen, otros le llaman la periferia, otros se lo llaman la pobreza. Y estoy pensando de un término diferente, un término que le llamamos transoccidentalidad, que es el acceptar que somos occidentales por un lado, pero que somos no occidentales por el otro y en ese encuentro somos más que todo eso. Yo creo que el teologizar así nos hace a nosotros repensar, repensar para vivir de nuevo con formas diferentes. El repensar no sólo significa revisar los procesos históricos que nos han dado a nosotros identidad, que nos han dado a nosotros una condición social. Sino que el repensar implica también el recrear.”

“Are you going to make space for me, too? Is your ethic and your framework going to make room for my life, too, and my thriving?”

Andrew Draper, assistant professor of theology at Taylor University and senior pastor of Urban Light Community Church, on vulnerability and repentance, in his talk at the 2017 Missiology Lectures.
My father and I were driving in his Toyota four-wheel drive up a mountain on bumpy, dirt roads, and we'd go into this small little hut. I was 10 years old, and my English was not as good as I'm speaking right now, but he sat me down and says, 'You're going to sit down next to this nice US American doctor who has come to help us, and you speak English. So you're going to translate for him. We're giving out medicine and medical help.'

He said, 'If you don't understand something he says, here's a dictionary. Look it up. I'm going to come back and pick you up at the end of the day.' I imagine a 10-year-old just sitting there. And it started nurturing this love, this empathy, this compassion that comes from the gift towards others.

If you don't know the narrative for a young girl in Nicaragua, for a man to empower a woman, he was amplifying my voice in ways that now I'm starting to understand. He was amplifying my voice and saying, 'You have something to contribute.' I see that Jesus did the same thing. He amplified the voices in the margins.

Have you ever asked the question, why does Jesus ask the blind man, 'What do you want me to do for you?' That's a question that has annoyed me from Jesus. I have an accent. I'm Colombian by birth. I am a foreigner. My accent and saltwater come together to create the most beautiful, diverse ecosystem. Interdependence flows right out of the gospel. It recognized the fragility and limitation of Babylon and the potential of Pentecost at the same time. You have to frame this carefully. Because if you go over too far in the direction of unity, this kind of uniformity, you lose everything. If you go too far in the direction of separate, distinct identities, or just insisting on the boundaries, not creating porousness between cultures, you lose something. You can't create new from either place.

Makoto Fujimura, director of Fuller’s Culture Care Initiative, speaking on trauma and restoration at the 2018 Missiology Lectures

"The song that you would write is going to be very different from the song I would write. And I need to hear your laments, and I need to hear your praises. I need to hear what you're mourning, and I need to hear what you are celebrating. And we need to exchange that with one another, not so that we can celebrate diversity for diversity's sake, but so we can give us the tools we need to live in this perilous context.

David M. Bailey, founder and executive director of Arrabon, on the church's role in reconciliation, in his lecture at the 2019 Belen Conference

"Music and the arts help negotiate, construct, express the story. One of the questions we are entertaining is 'decentering otherness.' With the music that we create, we need to exchange that with one another, not so that we can celebrate diversity for diversity's sake, but so we can give us the tools we need to live in this perilous context.

Sooi Ling Tan, adjunct assistant professor at Fuller Seminary and adjunct lecturer at Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary, speaking at the 2018 Missiology Lectures about the cultural power of the performing arts

I imagine that one way of working toward inclusivity follows this flow: discovering our particularities, being honest about how our distinctions became boundaries that exclude some and empower others, and then repainting by creating spaces of belonging. We don't repent of the distinctions, the particulars themselves. These is good things, beautiful things. Our unique histories need to be told, our cultures expressed and celebrated. We repent from giving those particularities the power to decide who matters and who does not, who deserves dignity and who can go without, who is heard and who should be silent. We repent toward a new way of being, a new space that is meant for belonging. A space where these distinctions don't go away—they are recognized and embraced—but they are denied the power to form hierarchies and foster practices of exclusion.

I think Paul was imagining a space of belonging when he said, 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile.' But the process isn't neat; for Paul, creating a space of belonging looked like writing frequently about the practice of circumcision, questioning its power to exclude Gentiles from God's people. At Fuller, it has looked like a protest, conversations about syllabi, discussion groups, new administrative positions, and a strategic plan. I don't expect any institution, Fuller or otherwise, to suddenly arrive at inclusivity. But there is a commitment to the process. Recently, we launched Fuller.edu/Inclusion, to illustrate this process—the strategies and efforts that aim toward greater inclusivity at Fuller. Reading about inclusion plans and strategies may feel as odd as reading about circumcision practices, but both are deeply theological. Both are grounded on the conviction that God is forming a people who belong together. The whole process—discovering particularities, naming exclusion, and imagining inclusive spaces—in the work of those who partner with God to cultivate that belonging.
Christena Cleveland, associate professor of the practice of organizational studies at Duke Divinity School, on the importance of mutual relationships, in her lecture at the 2015 FULLER Forum

“Vocation involves looking at how our membership in the body of Christ infiltrates all that we do, both in the church and outside the church. So, identifying first and foremost as someone who is part of the larger family, but also someone who’s uniquely positioned in that family because of demographic characteristics—age, gender, sex, or race. But it could also be giftedness, and thinking, I’m part of this larger body. I have my unique viewpoint, now how am I supposed to live out that unique gifting and viewpoint in every aspect of my life?”

Kara Powell, executive director of Fuller Youth Institute, on her passion and call to work with young people, on FULLER studio

“It’s young people that I’m passionate about, it’s young people that I pray for, it’s young people that I weep over. My passion for the last 20 years has been related to young people, first as a youth pastor, and now working with the team at the Fuller Youth Institute. What we are trying to do here is turn research into resources. As a parent, as a leader, so many times I feel like I’m guessing. I’m just hoping for the best with the young people in my family, or in our church. And at this point, my vocational calling is to take the amazing research that Fuller and others are doing, whether that’s theological research or more empirical, social science behavioral research, and turn it into practical tools so that parents, grandparents, leaders—anyone who cares about young people—we don’t have to guess so much. We have better answers.”

Erin Dufault-Hunter, assistant professor of Christian ethics, on her desire to reinvigorate the ethical imagination of the church, on FULLER studio

“I think of my vocation in terms of what do I do in my daily living, to both make a living, but also, what’s my role in the body of Christ? I think that part of what I do is turn up the heat in situations. I don’t like conflict, but I don’t shy away from it. And I’ll often push into things—I’m created that way. That’s part of how I articulate what I’m doing as a professor. In my discipline of ethics, I’m trying to take things that often have become rather dull, and turning up the heat in a person’s life to say, how do you think about that in a way that is not just about a rule but is about a God who is actively involved in the world? Part of my growth as a Christian and as a woman of faith and as an academic is knowing how to do that in ways that aren’t about me. I’m not really the fire. I’m attending to that. I’m attending to the crucible that is the church or is the world in which God is active. Yes, I’m stoking the fire, but I’m not actually the one who’s doing the work.”

“This content is curated from ongoing conversations taking place throughout the Fuller community. Visit this Voice section on Fuller.edu/Studio for links to full videos, articles, and more.
“Saying yes to the angel Gabriel was a risky response. Mary’s pending marriage would have been in jeopardy if Joseph decided her tale of the angel’s announcement was only a cover-up for infidelity. Her legal status would have been in jeopardy if accused of adultery. Her economic status would have also been in jeopardy, since first-century Jewish women were dependent on the finances of either their parents or their husbands. I imagine that Mary’s emotional stress was incredibly high, because apart from the logistical impossibility of pregnancy without consummation, there was also the fact that infant mortality was common in that time. Not to mention that her life would have been at risk, as dying in childbirth was a real possibility. Mary’s yes to the angel was a sacrificial yes. It was a yes despite her own needs. It was a yes despite what made sense. It was a yes for the sake of others.

As women, we encounter elements of sacrifice when it comes to love for my enemies in Iraq, Syria, Burma. That didn’t happen until I’m dead. When I came to Fuller, I wrote down all my sins out of will power. It happened out of surrender to Jesus.”

“Whatever the task before us, whatever the next season God calls us to, we are affirmed in our identity in Jesus Christ and assured that the Lord is with us. God’s invitation to us is accompanied with a promise: ‘my grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.’”

“Listening to the stories of assault survivors is a holy thing. It’s Saying yes to the angel Gabriel was a risky response. Mary’s As women, we encounter elements of sacrifice when it comes to love for my enemies in Iraq, Syria, Burma. That didn’t happen until I’m dead. When I came to Fuller, I wrote down all my sins out of will power. It happened out of surrender to Jesus.”

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“What drew me to seminary was not what drove me in seminary. The precocious child of a pastor, I tried to preach at a young age, copying what was heard in church and fitting into the expectations of the influencers at home, in high school, and later, in the philosophy and religion department of my college. I went to seminary as a preacher’s son who was continuing along a path that key witnesses to my childhood and adolescence expected me to walk. Calling was wrapped in my community’s expectations of who I should become.

What drove me in seminary was different. I entered seminary without knowing what to do with the budding awareness, begun in college, that things were not right with the world and that I should get involved in changing what was wrong. Attending Martin Luther King’s funeral in 1968 pushed me to consider the disparities between rich and poor, blacks and whites, the lot of the marginalized, and the terrible toll of the Vietnamese War. How should I fit this wine into the wineskins of ministry I brought from home? A desire to integrate a commitment to the fight for justice with my understanding of ministry and a yearning to understand my own psyche required differentiation from my Christian calling. It’s in this sacred work of emptying myself of pregnancy without consummation, there was also the fact that infant mortality was common in that time. Not to mention that her life would have been at risk, as dying in childbirth was a real possibility. Mary’s yes to the angel was a sacrificial yes. It was a yes despite her own needs. It was a yes despite what made sense. It was a yes for the sake of others.

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This quote is taken from the introduction to FULLER Formation’s “Reframing Vocation” lesson. FULLER Formation is an online tool to foster faith formation with guided material created and curated by Fuller’s faculty and centers for innovation. For more information, go to Fuller.edu/Formation.

In Spring 2019, the Fuller Leadership Platform launched its first digital learning experience, FULLER Formation, providing guided formation for learners who do not seek a traditional seminary degree. A second digital learning experience, FULLER Equip, will be available later this year and will focus on leadership and professional development.

Dave Evans, adjunct lecturer in the Product Design Program at Stanford University, a management consultant, and cofounder of Electronic Arts, in FULLER Formation’s “Reframing Vocation” lesson. FULLER Formation is an online tool to foster faith formation with guided material created and curated by Fuller’s faculty and centers for innovation. For more information, go to Fuller.edu/Formation.

“Vocation is not about ‘finding’ a particular thing to do, but being formed by God to meet the needs of God’s kingdom.”

“Before you start looking for some new idea, for some other place you should go, tell me about what you’re seeing of God in front of you now. Do you understand how to recognize God’s revelation of God’s self in every sphere of your life? Tell me about when you notice the Spirit moving in a staff meeting, tell me about when you notice glory in a better-written memo.

For design prototypes, from a spiritual point of view, we have language for this already. ‘Test the spirits.’ You take this counsel you’ve received, and you put it out there a little bit. In my case, you go have a bunch of cups of coffee with people and say, ‘What do you think?’ ‘Come and see’, Jesus would say. ‘That’s a prototype. So let’s go out there and get in the boat and give it a try and see what happens, and if God confirms, we can keep going, and if not, then we can step back a little bit. Prototyping is the raw material that you’re supposed to bring to the potluck party with the Holy Spirit. You’ve got to give God something to work with.’

Dave Evans, adjunct lecturer in the Product Design Program at Stanford University, a management consultant, and cofounder of Electronic Arts, in FULLER Formation’s “Reframing Vocation”
community creating faculty members share why they value the unique experience of in-person education at Fuller. We heard from Fuller voices reflecting on online community in Issue #10. This time, four voices share what they love about the in-person experience.

We've been so busy explaining programs, that we may have forgotten to emphasize how strongly we still believe in the core of Fuller—the one where students and faculty come to a main campus and participate in a transformative theological education. And eat street tacos together.

I love words more than the average person. I write fast and joyfully, and my life is more or less a constant stream of messages to various people over various platforms. But I would never suggest that words alone can create deep, transformative relationships.

I love our community of real people in real spaces? It has been said that a large, introductory survey course is a case where online education is every bit the equal of in-person education. It's certainly true that sometimes students can "disappear" and even tune out in a lecture. Crafting a large lecture course in the right hands, the lectern is a dramatic stage. As a student, I experienced many stirring lectures, after which we spilled out of the room buzzing about what had happened. I try to create those same moments, and I have students tell me that they're happening.

Some years ago Fuller created a rather ugly space for preaching that bore the odd name, the "Preaching Lab." Labs are spaces where bold experiments can happen safely. Students gamely strap on goggles and gloves, then dive in and try things. One dares to let a psalm of lament stand as a cry unanswered, a sermon left unified, with no tidy bow. One shares a story of a rugged, bitter marriage season that felt like living in the valley of dry bones, surprising herself with its rawness still.

"Pardon my tears," she says, and as she ends, we realize that we have been listening to a deep, transforming experience. It is an immense honor to open the doors of a ragged, bitter marriage season that we lack the words to express. We lack the language to speak with. We lack the words to create a space to experience something holy. We lack the words to share. Students gamely strap on goggles and gloves, then dive in and try things. One dares to let a psalm of lament stand as a cry unanswered, a sermon left unified, with no tidy bow.

A theological school is about formation, not just education, and anyone who has attended a traditional seminar can attest that much of their formation took place outside of formal classes—sitting around a lunch table, or bumping into each other on the quad. Gathering around a seminar table is another special, formative aspect of in-person education. This is not only at the upper-level courses at Fuller, a fair number of upper-level courses are small enough that you finish a quarter feeling a bit like family. Maybe the day will come when videoconferencing will allow you to convey things effectively with a nod or a glance—but we're not very close yet.

Why do I love our community of real people in real spaces? A theological school is about formation, not just education, and anyone who has attended a traditional seminar can attest that much of their formation took place outside of formal classes—sitting around a lunch table, or bumping into each other on the quad. Gathering around a seminar table is another special, formative aspect of in-person education. This is not only at the upper-level courses at Fuller, a fair number of upper-level courses are small enough that you finish a quarter feeling a bit like family. Maybe the day will come when videoconferencing will allow you to convey things effectively with a nod or a glance—but we're not very close yet. Nor can I imagine an online seminar adjoining to the local pub after a colloquium.

It has been said that a large, introductory survey course is a case where online education is every bit the equal of in-person education. It's certainly true that sometimes students can "disappear" and even tune out in a lecture. Crafting a large lecture course in the right hands, the lectern is a dramatic stage. As a student, I experienced many stirring lectures, after which we spilled out of the room buzzing about what had happened. I try to create those same moments, and I have students tell me that they're happening.

In-person education is a creation of a faithful community. For a seminar like Fuller, that certainly means faith in God; but it also means faith in a communal mission. Like a lot of the works of faith, this mission is costly, but at least it comes with tacos, and the flash in your colleague's eye when they laugh.
IMMERSIVE LEARNING

There are certainly benefits to online programs that allow learners the convenience of structuring their studies around family, work, or other commitments. In this dimension of activity, arranged around case, then, study and learning is an added make to even carve out the time for such an endeavor: time away from rest, or from structuring their studies around family, means attempting to insert theological focused approach to theological study, study into already crowded lives, in - invites new schedules and rhythms, tensifying, rather than thoroughly one more conducive to the kind of ground up. Such shakeup inevitably manner—meaning, from the inspiration of our lives in a radical reorganization and reembodying such virtues.

Second, an in-person program of study has long been the traditional format since one of its primary advantages—that of inserting learners in an embodied way into a community of inquiry—remains unrepli - cable in the online platform. True, we now realize that online education generates its own digital community, and it is also increas - ingly the case that many learner-oriented events held by educational institutions are streamed live so that the activities of institutions are accessible to remote learners. From a content delivery perspective, the gap between traditional in-person and digitally mediated learning is almost closed.

On the other hand, after events, online learners log off and return to their regular routines. Geophysically present learners, however, could opt to follow up more personally with speakers or panelists, or choose to interact further with other attendees, even over a meal. Major communities of inquiry, certainly here at Fuller, schedule multiple lectures, symposia, colloquia, and other scholarly activities to coincide with the course of the term. Those who are geophysically present enter into and build relation - ships with others—faculty, staff, other learners, and guests of the institution—in ways not possible for online learners. Traditionalists have always highlighted the immersive character of the historic seminar experience, which effectively baptizes learners into the multirefractional conversations through which the life of the mind is lived out across the institutional environment. In sum, content delivered in class is neither fixed nor unmov - ing. Quite the opposite. It’s a kind of divine residence that is dynamic and highly adaptable, oriented towards God being present with His people in the midst of their concrete, on-the-ground experiences, which almost always involve movement and dispersion. In fact, if Israel’s history is any indication, it isn’t until the people of God attempt to isolate and constrain the presence of God’s shekinah that they run into trouble. In the Exodus accounts, God tabernacles with Israel in the wilderness, demonstrating God’s loving faithfulness through residence that is always (perhaps necessarily) on the move (Exod 13:21). Yet the temple, originally conceived and constructed as a way of celebrating God’s incomparable glory, eventually became symbolic of Israel’s misguided attempts to contain, control, and domesticate an otherwise wild and unmanageable God. Put differently, Israel’s mistake was to reduce God’s distributed presence to a permanent residence.

As a theologian who teaches more theology classes online than in person, I also find it in - conceivable to imagine a Fuller Seminary that is not leading the way in distributed learning. Delivering high-caliber seminary education to pastors, therapists, and ministry leaders in their local communities, and toRemote seekers, through the Fuller DNA from the very start. Rather than require students to engage in an intellectual endeavor disconnected from the particular communities to which God had called them, Fuller created regional campuses where students could access theological education without having to uproot themselves from their ministry context. I am a proud alumnus of the Colorado regional campus, where I learned my MAT while serving teenagers and young adults in Colorado Springs. I now serve in a role in which I am teaching theology to pastors, missionaries, and industry leaders throughout North America and all around the globe. From my physical office in Pasadena, I am able to share a diverse and diffuse network of human beings otherwise known as the body of Christ. Yet, even when we don’t share the same residence or inhabit the same geophysical space, the Spirit still gathers with us because that’s who God is—the same God who pitched a tent with Israel in the wilderness and took on flesh in the Incarnation and will one day take up residence with us.
I've led an eight-week workshop on composition and grammar every quarter for two years, and when I taught an online version for the first time this summer, I had more online students complete the curriculum and be more interactive in this one workshop than in the previous two years combined. Students were emailing me, they were getting in touch with each other, they were more responsive and open to optional assignments—all because of the online forums. They felt comfortable being vulnerable and making mistakes because they saw each other's work, and they had more time and space to contemplate their words.

The parallels are significant: the introduction of printing and digital technology were watershed moments in history. It could be argued that the personal computer and smart device have changed the way we access and learn from one another. Learning should be interactive and engaging, as opposed to passive. Learning is inherently social, whether that refers to the instructor-learner relationships or peer relationships among learners. Instructors should have clear objectives, and learners should have opportunities to measure themselves against those objectives on a regular basis. Learners should have opportunities to apply their learning to real-world problems and see how their theories match the practical application. Nothing about these principles changes whether you're in a classroom or learning on a computer.

Fuller is committed to hybrid education, taking advantage of the best of both in-person and online education and putting them together. Online education allows Fuller to make our instruction more accessible. Rather than asking people to come to us, which can be expensive and logistically difficult for many of our learners, we can go to them. And by sending our research and resources into the world, we also open up communication to learn from others in other contexts. In our effort to form global leaders for kingdom vocations, online education gives us the opportunity to reach those who could never reach Fuller, and learn from those who we would otherwise never interact with.

Gutenberg's printing press made it possible to mass-produce the written word for the first time. So did literacy. Learning became attainable for common people, not just the wealthy and elite. The parallels are significant: the introduction of the printing press and digital technology were watershed moments in history. It could be argued that the personal computer and smart device have changed the way we access and learn from one another. Learning should be interactive and engaging, as opposed to passive. Learning is inherently social, whether that refers to the instructor-learner relationships or peer relationships among learners. Instructors should have clear objectives, and learners should have opportunities to measure themselves against those objectives on a regular basis. Learners should have opportunities to apply their learning to real-world problems and see how their theories match the practical application. Nothing about these principles changes whether you're in a classroom or learning on a computer.

Online learning is something that students have actually been asking for, for years. This is not just Fuller deciding to try something new or trying to experiment with a new modality. This is a new era of students. Our current students are asking for a little bit slower, they're saying, I want to make sure that I can still take care of my family and engage in life and ministry, but I want to do this Fuller thing, as well—I want to grow, I want to get my degree, I want to advance the kingdom, and I can do both if I do it online. I like to joke that they are at home taking their online courses in their pajamas, but that's only because they've spent a full day working, a full day serving in ministry, a full day taking care of their families and providing, then only at 11 o'clock at night when everything is all put away and everything is quiet, they can finally sit down and engage with their classes. So, yeah, they're sitting in their pajamas, but only after being some of the most productive and powerful movers in their own communities and workplaces.

One concern that we often come across is the idea that Fuller is becoming a ‘solely online school.’ Online is a phenomenal modality and many students really enjoy that, but there are also students who really enjoy learning in the classroom. Fuller is still going to be a campus school, now with an online component as well. So the idea that students will be able to take either side, take courses on the ground or on the web at any point in their degree, is something that we hold at a high value and that we always want to protect.
FULLER studio Explore FULLER studio’s media offerings

Conversing podcast
President Mark Labberton hosts this podcast, speaking with a broad spectrum of leaders on issues at the intersection of theology and culture—from public radio host Krista Tippett discussing wisdom to Yale Divinity theologian Willie Jennings reflecting on race.

Photo: Fuller’s Chapel Team discuss with President Labberton the significance of diverse representation in worship.

FULLER curated
This podcast gathers the best conversations happening at Fuller Seminary—drawing from lecture series, conferences, panel discussions, special events, and more—and reflects the eclectic, rich quality of Fuller’s intellectual and spiritual life.

Photo: A panel discussion at the Black Public Theology Symposium, held at Fuller in Fall 2018. Hear some of the sessions from the symposium on FULLER curated.

FULLER studio
From an exclusive conversation with Bono and Eugene Peterson to stimulating roundtable discussions with Fuller faculty and community members, FULLER studio produces, curates, and offers a wealth of video, audio, and written resources—for all who seek deeply formed spiritual lives.

Photo: Makoto Fujimura, director of Fuller’s Culture Care Initiative, speaks on a “Theology of Making,” and how the arts and imagination play an integral part in the Christian life.

Find these resources and more at Fuller.edu/Studio

All podcast episodes are available on iTunes, Spotify, or your favorite podcast app.

Introducing FULLER Formation

Fuller Seminary is pleased to introduce a new learning experience, FULLER Formation. FULLER Formation is designed to foster Christian formation in everyday contexts. Learn how to integrate your faith and work, discern God’s calling in your life, and develop formative practices as a Christian leader.

LEARN MORE AT FULLER.EDU/FORMATION

FULLER Theological Seminary

FULLER Leadership Platform

THREE DISTINCT CHANNELS FOR DELIVERING HIGH-CALIBER CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

Before founding Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947, Charles E. Fuller was reaching millions of people through his Old Fashioned Revival Hour radio show, which was broadcast over 650 radio stations. Starting Fuller Seminary was his way of extending the reach of the gospel message by training evangelists and missionaries to be sent out across the globe. Today, Fuller still prioritizes its global reach, finding innovative ways to deliver content from world-renowned faculty to as many people as possible.

Fuller’s original offering of residential theological education has expanded over the decades through the establishment of regional campuses and online degree programs. Three years ago, FULLER studio began creating original, free resources for anyone seeking a deeply formed spiritual life. In Spring 2019, the Fuller Leadership Platform launched its first digital learning experience, FULLER Formation, providing guided formation based on content from Fuller’s faculty and centers for innovation for learners who do not need or want a traditional seminary degree. A second digital learning experience, FULLER Equip, will be available later this year and will focus on leadership and professional development.

As the landscape of higher education shifts under our feet, Fuller is finding new ways to realize its vision of forming global leaders for kingdom vocations. Now individuals across the world can discover the free online resources of FULLER studio, access formation learning experiences and professional development through the Fuller Leadership Platform, and attend Fuller Seminary for rigorous theological degree programs.
LET THE BUILDINGS SPEAK

As we prepare for the move to Pomona, we’ve invited all Fuller alumni to share some of their fondest memories from the seven decades we’ve been in the buildings that make up the Pasadena campus. See more reflections and photos, and share your own stories, at fuller.edu/building.

When I had my first tour of Fuller’s Pasadena campus as a prospective student, our guide walked us by the Prager Garden. She pointed at its cement walls covered in ivy and said that many students find the greening, dying, and returning of the ivy is be an apt metaphor for the changing seasons in their academic careers at Fuller.

Over the next three years as a residential MDiv student, her comments meant true. I can remember walking through campus from our apartment on North Oakland Ave., coming and going from classes, and passing the Prager Garden, seeing the ivy dry and brown as full become winter (such as it was in Pasadena), and feeling resonance with my spirit as I was struggling with new and challenging learning. I can also remember walking by with a house in my step from the exhilaration of renewed faith and seeing the space turned sacred by what God did there, will always hold a special place in my heart.

—Andrea Cammarota (’02)

It was February 2002. I was stretched thin for cash, as is the common denominator for all theology students. I think, and needed to sell the bullet and call home for some funds to cover my registration fees. I went into Prag to use the phone booth to call my dad. I loved those plush phone booths, because they were vintage and felt like a nod to past decades. Plus, that day I really needed the privacy of a closed door to have this pathetic little talk with my dad. We had the usual “so where is this money going” conversation and, as per usual, he came through with the funding. I thanked him, told him, “I’m quizzing,” and rather than say “Ciao,” like we normally would, I very randomly said, “Adiós.” I didn’t know then that that was the last conversation I had with my father. He died suddenly a day later of an aneurysm. In saying “Adiós,” I knew both sad goodbye and commended him to God—I just didn’t know that last bit. This has become a tender memory, a final time of me being in need and him coming to my rescue, as he had a million times before, from when I adpted me at 3 months old until that day at 26 years old. I’ll always cherish the Fuller Prag campus and the many memories that I made there, but Prag Hall’s row of vintage phone booths, that common space turned sacred by what God did there, will always hold an extra special place in my heart.

—Luke Hyder (MDiv ’06)

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The platform of the Chinatown Metro Station offers an expansive view of Los Angeles. City Hall and Union Station tower above surrounding buildings. The Financial District’s skyscrapers stand tall above, and the skyline in the foreground, Mary frames the day ahead, an urban retreat into LA. The cohort usually retreats to the nearby Mater Dolorosa or Descanso Gardens, places of stillness and natural beauty. Today’s outing is different. “We’re here,” Mary explains, “to engage with what integrated peace looks like in the city.” For the faculty gathered, listening to the stories the city has to tell is the first step.

What is Fuller?

Fuller Seminary is an evangelical, multi-denominational graduate institution committed to forming global leaders for kingdom vocations. Responding to changes in the church and world, Fuller is transforming the seminary experience for both traditional students and those beyond the classroom: providing theological formation that helps Christ followers serve as faithful, courageous, innovative, collaborative, and fruitful leaders in all of life, in any setting.

Fuller offers 15 master’s and advanced degree programs—with Spanish, Korean, and online options—through its Schools of Theology, Psychology, and Intercultural Studies, as well as rich and varied forms of support for the broader church. Nearly 3,500 students from 80 countries and 210 denominations enroll in Fuller’s degree programs annually, and our 44,000 alumni serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businesspeople, and in a variety of other vocations around the world.

¿Quién es Fuller?

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

Fuller ofrece 15 programas de maestría y grado avanzado—con opciones en español, coreano y en línea—a través de sus escuelas de Teología, Psicología y Estudios Interculturales, así como formas ricas y variadas de apoyo para la iglesia más amplia. Cerca de 3,500 estudiantes de 80 países y 210 denominaciones se inscriben en los programas de estudio de Fuller anualmente, y nuestros 44,000 alumnos sirven como ministros, consejeros, docentes, artistas, líderes no lucrativos, empresarios y en una variedad de otras vocaciones alrededor del mundo.
Doxology I: Holy Grail
by Dao Zi. Wash-ink painting. 55"x28".
2017. See more of Dao Zi's work on pp. 2–3 and 11.
During his first quarter at Fuller's Northwest campus, Rick Reynolds (p. 18) started passing out pizzas to Seattle's homeless as a volunteer with a group called Operation Nightwatch. After more than three decades with the organization, he's learned a lot about recognizing the image of God in the poor. “They're all created in the image of God, and that's the thing: I want people to look, and not just look past.”