ISSUE #13 | WORSHIP AND ART

FULLER

WORSHIP AND ART

WORSHIP AND ART

by Todd E. Johnson
Guest Theology Editor

Shortly after the turn of the century, Eddie Gibbs, Fuller's McGavran Professor Emeritus of Church Growth, declared that the 20th century was the era of the orator, but that the current century would be the era of the artist. Even before Dr. Gibbs made his proclamation, the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts was a part of Fuller. Its existence acknowledges a shift in our culture and world away from the dominance of words and texts to the preponderance of nonverbals. We daily encounter the world of symbols and art: from the logos that identify brands to the images, sounds, and poetic words we encounter in the media, in our homes, and in our churches. One needs only to review the changes in Protestant worship over the past 50 years to see how much nonverbals have increased in our worship services in both quantity and importance. Given Gibbs's assessment, if Fuller did

ADORACIÓN Y ARTE

Por Todd E. Johnson

Poco después del comienzo de siglo, Eddie Gibbs, el profesor emérito McGavran de crecimiento de la iglesia en Fuller, declaró que el siglo XX fue la época del orador/a, pero que el siglo actual sería la época del artista. Incluso antes de que el Dr. Gibbs hiciera su proclamación, el Brehm Center, que es el centro de Adoración, Teología y las Arte, ya era parte de Fuller. Su existencia reconoce un cambio en nuestra cultura y en nuestro mundo, que se aleja del dominio de las palabras y los textos, a la preponderancia de los "no verbales". A diario nos encontramos con el mundo de los símbolos y el arte: desde los logotipos que identifican las marcas hasta las imágenes, los sonidos y las palabras poéticas que encontramos en los medios de comunicación, en nuestros hogares y en nuestras iglesias. Uno solo necesita ver los cambios en la adoración protestante en los últimos 50 años para ver cuánto han aumentado los medios no verbales en nuestros servicios de adoración, tanto en cantidad como en importancia. Dada la evalu-

예배와 예술

아모스 용

풀러의 맥가브란 교회 성장학 명예교수인 에디 깁스(Eddie Gibbs)는 새로운 세기가 시작 되자 연설자들의 시대였던 20세기에 반해 현 세기는 예술가의시대가 될 것이라고 선언 한 바 있습니다. 이 같은 깁스 박사의 선언 이 전에도 예배, 신학, 예술을 위한 브렘 센터(Brehm Center)는 풀러의 일부였습니다. 이 센터의 존재 자체가 우리 문화와 세계 속 변화, 즉 말(word)과 글(text)의 지배로부터 "비언어non-verbals)"의 우세로의 변화를 입증 합니다. 우리는 매일 상징과 예술의 세계를 만나게 됩니다. 이는 상품을 식별하는 로고에서부터 미디어, 우리들의 집 및 교회에서 마주치는 이미지, 소리, 그리고 시적 단어에 이르기까지 다양합니다. 지난 50년 간의 개신교 예배의 변화를 검토하는 것만으로도 예배 가운데 비언어적 요소가 그 양과 중요성 모두에서 얼마나 많이 증가 했는지를 알 수 있습니다. 깁스 (Gibbs)의 평가를 고려할 때, 만약 풀러에 브렘 센터 (Brehm Center)가 없었더라면

not have a Brehm Center, we would have to create one.

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

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

Ultimately, we hope to resource and inspire thoughtful, appropriate strategies for living one's faith in this new age amidst all its challenges and possibilities.

---

ación de Gibbs, si Fuller no tuviera un Centro Brehm, tendríamos que crear uno.

Nuestro trabajo se enfoca en la intersección de la investigación teológica, involucrándonos en los cambios culturales en el mundo que nos rodea y estudiando la adoración con la intención de proporcionar recursos para su planificación, liderazgo y ejecución, sea esta tradicional o innovadora. En ese espíritu, esta sección de teología de la revista *FULLER* explora la adoración y el arte en el siglo XXI, considerando muestras de temas teológicos que surgieron para nuestra investigación y estudio sobre la adoración y las artes en las tres escuelas de Fuller.

En los ensayos que siguen, encontrará estudios bíblicos fundacionales para el uso y la comprensión del arte en el ministerio, para saber cómo guiar a los artistas de fe, la relación de la competencia simbólica dentro y fuera de la iglesia y la importancia de tener una conciencia de las tendencias culturales. Otros ensayos explorarán el poder de la comunicación intercultural y la construcción de comunidades a través del arte en un mundo donde la distancia entre lo local y lo global se está reduciendo, así como el impacto emocional y espiritual de las prácticas y los símbolos en los adoradores. Hacia el final, tenemos una palabra de desafío para que todos tomemos un papel activo en la creación y el cuidado de las culturas que habitamos.

En última instancia, esperamos encontrar e inspirar estrategias adecuadas y serias para vivir la fe en esta nueva era en medio de todos sus desafíos y posibilidades.

반드시 하나를 만들어야 했을 것입니다.

주변의 문화적 변화로부터 분리 되지 않고, 얼마나 전통적이며 얼마나 혁신적이냐 상관 없이 예배를 계획하고, 이끌며, 실행하기 위한 자원들을 제공하려는 의도를 가지고 예배를 연구하며 신학적 연구의 교차점에 초점을 맞추게 된 본 *FULLER* 매거진의 신학 섹션은 3학교의 예배와 예술 관련 연구들 가운데 발견 된 신학적 주제들을 고려하며 21세기의 예배와 예술을 탐구 합니다.

이어지는 에세이들을 통해 사역에서의 예술의 사용과 이해, 신앙의 예술가들을 인도할 수 있는 성경적 시금석들, 교회 안팎에서의 상징적 능력 사이의 관계, 현재의 문화적 추세에 대한 인식의 중요성에 대한 탐구들을 보게 될 것입니다. 아울러, 로컬과 글로벌의 거리가 줄어들고 있는 세계 속에서 예술을 통한 문화간의 의사소통 및 공동체 구축의 힘, 실천과 상징들이 예배하는 신실한 그리스도인들에게 미치는 정서적 및 영적 영향을 다루는 에세이들도 읽게 되실 것입니다. 마지막으로 우리가 살고있는 문화를 창조하고 돌봄에 보다 적극적인 역할을 감당할 것을 도전하는 글도 만나실 것입니다.

궁극적으로는 새로운 시대의 모든 도전들과 가능성들 속에서 믿음의 삶을 살 수 있도록 사려 깊고 적절하며 전략적인 자원과 영감을 제공하기를 소망합니다.

MUCH ADO ABOUT KNEELING

Todd E. Johnson

Todd E. Johnson, a faculty member at Fuller since 2005, currently holds the Brehm Chair of Worship, Theology, and the Arts and is theological director of the Brehm Center. His scholarship includes writings in the arts, homiletics, liturgy and ritual, and spirituality and mysticism. An ordained minister in the Evangelical Covenant Church, he has a wide range of experience in education, ministry, and social services. Some of Johnson's works include *Performing the Sacred: Theology and Theatre in Dialogue, Common Worship in Theological Education*, and the multimedia resource *Living Worship*. He earned both an MA and PhD in theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Sometimes it is the most ordinary things that evoke the most extra-ordinary responses. This is the case with things we do or encounter regularly because they become such an intimate part of our lives. When they change, or when their interpretation changes or is called into question, we often experience enough discomfort to respond—often with great emotional heft. Such is the case with kneeling.

KNEELING: POSTURE AND PIETY

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

Surprisingly, it is the core of First Lutheran's worship, not its breadth, that created the most interesting challenge for their renovation plans. Although their services vary in music style and expression, they are all standard "Word and Table" services—that is, each service gathers the people together to hear the Word of God read and preached, and then invites them to communion at the table. In this church, people are invited forward to receive the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper by kneeling at a rail around the table. Their renovation raised the question of whether it might be more expedient to offer the communion elements to the communicants standing, because serving can take quite a bit of time with each recipient kneeling. Maybe they should not use a communion rail in their new space? This raised the question, "What does it mean to kneel?"

Answering that question is a challenge. Kneeling is a ritual gesture that is a symbol, not a sign. A sign would have only one meaning or referent. A stop sign on the street or road means "stop." A symbol has more than one meaning or referent. If you put a stop sign in a frame and hang it in an art gallery it could mean many things, leaving it open to multiple interpretations—and no one single interpretation might be more correct than another.

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

ARTFUL THEOLOGY

Maria Fee

Given the time to create art as part of their seminary training, many students in Fuller's Capstone Theology and Art course explore, expand, or improve areas that, in their estimation, Christian theology has failed to satisfactorily engage. Hence, their thesis projects fall in line with philosopher Simone Weil's conclusion that "creative attention means really giving our attention to what does not exist."[1] These students' imaginative and physical negotiations subsequently yield a heftier sense of God, others, and self. For this reason, I have found that the paired investigations of art and theology enhance student formation, doing so in the following ways.

WHOLE-BODY INTELLECT

Pairing the investigation of art and theology exercises a whole-body intellect that includes the somatic and affective realm. Because of the concrete nature of art making, these thesis projects fill a void left by disembodied practices of the Christian faith. These nascent theologians ask, why do believers profess one thing but do the opposite or nothing at all? Why is theology often abstract to the point of ignoring actual human circumstances or experiences? Ethicist James McClendon once expressed that Christians have falsely believed that ethics has nothing to do with "our bodies, their environment, our mutual needs, our delights and horrors, our organic selfhood in context."[2] By contrast, Capstone student Caitlyn Ference-Saunders's project employed these features as a means to theologically investigate the virtues of the historical church. Drawing on her theater training, she led a band of committed seminarians through devised theater and performance-based exercises. Over a period of six months, the community-building program also produced a vocabulary of movements, vocal phrases, and impassioned narratives that culminated in a choreographed performance piece entitled *Rehearsing the Virtues of God: A Story of Faith and Fortitude*. Her project echoed the conclusion of Matthew Crawford, who argues that "real knowledge arises through confrontations with real things."[3] Through Ference-Saunders's thesis, the Christian practice of regularly meeting together to confront "real things" was broadened to include external play as a means to connect to inner life.

PROFOUND ANALYSIS

Theological and creative exploration not only accesses whole-body wisdom, but also applies a more thorough approach whereby praxis informs theory and vice versa. This is one of the modalities of Hispanic/Latinx theology that links theological analysis *conjunto* with agencies stemming from embodied contextual realities. This type of theological practice invites cultural sources—life lived in the flesh—to drive analysis toward liberating acts. In fact, when it comes to problem solving, artist Theaster Gates notes that creative operations become the means to "master the [art] form," which also enables persons to "understand the world." Gates's activity of constructing cultural venues by renovating abandoned buildings in Chicago's South Side informed his knowledge of building construction, the urban landscape, and negotiating the bureaucratic. In the spirit of Fluxus artist Joseph Beuys, Gates poses the question to all: "Could the artist consider herself inside a bigger problem, and as a result bring aesthetics, bring taste, bring passion, and bring form" as part of the solution?[4] If the artist is open, the devising and the formal qualities of the art will inform maker and viewer in relevant and revelatory ways. This kind of exploration ultimately leads to transformation.

BRIDGING THE SACRED AND SECULAR

The integrative qualities of the Capstone thesis project also endeavor to bridge the social worlds belonging to the secular and sacred. This was the case in Hyung-in Kim's project. Grounded in concepts of trinitarian theology, Kim used the visual motif of the braid to deal with issues of alienation, race, and cultural diversity. The project consisted of two parts. In the first stage, Kim directed a series of creative workshops to explore these concerns through conversations with teams of three held in conjunction with their choreographed entwining of long strands of fabric. The array of fabric choices by color and pattern alluded to the possibility of differences tightly dwelling together as a unified entity. Developed for various ages, the sessions took place at conferences, Christian gatherings, and schools. For the second stage, all of the braided chords were collected to create an installation piece entitled *Remem-bearing as Refugees*. After its initial display in a church, it was exhibited in multiple secular and Christian contexts.

The Capstone Theology and Art course provides an avenue for embodied demonstrations of faithfulness, inviting collaboration and offering community building opportunities. Through song, video, dramatized story, art installations, poetry, and more, these student endeavors are exploring the intersection of the human and the divine supported by Christ's incarnation. It is his body that furnishes the capacity for theological exploration with the body, for

the sake of all bodies. Somatic theological contemplation reconnects faith with work, the sacred with the profane, the material with the spiritual. While art is not gospel and does not save, it can free the imagination to see the evidence of God's redeeming hope in the world—in ways that perhaps should become a part of every seminarian's faith training.

ENDNOTES

1. S. Weil, *Waiting for God* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1951), 149.
2. J. McClendon, *Ethics: Systematic Theology, vol. 1* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 85.
3. M. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 199.
4. T. Gates, "A Conversation with Hamza Walker: Theaster Gates," in *But to Be a Poor Race*, Regen Projects exhibition, Los Angeles, January 15, 2017.

Maria Fee, a PhD candidate at Fuller, is an artist with an MFA in Painting and MA in Theology. As an adjunct professor, she delves into theology and art through courses like Visual Arts and the Christian and Capstone Theology and Art.

came to the table. Kneeling became common after the 12th century when the bread and the cup were seen to be literally the physical body and blood of Christ after the Synod of Lateran in 1059. In this case kneeling at reception was a posture of both contrition (not presuming to be worthy to receive) and veneration (acknowledging the presence of Christ in the elements). Later, this was such a contentious point for Protestants that many prohibited kneeling during the Lord's Supper. The "Black Rubric" in the Book of Common Prayer dating back to 1552, for example, defended the controversial practice of kneeling by declaring it a sign of "humility and gratitude," but not an acknowledgement of any presence invoked upon the elements.

Kneeling, however, can mean more than any of the above interpretations. It can mean to some that communion is a private, interior moment with God, and kneeling and reflecting for a moment at the rail allows for that. For others, it might be a moment of intimate connection with the pastor who each week serves them the bread, creating a personal link with their spiritual guide and caring minister. For others, it may not mean anything explicitly; it just feels right. That is because our bodies develop routines that become familiar and allow us to attend through them to the God we worship. To change that routine, for whatever very sound reason, will make a certain number of people feel like they are not celebrating communion anymore.

Kneeling as a symbol has great potential to effectively communicate many meanings at once, with different people prioritizing one over another. This makes kneeling a very effective ritual action, but also a potentially controversial one in Christ's churches.

KNEELING: PROTEST AND PATRIOTISM

In the same way, kneeling is also a very effective ritual action, but also a potentially controversial one, outside of Christ's churches in the broader culture. That potential has been realized thanks to former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick. The meanings and interpretations of kneeling in this instance are as complicated as they are in churches.

In the 2016 NFL preseason, Colin Kaepernick, then quarterback of the San Francisco Forty-Niners, chose to sit on the bench during the performance of the National Anthem while his teammates stood facing the flag. He did this for the first two preseason games without being noticed. It was the third time that proved not to be a charm for Kaepernick, as a photo of the field posted on social media accidentally captured his sitting during the anthem, the first time it was publically acknowledged. When Kaepernick was asked his reason for sitting during the anthem, he replied, "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses Black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder. . . . This is not something that I am going to run by anybody," he explained. "I am not looking for approval. I have to stand up for people that are oppressed. . . . If they take football away, my endorsements from me, I know that I stood up for what is right."[1]

The context of Kaepernick's comments was the rash of deaths of young, mostly unarmed, Black men and boys, often by police, from the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida in 2012, to Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Missouri in 2014, and the many victims between and since. The reactions to these deaths were numerous protests and a nationwide response that crystalized into the "Black Lives Matter" movement. Kaepernick was hoping that his sitting would be a sign of his disappointment with our nation's inability to live up to its values of freedom and equality for all of its people.

But sitting is not kneeling, and this is where the story takes an unexpected and often untold twist, thanks to Nate Boyer. Boyer was a devoted Forty-Niners fan. He was also a former Green Beret and, for a very short time, a professional football player. After his service as a Green Beret, Boyer went to the University of Texas, where he became a 29-year-old freshman member of their football team and led the team onto the field each week carrying the American flag. Upon graduation he tried out for NFL teams as a "long-snapper" for kicks from the line of scrimmage. He did not make the

Forty-Niners, but did play in the preseason for the Seattle Seahawks. He has since been involved in many charities, in particular MVP (Merging Vets and Players), helping both veterans and professional athletes make the transition to life after their prior career.

Given his background, Boyer was asked by the *Military Times* to comment on Kaepernick's sitting during the anthem. His response was to pen an open letter to Colin Kaepernick. In the letter he stated how much he respected Kaepernick as a player and person, especially his support of charities including those for veterans. Yet he confessed his anger at hearing of his sitting during the anthem. At the same time Boyer recalled his experience in the Green Berets, witnessing the results of genocide in Darfur and other tragic expressions of racism, a racism he lamented is still part of his own beloved country. In the end he hoped Kaepernick would stand for the anthem, while encouraging him to fight on against injustice and racism. He concluded his letter, "I look forward to the day you're inspired to once again stand during our national anthem. I'll be standing there right next to you. Keep on trying . . . *De Oppresso Liber*." This last phrase is the motto of the Army's Special Forces, traditionally translated as "to free the oppressed." [2]

The letter went viral and caught the attention of Kaepernick, in particular because of the evenhandedness of its approach—leading to a conversation between Boyer, Kaepernick, and fellow Forty-Niner Eric Reid. In this conversation they looked for a new symbol, a gesture that would respect the flag, yet demonstrate a feeling of disappointment with the current state of affairs in light of what the flag represents. Boyer suggested kneeling. Kneeling was a sign of solidarity. One kneels out of respect for a fallen comrade on the battlefield. My own daughters, in their lacrosse and soccer games, would "take a knee" when a fellow player was injured and being attended to. The players agreed to kneel, hoping that it would communicate what they intended: a demonstration during the National Anthem, not a protest of the anthem, flag, or country. The next game, Kaepernick and Reid knelt on the sideline during the anthem while Boyer stood beside them, hand over his heart.

The practice of kneeling went as viral as the letter had, with some members of all NFL teams kneeling during the anthem, a practice that still continues in football and other sports. There were attempts to interpret the act in "nonpolitical" terms, such as declaring that the players—and at times their coaches, owners, or general managers—locking arms while kneeling was a sign of solidarity. Some players simply do not come out onto the sidelines until after the anthem to avoid the entire controversy, which has had its own mixed response. A variety of expressions of kneeling have evoked a variety of responses. Some are favorable, pointing out that it is raising consciousness of significant issues that need to be discussed as a country. Others are dismissive, pointing out that it is disrespectful, disgraceful, and dishonors the anthem, flag, and nation. Once again, the simple act of kneeling, which in certain contexts becomes a symbol, is open to many interpretations, simultaneously uniting and dividing groups of people.

KNEELING: INTERPRETING THE ORDINARY IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

What does it mean when a person gets down on one knee to propose? Or rests on both knees beside their bed with hands folded? Or kneels in church during a prayer of confession? How do we interpret kneeling during the national anthem? Or at the communion rail? How does one know, after all, what and who is right? Kneeling is a ritual action, an embodied symbol, which opens up many possible interpretations. When a gesture like this is attached with something valuable in our lives, like church and worship, nation and patriotism, its interpretations can be contentious and divisive.

There are so many factors in interpreting symbols, such as personal experience, tradition, context, intent, history, and opinions of our peers, for starters. That is why, as Christians, we ought to be sensitive to interpretations of symbols in and out of church, to allow us to be better neighbors in and out of church. By understanding that interpretation of symbols is a complex and often emotional process, we move into a posture of humility and dialogue. It is with this posture of humility and dialogue that we can embody an engagement of the gospel with our increasingly diverse worlds of understanding within and beyond the church. After all, many of our most powerful ritual actions are so ordinary, so ingrained into our bodies and their memories over the years, that our experience of them is almost precognitive. We enter into such practices leading with our hearts before minds, feeling before meaning, making these very delicate and not-so-ordinary conversations indeed.

ENDNOTES

1. S. Wyche, "Colin Kaepernick Explains Why He Sat During National Anthem," NFL website (August 27, 2016), www.nfl.com/news/story/0ap3000000691077/article/colin-kaepernick-explains-why-he-sat-during-national-anthem.

2. Read Nate Boyer's letter to Colin Kaepernick at the Army Times website (August 30, 2016), www.armytimes.com/opinion/2016/08/30/an-open-letter-to-colin-kaepernick-from-a-green-beret-turned-long-snapper.

THE ART OF PEACEBUILDING IN A DIVIDED WORLD

Roberta R. King

I was driving to an evangelical church with my Israeli-born friend, Summer. It was a typical balmy Southern California evening. But it would not be a typical service in that church that evening. Summer (whose given name is Samir) and I first met in a Middle Eastern music ensemble that brings together people originally from North Africa and the Middle East with others to enjoy the music of their cultural heritage. Like that group, this event would celebrate Middle Eastern music. As we entered the church, I found lighthearted laughter and joy as a diverse group, among them both Muslims and Christians, anticipated the evening's concert.

The concert began with a West African *griot*[1] from Senegal performing on the kora, a 21-string harp-lute. The concert proceeded with more Middle Eastern music, followed by an informative intermission. One of the church leaders explained how a number of local churches had been coming together to help Syrian refugee children get established in their local schools and find a place within the larger Southern California community.

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

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

That night, an Arabic folkdance migrated along with the refugees into a local church half a world away from its origins and brought joy and hope to all involved. The church, located not far from where an Islamic terrorist attack had just taken place, not only sponsored a benefit concert that evening, they also fostered a peacebuilding event via music-making. What, then, are the dynamics behind the performing arts and peacebuilding?[2]

PERFORMING ARTS AND PEACEBUILDING

In today's global era, when sounds of violence and conflict mute sounds of joy and delight in God-given life, "musicking"[3] and the performing arts are joining hands in innovative approaches to peacebuilding. This takes place through the building of healthy relationships, central to working toward peace. As John Paul Lederach argues, "Peacebuilding requires a vision of relationship."[4] He maintains that there must be a capacity to imagine "the canvas of mutual relationships and situate oneself as part of a historic and ever-evolving web,"[5] or peacebuilding efforts will collapse. Enter the performing arts. They function as agents for building relationships. Not only do they foster moments of imagining mutual relationships, but they also have the potential to propel people into experiencing one another as human beings.

Roberta R. King is professor of communication and ethnomusicology at Fuller. Her publications include *Pathways in Christian Music Communication: The Case of the Senufo of Côte d'Ivoire, Music in the Life of the African Church*, and *(un)Common Sounds: Songs of Peace and Reconciliation among Muslims and Christians*, with an accompanying documentary film. King has served as director of chapel and developed an innovative curriculum in Global Christian Worship and Witness (Ethnomusicology). Before joining the Fuller faculty, King was based in Nairobi, Kenya, and served with WorldVenture for 22 years. She has taught and held workshops in more than 20 nations.

Significantly, Lederach observes the following:

> *The artistic five minutes, I have found rather consistently, when it is given space and acknowledged as something far beyond entertainment, accomplishes what most of politics has been unable to attain: it helps us return to our humanity, a transcendent journey that, like the moral imagination, can build a sense that we are, after all, a human community.*[6]

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

PERFORMING ARTS AND EMBODIED METAPHORS

In peacebuilding, the performing arts serve as embodied metaphors on multiple levels. Not only do they metaphorically speak into our inner lives creating spaces of imagination, but they also move us into experiencing and interacting with one another. The strength of the performing arts is just that: they are meant to be experienced, often moving people into deeper levels of communication. Thus, the arts contain the capacity to impact peoples and societies in ways that transform their relationships. Building a sense of community was one of the major outcomes from the concert that evening. More significantly for the church, the concert engendered an opportunity to practice Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:27).

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

The concept of "musicking," which embraces all activities related to a concert, helps us further understand this aggregation of embodied metaphors. At the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music,[7] for example, serving Arabic coffee as global attendees enter the Moroccan concert hall functions as a gesture of hospitality. Going further into the auditorium, after finding one's seat among a sea of peoples from around the world, the focus turns to the Al Kindi Ensemble with the Munshidins (whirling dervishes) from the Damascus Mosque standing next to the Tropos Byzantine Choir of Athens on the same stage. Here are two contrasting faiths, historically at odds with one another, sharing the same stage, creating an embodied metaphor of the possibilities of coexisting as neighbors. Such embodied metaphors point toward building healthy relationships among global neighbors. By coming together around a common cause, music and the performing arts open up social spaces where "relationships are built and interaction takes place."[8]

PERFORMING ARTS AND SOCIAL SPACES

Performing arts require social spaces, which become arenas for relating with one another. We know that "Performance is a rich and complex social affair wherein group meaning is processed and negotiated."[9] It is in the social interaction of a performance event that people experience and create new meanings and attitudes toward their global neighbors. These are spaces where peoples from totally different walks of life can come together. They foster safe spaces of relating and processing relationships, both good and bad, in public settings. When encounter and engagement with peoples of different groups are sensitively entered into, shifts in attitudes toward one another take place and an openness to attachment toward global neighbors is initiated. I call these social arenas "Musical Spaces of Relating."[10]

"Musical Spaces of Relating" foster negotiating relationships across a continuum of five different levels and stages.[11] Relational attitudes and behaviors range from exclusion and enmity to willingly relating as neighbors. They include (1) enmity and exclusion toward people who are different, (2) encounter with others, (3) engage, (4) embrace, and (5) relating as neighbors. A brief analysis of the Syrian Benefit Concert described earlier demonstrates the dynamics of these five stages.

Stage 1: Enmity and/or Exclusion. Peoples of different nationalities who had not had any previous long-term contact, such as newly arrived Syrian refugees and a local Southern California community, now have the opportunity to come together around a music event.

Stage 2: Encounter. New neighbors are entering into the musical space and finding themselves encountering peoples of differing faiths, nationalities, and languages. The benefit concert provided a space to meet the needs of newcomers while also providing an opportunity to share common interests and, above all, demonstrate a willingness to be together.

Stage 3: Engage. Musical performance became the main reason for coming together. Inviting West African and Middle Eastern performers to share their unique music was a sign of generous hospitality. The host churches recognized a people's "home" music as significantly important. Indeed, a people's cultural music is a key part of their identity. As the evening developed, the long-term locals could begin to sense the distinctive differences between music cultures. They were entering into Middle Eastern ways of life and identity. This became especially evident when the concert moved beyond mere listening into participatory elements of dancing, clapping, and affirming vocal exclamations, common to much non-Western music. While some were fully engaged, others were still proceeding on a listening-only level. Then the pivotal moment occurred and the concert participants moved into a full embrace of one another.

Stage 4: Embrace. The folk song elicited direct participation on multiple levels. The Middle Easterners were propelled to complete the expectations of the music performance. It called forth dancing, a joining of hands, and a delight in being together. A sharing of joy and being themselves provided impetus for the people from the local community to join in the dance. A shared common humanity was recognized. Joy filled the room as people were enjoying being together and relating as neighbors.

Stage 5: Relating as Neighbors. The talking in the room rose to a peak level as the music finally stopped. People were in no hurry to leave. The excitement carried on, and many experienced a desire to continue on, to not let the music stop. The potential for living together as neighbors in peace and the groundwork for deeper dialogues of sharing life and one's faith in God had been established.

In sum, peoples from different walks of life can freely enter into musical spaces relating at different levels of understanding and from different religious perspectives. They find their common humanity through performing arts like music-making, and thus experience the possibilities of living together as neighbors.

MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS IN A DIVIDED WORLD

In today's challenging global climate, music and other performing arts offer social arenas for engaging and embracing our neighbors. They promote peacebuilding through performance events—for example, "musicking"—that allow people to experience being in each other's presence through non-aggressive and non-threatening means. People come together, often experiencing profound moments of joy, respect, and dignity. Relationships are initiated and allowed to thrive. The truth of Miroslov Volf's admonition rings true: "We are created not to isolate ourselves from others but to engage them, indeed, to contribute to their flourishing, as we nurture our own identity and attend to our own well-being."[12] Learning about our neighbors, in this case through "musicking," created pathways for relating as neighbors, listening to them, and initiating dialogues that foster sustainable communities of peace—and loving them as ourselves.

ENDNOTES

1. The term *griot* refers to a "class of hereditary professional musical and verbal artisans" originating in the Senegambia region of West Africa. More generally, *griot* can also refer to any "African oral historian, praise-singer or musician, regardless of birthright." *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. S. Sadie, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10:427.
2. Story adapted from R. R. King, "Global Arts in Peacebuilding and Interfaith Dialogue," in *Global Arts and Christian Witness: Exegeting Culture, Translating the Message, Communicating Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, forthcoming 2019).
3. Christopher Small maintains that "music" is an action verb, what he calls "musicking." Thus, "to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance." See his book *Musicking: The Meanings of Performance and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 8.
4. J. P. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 153.
7. The Fez Festival of World Sacred Music is a nine-day event that takes place annually in Fez, Morocco. It brings together a global audience around music, religion, and dialogue. The examples cited here are from my ethnographic notes made during the 2008 event. For further information and this year's program see https://fesfestival .com/2018/en/.
8. Lederach, *Moral Imagination*, 183.
9. R. R. King, "Music, Peacebuilding, and Interfaith Dialogue: Transformative Bridges in Muslim-Christian Relationships," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 1, no. 15 (2016): 205.
10. Ibid., 207.
11. Ibid., 205–7.
12. M. Volf, "Living with the 'Other,'" in *Muslim and Christian Reflections on Peace, Divine and Human Dimensions*, ed. J. D. Woodberry, O. Zümrüt, and M. Köylö (Lanham, MD: University Press of America), 12–13.

THE DIVERSE ECOLOGY OF FULLER'S CHAPEL

By Julie Tai and Edwin Willmington

Fuller's community is what you might call a diverse ecology. An ecosystem is comprised of the physical environment and the life that inhabits it. Chapel services at Fuller gather students, faculty, alumni, and staff—both residential and online—from various ethnicities, nationalities, languages, cultures, socioeconomic statuses, and theological and liturgical convictions. Leading worship in a context with such variety is a great task, but one worth pursuing.

This is the diversity that makes up Fuller's liturgical ecology, and like all ecologies, there must be a sustainable balance to allow all parts of Fuller's community to thrive. In making worship choices for Fuller's chapel, there is freedom that comes from not having one particular liturgical tradition to follow. This allows us to honor all traditions when it comes to prayers, postures, and ritual patterns, drawing from various forms and molding them into a creative service of worship. As denominational allegiance among our students has faded in recent decades, we are able to collect from all traditions to convey new meanings to those who gather for worship. The challenge, of course, is creating a balance that allows all members of our community to be represented and respected.

Fuller has a great breadth of international, ethnic, and cultural diversity, providing an opportunity to celebrate our unity in worship around those cultural expressions. A multicultural approach to worship leadership requires mutuality and solidarity that is often difficult to navigate. Multicultural worship levels the playing field and requires representatives from various cultures to be involved in the decision-making, design, and leadership for the service, adding in each one's experience, style, and tradition. It is easy to slip into being multiethnic but monocultural, where representation turns into tokenism. We purposefully select diverse worship leaders to help avoid such pitfalls. This intentional diversity is equally part of our liturgical ecology.

Naturally, such diversity leads to the use of multiple languages in almost every service. We particularly use Korean, English, and Spanish in any given service to celebrate the three language programs we have at Fuller and to welcome our friends who speak different languages. We also acknowledge that language is only one component in doing multicultural worship. Learning people's stories and cultural practices is key to integration and intersectionality and keeping our ecology in balance.

While the process of reflecting Fuller's diversity—and the larger diversity of Christ's church around the world—in our worship experiences can be a bit messy at times, we have come to see the many benefits of welcoming these issues. Christian unity does not place one expression of worship over another. Worship has divided so many churches, but to value all traditions and cultures speaks great volumes about our desire to express our faith as members of God's one family. When we embrace the global breadth of Christian life and worship by listening to and entering into one another's narratives, we make a strong theological statement that both honors and glorifies God.

Sometimes our planning and leading feels a bit like an experiment in experiencing God's grace in many forms. Yet, while we know that it would be easier if everyone agreed on a single denominational or cultural approach, it would not best express our worship. We have learned that our worship has become deeply formative in our community's faith. We have learned from others as we stretch out our arms to embrace the traditions and cultures of our brothers and sisters in faith. We have learned to value the creative nature of what we do—no week is the same as the week before or after. Since we cannot assume that everything is understood by everyone, as leaders we are challenged to plan with prayerful sensitivity to all, always willing to be hospitable and instructive. We have found that as new students worship with us, the sounds of other musical styles and languages become their own over time.

Worship change does not come easily. It is slow work. It is hard to let go of one's preferences for worship and enter into a new model, if only once a week. We have learned to be patient and gracious as we introduce new practices to our community, because sometimes such change is painful. In return, we pray the community we serve would be patient and gracious to us as we listen, learn, take risks, and sometimes fail, because "multi-everything" worship does not come with a formula. It takes humility, courage, and trust by both the worship leaders and the community to worship well. As in any ecology, there is a beautiful, delicate, and fragile balance. We pray that our chapel might contribute in a small but integral way to keeping Fuller's ecology healthy, balanced, and thriving—and perhaps also to benefit the ecology of Christ's church near and far.

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

Edwin Willmington is director of the Fred Bock Institute of Music, which is part of the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts.

THE CATASTROPHIC POETRY OF THE CROSS

Kutter Callaway

Kutter Callaway, assistant professor of theology and culture at Fuller, is actively engaged in writing and speaking on the interaction between theology and culture—particularly film, television, and online media—in both academic and popular forums. Books he has authored include *Breaking the Marriage Idol: Reconstructing our Cultural and Spiritual Norms*, *Watching TV Religiously: Television and Theology in Dialogue*, and *Scoring Transcendence: Contemporary Film Music as Religious Experience*. He also contributed to *God in the Movies, Halos and Avatars*, and *Don't Stop Believin'*. Callaway served in pastoral ministry for nearly a decade prior to teaching at Fuller.

The catastrophic.

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

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

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

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

Of course, because of their age, neither her children nor ours were fully aware of what it all meant. So while they laughed and sang together and misbehaved as they did nearly every other Sunday morning, we mostly cried.

No. We wept.

Interestingly enough, our weeping didn't stop us from singing, but it did color the music in a discernable way. Namely, instead of proclamation, the words we sang shifted into a form of divine interrogation:

And all the earth will shout your praise
Our hearts will cry, these bones will sing
Great are you, Lord

Really? Are the bones of *this* woman a testament to God's greatness—the woman suffering from cancer in her bone marrow? Will the earth—*should* the earth—shout praises to a God who would rob her three young children of their mother? As the congregation sang this stanza over and over again, it became clear that we were no longer stating anything; we were questioning everything. It wasn't "Great are you Lord!" It was "Are you great, Lord?" Our praises had become laments in their offering.

We weren't the only group of Christians who had gathered together that day to sing songs to a God who seemed to be impotent, or indifferent, or just plain absent in the face of tragic circumstances. Rather, through music, poetic utterance, and corporate singing, we were bringing to speech what countless other women and men of faith were also voicing on that otherwise unremarkable Sunday morning. In concert with this great cloud of witnesses, we drew upon the power of metaphor and poetry to articulate a "groaning too deep for words" (Rom 8:26)—an elemental cry of desperation, borne from an experience of the catastrophic, aimed directly at the Divine.

A strikingly similar cry of lament crossed the lips of Jesus himself while hanging on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:33; Ps 22:1). Jesus was quoting Psalm 22, but surely he wasn't proof-texting. Rather, he was articulating in poetic form the central trauma around which the entire theological project turns: divine abandonment. On the cross, the Father really does forsake the Son. Somehow, and in some way, God apostatizes against God's self.

Wait a minute. That can't be right, can it? Are we really supposed to take Jesus at his word here? There is of course no easy answer to this question, but Paul calls the cross a "scandal" for a reason (1 Cor 1:23), and it isn't simply because the idea of God abandoning God is logically counterintuitive. Instead, as Jürgen Moltmann has suggested, the scandal of Jesus' experience of god-forsakenness is that it makes theologians out of us all—believer and unbeliever alike:

> *[I]s not every unbeliever who has a reason for his atheism and his decision not to believe a theologian too? Atheists who have something against both God and faith in God usually know very well whom and what they are rejecting, and have their reasons. Nietzsche's book* The Antichrist *has a lot to teach us about true Christianity, and the modern criticism of religion put forward by Feuerbach, Marx and Freud is still theological in its anti-theology. Beyond that, moreover, there is a protest atheism which wrestles with God as Job did, and for the sake of the suffering of created beings which cries out to high heaven denies that there is a just God who rules the world in love. This atheism is profoundly theological, for the theodicy question—If there is a good God, why all this evil?—is also the fundamental question of every Christian theology which takes seriously the question that the dying Christ throws at God: "My God, why have you forsaken me?"*[1]

For some time now, my colleague Barry Taylor and I have been exploring this very notion—that something profoundly theological might be taking place in the name of atheism. In doing so, we have stumbled upon a somewhat surprising realization—that something scandalously "atheological" is also taking place in the name of theology. The only problem is that we need a new set of lenses to see it, much less come to grips with its many implications.

So we have embarked on a quest to find new conversation partners for theology. Along the way, we have focused very little energy on the "New Atheists"—that small group of outspoken atheists whose faith in scientism and staunch commitment to diatribe over dialogue would rival that of any religious fundamentalist. Instead, we've been far more energized by what Simon Critchley (himself an atheist) has called the "faith of the faithless" and what Alain de Botton (also an atheist) describes as "Religion for Atheists."

Given our broader interests in the theological significance of art, aesthetics, and popular culture, the working title for our project is "The Aesthetics of A/theism."[2] The primary aim of this project is to demonstrate what it looks like to engage in a robust, mutually enriching conversation with atheist artists and contemporary cultural artifacts, not simply because they offer us a concrete point of departure for theological reflection, but also because there is something about art and aesthetic experience that is integral to the entire atheological enterprise. Which brings us back to Jesus' cry on the cross.

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

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

G. K. Chesterton made a similarly subversive claim in his aptly titled *Orthodoxy*:

> *When the world shook and the sun was wiped out of heaven, it was not at the crucifixion, but at the cry from the cross: the cry which confessed that God was forsaken*

FORMING ARTISTS, STRENGTHENING CHURCHES

Shannon Sigler

Sounds of an electric guitar, loud and distorted, emanate from a broken-down sauna building in the woods next to the Wenatchee River. Hardly a suitable recording studio, it smells like cedar and sounds otherworldly. I knock on the door, but John doesn't hear me. He keeps grinding on the guitar. It turns out later that my knock made his record. The river noise is in there, too.

I've learned a lot from John since I first met him, when he was a new Christian. He's always been a musical prodigy. His band, Lonely Forest, toured with Death Cab for Cutie, and he recently got back from Germany where he was promoting his new solo album. But the first time I heard John play was in an old gym at a Christian camp a couple of years ago. Sitting on a blue exercise ball, he cried a little while sharing a song that would eventually become the first he wrote for a worship album. This is the album he was finishing up recording in the sauna that day.

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

The Pacific Northwest, or "Cascadia," can be an interesting place to do ministry. One of the most unchurched areas in the nation and a land of religious "nones," it is a place of few boundaries and norms. Tradition is inherently suspect. We are a culture of "living our (individual) truths" with no support system. Through conversations with pastors, cultural leaders, and artists in our region over the last five years, we have learned that this "spiritual but not religious" climate craves experience over institutional involvement, particularly as it relates to the church. People in our region prioritize outdoor experience, yoga, third space communities, beer culture, food culture, and the list could go on.

I've been asked why we don't simply host a Christian artist residency outside of the church. Wouldn't it be easier? The church is so messy and sometimes opposed to the arts. Wouldn't there be less red tape, less relational difficulty? Well, yes. We're convinced, however, that the church is still the nexus for God's work in the world, and that artists have much to teach our churches about how to cultivate living experiences of Christian encounter. We believe that artists can plunge us into the story of God—and equip our churches to do the same in the midst of a cynical and individualistic culture.

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

Slowly, over the course of the two weeks, our artists identified ways to live into our liturgy. Our musicians reworked hymns; visual artists brought natural objects in from the outside for reflection; an author recast Psalm 23 through multiple creative lenses. Magical things began to happen. The lectionary texts and liturgical pattern of Christian worship gave the artists a space to play, to innovate, and to embody. They began inviting us—propelling us—into the story of God. Artists began to shape our worship in revitalizing ways.

John approached me after our first worship time together and asked if he could have a copy of our liturgy. He had struggled to find a shape for his worship album—an album of fear, joy, gratitude, emotion, and questions. The liturgy gave shape to his creativity. And our community of diverse traditions helped him shape it. Worship began to shape his individual art, just as his art had given embodiment to the liturgy. Since then, he has told me often how grateful he was for that experience—and the sauna. John was shaped and formed as a musician and worship leader through our program, even as he will shape and form others through his music and worship leadership. Like the wise scribe in Matthew 13:51–52, we are training people for kingdom service to bring both the old and new out of the treasures of our faith.

Our artist residency has been a place of creative liturgical incubation. Artists and pastors come together to tell and retell the story of God, and they take these experiences back into their local congregations. Our poet took her recast 23rd Psalm into a Good Friday service; a textile artist created an installation

exploring themes of "sanctuary" in her own sanctuary; a painter captured congregants' weekly journeys in Seattle in a series of artful maps. And John: he took his album back to his home church, and then to a Capitol Hill nightclub—a location where most had likely never heard the story of God.

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

Shannon Sigler is the executive director of Brehm Cascadia, based in Seattle, where she and her team care for artists and build bridges between art and church communities. Learn more about the Cascadia Residency at cascadiaresidency.com.

> *of God. And now let the revolutionists choose a creed from all the creeds and a god from all the gods of the world, carefully weighing all the gods of inevitable recurrence and of unalterable power. They will not find another god who has himself been in revolt. Nay (the matter grows too difficult for human speech), but let the atheists themselves choose a god. They will find only one divinity who uttered their isolation; only one religion in which God seemed for an instant to be an atheist.*[3]

If Chesterton is correct (and I think he is), then the core event of Christianity is not so much a demonstration of supreme faith, but of divine abandonment. As such, it constitutes what Paul Ricoeur might call a "concordant discordance." It is neither logical nor illogical, but rather paralogical. And it is for this very reason that both theology and atheism need poetry and metaphor. They need aesthetics, for they are both inherently trafficking in matters "too difficult for human speech" as Chesterton says. Propositional language alone simply proves inadequate for navigating these complex realities. Which means that, taken from the perspective of the divine paralogic of the cross, what is truly heretical is not apostasy per se, but any attempt to "make sense of," "rationalize," or otherwise "logically explain" Jesus' despairing cry to the God who had so obviously forsaken him.

Many strong and loud voices would have us believe otherwise—that matters of faith are simple and straightforward and that we all exist at one or the other end of a very clear polarity. Either we are orthodox "believers" or heterodox "non/unbelievers," "faithful" or "faithless," "theists" or "atheists." The recent return of both secular and religious forms of fundamentalism has only made this polarization worse. The New Atheists may not believe in the God of radicalized religious sects, but they share the same penchant for absolutizing their claims to knowledge and truth over and against all those who see the world differently. It's no small wonder that both camps are often referred to as "militant," for to them, we are all at war. But to offer up a lament in the form of a faithful protest isn't to be at war with anyone, especially not with people whose anguished cries simply emerge from a different religious (or nonreligious) standpoint than our own. Rather than set us at odds with one another, the catastrophic poetry of the cross invites each and every one of us to enter a space in which despair and faith meet, a space where the "faith-ful" and the "faith-less" are neither enemies nor opponents, but fellow sojourners.

Put differently, whether we are "believers" or not, life's meaning remains elusive and opaque—always just out of reach. And that's why, when my little community of faith discovered that one of our own would once again have her life turned upside down by cancer, all we could do was cry out in song. We sang not because it alleviated our fears or distracted us from the unanswered questions that continued to plague us, but because speaking in propositional terms would have been a category mistake. It would have been offensive, possibly even heretical. In any other context, our words would have been words of praise, but in this context, they became a form of "protest atheism"—a railing against the god-forsakenness of the world. We joined our sister in song on that day for the same reason that Jesus chose poetry rather than prose for his last words: because some tragedies are simply unspeakable. To adapt that well-known exclamation from Mark 9:24: "We believe; God, help our unbelief!"

The catastrophic. It's more than a starting point. It's the constitutive feature of any faith modeled on the cross—that world-shattering event where Jesus not only uttered our isolation in the form of poetry, but also, even if just for a moment, was an atheist too.

ENDNOTES

1. J. Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 15–16.
2. A book by the same name will be available later this year as the lead volume in the Brehm Center's *New Engagements with Culture* series, a new line with Fortress Press coedited by Kutter Callaway and Barry Taylor.
3. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 162.


Such verses for my Body
Body
Such verses for my
for my Body
for we are
So far from helping me, and deaf
To all my mournful Cry?

PSALMS: A BIBLICAL MODEL OF ART

W. David O. Taylor

W. David O. Taylor, director of Brehm Texas and assistant professor of theology and culture at Fuller, is the author of *The Theater of God's Glory* and of the forthcoming books *Worship and the Arts: Singular Powers and the Formation of a Human Life* and *Honest to God: The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. He is also editor of *For the Beauty of the Church: Casting a Vision for the Arts* and *Contemporary Art and the Church: A Conversation between Two Worlds*. An Anglican priest, he has lectured widely on the arts, from Thailand to South Africa. In 2016 he produced a short film on the psalms with Bono and Eugene Peterson, available to view on Fuller.edu/Studio.

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

The answer to this question hinges largely on which scriptural text is privileged as a departure point and used to authorize a practice of art making. Do we begin with Genesis 1 and 2, with its story of the primordial creation and the command to cultivate the garden and construct a theology of arts from there? Do we start with Exodus 31 and the Spirit-empowered work of Bezalel? Do we build off the narratively constitutive work of Jesus in the Gospels? Perhaps Philippians 4:8 is the key text that opens up a way forward for the artist? Or the Book of Revelation: might its hyperrealist vision of a world turned upside down by the second coming of Christ illumine the path for artists of faith today?

These options, attractive as they may be, ignore possibly the most obvious starting point: the Psalter. The Psalter commends itself to us for many reasons. It has functioned for 2,000 years as the church's songbook, it represents one of the most influential books in the New Testament, and it is Jesus' most quoted book. But I commend the Psalter because it is here that we observe how a community practices art in faithfulness to God for the sake of the world that God so loves. The following, then, are five features that characterize the Psalter's practice of art making and the power of such art in the life of God's people throughout the ages.

First, the psalms are poetry. This is perhaps to state the obvious, but the obvious often needs stating. In the psalms it is through poetry—and not despite poetry or beyond poetry—that faithful worship occurs. This begs the question: How does poetry mean? A fully satisfying answer lies beyond the scope of this essay. A preliminary response could be drawn from the work of the English professor Laurence Perrine and the Hebrew scholar Robert Alter.[1] Together their works suggest that poetry communicates in ways that say *more* and say it *more intensely, more densely, and more musically* than does ordinary language. Hebrew poetry does this through similes, ellipses, rhythm, hyperbole, assonance, and parallelism. These are the ways that a poem *means* a thing in the psalms. Consider the beginning of Psalm 8, for example:

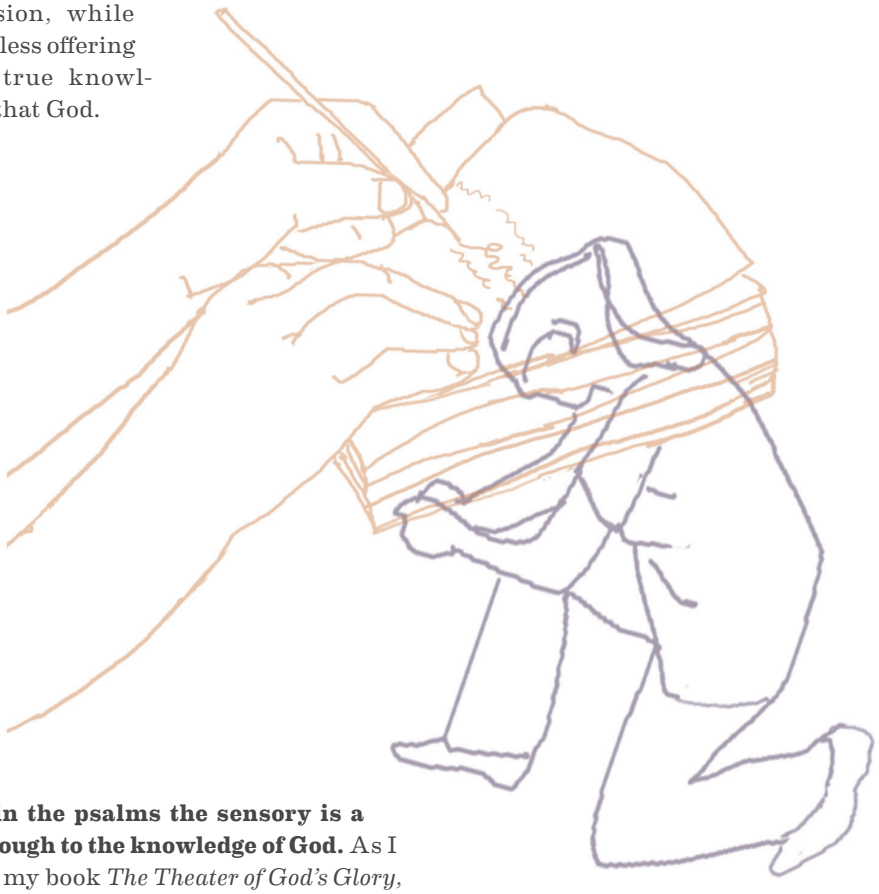
> *O Lord, our Lord,*
> *How majestic is Your name in all the earth,*
> *Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!*
> *. . . When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,*
> *The moon and the stars, which You have ordained . . . (Psalm 8:1,3)*

"Your name" and "your heavens" sound almost the same in Hebrew. In Hebrew, the sound of those words shows us how the heavens, with its stars, moon, and sun,

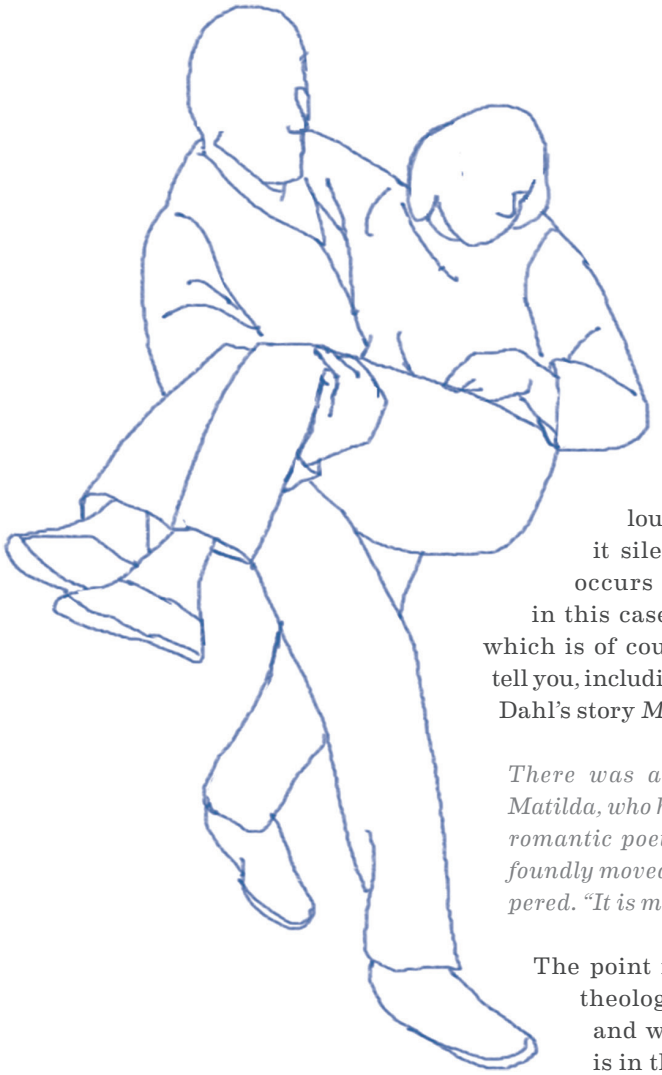
spell out the name of the Lord, an intimate, personal presence. We would fail to catch this nuance if we did not attend to the way in which poetry works. The point for us today? In the Hebrew mind, prose is not seen as a more faithful way than poetry to get at the truth—of God, of humans, of the world. They're both capable of doing so, but they do so in their own distinctive ways. By implication this means that art is a no less reliable or appropriate means of communication than discursive, prose, or propositional forms of expression.

Second, the psalms traffic in metaphorically rich language. A metaphor is a figure of speech whereby we speak of one thing in terms of another. In the psalms, the knowledge of God is not to be discerned on the other side of metaphor; it is discerned *through* the metaphor. Take "the Lord is my shepherd," for example. The Lord is not of course an actual shepherd by profession, like a Tunisian goatherd. Nor is the point simply to say that the Lord generically cares for his people. The metaphor of shepherd involves much more than that. As Old Testament professor John Goldingay reminds us, the image of a shepherd in Israel was not a gentle one. Shepherds were rough characters who at times had to become ruthless killers to defend their flocks.[2]

The metaphor of shepherd evoked memories of Moses. It evoked associations with Israel's exodus. It evoked an image of wildernesses where sources of water were scarce and wild animals endangered the safety of sheep. It evoked non-cozy pictures of great kings, as sovereign lords, who treated the people as vassals. Evoking all these images, the metaphor of the Lord as Shepherd involves a surplus of meaning. Yahweh shepherds his people with a "fierce tenderness," as Martin Luther once put it. If metaphor is one of the defining characteristics of the arts, as plenty of philosophers suggest, then with the Psalter on our side we can say that the arts remain central to the work of Christ in the world. The arts open up the world of metaphor and symbol that engages our imaginations about a God beyond our full comprehension, while nonetheless offering us the true knowledge of that God.



Third, in the psalms the sensory is a way through to the knowledge of God. As I write in my book *The Theater of God's Glory*, the arts engender a way to grasp the world through our physical senses, give us a feel for things that we might not be able otherwise to articulate, and enable us to perceive what, at first glance, may seem improbable or even impossible. The psalms invite the reader to immerse herself in richly sensory



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

> *There was a moment of silence, and Matilda, who had never before heard great romantic poetry spoken aloud, was profoundly moved. "It's like music," she whispered. "It is music," Miss Honey said.*[3]

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

Fourth, the psalms operate within "the tradition of David." That tradition includes both the individual poet and the community. There are three kinds of poets that we find in the Psalter: (1) those who are named and known, (2) those who are unnamed and unknown, and (3) those who are unnamed but known by the guild to which they belong. In the Psalter we have poems by David and in the spirit of David. We have poems by the guild of temple musicians: the Korahites, for instance. We also have poems by individuals who remain anonymous. Whether known or unknown, the poets whom we find in the psalms give voice both to their own concerns and to the concerns of the community. It is not one or the other. It is both. The heartbreaks of moms and dads, the hopes of young and old, the fears of the working class and the anxieties of the ruling class, the little people and the famous people, the artist and the non-artist—everybody somehow, somewhere gets a voice.

This is true for artists today, in particular for artists of faith. Though contemporary works of art will not have the authority of Holy Scripture, many believing artists today feel inspired by God to use their gifts to both speak to and speak for the church. Some of those works, like the poetry of Venantius Fortunatus, the stories of Dante Alighieri, and the songs of Mahalia Jackson, speak to God's people at that time and across the ages.

Fifth, not every psalm is a masterpiece. This is great news. We will never know how many poems failed to make it into the final edited volume of the Psalter. But perhaps we could guess by comparison to Charles Wesley. As scholars reckon it, the younger Wesley brother composed approximately 9,000 poems over the course of his lifetime. The number of his hymns that are included in the official United Methodist Hymnal is, however, a surprisingly modest number: 51.

That's 0.5% of his songs that see the light of day. Not every poem that Wesley wrote sees the light of day in a public capacity. Not every poem of his is a masterpiece, either. This is true, I suggest, for the Psalter as well.

Psalm 70 may be one of the most carefully crafted poems in the Psalter, for instance, and exceptionally sincere, but this psalm of lament lacks the agony of Psalm 12 or the pathos of Psalm 22. But there it is: a decent poem alongside great ones. And this too is good news for artists today. There is a place for all sorts of art in our lives: some of it passable, some of it great, some of it in between. Some of the work will become renowned. Some of it will be known only to the artist. But in the economy of God, all such artists matter, all such art needs to be made.

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

THE PSALTER AS AN ANALOGUE FOR FAITHFUL ARTISTRY TODAY

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

ENDNOTES

1. L. Perrine, *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, 5th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988); R. Alter, The Art of Biblical Poetry (New York: Basic Books, 2011).
2. J. Goldingay, *Psalms,* vol. 1: *Psalms 1–41* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 348.
3. R. Dahl, *Matilda* (New York: Puffin Books, 2007), 185–86.

HIP HOP HERMENEUTIC

Dwight Radcliff

Dwight Radcliff, a PhD candidate in Fuller's School of Intercultural Studies, holds an MDiv from Fuller with an emphasis in multicultural ministry and African American church studies. A Parish Pulpit Fellow and William E. Pannell Doctoral Fellow, he focuses his research on the ways Hip Hop culture has been formational for African American preachers. In addition to serving as an adjunct professor, he is a church planter and lead pastor of The Message Center, a multicultural, multigenerational, urban congregation in Gardena, California. His family, however, is his first ministry. Radcliff and his wife of 20 years, DeShun, have two daughters.

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

Studying this enterprise begins by affirming that all humans are cultural beings[1] and that culture is essential to human life.[2] Some scholars have written on the impact of culture—popular culture or various aspects of culture—on the church and believers.[3] Very little, however, has been written about the specific impact of culture on African American churches and preachers. The African American preachers and pastors referenced here have grown up with one of the most powerful cultural phenomena in recent history: Hip Hop culture. Hip Hop was part of the background, if not the foreground, of their formation. Research into how Hip Hop culture has been formational for African American preachers who engage it is revealing.

Those engaged in this research report that Hip Hop allowed many of them to see the realities of their own neighborhoods and families in the mainstream for the first time. It was a validating and liberating experience to see and hear someone describe, poetically and prophetically, the existential plight of their daily reality. Some have even expressed their introduction, or "coming," to Hip Hop in salvific and spiritual terms. For them, this cultural expression of urban minority life was second only to the liberation of salvation found in Jesus. Hip Hop culture was not something to be shunned for the sake of being a good Christian. It was, on the contrary, part of their culture and an expression of their reality. It is important to note that, in its genesis, Hip Hop culture was an expression of prophetic defiance against the systematic oppression of African Americans and Afro-Caribbean immigrants, who found themselves deliberately corralled into underserved and overpoliced ghettos overrun with crime, drugs, violence, and corporate greed. Hip Hop became part of the experience and worldview of these preachers and, as such, colors the way they view Scripture.

A brief historical summation will be helpful here. Gayraud Wilmore[4] and James Evans[5] explain how the first African American Christians arrived at their faith. It was not a simple matter of assimilating slaveholding Christianity, as some assume. Rather, it was a critical examination of the hypocrisy of brutal, oppressive White Christianity that forced African slaves in America to retain remnants of their own spirituality and worldview and actually forge their own Christian faith.[6] They saw in the pages of the Bible a God who created and loved all humans and acted decisively to liberate God's people from oppression. African Americans dared to affirm their

own humanity as part of the *imago Dei* and to affirm God as the liberator of the Bible.

Generations later, James Cone looked at Scripture and also saw a God who was on the side of the oppressed[7] in every generation; he saw a Christ who identified with the poor. Cone concluded that this Jesus must be Black in his christological importance and identification with the oppressed. For Cone, a Black theology must consider the Black experience as necessary to any valid interpretation of Scripture. This hermeneutic became a cornerstone of Black theology. Cain Hope Felder[8] and James Evans[9] would expound on this hermeneutic and boldly affirm, with Cone, that the lived Black experience must be taken into account when reading Scripture. The next generation of scholars would build on this foundation, going further to examine—and even critique—this hermeneutic. Kelly Brown Douglas[10] questioned if this hermeneutic of the Black Christ did not pave the way for women of color to be ignored. Her contention was that the "Black experience," as expressed to date, was simply a male Black experience. She widened the hermeneutic while continuing in the tradition. Each generation has added to, or critiqued, the major hermeneutic at play in Black theology: the Black lived experience. The Hip Hop hermeneutic being presented here is, perhaps, the next generation of development in an African American theology that takes seriously the lived experience of Black bodies.[11]

Since part of African American preachers' lived experience is within Hip Hop culture, those who are now leading and preaching to congregations read the third chapter of Daniel differently than many of their white colleagues. They see urban streets, corrupted political power, idolatry, and youth rebelling against that corruption. They don't see the traditional European images of young men in togas. Rather, they see the faces of urban minorities in their cities. They see the current political climate, they see the targeting of black and brown bodies, they see Black Lives Matter protestors. The contemporary world of the preacher folds into the ancient world of Scripture as time seems to collapse upon itself in the enterprise of exegesis and homiletics.[12] These preachers use titles, lyrics, and motifs from Hip Hop because they literally see them in the text. They see the ancient world grappling with the same evil and the same manifestations of that evil that the preachers and their congregations are experiencing. To be clear, this is not a process of taking a passage of Scripture and finding contemporary correlation. Rather, this is a Hip Hop, urban lens through which these preachers read the Bible. It is not an option or an additional feature. It is part of the very hermeneutic they bring to the text.

ENDNOTES

1. A. Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008).
2. J. Peoples and G. Bailey, *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, 10th ed. (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015).
3. See C. Detweiler and B. Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003); and J. Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Consumer Culture and the Church's Future* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2012).
4. G. S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*, 3rd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998).
5. J. H. Evans, *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).
6. Henry Mitchell explains that the strength of Black Christianity is due to "independent clandestine meetings which adapted their African Traditional Religion (very close to that of the Old Testament) into a profoundly creative and authentically Christian faith." See H. H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching* (New York: Lippincott, 1970).
7. J. H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970).
8. C. H. Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).
9. Evans, *We Have Been Believers*.
10. K. B. Douglas, *The Black Christ* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994).
11. R. Watkins, "From Black Theology and Black Power to Afrocentric Theology and Hip Hop Power: An Extension and Socio-Re-Theological Conceptualization of Cone's Theology in Conversation with the Hip Hop Generation," *Black Theology* 8, no. 3 (April 2015): 327–40.
12. Cleophus LaRue describes this meshing that occurs in Black preaching as follows: "To get at the heart of black preaching, one has to understand the interconnectedness between scriptural texts and African American life experiences." See C. J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000).

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMBODIMENT IN WORSHIP

Alexis D. Abernethy

Alexis D. Abernethy, who has served on Fuller's faculty since 1998, is associate provost for faculty inclusion and equity as well as professor of psychology. Her primary research interest is the intersection of spirituality and health, including studying the subjective experience of worship within and across ethnic and denominational groups and the connection of worship to behavioral and health-related outcomes. She has received grants to support her work from a number of institutions. Published widely in academic journals, she edited the book *Worship That Changes Lives: Multidisciplinary and Congregational Perspectives on Spiritual Transformation*.

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

My students, colleagues, and I study the psychology of worship. One of the questions we pursue psychologically is this: "What factors contribute to spiritual transformation in worship?" Several mechanisms have been used to explain emotional responses to music from a psychological perspective, including cognitive appraisal, rhythmic entrainment, visual imagery, and emotional contagion.[1] In our first psychophysiological study of worship,[2] we hypothesized that emotion would be associated with transformational experiences for parishioners. While emotion played a role, our participants also noted the role of cognitive dimensions. People identified key cognitive insights that were important for this process of transformation.

Although those results pointed to unity of upper and lower body in our experience of worship, they raised further questions. During praise and worship in corporate worship services, there are moments that many parishioners experience as powerful, anointed, and convicting. What facilitates these experiences? Does the worship song leader's spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and bodily engagement influence parishioners' spiritual experience in these moments? There are worship song leaders whose ministry leadership reflects a life in God. This is related not only to a sense of God's presence in the moment, but also to a sense of their connection to and journey with God as it pertains to the song they are ministering. The next step in our research sought to explore the concept of embodiment as one way of understanding this multidimensional process of engagement and exploring God's incarnational presence.

PERSPECTIVES ON WORSHIP

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

> *We see the priority and precedence of God's self revelation and redemptive work. We see the need for God's people to attend and remember that revelation. We see that it is God's character and redemptive work that elicit worship. Finally, we see that love and obedience are appropriate responses to God's character and actions.*[3]

The focus of worship needs to center on who God is and what God has done. The attention of people should be directed toward God and his presence rather than the personality, charisma, or even musical skill of the worship leader. The response to worship should include a deepened obedience to and love of God.

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

> *The "knowledge" imparted in worship . . . is a knowledge that can be known only in the doing of it. It is, at heart, bodily and performative. We are habituated to and in the knowledge of the Christian faith by the ritual performance that is worship, so that a deep unity between doctrine and practice is taken for granted.*[4]

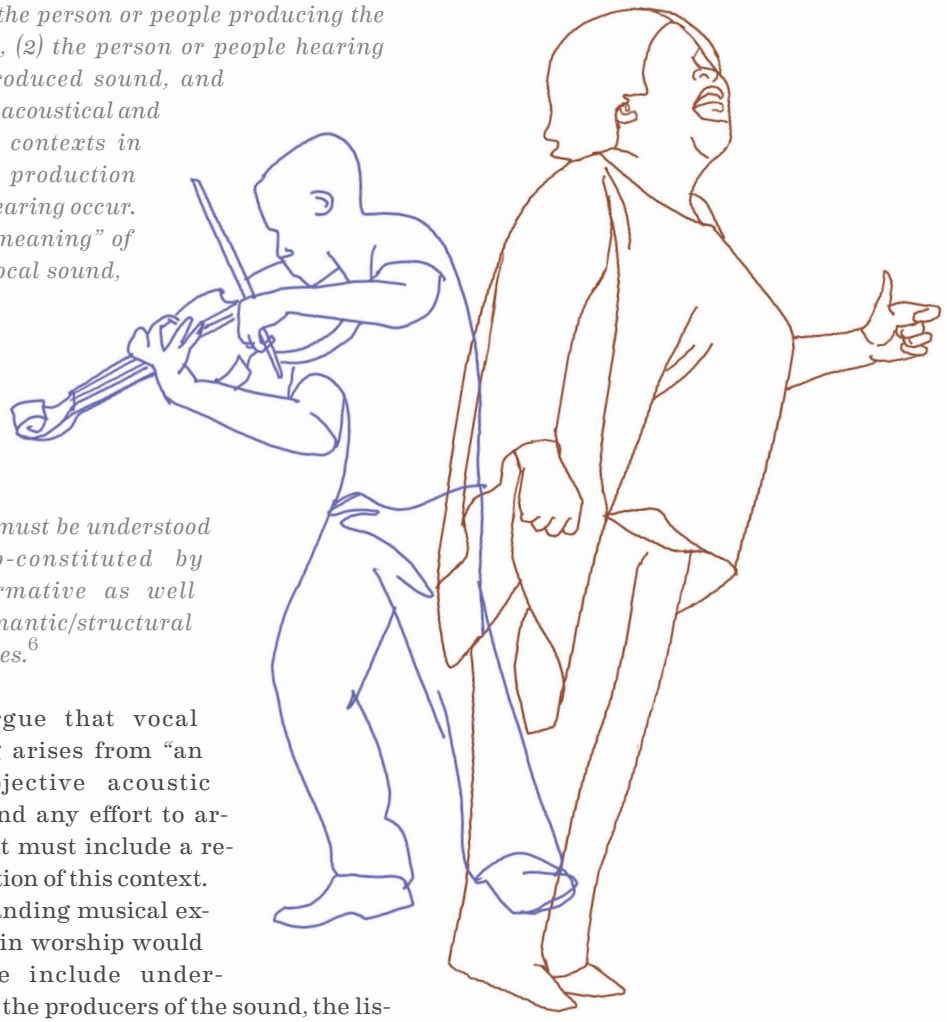
Worship is not simply cognitive; rather, it is a performative religious process that includes our hearts, minds, and bodies. Ritual fosters this deep unity between doctrinal beliefs and embodied practice. Worship, in other words, is seen as the actions and experiences of the entire person.

PERSPECTIVES ON EMBODIMENT

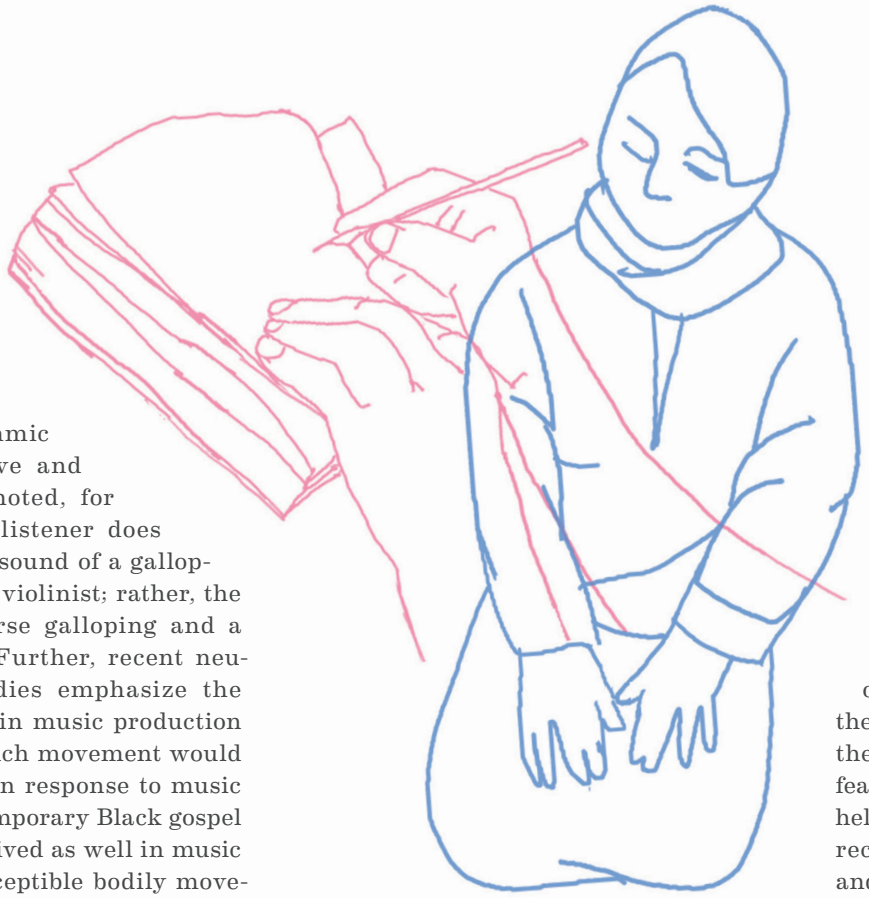
One of the most universal embodied modes of worship is singing. Embracing a broad perspective on the role of embodiment in music, John Blacking notes that "music is a synthesis of cognitive processes which are present in culture and in the human body: the forms it takes, and the effects it has on people, are generated by the social experiences of human bodies in different cultural environments."[5] This perspective underscores the importance of not only an integrated bodily and cognitive process, but also the cultural context. Noteworthy here is both the universality of embodiment—that every culture's music assumes embodiment—and its particularity: that every culture understands, values, and executes embodiment somewhat differently.

Yet embodiment has even further levels of complexity, as again illustrated through music and described by Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones:

> *We thereby recognize the roles played by (1) the person or people producing the sound, (2) the person or people hearing the produced sound, and (3) the acoustical and social contexts in which production and hearing occur. The "meaning" of any vocal sound, then, must be understood as co-constituted by performative as well as semantic/structural features.*[6]



They argue that vocal meaning arises from "an intersubjective acoustic space" and any effort to articulate it must include a reconstruction of this context. Understanding musical expression in worship would therefore include understanding the producers of the sound, the listeners, and their social context. For worship leadership, this would include the song leader and his or her process of preparation: the social and, specifically, spiritual context of song production. Patrik Juslin describes these qualities as going beyond the performance and considering "the nature of the person *behind* the performance."[7]



Music perception is associated with embodied movements—e.g., breathing and rhythmic gaits.[8] Patrick Shove and Bruno Repp have noted, for example, that "the listener does not merely hear the sound of a galloping horse or bowing violinist; rather, the listener hears a horse galloping and a violinist bowing."[9] Further, recent neurophysiological studies emphasize the role of body motion in music production and performance. Such movement would be easily perceived in response to music such as jazz or contemporary Black gospel music, but it is perceived as well in music that evokes less perceptible bodily movements. Perceived rhythm is viewed as an imagined movement even in the absence of musculoskeletal movement. Consequently, says Raymond Gibbs, "musical perception involves an understanding of bodily motion—that is, a kind of empathetic embodied cognition."[10] Even something we do so regularly as listening to music opens into a multilayered embodied experience each time we do it.

Cognitive and social psychology are making important contributions to our understanding of embodiment.[11] Gibbs defines embodiment in the context of the field of cognitive science as "understanding the role of an agent's own body in its everyday, situated cognition."[12] Paula Niedenthal and her colleagues describe the embodiment process in body-based (peripheral) and modality-based (central) terms.[13] They offer the example of empathy: based on understanding another person's emotional state, people are able to recreate this person's feelings in themselves. Margaret Wilson differentiates "online" and "offline" embodiment,[14] and Paula Niedenthal and her associates elaborate this further:

> *The term "online embodiment," and the related term, "situated cognition," refer to the idea that much cognitive activity operates directly on real world environments. . . . The term "offline embodiment" refers to the idea that when cognitive activity is decoupled from the real world environment, cognitive operations continue to be supported by processing in modality-specific systems and bodily states. Just thinking about an object produces embodied states as if the object were actually there.*[15]

IMPLICATIONS FOR WORSHIP

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

A traditional view of preaching, expressed by Karl Barth, is that the preacher is a herald who speaks God's words. The personality and preacher's relationship to the words are unimportant. In contrast, Ruthanna Hooke argues that revelation does not occur in this way.[16] She notes that "the voice of God does not come to us in a way that is removed from our historical, embodied existence. . . . In Jesus Christ, God reveals Godself not by bypassing humanity but by inhabiting humanity, the particular historical and embodied humanity of Jesus Christ. . . . God is most revealed in preaching not when the preacher strives to become invisible, but rather when she is most present in her particular, embodied humanity, in the room, meeting the text."[17]

Worship leaders who more fully and synchronously embody the depth of their spiritual engagement may contribute more

powerfully to their own and others' spiritual transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit. In order to identify key processes that might contribute to a worship leader's spiritual engagement and embodiment, we interviewed 26 music worship leader exemplars from various ethnic and denominational backgrounds.[18] Primary areas of inquiry included Christian formation; the roles of embodiment, cognition, affect, and spirituality in worship; leader preparation; and the congregation's role.

The most prominent themes that emerged from these interviews were bodily signals, God's action and presence, God-centric engagement, facilitating worship, divine purpose, and continual commitment to spiritual formation. God-centric engagement referred to the worship leaders' focus on glorifying God in their worship. In addition, attunement to the deep structure of worship was also evident as worship leaders expressed their desire for communion with God and made regular reference to Scripture.[19] They noted actions in their body that reflected this attunement. Their prayers focused on yielding to and being led by the Holy Spirit. Their intent was to direct attention toward God rather than using themselves to draw people. They also described a 24/7 commitment to preparation, viewing spiritual preparedness for worship as an ongoing orientation and desire in daily life to be more yielded to God.

This description by worship leaders reveals how their preparation facilitates their ability to be attuned to God as they lead worship. In a similar way, our engagement with God through Scripture reading, prayer, and fellowship reflects online embodiment that enhances our ability to be more Christlike in our daily interactions. Our encounter with God's grace through Scripture and our sense of his great mercy toward us can evoke feelings of warmth and deep gratitude. The offline manifestation of this might arise as we encounter a situation where we can extend grace to others. We might feel a similar sense of warmth and gratitude in our body that we extend toward someone in our life. Remembering the countless examples in God's word of his grace and mercy helps us not only to speak words that sound gracious, but also to reflect the grace of God in verbal and nonverbal ways: to *be* gracious.

This provides an invaluable reminder that, as Christians, our central desire should be a life that seeks to glorify God: that we would be students and followers of his Word and that the Holy Spirit would lead, guide, and empower us. The aim of worship is to glorify God, but as Don Saliers reminds us, this is culturally embodied and embedded: we bring our whole lives to worship.[20] I am thankful that we serve a God who views us holistically and helps us in our desire to worship him in spirit and in truth.

ENDNOTES

1. P. N. Juslin, G. T. Barradas, M. Ovsiannikow, J. Limmo, and W. F. Thompson, "Prevalence of Emotions, Mechanisms, and Motives in Music Listening: A Comparison of Individualist and Collectivist Cultures," *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind and Brain* 26, no. 4 (2016): 293–326.
2. A. Abernethy and C. vanOyen Witvliet, "Study of Transformation in Worship," in *Worship That Changes Lives: Multidisciplinary and Congregational Perspectives on Spiritual Transformation*, ed. A. Abernethy (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 197–216.
3. H. W. Johnson, "Practicing Theology on a Sunday Morning: Corporate Worship as Spiritual Formation," *Trinity Journal* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 7, 27–44.
4. D. D. Murphy, *Teaching that Transforms: Worship as the Heart of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 325.
5. J. Blacking, *How Musical Is Man?* (Seattle: University o Washington Press, 1973), 89.
6. L. Dunn and N. Jones, *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2–3.
7. P. N. Juslin, "Five Facets of Musical Expression: A Psychologist's Perspective on Music Performance," *Psychology of Music* 31, no. 3 (2003): 273–302.
8. R. W. Gibbs Jr., *Embodiment and Cognitive Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 53.
9. P. Shove and B. Repp, "Musical Motion and Performance: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives," in T*he Practice of Performance*, ed. J. Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 59.
10. Gibbs, *Embodiment*, 53.
11. T. W. Schubert and G. R. Semin, "Embodiment as a Unifying Perspective for Psychology," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 39, no. 7 (2009): 1135–41.
12. Gibbs, *Embodiment*, 1.
13. P. M. Niedenthal, L. W. Barsalou, P. Winkielman, S. Krauth-Gruber, and F. Ric, "Embodiment in Attitudes, Social Perception, and Emotion," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 9, no. 3 (2005): 184–211.
14. M. Wilson, "Six Views of Embodied Cognition," *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 9, no. 4 (2002): 625–36.
15. Niedenthal et al., "Embodiment," 187.
16. R. B. Hooke, "'I Am Here in this Room . . .': The Practice of Performance and the Learning of Preaching," *Homiletic* 27, no. 1 (2002): 13–21.
17. Ibid., 16.
18. Abernethy and Witvliet, "Study of Transformation."
19. Johnson, "Practicing Theology."
20. D. E. Saliers, "The Travail of Worship in a Culture of Hype: Where Has All the Glory Gone?," *Journal for Preachers* 24 (2001): 28.

CULTURE CARE: AN ASSUMPTION OF ABUNDANCE

Makoto Fujimura

Makoto Fujimura, director of the Culture Care Initiative at Fuller's Brehm Center, is a respected abstract painter, writer, and culture shaper. A presidential appointee to the National Council on the Arts from 2003 to 2009, he received the American Academy of Religion's "Religion and the Arts" award in 2014. His work has been exhibited at galleries around the world, with recent major exhibits at Waterfall Mansion Gallery in New York, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, and the Tikotin Museum in Israel. Fujimura has lectured at numerous conferences, universities, and museums; books he has authored include *Culture Care*, *Refractions*, and *Silence and Beauty*.

"In solving a problem, any problem, you must start with the universe." This oft-repeated quote from Bill Brehm—who, with his wife, Dee, gave the major gift that allows the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts to exist—invokes an abundance that seems increasingly rare in our fearful world.

The philosophy of "Culture Care" assumes, with Bill Brehm, a world of abundance. Culture wars begin when the notion of scarcity prevails. Common sense seems to indicate a Darwinian model of a zero-sum game of survival. But could there be an alternative? Do we dare even to ask that question?

It's not just benefactors and those with abundant resources who live with the perspective of the universe. Surprisingly, it is most often artists who live in the assumption of abundance, despite what the world tells them. They have to. In order to create anything, one has to assume that we are not just "fixing" the universe and "righting it back"; instead, we are creating a new universe.

In Isak Dinesen's story *Babette's Feast*, Babette, a haggard 19th-century refugee exiled to a fjord in Norway, assumes abundance despite the darkness and obvious scarcity that envelops her. "A great artist is never poor," she emphatically states. Michelle Hurst, who played Babette in a recent off-Broadway production, pronounced the line with a stare of a stubborn confidence earned not from winning the world, but by losing it; not out of fear-filled resignation, but with extravagant generosity. Michelle, as the first African American actor to be cast in the role of Babette, would know something about that decision to choose abundance, to assume that grace is indeed infinite—that we can still choose to speak against our fears despite the world of scarcity we experience every day.

Artists fight against that fear. "A great artist is never poor." That's why artists, possessing this invisible capital, are first to be targeted when dictators take over; they know how powerful this belief in abundance can be to free the captives. Smart despotic leaders like Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605–564 BC) knew that it was better to bring the artisans into exile first, as he valued their contribution to society (see Jeremiah 29). Artists and artisans of all faiths bring the aroma of abundance into any world, even a world of exile. It is in creating beauty that we find the antidote to our fears and state control; it is in the theater of humor that we find resilience. It is in music and dance that we survive our Holocausts.

"Culture Care" is my cultural translation of Paul's exhortation in Galatians 5 for us to live a "Spirit-filled life": "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such love there is no law." What kind of culture would be "filled with the Spirit," and what qualities would that culture manifest?

When I pondered that question, it became evident to me that the world we live in—and, even more critically for us, our church culture—do not often exhibit these qualities, but instead seem driven by fear: to choose to fight culture wars instead of caring for and loving our culture. As a result, we display the face of fear instead of love; project hatred instead of joy; reveal anxiousness instead of peace; exhibit judgmentalism instead of forbearance; build walls with jealous exclusion instead of kindness; invite bitterness instead of goodness; celebrate

celebrity instead of faithfulness; invoke rage instead of self-control. Can there be an alternative?

At Fuller, we are embarking on a journey of seeing Culture Care as one of the critical values of the seminary. As an artist and Culture Care Director at the Brehm Center, I am pursuing what it means to live and create by "being filled with the Spirit" and invoke those values into the greater culture. I call this theological journey into Culture Care a "Theology of Making." It is a journey of Christ-centered creativity and hope, of Spirit-filled experiments and innovation. But in order to gain this effect fully, we need to also be willing to be exposed to disappointments, failures, and challenges.

Artists, living in the assumption of abundance, can learn to be artists of the feast, to be wedding planners of the great cosmic wedding to come, to stare into the zero-sum game of the abyss and claim that "a great artist is never poor." But equally important is that all Christians, however artistic they may or may not be, can view the world and the cultures they inhabit—and can lean into them—with a posture of love and care, not fear and rejection. What great abundance of love might the Spirit afford us then? "Against such love there is no law."

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

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

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

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

- Andy Crouch, Author, Speaker, and Fuller Trustee

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

Culture care in the context of the Global South, then, may be imagined as the restoration of the* imago Dei *in the erasures of coloniality—and the propagation of an ecology of ancestral and contemporary knowledges coexisting as embedded beauty, goodness, and truth in stories, artifacts, and independent cultural histories for centuries negated by the logic of Western logo-centrism.

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