

CHRISTIAN
LEADERSHIP
FORUM
2016

LEADING DIFFERENTLY

*Inspiring Leaders to
Shape the Future*





TO LEAD DIFFERENTLY:

- **LISTEN** to voices that are excluded.
- Take risks to nurture **NEW IDEAS**.
- Ignite **SPARKS** of creativity.
- **ADAPT** to world changes.
- Courageously craft neighborhood **MINISTRY MODELS**.
- Tell **AUTHENTIC STORIES** from ministry encounters.
- Renew attention to “**GROW IN LOVE** of God and neighbor.”

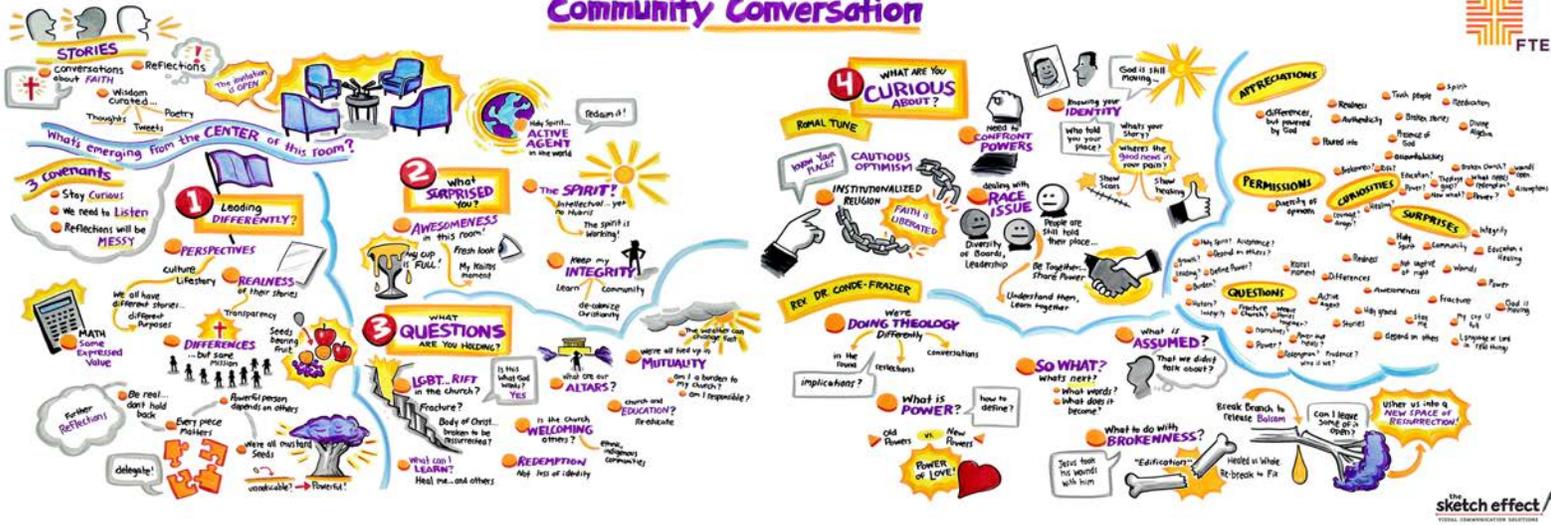


LEADING DIFFERENTLY MEANS TO...

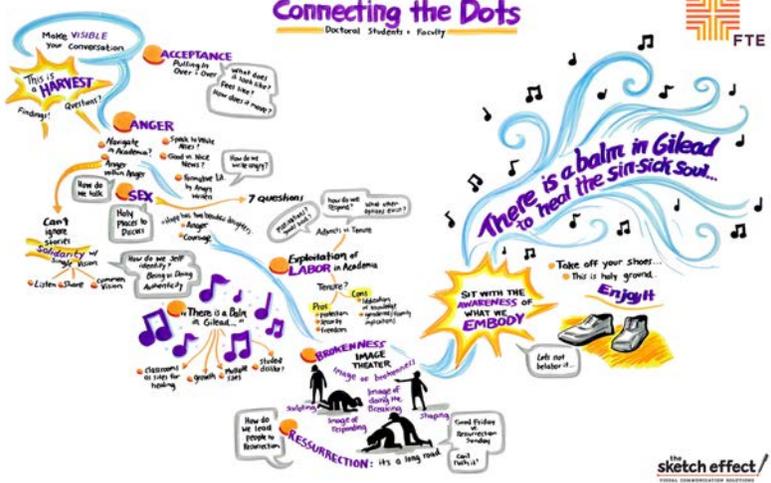
- **CHALLENGE** conventional notions of God, pastoring, and what it means to be church.
- Serve the community from a posture of **HUMILITY**, instead of “command and control.”
- Nurture ideas from the **GRASSROOTS** up.
- Be vulnerable. Take risks. Make mistakes—then **LEARN** from them.
- Show people what you **VALUE** through your actions.
- **BUILD** on historic ministries in ways that honor the past, reflect the present, and position them for future impact.
- **CREATE SPACES** for people to lead from life experience.

During the 2016 Christian Leadership Forum a graphic recorder captured big ideas and community conversations through a live drawing of images and words. The drawings below reflect what emerged throughout the gathering among participants inspired to lead differently.

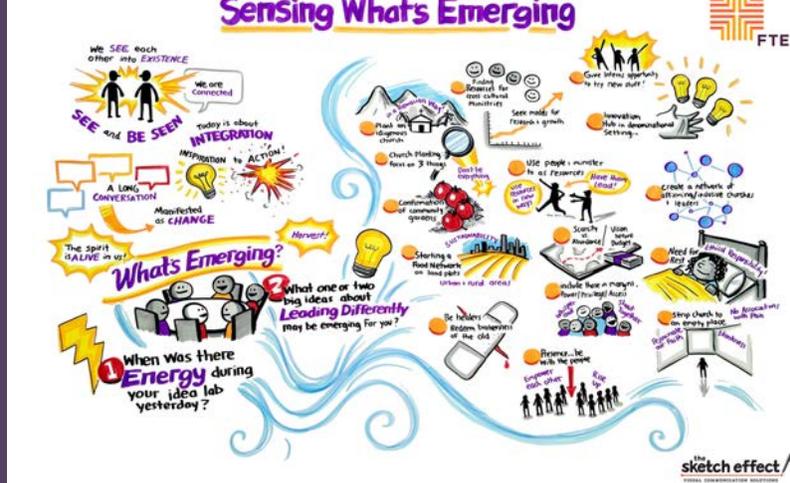
Community Conversation



Connecting the Dots



Sensing What's Emerging



Fearless Dialogues



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How Do We Shape a World with a More Hopeful Future?

It is hard sometimes to imagine a more hopeful future when we see and hear the news headlines.



Many of humanity's previously safe and solid foundations

seem as if they are crumbling. The world has changed. So have theological education and the challenges we face within our different communities of faith.

To meet the challenges of change—and to make the world anew—we need new conversation partners, new allies and new solutions.

What is required of us today to set

Michael J. Kimpan
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Unity is not uniformity. Celebrating the diversity of our humanity is simply recognizing our diversity comes from the Divine.
#FTEforum16

Nelson Kristoffer M.
@justnelson

“Change begins as local actions spring up simultaneously in many different areas.”
#FTEforum16

the church—God’s people and the next generation—loose in the world, to turn it upside down, and to transform it? What will fuel a sustainable movement toward justice, peace and love?

For earlier Christians, Pentecost was the catalyst. For Christians today, I believe it is leading differently.

At the 2016 FTE Christian Leadership Forum, a diverse, intergenerational and interdisciplinary community of leaders explored this theme of leading differently.

We reflected on vitally important questions:

→ What impact does leading

differently have on people's lives? What impact does it have on the communities and institutions that face complex challenges, including their own survival?

- How might we expand our imagination about the ways ministry, scholarship, service and activism advance God's work in the world?
- What do emerging and established leaders need in order to pursue faithful, wise and courageous pathways toward positive change?

FTE believes that the best answers to these questions, and others, are found when we gather a diverse representation of the whole of the church and God's people—storytellers and scholars, artists and poets, musicians and preachers, peace makers and healers, hope dealers and bridge builders, innovators, and animators of love and justice.

It seems that Pentecost occurs—again and again—when we gather and bear witness to the rich diversity of Christ's body. This was true at our 2016 leadership gathering.

“In every generation, Christians are called to follow the way of Jesus and to lead differently.”

As beautiful expressions of God's disruptive hope and dreams for the church, academy and communities around the world, we listened to the stories and experiences of those who had gathered across lines of difference. And we listened to the ways the Spirit of God was moving among us.

In every generation, Christians are called to

follow the way of Jesus, to lead differently, and to inspire future generations to do likewise. It's an uncommon and countercultural calling in a world consumed with power, status, and self. It's a call to act courageously, to sacrifice and to risk suffering for the greater good. It's a call to embody God's love and peace for the world.

History is chock-full of diverse Christian leaders who have followed this call. They dared to lead differently. Inspired by God's hope-filled vision, they changed the way they thought about things. They changed the way they wrote and how they taught scholarship. They changed the way they led and the way they practiced ministry. They turned boldly toward God and made a lasting impact in society.

Now is not the time to play small. Now is not the time to be timid. God's vision for the world and concern for all people demand that we play a bigger and more courageous role in the ministries, institutions and communities we serve.

We need a new generation of diverse leaders who are inspired to transform the world. We need brave people who are faithful, wise and courageous enough to lead differently.

Why? Because the world does not forever change because of just one leader. It changes when all of us decide to lead differently and to shape a world filled with hope.

So how will you lead differently?



Stephen Lewis
President, Forum for Theological Exploration



Dream Big, Lead Differently

BY DR. DORI BAKER

What does “leading differently” mean to you?

Across idea lab sessions, peer groups, plenary conversations, shared meals and communal worship, the widely diverse group of participants at the 2016 FTE Christian Leadership Forum mixed with others. They discovered that they all share a common desire to dream big about how God is calling them, and how they will respond.

Whether they are young adults, seminary faculty or new church innovators, scholars of color, nonprofit leaders or congregational pastors—or combinations of these identities—they explored together what it might mean to lead differently in a rapidly changing world.

Here are five core ideas, or themes, participants

said they took away from the gathering:

1. “I am not alone.” When envisioning and creating a church that makes sense—for a new generation, for a specific cultural context, or in a particular neighborhood—leaders need friends who help mitigate against the isolation they sometimes feel.

The Forum surfaced networks and communities to support leaders as they take risks, experiment, try, fail, and learn. One participant said, “Knowing that I now have partners who I can work with and be co-collaborators with the Divine for social transformation has re-energized me.”

2. “We are a difference-seeking people.” In addition to finding others *like* themselves, people enjoyed finding others with different perspectives, contexts or theological visions. Participants claimed that hope and possibility arise from the

broad spectrum of diversities that exist within Christianity—and that diversity is key in creating new solutions to the toughest problems that leaders face.

One person said, “Putting such a diverse group in a room expands my view of how God is at work and my imagination regarding what is possible.” Participants learned they can tap and leverage difference to make a difference in their communities.

“Each person’s unique and specific journey has something to contribute to the whole.”

3. “Own my story.” The church needs a multitude of voices and visions to address the changes facing people, the earth and its creatures. Therefore, each person’s unique and specific journey has something to contribute to the whole. As leaders, acknowledging our brokenness and seeking ongoing healing is a necessity.

Creating spaces where we can be our authentic selves and learn to own our stories—the messy *and* the glorious—is a key to beginning to lead differently. One participant shared, “Show up authentically; I learned I can be evangelical and scholarly. I can be silly, loud, enthusiastic, and scholarly.” Another wrote, “Sharing my story and purging old mentalities of not acknowledging all of my story was breathtaking.”

4. “Create new ways of worship, teaching and dialogue.” The varied processes of gathering people open up new possibilities. Setting up circles—whether it is an intimate circle of four,

or a ballroom-sized circle for community-wide sharing—allows people to be present in new ways.

One participant told us, “Prior to this conference I had no tools to facilitate the sort of structure that would enable the knowledge of the group to emerge. At this conference I was able to see first-hand the process of ‘incubating ideas’ together so that the Christian community can more effectively be who God has called us to be.”

5. “Begin where you are with what you have.”

Innovation takes time and can start small. Asking questions such as, “What is your next most faithful step?” helped leaders avoid being overwhelmed by the many needs confronting them. This perspective will be valuable as they attempt to create a more hope-filled future for all.

FTE is grateful to all Forum participants and to those who support this work of bringing diverse and faithful people together to dream big.

We’ll continue to seek ways to identify and empower leaders—with God’s help—to “lead differently,” taking their talent and passion into the church, into the academy, and into their communities to do God’s work in the world.



Dori Baker is FTE's research fellow. She identifies themes, trends and effective methods across FTE initiatives. Dori also builds relationships with innovative Christian leaders and co-hosts events for young adults and their mentors in vocational exploration.



Making Space for Something New

BY DANIEL WOLPERT

If no one complains about “the church of the past disappearing,” is it really a church conference?

This humorous riff on the old philosophical question, “If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, does it make a sound?” kept running through my mind as the FTE Christian Leadership Forum unfolded. For here was a rare church leadership event where the focus was squarely on the future: *What is the new thing that God is doing, and how can we—both young and old—see, support and engage that new thing?*

How wondrously refreshing!

If I had to pick one theme that consistently surfaced throughout the Forum, it would be that “leading differently” requires that we create

space. Creating space is also a central theme of the Christian spiritual life.

We must create space for young leaders. We must create space for new ideas. We must create space for voices that are normally ignored. We must create space for new narratives. We must create space for the Spirit to work and to become visible.

“We must create space for young leaders. We must create space for new ideas.”

While I was at the Forum, waiting to meet a friend in the hotel lobby, I overheard one young

woman talking on the phone to a friend or colleague. She was so full of excitement and energy. “I’m learning that we can try anything,” she said. And her tone was a mix of joy, amazement, and, almost, disbelief.

Too often in the church we limit space for innovation. Then we are surprised that nothing new happens. As featured idealist Romal Tune kept repeating, we think small and we think limited. But such behavior and thinking limits both God and us.

However, when we do give space, and when we do give permission, then we begin to see the full potential of all the gifts that God has given us to work with in the world.

Another clear manifestation of the power of space was the worship at the Forum. One of the young people who helped plan worship said to me, “It’s amazing to do the worship planning. One person has an idea, then another, and then another, and the service just appears.”

The result of this process was some of the most powerful and Spirit-filled worship that most folks had ever experienced.

Jes Kast @JesKast

A privilege to breathe in and out the Spirit together. Blessed by you all. The body of Christ is beautiful & powerful. #FTEforum16

Vijay Noel Henry
@noelhenry5000

You meet the best people at #FTEforum16 I am inspired to change, make new, and lead differently!

Kelsey Kava @kavakels

“So often we’re human DOings instead of human BEings.” My small group at #FTEforum16 is so wise.

Rich Havard @rkhavard

Thankful that FTE’s practices align w/ its values. FTE: “The smartest person in the room is the room.” FTE: “Whole room, speak.” #FTEforum16

When we talk about leading differently, it’s worthwhile to ask, “Differently than what?”

As we move from our limited, preconceived, and backward glancing vision of how things should be, to a forward-looking space of infinite possibility, that perspective is indeed something very different.

Such was the message and vision of the FTE Christian Leadership Forum, and it was presented not just in words, but also in action and by example. Thanks be to God.



Daniel Wolpert is a Presbyterian minister and co-founder of the Minnesota Institute of Contemplation

and Healing (MICAH). He has been a student of the spiritual life since age 21 and has taught in the fields of psychology and spiritual formation in numerous settings. In addition to his retreat and teaching work, Dan provides counseling and spiritual direction services.



Sacred Circles, Sacred Stories

BY KELSEY KAVA

Less than 24 hours after we arrived in Atlanta for the 2016 FTE Christian Leadership Forum, five of us—strangers, at that point—sat in a circle.

In the middle of Dr. Gregory Ellison’s Fearless Dialogues session, we pulled our chairs in closer to hear each other, so close that our knees knocked as we went around the circle to remind each other of our names. And then Dr. Ellison started asking us questions:

“Who are you?”

“What will be your legacy?”

“What does it mean to die a good death?”

These weren’t quite the questions I would have normally shared with a group after knowing them for a mere 36 hours. But there we were, sitting in our circle, and what else were we to do? So we

dove deep into our answers. And through those answers, our stories emerged.

These were not our sparkly and pretty stories, full of idealized versions of ourselves and ministries and faith journeys. We shared the stories where we’ve maybe come up short. The stories where we’ve maybe been broken, hurt and fearful. Our whole stories.

“We were reminded that God is using all of us.”

The circle was small; there was no room for hiding. But the circle was safe, too; we didn’t *want* to hide.

In a world that so often expects Christian leaders to show up perfectly—without faults, mistakes, or visible (or even invisible) flaws—the Forum for Theological Exploration fostered a space that welcomed imperfection.

Over and over—in keynote addresses shared over the loudspeakers, in small group reflections shared across tables, in one-on-one conversations over dinner—the stories shared at the FTE Christian Leadership Forum were unashamedly about what happens when we're broken open. They were about how God often breaks us down, but uses that brokenness to build something new.

And with each of those stories, we were reminded that God is using *all* of us. The messy, broken and questioning parts of us are still a part of our story—and are still a part of God's movement in this world.

"Leading differently" might look like an emerging church plant, a booming congregation, or the development of a new ministry, program, or space to include those who often aren't included at the table.

But leading differently also looks like one-to-one conversations, where people can show up with their whole story and be met by God's

CenterForm @cntrform

We shouldn't be preparing young adults to take over our ministry. We need to make space and unleash them to live into theirs.
#FTEforum16

Tyler Sit @TylerSit

"We see each other into existence."
#FTEforum16

the ratchet preacher
@msbond2u

"Insecure people make you jump through hoops. Healed people don't want to see you go through what they did."
#FTEforum16

Brian Bantum
@BrianBantum

It is such a gift to walk with emerging scholars. Hearing their stories and work is life giving.
#FTEforum16

love. It looks like interdenominational relationships that foster collaboration, support and embody that love towards all.

And leading differently looks like that small circle of five people, who started as strangers, who bore witness to each other's truths, and who blessed those stories as holy.

I am confident that my peers in the Young Adult Cohort of the FTE Christian Leadership Forum will continue to show up in this way to their congregations, colleagues and siblings in Christ.



Kelsey Kava is a lover of people, handwritten letters and working for social change. She graduated summa cum laude from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, and has since worked in higher education and nonprofit organizations in Portland, OR. Kelsey is a member of Leaven Community, a nonprofit grounded in the Lutheran tradition and focused on community organizing and building authentic relationships.



The PhD's Redemption: A Story

BY DR. LEE H. BUTLER

Andy Dufresne is the central character in the movie, “The Shawshank Redemption.” So why was the movie not entitled “The Dufresne Redemption?”

Perhaps it is because what we hear in the telling of Andy Dufresne’s story is the condition and redemption of the Shawshank Prison as an institution. The prison and many of its prisoners were redeemed from the negative consequences of being institutionalized by accepting the challenge, “Get busy living or get busy dying.”

We find a similar challenge in doctoral education. The most common narrative today for PhD programs nationwide is one that presents the declining significance of the PhD degree and the shrinking market for doctoral degree employment. This narrative is framed by the idea that

doctoral education is guided by a theme of “get busy dying.”

As we gathered at the 2016 FTE Christian Leadership Forum, the cohort of the Institutional Doctoral Network told stories of our work to enhance our PhD programs. Through our storytelling, we experienced our work as personally redemptive and as redeeming of our schools. Everyone shared inspiring stories about processes to make their school a space where faculty and students of color may thrive.

From our individual stories, we “curated” our collective wisdom and embraced a counter narrative that speaks to the ongoing significance of earning a PhD. The collective narrative claimed the mantle of “get busy living,” by leading with diversity at the center.

For example, what does it mean to “think

outside the box” when the doctoral program is within an institutional box? Creative leadership is sometimes identified as thinking outside the box while remaining in the box. “Leading Differently” requires the leader to exit the box that holds one hostage to a description of the box as a safe container and a space that preserves tradition.

“For example, what does it mean to ‘think outside the box’ when the doctoral program is within an institutional box?”

At the Forum we listened to one another’s stories. These stories reflected on the gifts of diversity to our schools, the challenges of diversity to our PhD faculties, and the opportunities that diversity presents to the theological academy. The curated wisdom of our storytelling concluded that maintaining the box to satisfy tradition leads to programmatic lethargy and institutional death.

Leading an institution into change means that an innovative leader cannot maintain a fixed location inside the institutional box. Often the leader must dismantle the box in order to think and to see new

options and opportunities.

Helping an institution to grieve what is dying—while working to transition the institution into a new being—is complicated, especially when the institution understands itself to be an agent of change in the world.

If our PhD programs are to survive, and our faculty and students of color are to thrive, our programs must become more innovative by cultivating diversity as a value.

Leading differently, in this instance, means helping the institution to recognize its resistance to diversity and to change. It means encouraging everyone to “get busy living!”



Lee Butler is an Africana pastoral theologian. In addition to his work as professor of theology and

psychology at Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS), and as founder of the Center for the Study of Black Faith and Life at CTS, Dr. Butler has served as a past president of the Society for the Study of Black Religion. He also contributes his leadership to diversity initiatives for the Association of Theological Schools.

Nelson Kristoffer M.
@justnelson

“The difference between souls and roles are that souls have the ability to rise up when roles do not.”
#FTEforum16

Emily McGinley
@thepemily

Healed but not whole.
Edification=re-breaking an improperly set fracture in order to restore it to wholeness. #FTEForum16 #LeadDifferently

Hannah Adair Bonner
@HannahABonner

“Don’t show them your wounds, show them your scars. Scars are evidence of healing. Healing can happen for them too” @RomalTune #FTEforum16



Finding Another Family

BY CHELSEA YARBOROUGH

It was daunting to enter a space focused on my vocation with “vocal laryngitis.”

Even with a great community of support, I found myself barely able to squeak out why I was there, and how this new identity of “scholar” had affected my confidence and my sense of self. My game plan for the FTE Christian Leadership Forum was to listen and learn, but to keep my speaking to a minimum because my voice felt too unsure and fragile to use.

Orientation at the Forum began with Dr. Patrick B. Reyes and Dr. Gregory C. Ellison, II. They expressed their excitement to meet us and they made it clear that each of us had an important story to offer in this space. I felt invited to be present, to engage, and to open myself up to all this experience would offer.

Orientation was the call to worship to a liturgy that continued to unfold throughout the week. The Forum was the work of the people in collaboration with the Spirit, emerging through proclamation, song, table discussions, meal fellowships, conversations with mentors, and late night talks filled with laughter and shared wisdom.

“This experience was a turning point in my scholarly journey.”

Being in community with other scholars of color was encouraging and affirming. We exchanged stories and advice on navigating the academy. It was deeply moving to experience a swift shift from being strangers to being a family that

is committed to supporting one another through the journey.

For the benediction as our time together concluded, I was charged to consider how I planned to “lead differently.” In that moment, I renewed my commitment to lead as Chelsea Brooke Yarborough. I do not need to mimic ways of being in the academy that are incongruent with my sense of self, nor do I need to try to leave out my passion, my love for people or my sense of call to ministry.

These markers of who I am do not disrupt my scholarly identity; they are critical pieces of it. I also committed to supporting my colleagues as teammates and not as competition. The people I was privileged to meet are doing phenomenal work. I am excited to celebrate them in their becoming, and to be a lifelong support and resource as best I can. I commit to proclaiming, “Go teammates, go teammates, go!”

This experience was a turning point in my scholarly journey.

The Forum was four days of soothing honey for my vocational laryngitis. It was an opportunity to speak with confidence once again, while simultaneously seeking growth and development.

Many moments in life are profound and impactful. But experiences I

Kabrielle Baker
@radicallyrealkb

Not only do I have a right to be exactly who God created me to be but it is my mandate ... #BeYou-DoUbooboo #FTEforum16

Hannah Adair Bonner
@HannahABonner

“To have courage you have to trust. It goes back to the altar. But in Spanish *couraje* means both courage and anger” – Rev. Dr. E C-D #FTEforum16

Jarell @TheJarell

It’s empowering to have a leader in the church redeem the emotion of anger from a stage often we teach people feel ashamed of it. #FTEforum16

Jes Kast @JesKast

When you can’t pray. You tell the Spirit to pray for you. #FTEforum16

describe as “life changing” are reserved for those that tangibly and clearly alter my sense of self, my behavior, and my developmental trajectory.

The 2016 FTE Christian Leadership Forum was life changing. I am forever grateful for the invitation to join this family.

This is just the beginning and I am confident that the best is yet to come.



Chelsea Brooke Yarborough is a doctoral student in Homiletics and Liturgics at Vanderbilt University in the

Graduate Department of Religion. She earned her Master of Divinity degree at the Wake Forest University School of Divinity, and her bachelor’s degree at Elon University, where she was a recipient of the Hilaire Pickett Leadership Grant. Chelsea is an ordained Baptist minister.



En Conjunto, Toward Deep Solidarity

BY ÁNGEL J. GALLARDO

“**W**hat should we do about the exploitation of labor in the academy?” This question, posed during a doctoral cohort session at the FTE Christian Leadership Forum, reveals one of the pressing challenges facing Christian scholars of color in today’s academy.

I posed this question in response to an invitation to share what we consider to be pressing concerns, and then to discuss those concerns in small groups. I was greatly inspired by my colleagues’ engagement and the robust debate that ensued.

Many studies indicate that

Diva @realnameisDiva

I have people in my life who will not define me by my broken moment - @RomalTune #FTEforum16

Emily McGinley
@thepemily

If you are planting seeds that plant more seeds, that is your measure of success. Results are temporary but fruit is eternal. #FTEforum16

universities and seminaries are replacing tenure-track positions with adjunct (contingent and part-time) faculty. Incredibly, although adjuncts teach without many of the benefits of full-time employment—including parental leave, health insurance, and a living wage—adjunct faculty now make up the majority of instructors in U.S. higher education.

There are multiple reasons for this shift. The reduction of federal funding for the humanities and the financial waning of mainline Protestantism are two major factors. Nonetheless, this trend seems to be part of a broader phenomenon best described as the “corporatization of the academy”—a business

model of education that concentrates revenue at the top, by simultaneously reducing expenses for “menial” administrative or manual labor, and passing costs down to consumers (students).

These changes, which fan the competitive flames of the job market, have left those of us pursuing academic vocations with unprecedented challenges.

“‘Leading differently’ entails a commitment to intersectional networks of subversive collaboration.”

Generally, our FTE Forum group discussed whether adjunct work constitutes exploited intellectual labor. Historically, tenure has provided a degree of job security, intellectual freedom, incentives for professional advancement, and opportunities for faculty to shape a school’s identity.

Adjunct status, however, jettisons nearly all of those elements. It generates class instability by forcing instructors to compete for short-term contracts with little-to-no benefits, research leave, or fair compensation. These dynamics go to the ethical core of theological education.

I was inspired by the FTE Fellows, who, in drawing from a wide range of perspectives and professional experiences, probed the way labor issues operate throughout the academy.

Some of the enduring questions included, “What groups ultimately stand to gain—or lose—the most from our current system of higher education? How are banking institutions that issue

student loans and senior-level administrators dependent upon college athletes, maintenance workers, adjunct instructors, and even tenured faculty, and their respective labor?”

Other participants noted that tenure itself is historically contingent. And so, given that tenure may be discontinued altogether, we as leaders of a different stripe may have to organize in order to create viable alternatives.

Simple answers will not address these complex problems. Yet it became clear that “leading differently” entails a commitment to intersectional networks of subversive collaboration through which scholars of color can embody deep solidarity.

The courage needed to confront the “powers and principalities of this world,” in and beyond the academy, can only be fostered en conjunto, that is, together in community. Together, we can join the liberating work of God’s Spirit, the One who ultimately empowers us to serve faithfully. Fortunately, FTE creates the spaces that make such vital work possible.



Ángel is a rising fifth-year Religion and Culture doctoral student in the Graduate Program in Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University. His project analyzes the legacy of theological geography in the Early Spanish transatlantic empire. Through research, teaching and activism, Ángel seeks to collaborate with faith leaders, community organizers and fellow scholars to offer interdisciplinary contributions to immigration reform, human rights debates, and progressive Christian engagements in the U.S. and Latin America.

Church doesn't have to start with Sunday services and expand from there.

It can embrace different forms of worship and programs in unlikely ways.

building bridges of peace through environment

Ancient Modern Technology

BY REV. EMILY MCGINLEY

In my congregation, we engage in the ancient practice of sharing testimony.

Once a week, someone comes forth and shares a sliver of their truth with the community and bears witness to where God has been, how God has moved, or who they hope God could be in their lives. It is always a gift. This act of sharing testimony opens up new ways for everyone to think more deeply about where, how and who God could or might be...in them, through them, for them.

On the first evening of the FTE Christian Leadership Forum, we heard from two leaders who shared with us a sliver of their truths. Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier shared how her experience of ecclesial diminishment seeded a passion to create opportunities for those who have

experienced educational diminishment. Romal Tune told us how he forged a new vocational path for himself, one that honored all aspects of his story—from the streets to the pulpit to the corporate table.

“We can dig deep and discover ourselves in one another, finding pathways for greater clarity of heart and healing.”

Each invited us in to see the view from their souls as they reflected on what “leading differently” means to them.

As the community reflected on this the next morning, I was reminded of what happens when we open our hearts to one another and allow God's math of 1+1=3 to do its holy equations. To learn that, as one of the participant poets put it, "United in this moment by the stories of two/or is it our collective story," we can dig deep and discover ourselves in one another, finding pathways for greater clarity of heart and healing.

I experienced a soul-thirst being quenched—a reconstituted sense of possibility—when folks heard elders (and then one another) reflect their personal truths:

...With pained curiosity ("Must redemption be accompanied by erased identity?")

...Laced with grief ("I'm afraid I will fracture my church.")

...Passionate boldness ("When I'm in activist mode, I'm casting out demons!")

Might it be that even in this modern world, the most effective and powerful way for cultivating leaders who are capable of responding to the diverse needs of faith communities is found in the most ancient practice of all?

This is the practice of storytelling.

Lois Snavelly
@fancyfeet77

I love hearing two radically different viewpoints on being a Christian leader and I can say yes to both.
#FTEforum16
#reinspired

Tyler Sit @TylerSit

"When you have to depend on others... THEN you become a powerful person."
— Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier
#FTEforum16

Dawrell Rich
@dawrellrich

In leadership you come to know your powers...
Voice, Knowledge, Anger, Strengths, Weaknesses
#FTEforum16

Jose F Morales Jr
@joseisdjrHEMA

"I can't separate education from healing." — Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier
#FTEforum16

Not just the kind of storytelling that is featured in picture books and bedtime routines. But storytelling and truth sharing in its most authentic and hospitable form.

It is story and truth-telling for the sake of quenching soul-thirst. It paves pathways for the imagination to dream different dreams and cast new visions.

It is ancient-modern technology, practiced by the Author and Perfector of our faith—on mountains, in boats, at tables...in circles, among strangers, forming family.



Emily McGinley is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) with roots in the non-

denominational, evangelical tradition. Her vocational background is in graphic design and ministry among young adults of color. In 2012, she joined Urban Village Church to plant its fourth worshipping location, with outreach to Chicago's south side neighborhoods of Hyde Park and Woodlawn. In all that she does, Emily seeks to bring a commitment to racial reconciliation, radical hospitality and creative authenticity.



Breaking Out of Boxes

BY DAE SHIK KIM

My experience at the 2016 FTE Christian Leadership Forum in Atlanta has opened up a new reality for me.

I not only needed to hear that I need to “lead differently.” I needed to hear that I could lead differently. I am entering my third year of seminary, and I’m constantly amazed at how far I’ve come.

I am not supposed to be here. I was a first-generation college student, which means I’m a first-generation graduate student. I’ve always had the feeling of insecurity that I’m not good enough to be at this level of achievement. What makes me able

Stephen Lewis @S1ewis

Communities need social entrepreneurs, innovators & investors to lead differently to help drive the next wave of social change.
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RevAR Williams
@RevSistahGirl

“There are lives at stake in the communities you represent and your work matters.” - P. Reyes @fteleaders
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to be the higher education pioneer in my family?

Everything about my immigrant parents represents leadership for me. From my mom, who worked odd jobs to keep her children fed, to my father, who grew up black in a Korean society that he experienced as racist.

I’ve always believed my parents to be the true survivors, the real accomplishees, not me.

They made a way for me to be where I am, close to finishing my seminary education. But the same box of social limitations that hemmed in my parents haunts me as I discern my next steps

vocationally. The same box that told my parents they couldn't survive in this country now traps me. It tells me that I should quit. Or, if I am not to quit, then I should follow the social paradigm that is set in front of me.

FTE has changed that for me.

At the Forum, I listened to the powerful message from Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier about planting seeds of passion and justice. I heard the last word from Dr. Rodger Nishioka, reminding me that the feeling of unworthiness is nothing new.

“ I am no longer ashamed to believe in my call to do ministry with the voiceless.”

#FTEforum16 created a paradigm shift inside of me. I realized that I have chosen to “lead differently” from the moment I committed to break out of the box in which society desperately wanted to keep me.

Boarding the plane to head back home to Seattle, I felt so empowered by my new community at FTE. I am no longer ashamed to believe in my call to do ministry with the voiceless, or to advocate for the people that the Western church once deemed hopeless.

My desire is for the church to do the same.

The FTE Forum was the first place that expanded my idea of what serving God could look like. It

offered a place where I could *unlearn* the black-and-white structures placed on my life. It set me up to *relearn* the promises God has for me and his people.

I have been told many times by Christian folk that I am “idolizing” justice work. They tell me that the work I am involved in with the community is great, but that it is really just about loving God. The biggest discouragement about these messages is that it has come from self-proclaimed followers of Christ.

Even beyond the messages and talent at the FTE gathering, it was the power of the Spirit that really convinced me that the experience in Atlanta was different from anything I've seen or felt before. It convinced me that I am not “crazy,” which is what the dominant culture calls me.

As Dr. Nishioka said to close the Forum, “People want power in the church of Jesus Christ, but no one is willing to go through the trouble to get the power Jesus had.”

I am ready to strive for that same transformative power with my family at FTE. I am ready to lead differently, to break out of boxes.



Dae Shik Kim attends seminary at Seattle Pacific University. He currently advises students of color, diversifies ministries on the university campus and researches new ways to address issues around race and culture at the institution. He believes in unity and reconciliation and is called to ordained ministry to create more hope in a broken world.

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