

# MICHAELA O'DONNELL

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## Education

- 2018 PhD, Practical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary  
Dissertation, *Adopting an Entrepreneurial Posture: Vocational Formation in a Changing World of Work*, was supervised by Dr. Scott Cormode and Dr. Kara Powell. It passed with distinction and upon completion was the basis for a \$350,000 grant from the Robert and Janice McNair Foundation awarded to Fuller.
- 2011 MDiv, Fuller Theological Seminary
- 2006 BA, Bible and Theology, Lee University

**Areas of Expertise:** Vocation, Faith and Entrepreneurship, Faith and Business, Changing World of Work, Creativity and Leadership, Women in Leadership, Practical Theology, Organizational Change

## Current Roles

- Executive Director, Max De Pree Center for Leadership at Fuller Seminary
- Assistant Professor of Marketplace Leadership, Fuller Seminary
- Owner, Long Winter Media

## Selected Publications

- *Make Work Matter: Your Guide to Meaningful Work in a Changing World*, Baker Books, October 2021
- Regular Writer for *De Pree Journal*. Select Articles include:
  - “What is God Birthing in You?” *De Pree Journal*, December 2020.
  - “Practices for Growth Part One,” *De Pree Journal*, December 2020.
  - “Practices for Growth Part Two,” *De Pree Journal*, November 2020.
  - “Dealing with Your Stuff,” *De Pree Center Journal*, April 2020.
  - “Finding Our Bearings in a Crashing Economy,” Series Editor, March 2020.
  - “The Road Ahead Requires Peace,” *De Pree Center Journal*, March 2020.
  - “Piecing it Together,” *De Pree Center Journal*, March 2020.
  - “Fear and Faithfulness,” *De Pree Center Journal*, June 2019.
  - “Rest, Play and the Costs of Believing ‘I Can Do it All,’” *De Pree Journal*, October 2018.
  - “Myths of Vocation,” *De Pree Journal*, August 2018.
  - “What is Entrepreneurship?” *De Pree Journal* April 2018.
  - “Why Passion is not the Holy Grail of Work,” *De Pree Journal*, October 2017.
  - “Gender Discrimination at Work: Faithful Resistance,” *De Pree Journal*, October 2017.
  - “Let’s Change How We Ask About Calling,” *De Pree Journal*, September 2017.
  - “Failing Well, Not Fast,” *De Pree Journal*, June 2017.

- Contributor to *Life for Leaders* Daily Devotions. Select Devotions include:
  - “Pilgrimage with God this Year,” *Life for Leaders*, January 2021.
  - “Dwell with God this Year,” *Life for Leaders*, January 2021.
  - “Hearing and Seeing in the Wilderness,” *Life for Leaders*, December 2020.
  - “Hoping for an Intervention,” *Life for Leaders*, December 2020.
  - “Walking in the Way of God,” *Life for Leaders*, November 2020.
  - “Invite God to Drop By Unannounced,” *Life for Leaders*, November 2020.
  - “Be Still and Know that God is God,” *Life for Leaders*, October 2020.
  - “When the Earth Shakes Beneath You,” *Life for Leaders*, October 2020.
  
- Digital On-Demand Courses for Marketplace Leaders:
  - *Overcoming Inequality: Women at Work*
  - *Myths of Vocation, with Paul Matsushima and Jerome Blanco*
  - *Showing Up to Lead* (available Spring 2021)
  
- Guides and Workbooks:
  - *Myths of Vocation: It all Happens Right Away*, De Pree Center, November 2018.
  - *Myths of Vocation: I’m Called to One Special Thing*, co-authored with Paul Matsushima, De Pree Center, October 2018.
  - *Myths of Vocation: My Calling is My Job*, co-authored with Jerome Blanco, De Pree Center, October 2018.
  - *Myths of Vocation: If I Check All the Boxes, I’ll be Fulfilled*, De Pree Center, September 2018.
  - *She Is...* Editor, April 2018.
  - *A Seat at the Table*, De Pree Center, November 2017.
  
- Other Selected Publications:
  - “Identifying and Pursuing the Things that Bring us Peace,” *Grit and Virtue*, May 2020.
  - “Piecing it Together, One Step at a Time,” *Grit and Virtue*, April 2020.
  - “Work is Changing. What’s Next?” *Common Good Magazine*, Summer 2019.
  - “How to Fail Well, Not Fast,” *Made to Flourish*, December 2018.
  - “Why Passion Isn’t the Holy Grail of Work,” *Faith Driven Entrepreneur*, December 2018.
  - “Gender Discrimination and Work,” *Grit and Virtue*, April 2018.
  - “Abundantly Creative,” *Liberty Magazine*, April 2018
  - “Passion and Work,” *Relevant Magazine Online*, March 2018.
  - “Becoming Entrepreneurial: Embracing Failure and Empathy in a Changing World of Work,” *Fuller Magazine*, February 2018.
  - “Why Are You Afraid to Fail?” *Grit and Virtue*, February 2018.
  - “Three Ways to Think Differently About Personal Calling,” *Grit and Virtue*, January 2018.
  - “Around the Dinner Table,” *Fuller Magazine*, 2016.
  - “Leading for Innovation: How to Construct Space that Fosters Creativity in Theological Organizations,” *Journal of Religious Leadership* 13:1 (Spring 2015).
  - “Resolving Conflict without Breaking Each Other’s Glasses,” *Fieldnotes Magazine*.

- “Work Environments that are Both Safe and Challenging: Three Part Series,” *Fieldnotes Magazine*.
  - “Learning the Language of the Artist,” *Fieldnotes Magazine*.
  - “Zooming in and Zooming Out,” *Fieldnotes Magazine*.
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### **Selected Speaking Engagements and Presentations**

- “Vocation Formation and Community” A Presentation to Young Life Camp Staff, January 2021
- “Inner Life of a Leader” Webinar, Fuller, December 2020
- “Innovation for Vocation” Webinar, Fuller, October 2020
- “Design Your Work Life” with Dave Evans, Webinar, Fuller, May 2020
- “Crisis Entrepreneurial Ministry in a Pandemic” Webinar, Made to Flourish, May 2020
- “Christian Innovation in Uncharted Territory” Webinar, Fuller, May 2020
- Los Angeles Center for Faith and Work, “Becoming Entrepreneurial” March 2020
- Karam Forum, “Discipling Workers in a New Economy,” January 2020
- Denver Institute for Faith and Work, Keynote “Women, Work, and Calling,” November 2019
- Anglican Deaconess Ministries, Keynote “Becoming Entrepreneurial,” September 2019
- Anglican Deaconess Ministries, Keynote “Voice and Leadership” September 2019
- Fuller’s De Pree Center for Leadership, “Vocational Thriving in a Changing World,” April 2019
- Made to Flourish, “Discipling Workers for the New Gig Economy: Vocational Formation Amidst a Changing World of Work,” November 2018
- Faith at Work Summit, “Entrepreneurship and Vocation,” October 2018
- Fuller’s De Pree Center for Leadership, “A Seat at the Table,” May 2018
- Fuller’s De Pree Center for Leadership, “Vocational Thriving in a Changing World,” May 2018
- Fuller’s De Pree Center for Leadership, “Becoming Entrepreneurial,” May 2018
- Believers in Technology with InterVarsity, “Panel on Women, the Gospel, and the Workplace,” September 2017
- De Pree Center for Leadership, “Panel on Igniting a Movement in the Marketplace,” February 2017
- Ronald McDonald House Southern California, Keynote, “Competing Commitments and Organizational Impact,” June 2016
- La Canada Presbyterian Church, Keynote, “Enough,” April 2016
- Young Life, Greater Los Angeles, Keynote, “You are What You Do: Practices for Impact,” 2016
- Academy of Religious Leadership, “Leading for Innovation: How to Construct Space that Fosters Creativity in Theological Organizations,” April 2015
- International Leadership Association, “Creative Spaces: Film, Narrative, and Organizational Change,” November 2014
- International Arts Movement, “Art as Spiritual Formation, Listening, Being, Making,” with the Brehm Center, October 2013
- PCUSA church planting cohort, “Plural Leadership,” Summers 2013-2018

## Grants Awarded:

- Principal Leader for *Vocational Formation in a Changing World of Work*, a 3-year project funded by a \$350,000 gift from the Robert and Janice McNair Foundation in Houston, TX (2021-2023). This grant is the second grant we've received from the McNair Foundation and is intended to support building out Road Ahead, investing in vocational coaching, digital resource creation, and supporting the promotion of my first book, *Make Work Matter: Your Guide to Meaningful Work in a Changing World*.
- Principal Leader for *Healthy Marketplace Leadership Initiative*, a 3-year project funded by a \$1,000,000 gift from the Looper Foundation in Houston, TX (2020-2023). This grant is part of a larger gift to Fuller Seminary. Though this grant supports a variety of aspects of our De Pree Center work, I am charged with leading the overall effort as well as researching, designing, and building resources and learning experiences meant to help leaders cultivate strong internal lives so that they might live wisely as disciples of Jesus.
- Principal Leader for *Entrepreneurship, Faith, and Flourishing Initiative*, a 2-year project funded by a \$350,000 grant from the Robert and Janice McNair Foundation in Houston, TX (2018-2020). With this grant, the goal was to convert my doctoral project into resources for marketplace leaders. From this we created workshops, a coaching program, and Road Ahead.
- Contributor to *Broadening the Conversation, Strengthening the Network, Increasing the Impact*, an 18-month, \$540,000 grant from the Kern Family Foundation (2018-2020).
- Program Lead charged with developing new initiatives for entrepreneurs and bi-vocational leaders, a program supported by a \$100,000 gift from Grace and Mercy Foundation as part of a larger gift to Fuller (2017-2018).
- *Visiting Fellow*, Anglican Deaconess Ministries, Sydney Australia (2019)
- Funding for Dissertation Project from Kern Family Foundation through Max De Pree Center for Leadership (2016-2017)
- Educating for Agility Grant Participant, funding via Wabash Center. Project directed by Barbara Blodgett of Lexington Theological Seminary (2015)
- Into the Noise Cohort Participant, funded via Austin Theological Seminary (2014-2015)
- Christian Leader's Doctoral Fellow, Fuller Seminary (2014-2015)
- CATS Scholarship Recipient, Fuller Seminary (2014-2015)
- Max De Pree Center for Leadership Doctoral Fellow, Fuller Seminary (2012-2014)

## Additional Relevant Work Experience

2018-2020	<b>Senior Director</b> , Max De Pree Center for Leadership, Fuller Seminary
2017-2018	<b>Consultant</b> , Max De Pree Center for Leadership, Fuller Seminary

## Key Accomplishments at De Pree Center

- Served as principal leader for \$1,700,000 in grants (details on page 2).

- Served as a key content creator and thought leader for De Pree, including securing a two-book deal with Baker Books. *Make Work Matter: Your Guide to Meaningful Work in a Changing World*, is due out in Fall 2021.
- Diversified revenue streams by envisioning, creating, and overseeing the center's first endeavors into income generating products and services. This meant seeing projects through from concept to delivery, envisioning and designing learning environments that lead to transformation, as well as managing organizational change as this type of activity was new for the center and stretched our mental models in a number of ways.
- Built a solid team, clear systems, effective processes, and a healthy organizational culture, which has enabled the center to flourish financially, grow its reputation in the Faith + Work sector, and explore new initiatives.

### **Other Highlights at De Pree Center**

- Envisioned, designed, and built the Road Ahead, a six-week group experience for individuals that helps people move from stuck to unstuck and discern next steps on their vocational journey. Originally built for young marketplace leaders, the program has had surprising resonance with professionals of all ages, including retirees. The participants in this program report that the program makes a meaningful impact on their lives, which is both good for the Kingdom and has helped attract new donors and foundations.
- Strategize, oversee, and when necessary execute audience growth and engagement efforts via email and social media. Because of these efforts our Faith, Work, and Leadership newsletter has grown from 1,500 to 11,500 people in three years. Our social media accounts have gone from almost zero followers to over 2,000 on both Instagram and Facebook.
- Oversee an annual budget ranging from 700,000-1,200,000 and moved the center toward fiscal health, wise spending, and a clear understanding of our finances.
- Lead new research and integrative efforts including new research investigating best practices on how leaders unlearn and relearn in their life and work, hopefully tackling blind spots and cognitive bias that often hinder effectiveness and organizational flourishing.

2014-2020     **Adjunct Professor of Practical Theology**, Fuller Seminary

#### **Courses Taught:**

- Practices for Vocational Formation
- Leadership in Context
- Entrepreneurial Ministry

2012-Present     **Co-Founder and Producer**, Long Winter Media

2012-2018     **Co-Founder and Managing Director**, Long Winter Media

### **Key Accomplishments at Long Winter Media**

- Successfully launched and ran a business full time for six years before finishing my doctorate and stepping into my role as Senior Director of De Pree Center. I continue to engage with select clients through Long Winter Media, though it's on a much more

limited basis. Importantly, this real-world business experience gives me a lot of empathy for and credibility with Christian business leaders.

- Nurtured relationships and successfully landed contracts with dozens of clients, enabling me to work with leaders across industries such as finance, wellness, manufacturing, education, real estate, technology, and faith-based nonprofits. This included work for notable clients such as YouTube, Google, Twitter, NBCUniversal, University of Southern California, PC(USA), as well as bootstrapped startups and home-grown non-profits.
- Produced, oversaw, and consulted on multi-media projects, which required: a) strategizing the use of multi-media content to meet target revenue and impact goals; b) managing projects with budgets between \$1,000-\$100,000; c) creative direction; d) managing teams of artists and creatives toward common goals; e) ensuring client satisfaction on a range of issues related to design, project execution, etc.

### **Select Projects at Long Winter Media**

#### ***Project: Come Eat, a Short Film Documentary***

Client: Fuller Seminary's Brehm Center

*Impact:* Come Eat is the story of a chef who found recovery from substance abuse by learning to cook. Come Eat was picked up by Oprah Winfrey's Super Soul Sunday in 2016 and aired with an interview of Glennon Doyle. It now lives on SuperSoul.TV.

#### ***Project: Video Production and Strategy***

Client: ABL Denim

*Impact:* ABL is a fashion company that creates adaptive clothing for people with physical disabilities. As a result of our audience growth strategy and corresponding videos, ABL received funding and awards from numerous sources, including a \$250,000 Chase Bank Mission Main Street Grant and a successful attempt at a \$16,000 Kickstarter Campaign.

#### ***Project: The Space I Fill, Brand Launch Video***

Client: Do the Good Stuff

*Impact:* Do the Good Stuff exists to promote a healthy view of self in light of the fitness and fashion industries. The purpose of video was tribe building – specifically on Facebook. Within a few weeks, the video had tens of thousands of views and was a key factor in how DTGS got 10,000 Facebook page likes.

#### ***Project: Brand Clarity for Project Hope***

Client: Head First Development

*Impact:* With clear branding and assets in place, Project Hope increased its grant awards and individual donors by 20% in Year One of the rebrand. Additionally, they raised \$30,000 on Indiegogo's Generosity Platform.

#### ***Project: Four Part India Video Series***

Client: Head First Development

*Impact:* As a result of this video series, online and in person giving rose by 600% and 200% respectively. The client liked to say that the videos "paid for themselves" within a week of launch.