

Where uncertainty lies, the possibility of growth occurs. Before coming to Iliff, I used to exasperate those who knew me with what appeared to be the opposite of a straightforward and easily explicable vocational path. It wasn't my fault, I claimed, pointing to my birth as a Gemini to explain my dynamic fluidity.

Fittingly, I joined Iliff in 2018 with great obscurity about what graduate theological education entailed or what it would bring to my life. It just seemed like another step along a path of ingenuity and vocational dexterity. Only by a vague sense of knowing that I needed to hit pause on a meandering decades-long career in international development did I arrive, immediately encountering a place where my mind and heart found endless sources of stimulation towards an unforeseen end. The uncertainty of where I was headed did not bother me.

I analyzed ancient scriptures, confronted injustice, and learned to be present with those navigating spiritual struggles amidst a period of social, economic, and environmental reckoning. And I became especially drawn to subjects addressing embodiment. For instance, where exactly does trauma live in our bodies? What does it mean to become old? What does it mean that Mary has throughout the millennia remain encapsulated in our imaginations as eternally pious, white, cisgendered, youthful, and virgin?

I devoured these topics as if they contained encoded messages that offered me profound wisdom that I could use to understand my self. All along, I absorbed everything from a place of agnosticism towards a particular vocational outcome. I hurtled through classes, internships, and training programs, racking up credits and qualifications that qualified me to become any number of things. Death doula. Yoga teacher. Chaplain. Throughout my Iliff journey, I continued to consult in international development, adding to the complexity of the question: what would I become?

As the finish line drew near, I began to acclimate to the idea that I would continue to follow that same vague sense of knowing that had led me to Iliff in the first place. But what had increased significantly during my time at Iliff was my capacity to be curious and stay present with the alchemical process of unfolding. When I invited my mind to rest and attuned to what my body was telling me, that vague sense of knowing became my source of embodied wisdom. I allowed uncertainty to shift into knowing.

Eventually, as I did this, I discovered that, yes, I would serve people as a chaplain, showing up in both hospice and hospital rooms to sit quietly, listen, ask questions, hold hands, and pray with those enduring life-changing experiences, even death. I would attend to their thoughts as well as encourage them to pay attention to their bodies. And yes, I would return to international development, bringing a wider, more critical perspective to this post-colonial yet still far from decolonized work. As I do all of this, I allow uncertainty to serve as fertile space where growth can occur. I try to invite patience and curiosity into the process of everyday life, so that my body can speak forth its truths and lead me into the wilderness.