

Exploring Ethnicity, Race, and the Gospel

Our Story & God's Big Story

Beginning with God's Big Story

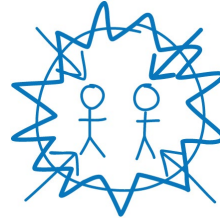
In the kingdom of God, our distinctions aren't erased or ignored. Our identity in Christ changes everything, including how we understand our ethnic and racial identities.



Beauty
Designed for Good



Brokenness
Damaged by Evil



Redemption
Restored for Better



Restoration
Sent to Heal

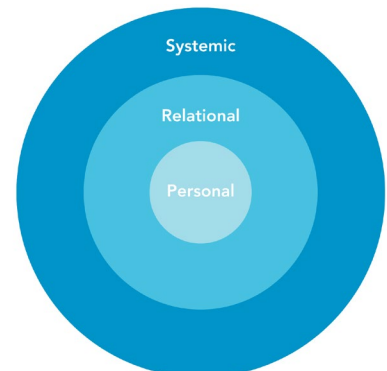
Defining Some Terms

- **Multiethnicity** – God's heart for all people demonstrated through justice and reconciliation.
- **Ethnicity:** A form of historical grouping defined by people who share a common heritage, story, language, religious affiliation, customs, or culture.
- **Race:** Human-created categories based on physical characteristics in which social meaning is ascribed to each group.
- **Mixed:** Someone with two or more ethnic or racial family backgrounds.
- **Multiethnic Chapter (or Ministry):** A chapter or group of chapters that is effectively reaching, including, and empower students from every ethnic group on campus. This effectiveness is characterized by both reflecting the population of the mission field and by mutual affirmation and partnership among students in the ministry.
- **Ethnic-Specific Chapter (or Ministry):** A fellowship that strategically focused on reaching a particular ethnic population or populations on campus. While they are "specific" in focus, they are committed to welcoming and including all.
- **BIPOC:** Referring to black, indigenous, and people of color.
- **Shalom:** The Hebrew word that captures what we long for—when things are as they should be—is shalom. Shalom connotes a sense of wholeness, completion, and peace in a material, physical, relational, and moral sense. To seek shalom is to work for justice and righteousness on personal, communal, and systemic levels.

Ethnic and Racial Identity through God's Big Story

As we consider these topics, it's helpful to think on multiple levels:

- **Personal** – As individuals, we have particular racial and ethnic identities, and our stories have been shaped by our unique contexts; these are our personal experiences.
- **Communal** – Communal refers to both our group identifications and how topics of race, ethnicity, and diversity play out in community.
- **Systematic** – Systems are ideologies formalized through policies, practices, and norms that shape an institution or society.



Beauty – Designed for Good (Circle 1)

What Does It Mean to Be Designed for Good?

Read Genesis 1:26-30.

What does it mean that we are made in the image of God?

- **Our character** - Humanity reflects the character of the triune God individually and collectively.
- **Our worth** - We draw inherent worth not from external attributes or accomplishments, but because we are made by a good, holy, and just Creator.
- **Our responsibility** - We also carry the responsibility of being God's representatives to the world.
- **Our communities** - We bear witness to the triune God through our generous love, our pursuit of justice, and our compassion for others.

We were designed for good, meant to reflect the beauty of Creator individually and collectively.

Reflecting the Image of God

Our communities – which reflect the image of God through how we live and how we love – can deepen or expand our view of God.

REFLECT

Is there a memory, interaction, or a particular cultural value from your family or ethnic community/ies that has brought deeper insight into Scripture or understanding the character of

Reflecting on Your Story

Reflect on the beauty of your story by going through the “Where I’m From” Poem Exercise ([link](#)).

Brokenness – Damaged by Evil (Circle 2)

What Does It Mean to Be Damaged by Evil?

Read Genesis 3:1-7. When humanity believed the lie of the serpent over the truth God had spoken, sin entered the world and forever distorted our relationship with God, self, nature, and each other. Everyone has been affected by the evil and brokenness of sin.

Facing Racial and Ethnic Brokenness

One way that we care for those we’re ministering to and with is by holding space for the brokenness in their lives. Brokenness on campus might look like varying graduation rates along racial and ethnic lines or overworked minoritized faculty.

REFLECT

What are some ways that you have encountered the evil and brokenness of sin in your life, your community, and on your campus?

Practicing Lament

We respond to brokenness with lament, a “liturgical response to the reality of suffering and engages God in the context of pain and trouble.” Lament begins with identifying sources of your anger or grief. Practice lament using the Lament Liturgy ([link](#)).

Redemption – Restored by Jesus (Circle 3)

What Does It Mean to Be Restored by Jesus?

Read John 1:14. On the cross, Jesus bore on himself the sin of humanity, dying on the cross as an innocent man. But Jesus came back to life breaking the power of sin over us. Jesus made a way for us to experience shalom with God and all creation.

Finding Shalom in Jesus

Our broken humanity is taken up and redeemed in Christ. Jesus shows us who we are and how we were meant to live. Jesus heals our distorted view of ourselves and of others.

REFLECT

Where have you seen and where do you long for Jesus to bring shalom in your ethnic and/or racial identity (or for your community)?

Inviting Jesus' Healing

Take time in reflection and prayer to invite Jesus to bring healing into your story.

RESPOND

Reflection: In what places do you need to experience the redemptive power of Christ in your ethnic and/or racial identity story? Complete the sentence: Jesus, I want to experience your shalom over _____.

Prayer: After reflecting, take a few moments to pray and listen.

Restoration – Sent to Heal (Circle 4)

What Does It Mean to Be Sent to Heal?

Read Revelation 21:1-5a and 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

We anticipate and long for the day when God will make everything right, when there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. We're sent out by Jesus to testify through our words and our lives of Christ's work on the cross, reconciling us to God and humanity to one another.

Being Sent on Campus

We are being sent out to bring God's healing and restoration.

- **We are sent to the campus as embodied people.** We're sent in our particularities, including the ways ethnicity and race shape our stories. Being sent on mission to the campus flows out of our own testimonies of healing and new life in Christ.
- **We are sent to every corner and every community on campus.** The Holy Spirit is at work across the college campus. We demonstrate the heart of the incarnate God when we enter another context, whether those contexts are familiar, unfamiliar, intimidating, or different.

Personal Response

Respond by taking time to see, discern, and commit.

- **See** – What areas of brokenness do you see? Are there any areas of injustice that God has brought to your attention? Make a list and be specific.
- **Discern** – Pray over your list. Is there an item that stands out to you? If you could only address one situation, what would it be? Who else in your community shares a heart for this area?
- **Commit** – Commit to taking one step in the next month.

Telling Your Story

Sharing Your Story & Learning Others' Stories

Share your story: Who is a friend or family member with whom you can share your story? Feel free to keep it low key.

Learn someone's story: To be let into someone's story is a gift. Affirming the imago dei in one another includes treating one another's story with honor and care. When someone shares their experiences of racism, believe them. When someone shares vulnerably about their fears, listen with compassion.

Related Resources

- [Where I'm From Poem](#)
- [Lament Liturgy](#)
- [Justice Bible Study](#)
- [Beyond Colorblind Resource Collection](#)
- [Flourishing Communities Bible Study Series](#)
- [Linger in God's Presence Playlist](#)
- [College Students Talk Race, Culture, and Faith Video](#)

Recommended Course

- [Sharing the Gospel](#)

Visit the Ministry Playbook to learn more about leading, planting, and building Kingdom movements on college campuses: <https://www.theministryplaybook.com/>