



# INTERCONNECTED

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION GUIDE



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# INTRODUCTION

Thanks for watching the “Interconnected” series from Be the Bridge and the Asian American Christian Collaborative. We hope that your personal reflection and/or group discussion will propel you to consider your place in the work of anti-racism.

This guide offers direction for individual and corporate reflection on each of the three videos in the series. While individual reflection is an important start, we highly recommend reflection and discussion in community with others whose perspectives will affirm *and* supplement your own. The questions have been categorized by personal reflection, group discussion, and campus engagement, but you are welcome to use any question for yourself or your community.

We hope you can remain mindful of God's presence and communication as you reflect and discuss. References to the Bible are intended to help you connect this moment of anti-racist struggle with the tradition of justice and righteousness that the original readers of the Bible knew so deeply.

Finally, for group discussion, we recommend some best practices:

- Consider appointing a facilitator to keep the conversation on track and create a welcome space for participation.
- Rather than attempting to define others' reality, use “I” statements to acknowledge their perspectives and experiences.
- Withhold judgment that prevents you from fully understanding what someone is trying to communicate.
- Confidentiality agreements are usually a good idea. Trust is a key ingredient in building relationships during discussion.
- When you are concerned or confused about something that is said, question or disagree with the idea, not the person.
- You may want to limit group members to three exchanges per topic. There may be a topic about which two or more people could keep talking. Limiting those exchanges allows you to move forward. Take opportunities for further dialogue outside the discussion group.
- Remember that quiet is not always reluctance to participate. Some people process more internally than others.
- Listen as much as, or more than, you speak.

# PANEL 1

## Confronting Racial Prejudices Between Asian-American & Black Communities

### Panelists:

- Jane Hong – Professor of History, Occidental College
- Christina Edmondson – Dean for Intercultural Student Development, Calvin College
- Dominique Gilliard – Director of Racial Righteousness and Reconciliation, Evangelical Covenant Church
- Raymond Chang – Campus Minister, Wheaton College; President, Asian American Christian Collaborative

### BEFORE YOU WATCH:

As you prepare to watch, reflect, or discuss “Interconnected,” take a moment to ask yourself how you are entering into this time. What hopes do you have? What hurts are you carrying? Take a moment to pray, inviting God to both heal and steel you for the experience ahead.

[Watch Panel 1 Here](#)

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Reflect on the history of the United States that you learned in school (at any level). How does this compare to the historical accounts you heard from the panel? Have you or people you know learned myths about the US that need to be *unlearned*? Which ones?
2. Consider Mark 8:22–26. We could speculate about why Jesus used this two-stage healing, but let’s focus on what you may need right now. How might you need a second touch from Jesus for further healing? What do you need to see better?
3. Trauma disconnects us from the past and discourages us from speaking out. Is the old proverb “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down” a cultural norm we should be liberated from? Are there ways in which it reflects God?
4. Think through your significant theological influences. What cultural perspectives are represented in your influences? What perspectives would you like to hear more from? How will you pursue those?
5. Are you overwhelmed by the amount of information or bad news coming in? What can motivate you onward toward a lifelong journey? Pray for God to grant you the grace, energy or desire that you need.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Mark 1:4-11. Tribalism can train us to treat blood as thicker than water. In this passage, the waters of baptism generate familial bonds in the body of Christ. How can remembering your baptism help you view others?
2. Black and Asian-American racial groups were “racialized differently.” Our respective experiences of race in the US have been maintained by the legal system, which has pitted these two groups against each other. In addition to historical examples, can you point to personal experiences of solidarity that break down this historic enmity?
3. What do we have in common with others who pursue racial justice? What difference does Jesus make in this conversation? Be precise. Is there anything distinctive about a Christian approach to racial justice?
4. Imagine for a moment that all the historical information from the panel enabled us to write a new textbook about American history for the reeducation of our families, students, and congregations. How might you begin to retell American history? Who would you tell first? What might be the result? Consider watching the panel with people from your church or organization.
5. The panel discusses how we alone can't educate ourselves out of racism, but we need God's intervention. Just as Wong Kim Ark's Supreme Court victory was predicated on the suffering and work of Black Americans who won us all the Fourteenth Amendment, we need to stay interconnected with one another. What opportunities might exist for collaborating with other racial groups for a ministry of justice?
6. Read Proverbs 31:1-9. If Christian leaders are supposed to be characterized by setting aside self-interest for the welfare of others, what might this mean for your church? For its budget? Sacrificial, political (but not partisan) participation? How can our histories of working for justice inform your answer?

## CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

1. Read Philippians 2:1-11, focusing on verses 3-7. We are asked to consider the interests of others. How do you envision your major or your studies preparing you to do this? How can your group practice this consideration for others?
2. What groups on campus are doing the work of education and political advocacy that the panel referenced? Have you considered participating in or partnering with these? If you're a part of a Christian group, is it contributing to that work? How could it do so?
3. Learning other histories and theologies on top of your studies can seem like a big ask. What is one right-sized learning opportunity you could pursue with others? Could you take a class in Asian-American or African-American studies? Is there a speaker coming to campus? A professor you could buy coffee for and have a chat with? Consider using resources from AACC or Be the Bridge to spark more conversation.
4. Think about the staff of your college or university. What jobs or positions are filled by which racial groups? Are you attuned to the needs of the lowest paid staff serving you? Are there ways in which advocacy might be needed?
5. Are there campus experiences that you wish students from other racial groups knew about? Create a brave space in this discussion group to talk about those experiences. Consider praying for one another for wisdom on how to support one another well.

## PANEL 2

Addressing Racial Prejudice Between Asian-American & African-American Communities from a Biblical Perspective

Panelists:

- Ekemeni Uwan – public theologian, co-host of the Truth’s Table podcast
- Mika Edmondson – Presbyterian Minister, author of *The Power of Unearned Suffering*
- Esau Mccaulley – Assistant Professor of New Testament, Wheaton College
- Michelle Reyes – Vice President, Asian American Christian Collaborative; author, pastor’s wife, church planter
- Jeff Liou – Director of Theological Formation, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

### BEFORE YOU WATCH:

To prepare for this panel, you may want to consider the sense of peoplehood you have with your ethnic group, your family, or even your close friends. Think about how they shape you, including your likes and dislikes, and the things you care about. Spend some time thanking God for their positive influences in your life.

Consider also the importance of peoplehood in the Bible—for Israel, for the disciples, for the fledgling church as it emerges in the book of Acts. What are some of the strengths of belonging to a community? What are some pitfalls?

[Watch Panel 2 Here](#)

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How do you feel about your own racial category or categories, community or communities? What has been your experience with these? What have been the joys and sorrows, and how have they influenced you? Can you see God at work in those experiences?
2. What is your default mode of thinking about sin? As isolated actions we do, attitudes we possess, failure to do things we know are right, and/or passive participation in inequitable systems? How might other modes be helpful to you?

3. Christians often turn to the doctrine of the image of God to help them view other racial groups as precious to God. Yet no single individual possesses the image of God sufficiently. Only all of us *together* are the image of God. What other biblical or theological concepts have helped you pursue racial justice?
4. Do you operate with a scarcity mentality in which justice is a zero-sum game? Are you aware of ways in which being *for* your own community has meant neglect toward or opposition *against* oppressed communities? Can you confront this in yourself or others through regular prayer for the welfare of other communities?

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Revelation 7:9-10. Do you think you will be able to identify racial groups or ethnic groups in the New Heavens and New Earth? How do you understand the difference between these categories? What difference does it make?
2. There were a few examples on the panel about race-conscious reading of the Bible (e.g. Moses' relationship with Zipporah as a high-class Egyptian woman). Can you point to other places in the Bible where interethnic or racial dynamics are at play? (If an example is needed, consider looking at Galatians 2:11-14 together.)
3. There is a long history of misuse of the Bible to justify racism. Slave owners emptied baptism of its power to reorder social relations. Today, repackaged apartheid theology persists in some parts of the world, including the US. Sometimes we become aware of interpretive problems when they lead directly to human suffering. As you consider racial injustice, do you see interpretive problems at play?
4. The black-white binary has been mentioned numerous times. This panel prescribed learning your own group's history as well as learning that of other groups. They also prescribed reading Bible scholars and theologians from other racial and ethnic communities. What is your experience of listening to perspectives from beyond the black-white binary?
5. Romans 12:15 instructs readers to "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." Can you describe a time in which you did that? When others did that for you or your people? How might we need to follow this imperative right now? Be specific.



## CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

1. Race and ethnic studies have provided useful terms and theories to help us better understand complex ideas and systems related to race, such as *institutionalized racism*, *intersectionality*, *white supremacy*, and *privilege*. Does the Bible also help inform your understanding of similar concepts related to race? Elaborate.
2. The gospel deconstructs systems of value that humans create in the world, including, in the US, whiteness. What are the systems of value on campus, either for your university or your peers? How do they need to be deconstructed or perhaps redeemed? Which values do you resist? Which ones do you buy into?
3. Skeptics sometimes consider the Bible to be the source of racial injustice rather than the solution to it. How might you or your group confront this perception? What kind of conversations or events might you plan? Which audiences would you want to address first?
4. Not all Christian colleges or campus ministries have significant track records of understanding and pursuing racial justice. In some cases, the leadership can offer sound theology and biblical perspective while students continue to experience injustice. What might a multi-racial coalition of students be able to accomplish in such a situation? What actions might be meaningful to the university community? To the leadership?

## PANEL 3

Pursuing Healing and Solidarity for Asian American & African American Communities

Panelists:

- Latasha Morrison – Founder, Be the Bridge
- Sheila Wise Rowe – Director, Rehoboth House; Co-founder, The Cyrene Movement
- Vivian Mabuni – Author; Staff, Cru City
- Soong-Chan Rah – Milton B. Engebretson Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism, North Park Theological Seminary

**BEFORE  
YOU  
WATCH:**

Would you describe your attitude as glass half empty or glass half full when it comes to healing and solidarity across racial groups? What seems beyond your power to affect? What, if anything, might be possible for you to act upon? Spend some time praying for God's guidance in this.

[Watch Panel 3 Here](#)

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What have been some of your own formative experiences of cross-racial interaction? How do they shape you today? Are they positive or painful? Look deeply at those experiences and invite God to show you what more you can learn from them.
2. Spend time in confession. Perhaps you have inherited or believed things that dishonor others or other groups. Perhaps you need to confess your own confusion, weakness, or fear.
3. When you have negative experiences, what practices help you bounce back? How can you cultivate resilience for a long struggle? What spiritual disciplines might help? How can communities or mentors support you?
4. Have you stayed silent when another racial group suffered? Spend time considering why that happened. Was this a cultural tendency or complicity with oppression? Could it be both? Is quietness always an obstacle to be overcome?

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Make a list of specific national events or personal experiences that need to be lamented. They could be recent, or historical. Consider adapting some language from the psalms of lament (Ps. 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 85, 90, etc.). Perhaps read through a psalm together and spend some time in corporate prayer. If your group is multi-racial, be sure to listen carefully to others' experiences. Can you share in their suffering?
2. If it is true that the white gaze has sought to determine reality, defining who is a threat and what is beautiful, etc., how do we avoid the same presumptuous impulse to define reality for others? How do we avoid those tendencies as we seek to define narratives of our own?
3. Like "honorary whiteness," certain narratives that communities of color are asked to believe are empty promises. Can you name some false promises that are popularly held? How do they affect your communities? With what would you replace them?
4. Read Ephesians 6:10-12. So much of our world is broken, including the carceral system, the justice system, our schools, and churches. As a group, choose a broken area and consider how to help repair it. Who was affected when it broke? Where are they now? What are they owed? What could the future look like together?
5. If your discussion group is multi-racial, what is one way in which you can have each other's backs? Are there perspectives you can read together, social media accounts to follow, phone-a-thons or letter-writing campaigns to organize? Choose an action you can do together and invite others to join.

## CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

1. Campuses frequently talk about self-care. How are you doing with soul care? How are soul care and self-care different for you? How are they the same? Share some of your best practices. Are there spaces, people, or organizations on campus that can support your soul care?
2. Many students are very busy with academics and extracurriculars. Does this get in the way of mobilizing for racial justice? Conduct a time audit for yourself. How do you spend your time? What does it say about your priorities? What, if anything, would you change? Who will help you?
3. Read John 13:12-20. Now is the time to make critical decisions about life patterned after the self-giving of Jesus. What “wins” will you seek for others? What might it cost you? Are you willing to pay that price, even up to putting your body on the line for others? How can you prepare yourself for this possible need?
4. What legacy of faithful action do you want to leave behind after your time at university? What key cross-racial relationships might you invest in between now and graduation? What experiences or ideas might you seek out? Ask for God’s guidance for these months and years on campus.

## CREDITS

Jeff Liou, author  
Dorcas Cheng-Tozun, editor  
Sean Kim, designer



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MOVING TOWARD  
RACIAL RECONCILIATION



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