

TWO VIEWS REGARDING ETHNIC SPECIFIC AND MULTI-ETHNIC FELLOWSHIPS

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PREFACE: This paper will address the two main types of Asian American ministry that we have in InterVarsity: ethnic specific and multiethnic. (Within the category of ethnic specific fellowships, they are Pan Asian American, Korean American or Chinese American). We will talk about the Scriptural basis for these fellowships, presenting two views as well as to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the two types of ministries. This paper is intended for Asian American staff and students. Though it may relate to other situations as well, it is not intended to address issues of all ethnic specific ministries. Before we start, we want to start by introducing ourselves a bit and sharing some about our background, and why we are writing this paper.

Collin:

I am a *yon-sei* - a fourth generation Japanese American. My great grandparents immigrated to California and began carnation farming in the San Fernando Valley. Born and raised in the valley, I grew up in the Japanese American Church community playing baseball, learning about God, attending church and became a Christian at church summer camp. I came on staff with Boston University's Multi-ethnic fellowship and was there for more than four years; it was the fellowship that raised me. Following that I worked with the Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Christian Fellowship for the next five years. I am presently on staff at UC Berkeley working with the multi-ethnic undergraduate fellowship and doing Asian American consulting for InterVarsity.

Before I came on staff, New England's former Regional Director, Doug Whallon, saw the growing numbers of Asian Americans in our fellowships. Sensing the need, Doug invited Jeanette Yep and her team of Asian American Chicago staff to do a leadership conference for Asians from 1990-93. The work these Chicago staff began has been essential to the growth of Asian American leaders in the region, helping them to understand who God has created them to be – including myself.

In the course of my time on staff God has taught me about me, both as a person with a history and as a part of a community of faith. With the recent death of my grandmother (November 2000), I continue to learn about my family and the events that have shaped their experiences in the church and this country. Although it was almost 50 years ago, the internment is a deep and meaningful event in the life of the Japanese American community and in me.

In my own journey in ethnic specific ministry and racial reconciliation, the work of Dr. Alice Brown-Collins and Dakota Pippins has been significant to me. Much (if not all) of my words and thoughts in this paper come from these sources. As I begin writing, I am well aware of all I do not know. I do not wish to step beyond myself and pretend to know more than I do. Both Sandy and I feel under qualified to be writing this paper. Nevertheless, we hope our experience, perspective and approach will be helpful to you.

Sandy:

To tell you a little about myself, I moved from Korea with my family when I was four years old. My parents brought us to the U.S. in order to give us more opportunities than they believed Korea would give us. I became a Christian as a sophomore in high school and was involved with InterVarsity throughout my college years. I came on staff because I got so hooked on witnessing

the process of transformation in students' lives. It is thrilling to watch the students give their whole lives for the sake of the gospel.

This is my ninth year working on staff with InterVarsity. During this time, I have worked in a multi-ethnic context and for most of that time, my ministry has always had a focus on racial reconciliation. I have a deep passion for racial reconciliation because of the way Jesus' glory is manifested in such a powerful way. It has probably been the way that God has grown my faith and personal character the most. I love that racial reconciliation encompasses both mercy and justice. But what makes me most passionate about racial reconciliation is that people are reached by the love of God who might otherwise be ignored. My passion for racial reconciliation was birthed and formed particularly through my relationship and partnership with my dear friend Kevin Blue, who is on staff part-time. Much of what I have learned about racial reconciliation originates from him.

In terms of my ministry, it has always had a cross-racial aspect to it, particularly with African American students, but with others as well. Like I said, most of my ministry has been in a multi-ethnic context other than my church involvement. I was a member of a Black Baptist Church for three years and after that, a co-director with my husband of an English-speaking ministry at a Korean Presbyterian church. Those have been the extent of my experiences in ethnic specific churches.

Recently, I have also been learning about InterVarsity's ethnic specific ministries across the country, specifically Asian American chapters. I have wanted to learn about these chapters, because I knew my understanding and exposure to them has been very limited, therefore somewhat skewed. I am on a very high learning curve these days, so some of my thoughts on this paper are new. In writing down my thoughts, like Collin, I feel very under-qualified, but I do feel convicted that I need to share my convictions with you. I wish I could have a one-on-one conversation with you all rather than to share this on paper, since I like to communicate in a more relational way. However, since that is not possible, I hope that you will read this as some thoughts from a fellow sister who is learning and open to your responses.

WHY WE ARE WRITING THIS PAPER (Sandy)

As I have been in contexts with Asian American staff across the country, I have come across a tension that exists between staff who work in Asian American chapters and those that work with multi-ethnic chapters. I perceive there has been a lack of open dialogue. So, part of our hope in writing this together is to engender more open, honest, respectful dialogue among all the staff, and in particular the Asian American staff community. Our hope is that this paper will help us enter into these discussions with the freedom to disagree yet ultimately be able to bless what we see is good in each others' ministries and to partner and to learn together.

This paper is born out of a discussion that a group of Asian American staff had as we met as a racial reconciliation task force this year to work on how to help Asian American students and staff grow in racial reconciliation. [The task force team included: Henry Lee (Great Lakes West), Bora Reed (Pacific), Kevin Oro-Hahn (New York/New Jersey), Collin Tomikawa (representing New England) and myself, Sandy Schaupp (Southern California).] The task force was commissioned by Paul Tokunaga, National Coordinator of Asian American Ministry in InterVarsity, so many thanks to him for enabling us to meet.

During these discussions, it became clear that the staff who have worked with Asian American chapters (Collin and Henry) have taken quite a beating over the years from criticism from other

staff, board members and others about their existence. As I led the discussion, I was nervous, because I really wanted them to feel served and listened to, but I also felt I needed to be honest with where I still disagreed on certain points. We had a good discussion and Collin and Henry in particular felt that it was one of the few times where there were differing views, but that they were discussed with respect and grace for one another.

This is our hope for each of you that as you engage in these types of discussions with each other, that you will have respect, grace and honesty with one another. Our hope is that this paper will help open up such discussions. Though Collin and I are the ones writing, much of this material was from our discussions, so we are writing on behalf of this task force team. If there are comments that you have for either of us, please let us know and give us your feedback.

One comment I would like to add is that I have known Collin for a number of years, but have gotten to know him much better since I joined him and some other staff on the Asian American Coordinating Team. I really respect Collin's deep love for his students and his passion to see Asian Americans raised up to be all that God created them to be. He has added to my vision for what I could dream about for our Asian American students. So, it is a real honor to be able to work with him on this paper.

INTRODUCTION: WHY THIS FORMAT?

First of all, we picked these particular scriptures because they reflect some of the biblical convictions that have formed the reasoning for the type of ministry in which we are each involved. Usually our philosophy of ministry springs out of our convictions in the Scripture. Therefore, we would like to begin our discussion with the underlying biblical values.

Second, we have Collin's and my views about these passages next to each other, so that we can learn from our different views, but also to offer you the opportunity to think through these passages yourself and come to your own convictions. Maybe you will not agree with either of us, but it will hopefully give you some food for thought.

Third, we all have weaknesses in our lives and in our ministries. By offering two views on these Scripture passages and later (in the appendix), the strengths and weaknesses of both types of fellowships, we hope to encourage you to examine your own life and ministry and consider where you might grow. We hope this paper will be a form of input into your life and ministry, which we all need. Collin and I have been challenged by each other's perspectives and as we have dialogued and we hope that this will be the same for you.

DEFINITION OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION:

As a task force team, we also had a discussion about the definition of racial reconciliation. So that when Collin and I refer to racial reconciliation, you know what we mean, here is the definition we came up with:

People of different races forging relationships based on repentance, forgiveness, justice and love in order to address, heal and redeem the effects of personal and systemic race-based sin.

Though we did not include ethnic identity growth in the definition, we do want to make clear that we believe it is an essential part of the process that every person (an ethnic minority as well as a white student) needs who pursues racial reconciliation.

MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TWO TYPES OF FELLOWSHIPS

There are a number of questions that come up when staff or others talk about both types of fellowships. Here are some of the most common ones that we would like to address through this paper.

Regarding ethnic specific chapters:

- 1). Why do you exist especially if there is already an InterVarsity chapter on a given campus? What is the role of ethnic focused ministries?
- 2). What is your biblical grounding for ethnic specific chapters/ministries?
- 3). Is racial reconciliation being lived out within the lives of the Asian American students in the Asian American chapters?

Regarding multiethnic chapters:

- 1). Are you graduating Asian American students who know themselves ethnically and love themselves? The worst fear is that students are just assimilating and taking on a “white/majority culture” voice.
- 2). Are you developing the voice of the minority? Are your Asian American students developing their Asian American voice?
- 3). Is there a safe place for the development of Asian American students in your ministry?

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR ETHNIC SPECIFIC AND MULTIETHNIC FELLOWSHIPS: TWO VIEWS

This paper gives just a sampling of some Scriptures and our differing perspectives. It is not meant to be comprehensive of all passages about racial reconciliation. The three sections of Scripture that we will address are:

- Genesis 1 & 2 (Creation) and we will touch on Genesis 11 (Tower of Babel)
- Acts (particularly the role of Peter, Paul and the Antioch church)
- Galatians 3:28

We aren't attempting to write a thorough exegesis of these passages, but rather we will each share our perspective on them and how our understanding of the passage affects how we do ministry. We also offer these perspectives in the spirit of having a dialogue. We are both learning and do not claim to have conclusive truth about these passages.

GENESIS 1 & 2

Sandy's section:

To form a theology, it is helpful to begin at the beginning, with God's plan for things. As we read Genesis 1 & 2, we ask, “What are we suppose to learn about God and humanity? What is the author's intent in these two chapters?”

The created order is amazing, perfect and breathtaking. It stands in stark contrast to our world today. The author highlights several key things as part of this “shalom.” The author goes out of his way to tell us that gender is a pre-fall blessing. Work is a pre-fall blessing. Food is a pre-fall blessing. Yet there seems to be a notable absence of ethnicity and culture. For such a meticulous writer, such an omission does not seem accidental. Why is there this omission? The author is carefully drawing our attention to certain things and not others. To say that ethnicity and culture

exists pre-fall might be an injection of our grid on the author. It seems that the author intentionally does not shape our understanding of ethnicity and culture until chapters 10 and 11.

Therefore, I infer from the author that I should begin to form my theology of ethnicity and culture primarily in Genesis 10 and 11, not in Genesis 1 & 2. Also, I infer that it appears from Genesis that ethnicity and culture were not part of our pre-fall state. Instead, ethnicity and culture may be a post-fall reality.

Did God then create culture? Most certainly. For example, in Acts 17:26-27, it says: “From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him--though indeed he is not far from each one of us.”

This passage implies that God specifically gave people culture, a time period, and a place where they live in order that they would seek after him. Not only is culture created by God, but it is created with things in the culture that cause us to grope after God. This implies there are indicators of God in every culture, and therefore, culture is to be highly valued. So, I agree with Collin that culture is of importance and critical to address in developing our students. However, where I differ is how heavily I emphasize it, especially compared to what seems to me an absolute Biblical mandate to love across ethnic lines. Because I perceive that there are more Biblical injunctions toward racial reconciliation, I emphasize racial reconciliation more heavily than ethnic identity growth with our students. I do not perceive there is an equal “mandate” weight to ethnic identity growth.

So what do I think is the Biblical view of culture? I see it appear in Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel passage. But then how does Genesis 10 fit with Genesis 11? Is the author writing these two chapters chronologically? I do not think so. Some may argue that because the Tower of Babel story follows the Table of Nations, therefore different cultures and languages existed by Genesis 10. Yet in the story of the Tower of Babel, the people all start with one language. If you read that this story follows the Table of Nations chronologically, then it does not make sense that in chapter 10 there are multiple languages, but then by chapter 11 all the people have one language. Here is how Old Testament Scholar Gerhard Von Rad understands the Genesis author: “Our narrator has freely welded single traditions into a primeval history, and in doing it, he paid much more attention to the inner theological orientation of the whole than to a precise harmonizing of the details.”¹ Maybe the best question we can ask in Chapter 11 is, “What is the theology that the author wants to teach us here?”

What then is the point of Chapter 11? In the Tower of Babel, humankind had one language and culture, and therefore grew arrogant in the same spirit of Adam and Eve, wanting to be like God. So, they built a tower to reach up to the heavens to be like God. God knows that such arrogance is our downfall. God’s rebuke is both judgment and mercy. It is judgment, to keep us humble in our inability to easily communicate across ethnic lines. It is also mercy, because God could have given every single person a different language, but He knew that would create utter isolation. So, instead He created different languages but within groupings of people, and thus we have a theological understanding of language groups and cultures. Genesis 11 seems to indicate that culture and ethnicity are a post-fall reality, part of keeping our arrogance in check. The Genesis author has been imparting his world view over the past ten chapters, and here in chapter eleven we get the most information yet on his view of culture.

¹ Van Rad, Gerhard. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1972. P. 148.

Given this perspective, I hold culture a little more lightly than Collin and others who consider culture created in the context of Genesis 1 & 2. As I said with the Acts 17 passage, I do believe there is an appropriate value for culture, but I also hold culture with some caution. The Tower of Babel passage seems to communicate that culture was born out of judgement as well as mercy. Consequently, I do not view culture an end in and of itself. I value culture, because it is a part of a person. So, as I extend myself in love to another person, I take seriously their culture. Heaven will have people of various cultures and languages, therefore culture will be present, but I do not think of it as culture making it into heaven in and of itself.

In terms of how much we press the priorities of racial reconciliation and ethnic identity in our ministries, I give more airtime to racial reconciliation than I do to ethnic identity, because I see racial reconciliation as the umbrella value and ethnic identity as a part of the larger racial reconciliation umbrella. In addition, as I said earlier, I give more airtime to racial reconciliation, because I see it as a Biblical mandate, whereas I do not see ethnic identity growth having the same weight.

To explain my understanding of the relationship of ethnic identity growth and racial reconciliation, allow me to use an analogy. Ethnic identity like gasoline is useful in a variety of ways, but in and of itself is not racial reconciliation, just like having gasoline is not the same as driving a car. Indeed, gasoline is essential to being able to drive a car. Likewise, ethnic identity is essential to racial reconciliation. But just because a person has gasoline does not mean that it by nature will end up in the car tank. Gasoline has many purposes apart from car engines. In the same way, just because a person is growing in ethnic identity, it does not mean he or she is engaging in racial reconciliation. The analogy does not completely work in that you need gas in order to begin driving a car. I do not believe ethnic identity growth has to happen right at the beginning, but can come a little later in a person's experience of racial reconciliation. However, it is essential that it is eventually a part of the person's journey in racial reconciliation.

Just to be clear, I am not saying that I have no value for ethnic identity growth in and of itself. I do believe there is a need to help students grow in their ethnic identity for their own personal faith and life development. Therefore, we have implemented an annual conference to address ethnic identity for Asian-Americans and will begin to have regular events throughout the school year. But in regards to racial reconciliation, I am saying that ethnic identity growth in and of itself does not equal racial reconciliation.

Collin's section of Genesis 1 & 2:

If grasping the complexity of campus ministry was as easy as looking up the "campus fellowships" section in Leviticus to tell us how many and what kinds of fellowships are permissible - we would not be writing this paper. Fortunately, we can look to Scripture to understand race and ethnicity more deeply. Scripture provides a framework for navigating this complexity. In fact, we must rely on Scripture, for something as deep as race, ethnicity and racial reconciliation can only be understood through the lens of the Bible.

God's Cultural Mandate: "Let's start at the very Beginning End"

To make some comments about ethnicity in Genesis at the beginning of time, I want to first talk briefly about the end of time, using a picture of heaven. In Revelation 7:9 we are told about ^{9b} "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands." I submit this beautifully complex picture of creation worshipping their creator as God's full intention for us, before time as well as after it. If the complexity of race is affirmed

here at the end of the story, it seems logical that it was somehow present at the start. Our culture and ethnic make-up was not a last minute adjustment God came up with because of the Fall, but something he had in store from the outset.

As we look more closely at the Genesis text, I will defer my comments to the work Great Lakes West staff have done in a paper written by Greg Jao, Area Director in Chicago and member of InterVarsity's General Counsel.²

A) As part of the special creation of humanity in his own image, God commanded Adam and Eve to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28), issuing what Reformed theologians recognize as "the cultural mandate." More than just "having babies", Adam and Eve share in God's act of creation by developing "human-made" items -- patterns of relating and social processes -- which help them to "fill-in" the otherwise rich diversity of God's creation. In doing so, they began to create the things by which people distinguish one culture from another -- methods of agriculture, husbandry, language, and poetry. (Gen. 1:26, 28-31; 2:19, 23). God placed only one limitation on their activities (Gen. 2:16, 17); otherwise, humanity was free to develop its own culture. Cultural formation demonstrates God's desire to love mankind, honor his image in man and woman, and give freedom to humanity's innate creativity.

B) Scripture assesses the creation of humanity and the proclamation of the cultural mandate with the refrain, "And God said....And it was so. . . And it was *very* good." (Gen. 1:26-31) Like procreation, partnership in marriage, work and child-rearing, cultural formation exists as part of God's good and perfect created order. They are experiences which reflect God's good intentions for an unfallen humanity and a sinless world. The creation of culture by humanity is part of God's good purposes for humanity. Therefore, we should value the different cultural expressions God has blessed us with.

C) As beings created in God's image, humanity's exercise in cultural formation will naturally reflect the nature of the Creator who endowed the world with incredible diversity of environment and life form. The emerging cultures also will reflect some aspect of their creators -- and, consequently, the Creator. As a result, all cultures reflect and contain some amount and aspect of truth and beauty. (Rom. 1:20) All truth is God's truth, and any truth and beauty found in a culture derives from God.

D) The Table of Nations (Gen. 10) describes how each ethnic/language group coalesced in fulfillment of God's command to both Adam and Noah to fill the earth. (Gen. 1:28 and 9:1) The Table of Nations expresses how cultural formation manifests itself in the development of specific ethnic/language groups. Scholars interpret the numerical symmetry and perfection of the Table of Nations (seventy people described) as proof that the dispersion occurs through and because of divine providence.³ [The table also offers a redemptive theological interpretation for creation of linguistic diversity in the Tower of Babel narrative (Gen. 11). God fulfills his own good purposes to increase diversity even in the act of judgment.]

E) A natural implication of the creation of different ethnic and cultural groups is the concept of a corporate *imago dei*. "[T]here is no one human individual or group who can

² Jao, Greg, "Preserving Unity and Celebrating Diversity: Pursuing Multiethnic Fellowship Through Multiple Chapters", Unpublished paper drafted May 1999.

³ Jao, IBID, (citing Driver, S.R. *The Book of Genesis*. London: Methuen & Co, 1904. Pp. 134f).

fully bear or manifest all that is involved in the image of God, so that there is a sense in which that image is collectively possessed. The image of God is, as it were, parceled out among the peoples of the earth. By looking at different individuals and groups we get glimpses of different aspects of the full image of God.”⁴ Without racial reconciliation which demands more than assimilation -- which values the differences as well as the similarities -- we do not adequately reflect God’s image.

Ethnic Identity Development

Being made in the image of God, our race and ethnicity is good. God deemed it so. This goodness needs to be affirmed in who we are as a part of creation. Unfortunately, for many Asian Americans, understanding the reality of this goodness is a struggle. Raised in a dominant white majority culture, Asian American responses can often take the form of culture rejection and attempted assimilation into the mainstream, or personal shame regarding ethnic inferiority. In my years of working with college students, my heart continually breaks over the many Asian Americans who distance themselves from their ethnic heritage or have asked the question, “Did God make a mistake in creating me differently as an Asian? Why do I feel inferior?”

I believe with my whole heart that God’s desire for his people is to be racially reconciled as the body of Christ. This is of utmost importance to the kingdom. I also believe that for many Asian Americans an initial (and critical) step in true racial reconciliation is the need to be racially reconciled to oneself. The journey in ethnic identity development and racial reconciliation to oneself can be a complex one. It takes people through both personal issues (self-hate, shame, assimilation mentality) and collective issues (institutional racism, hierarchy of power, racial histories). We are not only individuals, but we are also a corporate people.

Furthermore, understanding the personal issues of our *here and now*, requires an understanding of our *then and there* - our place within an ethnic community and its history. Ethnic identity formation - tying ourselves to a collective history and celebrating God’s creation in us - is the foundation for any Asian American to reconcile racially to another person.

I am no authority on how reconciliation is to work. But I am convinced that working through and having peace regarding one’s own ethnic identity and racial heritage is an essential element in the racial reconciliation equation. Knowing and loving ourselves before we can go and love our neighbor is the design of the created order. We must be careful not to overlook this critical component as we think about developing disciples.

In a nutshell, I do not hold ethnic identity development above the value of racial reconciliation nor do I hold it as a replacement for it. Ethnic identity development is a priority in my strategy and commitment to racial reconciliation. I do not see them at odds with each other.

For many in the majority culture, ethnicity is a non-category. It is not something many think about and perhaps can create a blind spot in how we see the Scriptures. Ironically, in many Asian American specific settings ethnic identity is never explored. Race and ethnicity are not things the Scriptures are silent about. Perhaps as the Asian American community gains more perspective on race and culture in the Scriptures we can bring a more accurate picture of our God to the Church.

⁴ Jao, IBID, (citing Mouw, Richard J. *When the Kings Come Marching In*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983. p. 47).

Collin's response to Sandy's section:

The Genesis account presents a major place of theological disagreement. The center of our divergence comes from how we interpret the Genesis account. Does culture, race, and ethnicity emerge after the Fall? Or is it a part of God's original creation? In essence, is culture a pre-Fall or post-Fall construction? The camps are split on this one and there is substantial resources devoted to each side.

I fall in the pre-Fall camp. In Genesis 2:16-17, 20, we see humanity interacting with creation. Here are the beginnings of discriminating choices about life, specifically dealing with food and animals. In 2:23-25, a pattern of interpersonal relations begins. The specifics of culture are not fully unpacked here, but that is by design. Humanity is left to create, build and form the existence of culture.⁵

It is critical to seek out an understanding of where culture emerges in Genesis. The answers are not cut and dry, but this position is the underpinning of the arguments presented in this paper. I invite you as a next step to read and research the perspectives on the Genesis account. We are a community of faith that submits ourselves to its authority, thus the need to really work at understanding this together. It is the text that will inform and shape our convictions, philosophies, and campus strategies.

There are others who have done more work than us on this subject. One resource I'd like to suggest is Lisa Sung's recent work: *"Culture, 'Race' & Ethnicity in a Christian Perspective: Theoretical & Theoretical Foundations for Multi-Ethnic Ministry."*

Sandy's response to Collin's section:

In Collin's opening paragraph about Genesis, he brings up Revelations' picture of heaven to argue that since cultures are present in heaven, they must have been present at the beginning at creation. I have two responses to that:

- 1) I have a hermeneutical difference in how to approach the Scriptures. I believe the most helpful way to approach the Scripture is to let each book and author make their own point and not try to read one Scripture through the lens of another. My goal is to let each biblical author share their world view and message. Therefore, I do not believe that culture was on the mind of the Genesis redactor in Genesis 1 and 2.
- 2) Just because cultures and languages are stated as being present in heaven does not necessitate that they are present at creation. For instance, the city is also present in heaven, but is clearly not present at creation. The city comes in Genesis 4:17 as a way for the line of Cain to trust in themselves. God, in his brilliant wisdom, redeems the city and even gives it a central place in Revelations. Therefore, it seems that just because it is in Revelations does not mean it was in Genesis 1 and 2. Conversely, not everything that was present at creation will make it into heaven, as we can see with marriage.

In the section where Collin quotes Greg Jao, under part A, I would also like to respond to the idea of the "cultural mandate." I do not believe that God had yet created culture, therefore I would not agree he was giving a cultural mandate. Greg states that they begin "to fill-in the otherwise rich diversity of God's creation. In doing so, they began to create the things by which people distinguish one culture from another--methods of agriculture, husbandry, language, poetry." In my understanding of Genesis, it does not seem to me that these things are mentioned until chapter 4:20-22, with the character of Lamech, the great, great, great-grandson of Cain. It is not until chapter 4 that a description of civilization, a way of life, like agriculture and cultural traditions, is

⁵ My response dealing with Greg Jao's material was written in consultation with Greg Jao, March 2001.

mentioned. In chapter 4 these parts of civilization are not being honored, but rather are placed in the light of human rebellion and self-protection. I am hard-pressed to see in Genesis 1-4 a cultural mandate but rather civilization as a fruit of human rebellion, which later God redeems. In my understanding of Genesis, the diversity of cultures and languages, as I mentioned earlier, does not come up until chapter 10 and 11.

I do agree with Collin and Greg that all cultures reflect something of the kingdom of God (as mentioned in section C), therefore we need to take seriously their culture as we love people.

I think we would both agree that both racial reconciliation and ethnic identity growth are important, but I believe Collin would emphasize ethnic identity more than I do, because he sees it as a biblical mandate on equal footing with racial reconciliation, which Greg Jao refers to as the “cultural mandate.”

ACTS: Peter, Paul and the Antioch Church.

Collin’s section: ACTS: God’s Evangelistic Mandate to Reach All Peoples

God desires for the nations to know him. This direction was made clear to the early Jews through the Great Commission (Acts 1:8), and the razing of the dividing wall of hostility. Armed with a mission – “to go out and preach the message of salvation to all peoples, both Jew and Gentile” - the early church was left with the question of *how*. As a church of Jews, how were they to reach the Gentiles? The Jews? If we look at the life of Peter, Barnabas and Paul we see focused ministries that grew out of the Great Commission - strategically organized and oriented around Jew and Gentile.

Pre-Acts 11: One Size Fits All

At first, membership in the early church was limited to the universe of Jews. Jesus began his ministry among the Jews and conversion followed a natural course of organic growth within the Jewish community. While the Jews had an “open door” policy towards Gentiles, there were both theological reasons and cultural issues that made it hard for Gentiles to enter into the family of God. The Jews expected the Gentiles to enter Jewish majority culture and assimilate through circumcision and observation of the Sabbath.

A modern day illustration of this majority culture dynamic can be seen in the dorm dining hall on campus. In the dining hall, dining is usually separated by race. Blacks have a table in this corner. Latinos sit by the far wall. Asians congregate in another area. Tables populated with students of color are typically scattered amidst many tables of predominantly Caucasian students. There are two common dynamics that can transpire in this setting:

First, for a non-black student to sit at the black table or a non-Latino to sit at the Latino table there can be a palpable feeling of anxiety, awkwardness or intimidation. Secondly, students at a White table might think, “Why do these students of color isolate themselves? Why don’t they mix with us?”

Let’s suppose a student of color, say an Asian American student, comes to sit down at a “White table.” It can be easy for that those at that table to now think of themselves as a diverse multi-ethnic table, “See, we are a table for all nations. We have minority students with us.” This mentality reflects a good intent, one of openness to all people, which says, “Come one, come all.” But there is an underlying attitude that assumes a “coming” on the part of the minority person and

another attitude which states “We are not willing to go to a table where we might feel out of place.”

Whereas the reality could be that the Asian American student is crossing beyond their comfort zone to sit at the White table, operating in a cultural environment that may not feel like home. Or, the reality might also be that the Asian American student has grown up in a majority white setting and thus feels equally or more comfortable in a predominantly white setting. In either case, God’s mandate to go and reach all nations has not been achieved. Many cafeteria tables are unreached by the white majority table.

We practice a faith that preaches against comfortability, that challenges our comfort zones. Ethnic specific ministry is often described as a “comfortable” or “safe” place for students of color to come. But let’s not get confused here. At the majority white fellowship, the Asian American student takes a risk, crossing a cultural barrier largely unrecognized by the majority culture who feels “comfortable” in this setting. The onus of leaving their comfort zone is placed on the student from an ethnic specific ministry context, not the majority white fellowship. The “one size fits all” approach does not work because it does not recognize the dynamics of culture, security and power that are at play.

Post-Acts 11: Go and Make Disciples

Jesus was an incarnational savior who as the almighty God who walked the earth as a mere human. God called the Jews to an incarnational ministry, to cross cultures and power structures towards the Gentile. God calls us to reach beyond our norms of comfortability. We are not to be content in sitting at the majority table waiting for the “gentile” to come join us by becoming one of us.

God, in the book of Acts, does not wait around to see if the Jewish believers will all repent of their ways. He raises up ministers who go into the Gentile world with the Gospel. God broke through barriers that lay between Jew and Gentile, by scattering the apostles and forcing them out of their comfort zones - to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 8:1b, 11:19).

Then God began to do a new thing at the church in Antioch. God raised up bi-cultural Jews who were like the people of Cyprus and Cyrene to reach non-Jews (Acts 11:19-20). Barnabas and Paul, too, were stretched beyond current Jewish practices and theological positions to tell the nations about the Gospel. Paul began creating a place of comfort and familiarity for the Gentiles within the family of God, encouraging them to embrace the Gospel.

Antioch was a place where Gentile leaders were empowered and given authority to lead (Acts 13:1). They had a corporate identity that was addressed by the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22-23). It became the place that seemed to genuinely welcome and empower Gentiles.

The church at Antioch was not conformed to becoming a group of Jews, but allowed to develop and create their own fellowship structure. What was important to the church in Jerusalem was not the form, but the relationships. The only “requirements” they laid down were ones of table fellowship and personal purity (Acts 15:28-29). The church in Jerusalem wanted to make sure that these people were enabled to follow the Holy Spirit and to remain in relationship with other Jewish believers.

Relationships are critical to our faith. Understanding what it would take to lay down our own customs and practices and stay in relationship with one another is an important conversation for people to have. At Harvard, this is the topic of almost all of the joint exec (leadership team)

meetings we have had between the two Intersarsity fellowships (multi-ethnic and Asian American). How can we grow and promote genuine relationships across our fellowships?

Sandy's section:

I agree with Collin's comments that the Jerusalem church was suppose to open their hearts to all the nations, but because of their biased, majority-centric mentality, they were not welcoming to the Gentiles. They were slow to change, so God had to shake them up to get them out of their ethnic biases. God allowed the persecution in part to come to get them outside of their ethnic preferences.

Peter is such a major character in Acts and played such a central role in the Jerusalem church. So, I think it is useful to trace Peter's journey of how he deals with the Jerusalem's majority-centric mentality. For the first five chapters of Acts, God allows Peter to focus primarily on the Jews. But by chapter 6, Peter's bias, as well as the other apostles', shows up. In 6:1, Luke reports that the Hellenists widows were being neglected in the food distribution; in their leadership the apostles including Peter had been biased and neglected the outsiders, the Hellenists. It doesn't say that the Hebrew widows were being neglected, just the Hellenists, the non-Jews. Luke shows us Peter's blind spot.

Next in chapters 6-8, God's hand is then on the raising up of outsiders (Hellenists) as leaders, who are willing to try new things. Stephen in particular is highlighted. It is clear that God is not just at work through the Hebrew-speaking leaders but the Hellenist leaders as well.

God again presses Peter to get outside of his Jewish partiality when he ministers to the Samaritans in chapters 8-9. In 8:14, he begins his ministry to the Samaritans and by 9:32 and 9:43, he strengthens his ministry to them. This is a major step for Peter. So, Peter seems to be growing in his ability to cross barriers to minister to those different from himself. This is also a fundamental shift in Peter's role and authority. He is no longer just a city leader in Jerusalem, but an international leader.

It would seem that this is enough for Peter and that he is well on his way to being a cross-cultural minister, loving people of all nations. But God exposes Peter's partiality even further, which shows that his partiality is deep and a one-time event (or even two times) does not change Peter. So, in chapter 10, God teaches him that "God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (10:34) through his interaction with Cornelius. Peter does well for a period of time and he even helps the Jerusalem leadership to face their own partiality in chapter 11:1-18.

We would hope that Peter would hold these commitments for the rest of his life, since God has been so clear with him. But later in Peter's life, we see a major setback in the book of Galatians, regarding this journey of shedding his racism. This process of getting his heart open to all nations is reversed under the pressure of the Judaizers.

In Galatians 2:11-21 Peter is rebuked publicly by Paul for going against what he was learning in Acts 9 and 10. What exactly is he rebuked for? When he is with the Gentiles, he is willing to shed his Jewish cultural distinctions, but just as soon as the Judaizers show up, he separates himself from the Gentiles for fear of the Judaizers. Others follow his lead, therefore he leads the church in Antioch to split off into separate Jewish and Gentile communities, until Paul intervenes to restore the unity of the church. God had worked hard to get him out of his provincial Jewish favoritism. Peter is supposed to be committed to the Antioch model of cross-cultural church life.

We would think that Acts 6, 9 and 10 would have been enough to make their lasting impact on Peter to stand sturdy against the racism of the Judaizers, but instead Peter falls back into his old way of thinking and even causes others to follow him. This is why I believe Peter is in such trouble for allowing the Galatian church to split along ethnic lines. Paul says in Galatians 2:11 “But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned.”

Given this journey of Peter’s growth in crossing ethnic barriers, I would not describe Peter as being primarily called to Jewish ministry. Jewish ministry was only the beginning of his ministry, up to Acts 5. God in the book of Acts seems to be opening up his ministry far beyond just Jews. It seems that the book of Acts is trying to communicate that it is fear and sin that hold Peter and the Jerusalem church back from welcoming the Gentiles and not because Peter was primarily called to the Jewish church.

Let me bring this discussion to our current situation of Asian American fellowships. As with Collin, I can agree that the Jerusalem church is like our majority-centric average InterVarsity chapter that can call themselves “multi-ethnic”, but really is a mostly white fellowship. Given that, the parallel would be that the Gentiles are like the Asian American students who are not welcomed or loved well in one of these majority-centric fellowships, therefore, form an Asian American fellowship. The Gentiles in the situation with Peter and the Judaizers did not have much of a choice in the matter. They were somewhat forced to have their own group since the Jewish folks were separating themselves from them and not loving them well. In the same way, I can understand the existence of Asian American chapters, where the Asian-American students are not really being cared for or even reached out to, so they form their own fellowship.

The guilt of this scenario is on the majority, and in our case the “multi-ethnic” fellowships that are predominantly white, that just expects anyone who joins them to become like them to be a part of the chapter. So, I think the existence of Asian American chapters is understandable and for the time being maybe even necessary until the “multi-ethnic” chapters really become a place that truly cares for all the nations. However, according to what I see in Acts, I do not think that this separation is what God ultimately desires. It seems clear to me that the desired end is to truly be a multi-ethnic church, not just in numbers and demographics, but where people are in deep relationships across racial, ethnic lines and where racial, ethnic sin and injustices are brought up and resolved. For instance, in the example of Acts 6, the fact that the minority group was being neglected was raised and resolved, and out of that the minority leaders are empowered, like Stephen.

If there were no Paul on the scene to rebuke the majority culture leader, Peter, then the minority culture, the Gentiles, would have no other recourse than to meet separately. But Paul corrects the situation and they continue on as a Jew/Gentile church. So, for us, maybe it is that we need people like Paul to rebuke the majority culture fellowships in InterVarsity to be more a place where people of all nations are truly loved and cared for in culturally sensitive ways and not in a “one size fits all” way.

Some would say that that is unrealistic particularly in a college setting where you have four years with students and that it is better to have students separated to really have their needs met. But in my opinion and to my knowledge, I do not believe we have really fully tried this enough to say that it is impossible. Personally, this is one of my visions and one of the things I have sensed God has called me to try to help happen in my sphere of ministry. I may be corrected in the end and may admit to you that it cannot be done, but I do not yet feel released by God to let go of this vision until more effort has been exerted and more prayers have been prayed. So, I am

sympathetic to the existence of the Asian American chapters, but I cannot fully say that I think that it is the desired end goal.

Part of why I feel so strongly about this is that in Acts, Luke seems to place a great emphasis and honor on the Antioch church which seems to be living out as an ethnically reconciled, mixed church of various ethnicities. One way to interpret this church is that it is a unique experience that is admirable, but not necessarily the goal for the rest of the church. But another way of understanding the significance of Antioch is to think of it as the model that Luke, the author of Acts is promoting for the future of the church. And the way that Luke talks about Antioch, it does not seem like just another model to choose from, but rather as a new way of uniquely glorifying the power of Jesus to break down the walls between people of different ethnicities and races. Plus it is what Paul proceeds to replicate again and again.

For instance in Acts 11:20-23, the church at Antioch was growing in great number, so the church at Jerusalem sends up Barnabas and it is reported that he “came and saw the grace of God...” Luke highlights it as having the “grace of God.” Why is that? The way that Scripture, in particularly Ephesians 2, describes ethnic hostility is as being “hostile walls”. Because these barriers are so intense, the fact that Jesus’ cross destroys them shows Jesus’ amazing strength and his glory. So, when the Antioch church defies the walls of hostility, it is highlighted and honored, not because it is just another good option, but because it uniquely demonstrates the power of Jesus to break through ethnic hostility. It was not just because of the number of people, because that has been happening in Acts 2. But here, I believe Luke highlights Antioch because it is where both Jews and Gentiles are in a church together, where the walls are being defied.

Later in Acts 13, Antioch is further described - in particular its diverse leadership - probably the most diverse leadership described in Scripture, which indicates the diversity of the church as a whole. I have heard it argued that each of the leaders led their own ethnic-specific house church and when they all gathered there would be great diversity. But the text does not seem to say that. It is possible that that was just a known historical fact, but it is not clear. The text does seem to clearly highlight the amazing diversity, which seems to be the focus. I believe the glory is shown because they were operating as a church across the ethnic lines and dealing with the ethnic tensions, which I am sure existed.

The Jerusalem church in Acts has a major problem, because they resist the boundary-crossing nature of the Gospel. It is conceivable that the Jerusalem church could have stayed Jewish and embraced God’s agenda of reaching out across cultural boundaries. But the reality is that they do not do that. If Peter, the father of the church could not remain faithful to the call of Jesus to cross boundaries, what is Acts trying to communicate? It is possible that one can be in a mono-ethnic context and yet move across the ethnic barriers to love others beyond one’s ethnicity. However, I would say that Acts seems to be communicating that this is very difficult to do and therefore, any mono-ethnic group that remains as such would need to be intensely aggressive and intentional to cross ethnic barriers for love, for the gospel and know what they are up against.

On a practical level, how does this understanding of Acts affect the way I do ministry? Given the Scriptures description of the ethnic hostility, I tend to be more of the vein of the depravity of the human heart. Our tendency is to be against God’s plans and would rather do the opposite. Given this and what I have seen working with students, which is that racial reconciliation has been the most difficult of all the values we try to pass on to them, I prefer and recommend a context that will more likely help students to cross barriers. That is why, I feel called to and drawn to a multi-ethnic setting versus a single-ethnic setting.

Given that, I also strongly agree with Collin that we cannot have a setting that is majority culture-centric, expecting that a “one size fits all” will be sufficient. We need to work very hard at serving the students to understand and grow in their ethnic identity unto knowing their unique value in the body of Christ. This is where I know I need to help our multi-ethnic chapters to grow.

Again, some would say that it is impossible to have a college fellowship be truly a racially reconciling community and have the students all grow in their own ethnic identity. But that is what I am proposing we try. Some have felt they have tried, but I cannot say that all that can be tried, I have really tried. So, until I do, I will try to find partners who will try with me. And in the meantime, until our “multi-ethnic” fellowship truly can be like the Antioch church, I bless and encourage the Asian American chapters to grow in general as well as challenge them to also grow in racial reconciliation.

Collin’s Response to Sandy’s section on Acts:

Peter is a great example to study and Sandy has done a wonderful job in tracing his development. Peter’s lessons learned are vitally important for all disciples. Growth in the area of racial reconciliation cannot be divorced from personal relationships that give us experiences with people who are different from ourselves. We all need Cornelius-type relationships and experiences. This is not merely a theoretical discussion. Without such relationships and partnerships we cut ourselves off from a full picture of our Trinitarian God. Peter’s Acts 10 experience forever colors his life and the way he does ministry.

In our ministries, it is worth asking our students and ourselves about what our relational circles look like. What does this reveal about our own situations, biases or prejudices?

But having a primary call to a certain people group (such as an Asian American Fellowship) does not translate into a dirth of relationships with others. Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles who did ministry outside the Gentile context. He engaged both Jews and Gentiles. As staff workers called to minister to college students, do we limit our focus to 18-24 year olds enrolled in a specific tertiary educational institution? When on staff with an Asian American fellowship, did I refuse ministry opportunities with non-Asians? I see myself as a minister of the gospel to all peoples, who has a particular heart and calling toward Asian Americans.

Lastly, what is the place of an ethnic specific ministry? Does having a focused ministry create disunity? If we only got rid of these kinds of groups would we be a lot more reconciled? The reconciliation process is complicated. If suddenly the table with white students in the cafeteria had a vision for all the other groups to join it, should they? Merging all the campus fellowships and creating one campus group is not necessarily the answer. What should reconciliation look like?

The gospel is capable of reconciling two or more groups of people. We therefore need to be creative in looking for places of connection for groups to come together in trueness of fellowship and openness of dialog.

Without the Gentile voice in the book of Acts there would not be the letter from Jerusalem endorsing the Gentile believers (Acts 15:22-29). We are to be a reconciled community, but much would be lost if it were at the expense of the corporate minority voice.

**Collin's section: GALATIANS: God's Vision for Equalizing Status
Race matters to God?**

A question we still need to answer is: Do we see validity in focused ministries? Is it biblical to have ministries divided along racial lines or hone in on a particular group of people? A look at Galatians can help us understand this.

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

One common interpretation of this verse proposes that in Christ we are all one and there are no longer delineations or differences between us – whether race, social status or gender. Jesus subsumes them all. *In Christ we are all the same.* This interpretation would suggest that ethnic specific ministry is not necessary: Doesn't Christ move us beyond these distinctions to find our identity solely in him as one body? Why then is race still an issue? We are all one in Christ Jesus. Focusing specifically on ethnic specific ministry causes more division when we should be unified in Christ.

Let me offer an illustration of this view.

When I started dating my wife Priscilla, imagine that we had a conversation that went something like this.

Priscilla: “Collin, I wanted to let you know that I am a female.”

Collin: “You know what? I've never thought of you as a woman. When I see you, I don't see a female at all. No, I don't see you differently at all. I just think of you the way I do everyone else. I've moved beyond such distinctions and see you only as a Christian “for all of us are one in Christ Jesus.””

An alternative interpretation of this verse is that through Christ, we are all equal.

In this passage Paul is addressing the issue of status and not differences. The distinctions addressed were being used by the Church to differentiate status before God. The Jews were God's chosen people and to become apart of God's people you had to become a Jew. Therefore being a Greek, a slave, or a woman were significant barriers to being a part of the family of God.

We are not being asked to move beyond or disregard our gender identities no more than we are being asked to move beyond our racial or cultural identities. Race is not something we need to be liberated from. “Being liberated from race means that race no longer means anything, and something basic is lost in the church's attempt to learn from one another.”⁶ Priscilla's gender, the fact that she is a woman, was vitally important to God, to her own identity and to our relationship. Christ has not come to render us gender neutral: “I have been neutered in Christ, it is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me...”

When the dividing wall of hostility comes down it does not take with it Jewish and Greek ethnicity. It's not like we no longer have Jews and Greeks and we just have JEEKS.⁷

⁶ Kang, J.P., “Asian American Theologies: Works in progress”, an unpublished paper Princeton Theological Seminary May 1994 (citing Roy I. Sano, “Ministry for a Liberating Ethnicity” presentation, September 20, 1973).

⁷ Dakota Pippins, “Biblical Basis for Ethnic Specific Ministry” (Talk given at Harvard University, February 2, 1999).

Therefore we have access to God no matter what our racial, social or gender identity might be.

Focused Ministries in the Early Church

Paul here is not advocating a kind of colorblindness, but quite the contrary. When we look at the different ways the apostles ministered we see that race mattered to them.

On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do. (Galatians 2:7-10)

God raised up Saul of Tarsus to do focused ministry. God's desire is for the Gospel to reach the nations, not just the Jews. Peter had a ministry focus with those of his own ethnicity and culture. Paul, a *diaspora* Jew, had a focused ministry with the Gentiles. God used their ethnic and cultural heritage to live out the Gospel in ways that were relevant to their respective people groups.

As a Japanese American, I encourage my non-Japanese American brothers and sisters to reach out to the 97% of Japanese Americans who are unchurched (which I hope all will do). One can imagine that there can be a type of advantage I have as a fellow Japanese American in reaching out to Japanese Americans. By no means do I have exclusive rights to the Japanese American population, but I do have some insights and keys others might not. Ethnic specific ministry is partly about discovering how we are to bring the Gospel message to people like ourselves. What is good news about Jesus to the Asian Americans on our campuses?

Looking at it another way, as IntersVarsity Christian Fellowship, we are focused on an exclusive part of the population, 18-24 year olds who are highly educated. We are part of a focused mission because God has given us a passion and special connection with students and a mission field ripe for harvest on college campuses. Is there validity then to our call to ministry?

Designed to Sing

What about the unity of the body? For some, a picture of 'unity' means all the focused ministries need to shut down to form one big campus fellowship. But, if there is an Asian American fellowship on campus and a majority culture dominant fellowship on campus, there are two "focused ministries" on campus. Each is oriented in a way that draws certain people to them. If we agree that we are not looking for a 'one size fits all ministry solution,' how do we think about this question of unity?

Again let's look at Revelation 7:9-11.

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God.

This is the Large Group to end all Large Groups. How the details of this massive worship service works is challenging - even for the Urbana program team. But somehow everyone is singing "Salvation belongs to our God." I must confess that when I imagine this scene in my mind's eye we are all singing in English. But of course we aren't. God's people from every tribe and nation are singing together in the language of our hearts unto our Creator. The glory of God is amplified in the diversity of the picture. There is no dispute that this is where we are all headed.

I propose that on this rich, beautiful, glorious day, our differences are not something that will ultimately divide us. Nor will our differences be something that God will mute. It is in our full expression of our backgrounds that God is glorified – through each person, each tongue, each nation. Dakota Pippins uses the picture of a choir to illustrate a perspective on unity.⁸

Like a choir, the people of God are a collective whole made up of different parts, sopranos, altos, tenors, and bass. They sing different parts, each with its own strain and pattern, but when all parts sing together the music is harmonious and unified. In a well-practiced choral group no part is lost to another. There is a respect, an understanding and balance - the differences in timbre only add to the beauty of the song. If the practice room is full of altos with just a few tenors, something unbalanced happens. Some tenors with great concentration can hold their own, others may start singing like altos or might stop singing all together. Even if you have more tenors, but no one to lead them, it can be difficult. The tenors need some practice time as a group to get their technique and mechanics down.

As people find their voice and sing unto the Lord we are all blessed. For some, ethnic specific ministry is that place to find a voice, both as individuals and as a corporate people. The goal is for singers to learn to sing and to worship God in the fullest way possible. It is important that each singer not get drowned out or made to sing another way, this would be a loss to the other parts as well as to God. Groups need to practice singing together as well as practicing apart.

As a leader in the Gentile community, Paul was able to challenge the Jews believers, both on a personal level and at an institutional level. As a missionary Paul was able to contextualize the Gospel to a focused audience. Likewise, with Peter. They needed each other in an accountability relationship.

Without a corporate voice, we are unable to challenge the power structures. The dismantling of the ethnic church in America would silence a key and instructive voice in our country. And the current institutional power structures would go unchallenged and go unchanged.

Sandy's section regarding Galatians:

I mostly agree with Collin's points about Galatians. I value having people's ethnicities honored and the differences between people to not be disregarded. I like the picture that Dakota Pippins uses of a choir. I would love to see people of various races, cultures, ethnicities be able to bring all their gifts and strengths, to be fully who God created them to be.

I would like to elaborate on his comment that God raised up Paul to do focused ministry. I would say that yes, the majority of his ministry, if you added it all up, was with Gentiles. However, whenever he was in a specific city, he brought the gospel to all who were there, Jews and Gentiles. God raised him up to reach whoever was in the cities. He went to synagogues to reach Jews and the marketplaces/centers where Gentiles congregated to reach the Gentiles. But when

⁸ Pippins, IBID.

he went to establish churches, he tended toward the Antioch model of cross-ethnic churches like in Ephesus and Galatia. He was consistently concerned about the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles.

In the Gal. 2:7-10 quote, where Peter is focused on Jews and Paul focused on Gentiles, I would say that that was for the purpose of evangelism and that as people became believers, they were called to be in cross-ethnic churches.

SUMMARY OF OUR PLACES OF AGREEMENT AND DIFFERENCE:

Our Task Force Team had a good suggestion to include at the end a summary of the key places where we have agreement and where we have differences, just to be clear.

We both agree that:

- 1). Racial reconciliation is a biblical mandate that needs to be taught to all students and staff.
- 2). Ethnic identity growth is an essential part of the racial reconciliation journey.
- 3). All cultures have some aspects of the Kingdom of God, therefore, needs to be honored as we care for people.
- 4). Both types of fellowships have strengths and weaknesses and we all need to grow in both racial reconciliation and ethnic identity growth.
- 5.) From a missiological perspective we agree that ethnic specific groups are strategic.

We have differing views about:

- 1). Our theology about culture: Is culture a pre-Fall reality or a post-Fall reality? This leads to a difference of weight we give to culture and how much we emphasize ethnic identity growth in our ministries.
- 2). Our theology about ethnic specific fellowships and whether they are the desired end goal. For instance, we would agree that they are needful for evangelism, but we differ on the whether they are what God intends for believers. I, Sandy, can see the need in certain contexts for ethnic specific fellowships given the status of the main fellowship, but I see the place for them primarily for strategic reasons versus for theological reasons. I believe Collin would see the place for them for both reasons.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THESE DISCUSSIONS AND WRITING THIS PAPER?

Sandy:

I have been very blessed by Collin and the others on our Racial Reconciliation Task Force. Even though we have different views on some things, we discovered that on many things we agree. Also, I believe that we have come out of these discussions with greater respect and understanding for our respective ministries. We have also deepened our trust and partnership.

In writing this paper with Collin, I have also gained a better theological perspective on single-ethnic ministries. His section on Acts was enlightening to me, particularly about seeing the Gentiles likened to the ethnic minority students who are marginalized by the majority group. If ethnic minority students are not being nurtured in a group that is highly majority culture-focused, I can understand why there is a need for ethnic specific ministries.

The result of these dialogues have deepened my appreciation for ethnic specific ministries, not diminished them. That is my hope for all of you who read this paper, that whichever type of ministry you are engaged in that you will grow to appreciate the other more.

Collin:

I too have been blessed in the process. This has been a challenging paper to write and God has met me significantly in this process through Sandy's listening heart. She has been compassionate and caring. We both have worked to a place of mutual love and understanding of one another and our ministries.

Furthermore, I continue to be impressed with her staff and students in their ability to articulate some of the complexities of race today, a true credit to her ministry.

My heart and mind has been sharpened through this project. I appreciate the constructive critique and challenge to live submitted to the scriptures. Sandy's zeal and attentiveness to reconciliation and rightness of relationship in all areas has been inspirational. Sandy's heart of hope and genuineness has been evident throughout, which I'm sure is not hard to hear in her writing.

This is not the last on this subject, but only a marker for more to come.

APPENDIX:

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS OF BOTH MODELS:

When we talk about strengths and weaknesses of whole groups of fellowships, it is hard not to generalize, but I (Sandy) realize that not every ethnic-specific or multi-ethnic fellowship is the same. But we have seen some common trends in their strengths and weaknesses that we see worth noting. These observations came from the task force team as a whole. This section will be where we will also address the questions from page 3.

Asian American fellowships' strengths:

For someone not at all interested in Jesus or racial reconciliation, an Asian American fellowship is a place for them to start. This is particularly true for Asian Americans who would not be reached unless by Asian Americans.

Asian American fellowships can bring a focus and clarity to unique contributions of our community as well as to be a safer place to critique one's own culture (who the audience is). Having similarities can give the Asian American students an ability to gain self-awareness. In addition, the quality of ethnic self-awareness can be higher, therefore, quality of cross-racial dialogue might be higher.

Other benefits and strengths that an Asian American fellowship offers is a safe place for healing of painful wounds like self-hatred, toxic shame, achievement and performance orientation, parental struggles.

Sometimes Asian American students in multiethnic fellowships are not recognized as leaders because the leadership styles differ. Asian American fellowships provide an arena to double the opportunities for leadership and affirm Asian American leadership styles.

Because some multi-ethnic fellowships do not know how to care well for Asian American students, Asian American fellowships can be a good partner for multi-ethnic fellowships. Because they are focused on the unique needs of Asian American students, they can provide a platform to cast vision for mission for a new Asian American generation.

Multi-ethnic fellowships' strengths:

The main strength that multi-ethnic fellowships have is the great potential for cross-racial and cross-ethnic relationships to form that have depth and regularity to them. Bora Reed likes to describe it as "life on life." In a multi-ethnic fellowships there are many opportunities to live out the Kingdom values together like: forgiveness and reconciliation, sharing resources, being advocates for one another, standing up for justice for the sake of your fellow brother or sister, having life experiences together that raise all kinds of issues.

So much of the world is segregated by racial and ethnic lines because of hostility or indifference. The students' time in college is one of those rare opportunities where all kinds of different people are around. This is not to say that by co-existing there is racial reconciliation, but there is certainly the potential. Likewise, in a multi-ethnic fellowship, there are many opportunities to go deeper with life issues with people of other races. It is easier to give depth and breadth to their world awareness and exposure to different racial experiences with a mixed group of people. There is a way that when you are in a greater place of contrast, that experience can increase a person's self-awareness.

Another strength of a multi-ethnic fellowship is the opportunity for student leaders to lead people different from themselves. It can be a difficult challenge, but it can also be an arena to learn how to both be more sensitive to the needs/differences of people of different cultures as well as an opportunity to be empowered by leading people who you might not think would follow your lead.

A very moving strength that I have seen in a multi-ethnic fellowship context has been the healing that some students have gained. The healing has particularly come when a person experiences love from a person of a people group from whom they had received much pain in the past. It is essentially the experience of seeing a racist become a friend and servant.

Lastly, the multi-ethnic fellowships have the potential to reflect the beauty of the multi-ethnic nature of the Kingdom of God. When a fellowship is truly a racially and ethnically reconciling body, it has immense evangelistic potential, which I have witnessed on many occasions.

Asian American Fellowships' Weaknesses:

Asian American ministry can lull itself into thinking they are the only ministry that matters. It can get lost in itself very much like the early Jewish church did. Missing the full commission of God to make his name known among the nations and caring for the poor are places of neglect.

Asian American ministries can insulate themselves in the model minority myth. Thinking we are smarter, we do work harder and we are on this path to success that guarantees our community tunnel vision. Feeding an unhealthy sense of entitlement and privilege.

Our East Asian-centric definition of community is often limiting and exclusive. We neglect a broader and fuller understanding of what political, economic or social issues face other people of color.

When we buy into the model minority myth we set ourselves up against other minorities, thinking we are the privileged and selfish sibling. We become the sibling who is so ambitious that he forgets his other siblings.

Ethnic specific ministry after establishing our space to meet can forget to talk about what is it that makes us who we are.

Multi-ethnic fellowships' weaknesses:

The biggest weakness for multi-ethnic fellowships that I have seen is that everyone can gloss over the ethnic identity growth process or rush ethnic identity and therefore have a superficial experience of racial reconciliation. It is easy to neglect ethnic identity growth in a multi-ethnic context, especially if a fellowship is trying to focus on racial reconciliation. In the name of having people relate cross-racially, it is possible to have students who do not understand who they are ethnically in the multi-ethnic context. It could be that ethnic minority students are just melding into the dominant culture of the fellowship, so that in reality, the "multi-ethnic" fellowship is really just a mono-cultural fellowship that looks diverse.

And for some Asian Americans who have issues of self-hatred in regards to their ethnic identity, a multi-ethnic fellowship can be an easy place to hide from their ethnic identity and simply adopt a majority mindset.

In order to avoid these scenarios, multi-ethnic fellowships have to create arenas for all students, ethnic minority as well as majority culture students, to grow in their understanding of their ethnic identity. In the Greater Los Angeles Division, in February 2001, we had our first conference

where we divided by racial groups (Latino, Black, White, Asian American, and multiracial) for most of the weekend, to develop each group's "voice." We ended the conference weekend with a time where all the groups came back together to hear what God had done for all of us and to be exhorted to pursue racial reconciliation. Because each group had experienced God pouring into them in their ethnic identity, each group was freed up to truly be interested in what God had done in the other groups. It was a most joyous experience. Because people took in the truth that they truly were "wonderfully and fearfully made," they had the freedom to see that the others were also "wonderfully and fearfully made." This has traditionally been a major weakness for us in Los Angeles in which we are just starting to grow.

Through investing in students' growth in their ethnic identity, their experience of racial reconciliation will be all the more real and rich. Also, their experience of racial reconciliation will be as people who really know who they are (or at least on that path), rather than just speaking the voice of the majority culture without knowing it.

Another major danger that multi-ethnic fellowships can have is living in the illusion that they are living out racial reconciliation, just because there is diversity, when that is not the actual reality. This danger is of being just like the secular university rather than being God's people, who intentionally and lovingly live racially reconciling lives with one another.

Lastly, a spiritual danger to a multi-ethnic fellowship is the danger of having a superiority mindset about themselves, in contrast to other types of fellowships. Multi-ethnic fellowships need to see how God is at work in other settings and to respect that.