

# "I Am Not My Ethnicity"

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Identity Crisis

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## Overview

- ▶ Personal Experience with Ethnicity
- ▶ Professional Experience with Ethnicity
- ▶ A Biblical Perspective on Ethnicity
- ▶ Biblical Counseling, Ethnicity, and Worldview

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## Definition

- ▶ **Ethnicity:** "A named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members."

J. Hutchinson and A. D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6. In Keith Ferdinando, "The Ethnic Enemy—No Greek or Jew ... Barbarian, Scythian: The Gospel and Ethnic Difference," *Themelios* 33, no. 2 (2008): 48.

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## Definition

- ▶ **Culture:** patterns of ideas, attitudes, values, lifestyle habits, and traditions shared by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to the next

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## At the heart of culture is: **WORLDVIEW**

- ▶ **Information/Description:** Data, sometimes in the form of a problem
- ▶ **Interpretation/Theory:** Narrative for explaining the data/problem
- ▶ **Intervention/Prescription:** Attempts to solve the problem
- ▶ **Worship:** Worldview affects our worship, or "Worth-ship"; what we treasure, value, and place our hope; what we inordinately desire or fear

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## Personal Experience with Ethnicity

Shame and Alienation  
Anger and Pride

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## Video clip



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## my childhood/teenage worldview

- ▶ **Information:** my ethnicity causes alienation
- ▶ **Interpretation:** my ethnicity is bad
- ▶ **Intervention:** reject my ethnicity as my identity
  
- ▶ **Worship:** People - inordinate fear of rejection; inordinate desire for belonging, approval, beauty

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Japanese-American Internment Camp, World War II  
<https://eji.org/history-racial-injustice-forced-internment-of-japanese-americans>

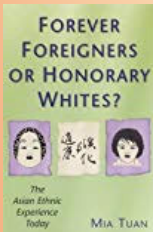
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Maternal Grandparents' Wedding, December 7, 1941  
*History of the Okinawans in North America*, (The Okinawa Club of America, 1989).

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## my teenage/undergraduate school worldview



- ▶ **Information:** others have caused harm to people of my ethnicity
- ▶ **Interpretation:** they are ignorant, selfish, or both
- ▶ **Intervention:** embrace my ethnicity as my identity and immerse myself in it, educate self and others
  
- ▶ **Worship:** My ethnicity - ungodly pride about cultural values (superiority); hope in education/worldly knowledge as the solution; fear of alienation from both cultures

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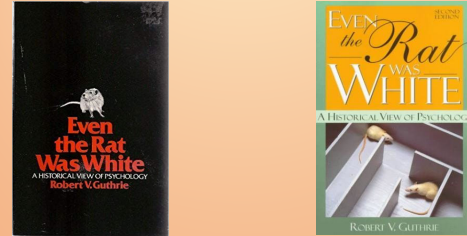
## Professional Experience with Ethnicity

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## Professional Experience with Ethnicity

- ▶ Doctoral Dissertation
- ▶ Teaching/Lecturing/Supervising
  - ▶ 4th Force in Psychology (Multicultural Psychology) after Behaviorism, Psychoanalytic, and Existential/Humanistic
    - ▶ **Information:** There are systematic abuses of power against cultural groups (minorities)
    - ▶ **Interpretation:** Some cultural groups have too much societal power, which they use to define reality and keep resources for their own cultural group
    - ▶ **Intervention:** Postmodernism and Social Equality
    - ▶ **Worship:** Reliance on man to fix societal problems

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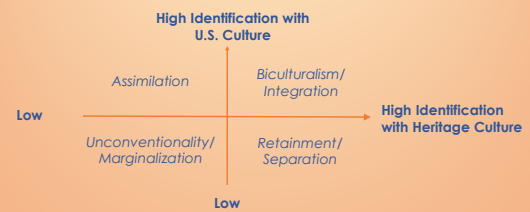
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## Research Participants

- ▶ Behavioral scientists routinely publish broad claims about human psychology and behavior in the world's top journals based on samples drawn entirely from **W**estern, **E**ducated, **I**ndustrialized, **R**ich, and **D**emocratic (WEIRD) societies.
- ▶ Henrich, J. Heine, S.J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2-3), 61-83.
- ▶ Grohol, John M. (2018) "Psychology Secrets: Most Psychology Studies Are College Student Biased." <https://psychcentral.com/blog/psychology-secrets-most-psychology-studies-are-college-student-biased/>

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## Acculturation Model



Adapted from John Berry, "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," *Applied Psychology* 46, no. 1 (1997): 5-34.

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## Individualistic vs. Collectivistic Cultures - Worldview

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▶ <b>Individualistic</b>        | ▶ <b>Collectivistic</b>      |
| ▶ Focus on progress             | ▶ Focus on tradition         |
| ▶ Industrial/Capitalist Economy | ▶ Agrarian Economy           |
| ▶ Scientific belief system      | ▶ Metaphysical belief system |

(Ng, 1985)

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## Identity

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ▶ <b>Individualistic</b>          | ▶ <b>Collectivistic</b>              |
| ▶ Autonomy                        | ▶ Group identity                     |
| ▶ Nuclear Family                  | ▶ Extended Family                    |
| ▶ Achievement of individual goals | ▶ Achievement of goals set by others |

(Ng, 1985)

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### Way of Life

This and following infographics by Yang Liu, *East meets West*, 2006

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### The Child

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### Elderly in Day to Day Life

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### Social Responsibility

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Individualistic</b></li> <li>▶ Rights &amp; Privilege</li> <li>▶ Responsible to self - Social relations voluntary</li> <li>▶ Trained to be individuals - Behavior determined by personal rights and freedom</li> <li>▶ Motivation based on feelings, self-development and self-fulfillment</li> <li>▶ Decision making - Democratic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Collectivistic</b></li> <li>▶ Duty &amp; Obligation</li> <li>▶ Relational responsibility - Obligation to group</li> <li>▶ Duty to others - Behavior determined by social position</li> <li>▶ Motivation based on obligation</li> <li>▶ Decision making - Authoritarian</li> </ul>
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(Ng, 1985)

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### Self-Perception

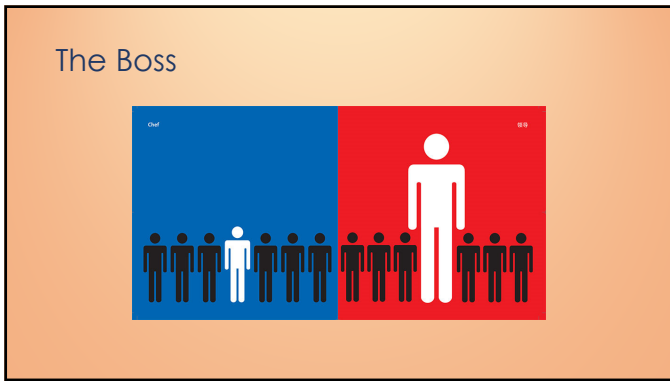
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### Social Position

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Individualistic</b></li> <li>▶ Equality</li> <li>▶ Dislike for rules &amp; control</li> <li>▶ Play down superiority/inferiority</li> <li>▶ Questions authority</li> <li>▶ Status by economic possession, credentials, titles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Collectivistic</b></li> <li>▶ Hierarchy</li> <li>▶ Submissive to authority</li> <li>▶ Emphasis on positions in relationships</li> <li>▶ Accepts rules &amp; propriety</li> <li>▶ Status by family name</li> </ul>
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(Ng, 1985)

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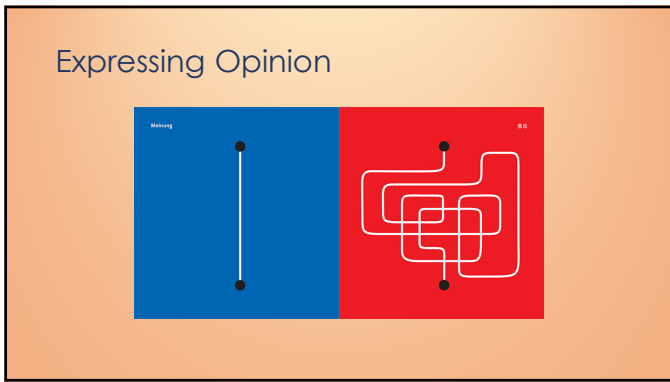
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### Interpersonal Interaction

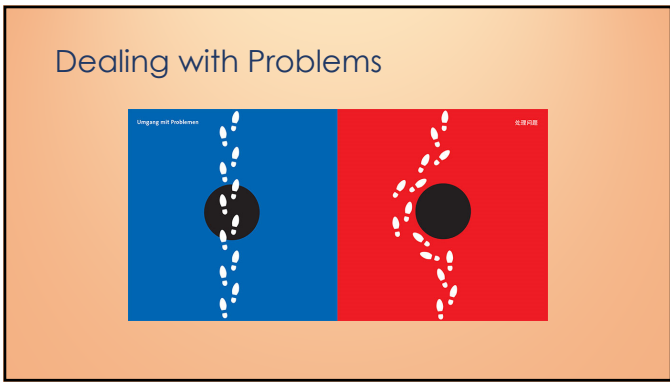
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Individualistic</b></li> <li>▶ Competitive</li> <li>▶ Self-assertion - Aggressive and expressive</li> <li>▶ Direct, verbal, or written, assertive</li> <li>▶ Open and accessible to others</li> <li>▶ "Guilt/Dignity" and internalized norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Collectivistic</b></li> <li>▶ Cooperative</li> <li>▶ Deference - Passivity and yieldedness</li> <li>▶ Indirect, non-verbal, adherence to social politeness</li> <li>▶ Emphasis on self effacement</li> <li>▶ "Shame/Honor" and externalized norms</li> </ul>
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(Ng, 1985)

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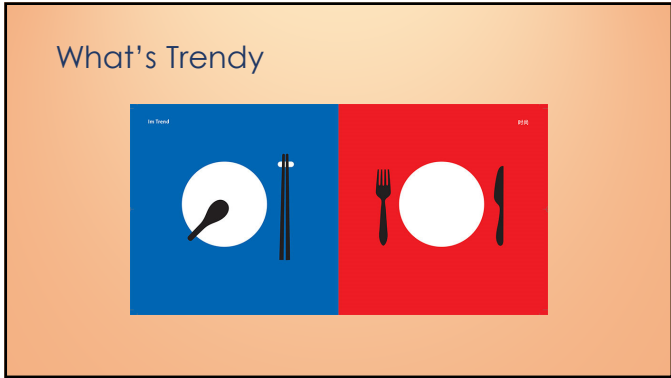


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### Worldview

	<b>Individualistic</b>	<b>Collectivistic</b>
<i>Time Orientation:</i>	Present, Future	Past, Present, Future
<i>Relationship with nature:</i>	Mastery	Harmony
<i>Efficacy/Agency:</i>	Personal efficacy, Internal Control	Fatalism/Karma, External Control

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### Comparison of Terminology in Racial/Cultural Identity Development Models

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Minority Identity (Atkinson et al., 1989)	Conformity	Dissonance	Resistance & Immersion	Introspection	Synergetic articulation & awareness
Racial/Cultural Identity (Sue & Sue, 1990)	Conformity	Dissonance	Resistance & Immersion	Introspection	Integrative awareness
Ego Identity (Marcia et al., 1994)	Diffusion/foreclosure	←	Moratorium	→	Identity Achievement
Racial Identity (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990)	Preencounter	Encounter	Immersion/Emersion	Internalization	Commitment
Ethnic Identity (Phinney, 1989, 1993)	Unexamined	←	Exploration	→	Achievement

Adapted from page 299 of Sue, D., Mak, W. S., & Sue, D. W. (1998). Ethnic Identity. In Lee, L. C., & Zane, N. W. W. (Eds.), *Handbook of Asian American Psychology* (pp. 289-333). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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### Stage 5: Synergistic Articulation and Awareness

- ▶ Secure in ethnic identity.
- ▶ Individual has found ways to translate a personal sense of racial identity into ongoing action expressing a sense of commitment to the concerns of one's own group.
- ▶ Cultural values of other minorities as well as those of the dominant group are objectively examined.
- ▶ **There is a strong desire to eliminate all forms of oppression, which is an important motivation of individual's behavior.**

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### my graduate school worldview

- ▶ **Information:** oppression due to ethnicity exists
- ▶ **Interpretation:** it is society's fault
- ▶ **Intervention:** eliminate all forms of oppression through social justice and empowerment of the weak
- ▶ **Worship:** social equality leading to equal opportunities for social status, pay, etc.

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### My Professional Experience with Ethnicity

- ▶ Doctoral Dissertation
- ▶ Teaching/Lecturing/Supervising
- ▶ Working in the Inner City

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### A Biblical Perspective on Ethnicity

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## Creation & Fall

### Creation

- ▶ Genesis 1:26-28 – Man created in God's image and mandated to multiply (c.f., Gen. 9:1-17)

### Fall

- ▶ Genesis 10 – Nations Descended from Noah (essential unity of human beings)
- ▶ Genesis 11 – Tower of Babel (disunity and dispersion)

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## "Nations" – Old Testament

- ▶ **The Nations:** Groups of people linked by kinship, land, culture, or government; in the Bible, "the nations" especially refers to those who are not Israelite.
  - ▶ גוֹיִם, *goyim*/non-Israelites
  - ▶ אֲמִיּוֹת, *ammim*/"the people of Israel"
- ▶ All nations rebel against God, as does Israel
- ▶ Antithetical relationship with Israel
- ▶ Warnings to be separate from the gods of other nations (Deut. 7:1-26), which are mere idols (Psa. 96:5), not true gods (Isa. 44:12-20, 45:14).  
(Lexham Bible Dictionary)

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## "Nations" – New Testament

- ▶ Most of the time, the New Testament authors use ἔθνη (*ethnē*) in a neutral way to refer to those who are not Jews, that is, *Gentiles*.
- ▶ However, *ethnē* is sometimes used to call attention to sinful or deceived practices
  - ▶ Jesus criticized Gentiles for their manner of praying (Matt 6:7) and their authoritarian style of leadership (Matt 20:25).
  - ▶ Paul faulted their sexual immorality (1 Cor 5:1; 1 Thess 4:5) and their demonic worship practices (1 Cor 10:20).
  - ▶ Paul regarded their sinfulness as a sign of spiritual ignorance (Eph 4:17).
  - ▶ Peter listed as typical Gentile behavior: "licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry" (1 Pet 4:3).  
(Lexham Bible Dictionary)

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## Redemption

- ▶ Pentecost: transcending nationality/ethnicity in unity of God's people
- ▶ Acts 10:28 (ESV)  
And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean."
- ▶ Colossians 3:11 (ESV)  
Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (c.f., Gal 3:28)

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## Consummation

- ▶ Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV)  
<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
- ▶ Revelation 21:24, 26

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## Biblical Counseling, Ethnicity, and Worldview

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## The Counselor

- ▶ Be aware of your own worldview and communication style
  - ▶ Do they come from Scripture, or from another cultural influence? This is part of why it is so crucial to know and counsel the Word!
- ▶ Incarnation Principle/Indigenous Principle
  - 1 Corinthians 9:22b-23 (ESV)
  - <sup>22</sup> I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

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## Biblical Worldview

- ▶ **Information:** the counselee is dealing with problems associated with ethnicity/culture
- ▶ **Interpretation:** the counselee is living in a fallen world as a sufferer, sinner, and saint in desperate need of Christ
- ▶ **Intervention:** the Gospel
  
- ▶ **Worship:** the only true and living God - the Triune Redeemer!

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## Sufferer

### Lamenting leading to worship

- ▶ Weeping with those who weep (Rom. 12:15)
- ▶ Acknowledging there can be suffering from prejudice and oppression due to ethnicity and culture
  - ▶ Psalms on oppression (e.g., 10, 73, 102)
- ▶ Crying out to God as an act of worship and trust
  - ▶ Psalms, Lamentations, Habakkuk, Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

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## Sufferer

### Meeting their suffering with Biblical hope

- ▶ God cares about our suffering (e.g., Psa. 56:8) and does not afflict from His heart (Lam. 3:33), is present (e.g., Psa. 23:4; Isa. 43:1-7), and is our comfort (e.g., 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Isa. 51:12, 66:13)
- ▶ Suffering is necessary for spiritual growth
  - ▶ e.g., Rom. 5:3-5; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; Jas. 1:2-4; Heb. 12:5-11
- ▶ Suffering is going somewhere good!
  - ▶ e.g., Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Phil. 3:8-11; Rev. 21:4-5

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## Sinner

- ▶ Differentiating between their cultural values and biblical values
- ▶ Identifying their idolatries - what they worship and where they seek their "salvation" from other than God - and how their culture(s) may influence this
  - ▶ "ethnicity answers to the profound human need for identity, belonging and security." (Keith Ferdinando, *The Ethnic Enemy*, p. 58)
- ▶ Conviction (Psa. 51:3, Luke 18:13), Confession (Psa. 51, 1 John 1:7-9; Prov. 28:13), Repentance (2 Cor. 7:8-10)!

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...in a fallen world human beings, in their search for lost *identity and security*, have a constant tendency to accord to their autonomous governmental/ national/communal collectivity an *idolatrous commitment*, and human governors/leaders have a constant tendency to demand it (cf. the different portraits of government, people and power in the book of Daniel).

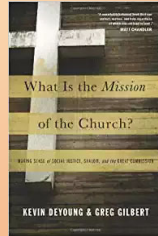
Neil Summerton, "Identity Crisis? The Nation-State, Nationality, Regionalism, Language and Religion," *Themelios* 21, no. 3 (1996): 18.

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## Saint

- ▶ Having Biblical Discernment
  - ▶ Kevin DeYoung & Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission.*
  - ▶ John MacArthur, *The Injustice of Social Justice*, <https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B180813>



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## Saint

- ▶ Growing in knowing God and His perfect character (2 Pet. 2:1-3)
  - ▶ Attributes: Loving, Just (e.g., 2 Thess 1:6-8), Wise, Sovereign
  - ▶ *Trusting God* by Jerry Bridges
- ▶ Love: e.g., 1 Cor 13; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 1:5
- ▶ Not being overcome by evil, but overcoming evil with good (Rom. 12:9-21)
- ▶ Responding with the "constructive displeasure of mercy"
  - ▶ *Good and Angry: Redeeming Anger, Irritation, Complaining, and Bitterness* by David Powlison

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## Saint

### Stewarding Ethnicity

- ▶ While I am not defined by my ethnicity, it is a part of how God created me, and to be stewarded for His Kingdom
- ▶ Japan
  - ▶ only 1% Christian
  - ▶ 97.8% unreached
  - ▶ 23 out of 36 people groups are unreached
- ▶ Romans 9:1-3 (ESV)  
I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart; <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

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## my current worldview

- ▶ **Information:** I have an ethnicity, though it is not my defining identity (no longer a problem)
- ▶ **Interpretation:** God created me, including my ethnicity, in His sovereignty and providence
- ▶ **Intervention:** engage Him in suffering as it relates to my ethnicity, repent in my sin, work out my salvation with fear and trembling as I steward my life (including my ethnicity) for His Kingdom and glory
- ▶ **Worship:** The Triune Redeemer!

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## Identity in Christ

- ▶ Finding one's ultimate identity in Christ
- ▶ 1 Corinthians 12:12-21 – One Body with Many Members
- ▶ Ephesians 2:11-22 – One in Christ
  - ▶ **Without the gospel:** separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world
  - ▶ **In Christ:** brought near by His blood, made one, the dividing wall of hostility broken down in His flesh, Jews and Gentiles both reconciled to God in one body through the cross. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

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