Comment

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> Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.... The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.
> —1 Corinthians 12:14, 21, 26–27

If an underlying contention runs through this issue, it is this: only at great cost does the church say "I don't need you" to the particular ethnic communities that comprise its very body. The claim of both Max Lee and Bruce Fields is that the North American church desperately needs to *see* its need for the scriptural interpretations of minority Christian communities and biblical scholars; the two additional articles provide intercultural readings that further support this claim.

North Park Theological Seminary professor Max Lee begins the issue—and appropriately so, as it emerges from his course, Intercultural Biblical Interpretation. Lee introduces the goal, method, and benefits of reading Scripture interculturally, inviting the church to this practice of listening to one another with open ears and so together reading Scripture with new eyes. Two extended examples of intercultural readings follow, one from the Old Testament and one from the New, written for Lee's course by graduates now serving the church.

Nilwona Nowlin advocates the necessity of reconciliation between African Americans and Africans in the United States *prior* to the possibility of reconciliation with white or other ethnic Americans. She offers a

reading of Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers as a resource for this "family reunion" so that God might similarly take what was meant for evil and from it bring good (Genesis 45:5, 7; 50:20).

Erik Borggren explores how reading Scripture *from* a cultural context that is not one's own might expand our imagination to open up more fruitful readings. Borggren explores the response of Japanese Americans to internment during World War II as a means of collapsing a false opposition between Paul's call to "be subject to governing authorities" (Romans 13:1) and his locating the Christian's citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Borggren suggests a third way is opened by Japanese American resistance to the dehumanization of internment camps in the form of the art of *gaman*, "enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity" (quoted, p. 32).

Together Nowlin's and Borggren's papers demonstrate (1) how Scripture can provide resources *for* specific cultural communities and, conversely, (2) how reading intentionally *from* a particular cultural context may enable the church to read Scripture in fresh and faithful ways.

The issue closes with an article by Bruce Fields, associate professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. A guest lecturer in Lee's course, Fields delivered the 2015 Eaton-Jones Lecture at North Park, from which this article derives. Using Paul's imagery of the body of Christ, Fields argues that if the contribution of one *ethnic* part of the church is not receive by the whole church, the entire body suffers. As a concrete example of this, Fields offers four lessons a black hermeneutic extends to the wider church. He secondly calls a black hermeneutic to self-evaluation through the balancing of theology and praxis and attention to the Christian tradition.

The ultimate concern of all four authors in the biblical readings they offer or advocate is love—love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self. Nowlin makes the case that a healthy self-love is prerequisite to obeying Christ's command to love our neighbor as ourselves—and that this self-love is impeded by deeply rooted racism and the tension between Africans and African Americans symptomatic of it. Borggren calls the church to its fundamental identity is as "a community in which the gospel is proclaimed, the idolatries of fear and power are rejected, and worship is expressed through the love of neighbor as oneself" (p. 38). Lee's conclusion captures well this common aim:

> What better way can we love our neighbor than to take

> steps to learn about the cultural histories that shaped their identities and somehow, in the process, empathize with their struggles and make them our own? What better way can we love ourselves by letting our neighbors help expose our invisible presuppositions and prejudices? And what better way can we love God than when we, as a united community of diverse believers, learn from one another's readings of Scripture so that we can obey its teaching with greater faithfulness? (p.14)

After reading the proposals that follow, these questions await your consideration.

For further resources and discussion on reading the Bible interculturally, join the conversation at Forum: Dialoging with the Covenant Quarterly.