

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON RACE, JUSTICE, AND DIVERSITY

*The resources in this document come from a wide variety of perspectives—Christian and non-Christian, academic and practical. Some of the authors operate from a worldview that may not align with a Christian worldview, and at points, stands in opposition to it. These resources reflect a critical journey to read widely, listen to diverse voices, empathize with people of different backgrounds and experiences, and grow in my own understanding and leadership. Resources marked with an asterisk (\*) are resources that I have flagged as more controversial and “advanced,” that is, these are resources that should be read a little further along in the process, once you have a more rooted, biblical understanding of race, justice, and diversity.*

## Academic Resources

Alcántara, Jared. *Crossover Preaching: Intercultural-Improvisational Homiletics with Gardner C. Taylor*. Strategic Initiatives in Evangelical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015.

*This book examines the preaching style of Gardner Taylor and his ability to speak effectively to white churches and congregations. This book also contains a succinct and fair critique of black liberation theology. Recommended for preachers.*

\*Barron, Jessica M. and Rhys H. Williams. *The Urban Church Imagined*. New York, NY: NYU Press, 2017.

*An academic book which is a case-study of a white-majority church starting a multisite campus in a downtown, urban context. Sheds light on the inauthenticity of tokenism.*

Edwards, Korie L. *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008.

*This academic work analyzes multiethnic churches. The primary finding is that multiethnic churches are only as multiethnic as the white Christians in the church allows it to be. There is great resistance among white congregants to embrace becoming a truly diverse church.*

Emerson and Smith. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000.

*This academic work examines why many churches fail to engage in racial reconciliation. White Christians approach race with a toolbox—individualism (start with your heart), relationships (become friends with the other), and antistructuralism (racism does not exist in systems, but individuals). Black Christians, however, view American culture as a racialized society that has systems which need reformed. For these reasons, Black and White Christians do not see eye-to-eye.*

Frey, William H. *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics Are Remaking America*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015.

*This book was an analysis of 2010 census data and made projections of what the future of America is heading towards—one that is minority-majority and increasingly multiethnic.*

\*Inazu, John. *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

*A book on Christian cultural engagement. A pretty academic work (written by a lawyer and focuses on a lot of legal cases and their interpretations); however, strong application points and a much-needed message for today.*

Sanneh, Lamin. *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

*Sanneh looks at how Christianity originated and spread. His key insight is that the Bible was culturally “unlocked” from its inception. Jesus, an Aramaic-speaking Jew, had all his words recorded in Greek in the New Testament. This subtle thing means that no culture has a claim on Christ; all have access to him.*

\*Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

*The global center of Christianity is moving southward. Rah paints a picture of what the future of Christianity looks like and why this is good news for the world.*

## **American Life and the Black Experience**

\*Anderson, Elijah. *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2000.

*This work of sociology looks at the inner city of Philadelphia and the origins of the unwritten rules that govern the “streets.”*

\*Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

*Coates writes about his experience on being black in America. The book is written as a series of letters from father to son. A helpful read to take the first step.*

Ellis Jr., Carl F. *Free at Last? The Gospel and the African American Experience*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

*A highly recommended work. Dr. Ellis traces the history of African American thought and how the biblical narratives connect to the Black experience.*

Logan, Doug. *On the Block: Developing a Biblical Picture for Missional Engagement*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2016.

*A book aimed at giving urban churches practical ways to do ministry in an urban setting. The big idea is contact ministry, being “on the block” and getting to know those immediately around you.*

Loritts, Bryan. *Insider/Outsider: My Journey as a Stranger in White Evangelicalism and My Hope for Us All*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.

*Loritts retells his experience as a Black Christian pastor in white-majority evangelical spaces. A lot to learn here. Recommended for those in ministry.*

Mason, Eric. *Woke Church: An Urgent Call for Christians in America to Confront Racism and Injustice*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2018.

*Mason pulls no punches as he discusses the state of American Christianity. He argues for how to combat racism, pursue reconciliation, and work for justice. Ligon Duncan writes a heartfelt foreword.*

Perkins, John M. *Dream with Me: Race, Love, and the Struggle We Must Win*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017.

*Perkins, a civil rights advocate, reflects on his life and offers a challenge to Christians to persist in the work of racial justice.*

Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

*Stevenson, founder of Equal Justice Initiative, talks about the problems of racial injustice and policing. Moving narrative which builds empathy.*

Robinson, Natasha Sistrunk. *A Sojourner's Truth: Choosing Freedom and Courage in a Divided World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

*Robinson has a diverse background, and she uses the exodus narrative to both tell her story and convey principles she has learned from the minority experience.*

Tisby, Jemar. *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019.

*Tisby examines the roots of American racism and how it grew unaddressed in the American church. Contains some practical applications at the end. Tisby has received criticism from many in the PCA, but his history and story-telling are eye-opening.*

Vidal, Juan. *Rap Dad: A Story of a Family and the Subculture That Shaped a Generation*. New York, NY: Atria Books, 2018.

*A memoir of a Latino Christian who grew up without a father and influenced by rap culture. Provides insight into fatherhood and the importance of family structures and healing in broken homes.*

## **Christian Ministry**

Brooks, Christopher. *Urban Apologetics: Why the Gospel Is Good News for the City*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Press, 2014.

*An accessible guide on how to respond to objections to Christianity that are common among those in the African American community. Quick read.*

Crouch, Andy. *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.

*This book is an examination of power and how Christians ought to steward it. Chapters, 6, 8, and 10 are insightful to understanding the Black church tradition. Also contains a helpful excursus on Philemon.*

\_\_\_\_\_. *Strong and Weak: Embracing a Life of Love, Risk & True Flourishing*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016.

*This book utilizes a 2x2 grid that gives a framework for flourishing: flourishing, suffering, withdrawal, and exploiting. Those who flourish “descend to the dead,” entering into spaces of suffering to lift up those being exploited. This speaks to the difficulty of reconciliation. Flourishing is to possess authority and vulnerability and to take on more vulnerability to serve the hurting.*

Ellis Jr., Carl F. *Apologetics in an Urban Context*. Logos Mobile Education. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015.

*This course connects apologetics and the African American community, focusing on core concerns and providing a history of the development of African American thought, as well as why “traditional” apologetics often doesn’t connect.*

Gustine, Adam. *Becoming a Just Church: Cultivating Communities of God’s Shalom*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.

*This book provides some practical steps on engaging in works of justice in the church’s particular community. Pretty generic action points.*

Humphreys, José. *Seeing Jesus in East Harlem: What Happens When Churches Show Up and Stay Put*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

*A Puerto Rican pastor ministering in East Harlem, he retells his story and how the church can make an impact when it invests in a community and stays in place.*

Jeon, Paul. *Unreconciled: The New Norm*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018.

*An exposition of Philemon with a focus on reconciliation. Short and practical.*

Lindsay, Ben. *We Need to Talk about Race: Understanding the Black Experience in White Majority Churches*. London: SPCK, 2019.

*An assessment of the Black church experience in the UK. Contains both historical data and practical applications for churches.*

Perez, Rich. *Mi Casa Uptown: Learning to Love Again*. Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2017.

*The main idea in this book is what if familiarity did not breed contempt, but love? This book contains pastoral reflections on being invested in the community and loving place.*

Rah, Soong-Chan. *Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015.

*Rah looks at biblical lament, its value, and its place in the process of racial reconciliation.*

Swanson, David W. *Rediscipling the White Church: From Cheap Diversity to True Solidarity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.

*Swanson advocates for reimagining Christian discipleship to address racism in white Christians. Part 1 of his book gives foundation; Part 2 is application. A book aimed at practitioners.*

Van Opstal, Sandra Maria. *The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015.

*This book looks at ways to introduce more diversity into corporate worship. Contains many good ideas and gives helpful tips on how to implement change.*

## Contemporary Sources

Burns, Tyler and Jemar Tisby. "Pass the Mic" podcast.  
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/pass-the-mic/id1435500798>

*Periodical podcast covering current events from a Black, Christian perspective. Good resource for getting a quick pulse on the culture.*

Higgins, Michelle, Christina Edmonson and Ekemini Uwan. "Truth's Table" podcast.  
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/truths-table/id1212429230>

*Periodical podcast covering current events from a female, Black, Christian perspective. Good resource for getting a quick pulse on the culture.*

Keller, Timothy and John Inazu. *Uncommon Ground: Living Faithfully in a World of Difference*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2020.

*A collection of essays on how to engage culture and be a faithful witness for Christ.*

Newbell, Trillia. *United: Captured by God's Vision for Diversity*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

*Newbell's aim is to help the reader see the beauty of unity (not uniformity) and how churches should be in the business of reconciliation, as it is near to God's heart. Practical and accessible.*

Sauls, Scott. *Befriend: Create Belonging in an Age of Judgment, Isolation, and Fear*. Nashville, TN: Tyndale House Publishers, 2016.

*A book on friendship that isn't cheesy. Chapter 14 on befriending the other race is pertinent to this bibliography.*

Wear, Michael. *Reclaiming Hope: Lessons Learned in the Obama White House About the Future of Faith in America*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2017.

*Wear worked during Obama's first term. As a Christian Democrat, he explains parts of the democratic platform (which in our era of identity politics) in a helpful way, allowing those of the other party to find common ground on important issues.*

## Historical Sources

Douglass, Frederick. "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"  
<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>

*A historical address by Frederick Douglass, exposing the hypocrisy of American Christians and the racist systems it protects.*

King, Jr., Martin Luther. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."  
[http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/letter\\_birmingham\\_jail.pdf](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/letter_birmingham_jail.pdf)

*A must-read essay from the civil rights movement that still has moral force today.*

Lewis John, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell. *March*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Production, 2016.

*A series of graphic novels retelling the story of the civil rights movement.*

## Leadership

Chand, Samuel R. *Leadership Pain: The Classroom for Growth*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2015.

*This book, primarily on change and leadership, contains a lesson for those who want to enact large-scale change: your ability to grow is limited to the extent you are willing to endure pain. This may explain why many white churches do not pursue genuine racial reconciliation—they may find the cost too high.*

Bradley, Anthony B., ed. *Aliens in the Promised Land: Why Minority Leadership Is Overlooked in White Christian Churches and Institutions*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013.

*This book is a collection of essays from minority pastors on how to build better bridges and incorporate their perspectives.*

Goggin and Strobel. *The Way of the Dragon or the Way of the Lamb: Searching for Jesus' Path of Power in a Church that Has Abandoned It*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2017.

*This book looks at a Christian approach to power. Chapter 5 is an interview with John Perkins, a Christian and a civil rights activist. This chapter is worth a read.*

Ince, Irwyn. *The Beautiful Community: Unity, Diversity, and the Church at Its Best*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.

*Irwyn's book moves from the doctrine of God and the divine attribute of beauty to paint a picture of what the Church can be as a beautiful, diverse community. Highly recommend.*

Loritts, Bryan. *Right Color: Wrong Culture: A Leadership Fable*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

*A leadership book in the vein of Patrick Lencioni that helps white churches identify what to look for in a diverse hire. His categories can be seen as simplistic, but a helpful framework for those starting from square one.*

Pei, Adrian. *The Minority Experience: Navigating Emotional and Organizational Realities*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

*Pei, an Asian-American, writes about how minorities navigate Christian churches and organizations. Helpful for those in majority culture to identify their blind spots.*

## **PCA Resources**

Kwon, Duke. "Speaking the Truth in Love." [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejNaO\\_ec\\_Uk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejNaO_ec_Uk)

*A sermon—primarily for black Christians—on how to engage their white brothers and sisters. Also contains ideas for "ecclesial reparations," that is, ways to imagine a way forward for our brown believers in the PCA.*

Presbyterian Church in America. "Report on Racial and Ethnic Reconciliation." [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2018\\_Racial\\_and\\_Ethnic\\_Reconciliation.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2018_Racial_and_Ethnic_Reconciliation.pdf)

*The denominational report on race, ethnicity, and reconciliation, containing history and action steps. A must read.*