



## Season 2, Episode 12

### Vince Bantu Rewrites the Church's Understanding of its own Origins

#### SUMMARY KEYWORDS

christianity, people, book, church, vince, felt, black, white, writing, early, western, christian, color, world, published, culture, speaking, evangelical, press, write

#### SPEAKERS

Promo, Helen Lee, Vince Bantu, Ed Gilbreath, Maila Kim

Maila Kim 00:01

Welcome to The Every Voice Now Podcast, where we bring voices of color into the spotlight. I'm Maila Kim,

Ed Gilbreath 00:07

and I'm Ed Gilbreath. In every episode, you'll hear from authors of color about the making of their books, as well as the challenges they had to overcome along the way.

Helen Lee 00:24

Hi, everyone, I'm Helen Lee, producer of The Every Voice Now Podcast. And I'm thrilled at the chance to tell you a bit about today's featured guest. Vince Bantu is a professor of church history and Black church studies. And he's also the author of our book *A Multitude of All Peoples: Engaging Ancient Christianity's Global Identity*, which won an award of merit from Christianity Today. Now, as you think about the origins of the early church, you might be someone who unconsciously or unconsciously believes that Christianity had European origin and then eventually made its way around the world. But Vince upends those assumptions and presents a pretty compelling argument for why many of us have the story backwards, and what the real roots are of the early church. And along the way in this conversation, I've got to tell you, Vince drops all kinds of fire in sharing his story of growing up in a Black neighborhood, but attending a predominantly white evangelical church and college, and I think you will find this an



eye-opening and fascinating conversation. I learned so much from Vince, and I'm sure you will, too. So please enjoy this conversation between our hosts Maila Kim, and Ed Gilbreath, with Vince Bantu.

Maila Kim 01:52

We are excited to welcome Vince Bantu to The Every Voice Now Podcast today. So thank you for joining us, Vince.

Vince Bantu 01:59

Oh, thanks for having me. Yeah, great to be here.

Maila Kim 02:02

I want to start off with having you tell us a little bit about your personal backstory. So where did you grow up, where do you live now, or any other details you'd like to share about your family?

Vince Bantu 02:13

Yeah, I'm from St. Louis, from the west side. Born and raised, I moved away when I went to college, and I was gone for about 15 years. And in 2015, I came back home. And you know, my wife and I started a church and we do ministry here in the neighborhood.

Maila Kim 02:30

Can you also share with us a little bit about your ethnic identity? So what is your ethnicity? What are some key moments in your ethnic journey that stand out to you both positive and negative? Would love to just kind of hear that story?

Vince Bantu 02:44



Oh, definitely. Yeah, so I am Black, African American. My father also is African American, from St. Louis, my mother's white. So I'm biracial, come from a biracial household and family. But, you know, I grew up in a black neighborhood. And just, you know, we know how the one-drop mentality functions in this country, so I always identified as Black. My church that I grew up in was actually a white church, a white evangelical church, and it was actually only about two miles away from my house, it might as well have been in a different world, because St. Louis is a very, like segregated city, the whole city is cut in half by one street, and everything on one side of that street is black, it's predominately poor. And then straight, straight to the south of that street is like all white. And it's like, you know, very, very wealthy, so it's like a racial and economic divide. We're up about a mile north of that line. But my church was about a mile south of that line. So it's about two miles away. But it was like a, you know, different world altogether. And so I just grew up always associating Christianity with that culture, because they were the way I got connected to it just because they used to come into our neighborhood and try to cross the the famous divide of St. Louis, racial divide, they would try to come in and minister and reach the poor Black people. So my family was one of the ones that was kind of being ministered or reached out to who were helping us out, you know, financially and all that. So I kind of grew up in that church going over there. And then nobody else in my neighborhood went to church at all. I mean, this was growing up in the 80s, where there was the gangs, the Crips, and Bloods and all that. So nobody in my neighborhood was churched. I didn't, you know, I didn't have an alternative optics for, you know, people who looked like me sounded like me or acted like me, you know, following Jesus. The only people I knew that were following Jesus were these white folks. So that's just kind of what I associated Christianity with. I always felt this tension of my ethnic and racial identity and who I identified with and what I identified Christianity to be, and I just felt like they were like, kind of opposite things. I just tried to have a foot in both worlds, so to speak, in my neighborhood one way but then in my church another but then when the Lord called me to ministry when I was in high school, I felt like that was, okay, I need to take my walk more seriously now. So for me, that was like equivalent to rejecting my culture. So I felt like I needed to assimilate to kind of this white suburban evangelical culture. And for me, it was like in order to be good Christian lives like and acts like. And so that was that was like when I, by my senior year of high school where I just went through this transformation and started really trying to move away from my culture that I actually identified with and tried to embrace this other culture that I identified as being a Christian culture.

Maila Kim 05:28

Hearing kind of your upbringing and your experience just adds so much more layers and depth to exactly what it is that you write about and the work that you're doing. So I'm excited for that



conversation. But before we even get to the book, I'm curious even about your writing journey. Were you the type of person who always thought, "I want to write a book," or how did that even come to be?

Vince Bantu 05:49

You know, I think within my first semester of college, that was actually when the Lord really kind of saved me from a colonized discipleship and self hatred, really, I kind of went and did a 180. And really went back into embracing my culture. And my, and I would say, I'll give a shout out to my uncle who's transitioned to the next phase. And my uncle Richard Twiss, you know, he also, you know, wrote with IVP, he came to speak, actually, I remember as my first semester in college, and, you know, he was dancing and drumming and talking about how, you know, how we all you know, God made us all distinctly beautifully, not despise it and, and the Lord really spoke to me from Acts chapter 10, when when God told Peter to kill and eat, Peter said, "I'm not touching anything that's unclean," and God said, "Peter, don't call anything unclean," and that's really what I felt the Lord was speaking to me that I had called who I am, and who my and my community unclean. And that's really what made me want to actually begin bring the gospel in ways that are relevant to my community and my culture. And as much as I love my experience in undergrad, I didn't really, it wasn't really training me to do ministry in my context, but it was training me to do ministry in, you know, again, that context of power that frames Christian discourse, you know, that I'd been taught to try to assimilate into. So, my wife and I, into going to seminary in an urban context in the inner city of Boston, seminary was all focused on like, preparing people to do ministry in the hood. And that was when the Lord really, you know, made it clear to me that he really wanted me to be a part of something like that, to go into academics, and go into writing, and studying and research and teaching, but specifically for that context, like to basically, you know, be a theologian for the hood, and for the, you know, for the block. And that's, that's really what that whole thing came about.

Ed Gilbreath 07:44

So, Vince, I'm curious, what was the road to getting published like for you? Was it pretty easygoing? Or did you experience some, some turbulence along the way?

Vince Bantu 07:55





I would say, so it was a mixture of both actually, like, I got saved when I was like, seven years old. And but I didn't know what an evangelical was until I, you know, went to college. I was 19, like, 12 years later, I was like, "Oh, are you evangelical?" I'm like, I don't know, what does that mean, you know, and so there's so much language and cultural capital that is wrapped up in evangelicalism and, and the academic world that I had access to, when I, as soon as I went to, like a prominent evangelical school, I just started getting opened up to that to that world, and I gained access to that world. And I would say, it's extremely hard for people from my community to publish, and to break into that world or to gain access. I, you know, I didn't have good grades in high school. So I like barely got in by the skin of my teeth. And I had people behind the scenes fighting for me, but I mean, the, you know, life could have went a whole different direction. But to say that when I went to this prominent, you know, evangelical school, I met Dr. Soong-Chan Rah who came to speak there. And then I just ran up to him after he spoke in chapel, and began a relationship and a connection. Now, he's still one of my closest mentors today. And then after I finished my PhD, he specifically connected me with InterVarsity Press, and was talking to me about publishing. And so in that, that phase of it was actually very easy. I knew somebody, he has published with this press, and so he just hooked a brother up. The first part of it going back to adolescence, and first breaking into this evangelical power table, was really hard and almost didn't happen. And so it just makes me think about all the other voices that are growing up in the barrio and that are growing up in the hood, that are growing up [...], and also have a lot to say, and that just don't have access to these these power tables that I do and that we do.

Ed Gilbreath 09:46

Those relationships are important, but it's a challenge to us as well as publishers or as folks working in the industry to be more intentional and working harder at identifying where the next great scholars and writers are. Let's talk a little bit more specifically about *A Multitude of All Peoples*, your book. The topic you're tackling is, and I quote, "The historical roots of the Western cultural captivity of the church, and the development of early non-Western expressions of Christianity." Can you unpack that for us, just sort of give us an accessible rundown of what you're doing in the book?

Vince Bantu 10:25

When I was in college, you know, I learned church history, but it was really just Western white church history, or Western white theology, but it's being presented as this normative global all-



inclusive the thing, and then people of color get, like kind of tacked on at the end of like, being these add ons or these afterthoughts. But on the flip side, you know, what, again, when I was in seminary, and I was in this urban kind of context, you know, I took this focused study on African churches, and I was actually on a trip in Egypt. And that was the first time I learned about how the church was India or Egypt or Ethiopia, like, even I just, I just thought I was it was actually it was interesting, because I was on this study tour with a group of Black, you know, seminarians and pastors, actually multiethnic, very culturally diverse, most people was black. And it was really an emotional experience. Because all of us, myself included, were, you know, shocked to find out that Christianity was actually in Africa, all over Africa long before, the mentality is often that, well, Christianity came into African and African diasporic societies through slavery and colonialism. And so it was really empowering to learn that but also even learned about the early church in Asia and on the Silk Road. I was like, man, this is great. And nobody talks about this. When I learned about the ancient part of it, that made me want to get to the bottom of like, well, where did that come from? Like, how did we point because clearly, that's not the picture of Scripture. So how do we get from Scripture to the hot mess of 2016? You know, and 2020? Like, how, what happened? Or slave ships, or Jim Crow or, you know, residential schools, all the all the hot messes, you know, Crusades, that have happened? How do we get from Scripture to all that? But really the heart of the first part of the book, but really the core of it, and I think the more important part, is the unsung heroes that are really in the core of the book of showing that, again, Christianity has been in these other places as well. And I think if we can tell those stories, we can also begin to understand that even as we try to decolonize and decenter the kind of Western normative narrative of Christianity, that actually that's, that's a that's been going on since day one. In fact, there's not only you know, there's not only examples of decolonial theology, but there's actually acolonial theology. There's, there's theology that is developed in contexts of color that haven't known colonialism, that that precede the colonial Christianity. Everything's not only an afterthought, or even a reaction to hegemonic Christianity, but Christianity that's existed free of dominant Christian culture.

Ed Gilbreath 12:55

Why do you think so many of us in North America, so many North American Christians remain ignorant about this history? Why is it so buried?

Vince Bantu 13:06



You know, obviously, white supremacy, I think is the most important and first answer that that we still live in a society that is white supremacist, that whites control most aspects of society, government, culture, education, academia, and in some ways, it's even worse now than it was maybe in the segregation that grew up in or, you know, in others. Now, it's more like subversive and indirect there. But I mean, academia still runs in a Western normative kind of way. I mean, even when we think about like, I mean, I'm an ancient historian, even when you think about the classics, right? And the great literature in colleges, and all these things like, though this mentality that like the Western, whether it's ancient or medieval, or modern, you know, the classics are all kind of in the Western context. So we have a pedagogy and a curriculum, that's centered around the West and whiteness, and again, people of color, are just kind of like, you know, the orbiting the white center of all things. And I think that that's a lot of us, even us, as people of color are sometimes trained to, to measure our success by the degree to which we can acclimate to and achieve things in white institutions, rather than just understanding who we are in and of ourselves. And that's another reason why I'm really interested in history, African and Asian history that's not responding to white culture, but it actually precedes it and exists in many ways apart from it.

Ed Gilbreath 14:33

There's a lot a lot there to continue to unpack, but first we need to take a quick break. But when we return, Vince will continue on this fascinating subject and he will actually do a reading for us and talk more about the writing process as well. So stay tuned. And thanks for listening to The Every Voice Now Podcast.

Promo 14:53

Ed Gilbreath 15:01

Welcome back to The Every Voice Now Podcast. I'm Ed Gilbreath. And it's time for our Behind the Words segment, where Vince will be reading a passage from his book *A Multitude of All Peoples*, and then we'll find out a little bit more about what went on behind the scenes of writing that passage. Vince, what will you be reading for us today?



Vince Bantu 15:54

So starting on page two in the first kind of full paragraph it says: Contemporary missiology has often advanced the church's cultural self understanding by highlighting the unprecedented recorded numbers of Christians in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The "typical Christian" of the 21st century is not a white man, but an African woman. However, the modern global church has often presented as emerging from centuries of a Western Christian majority. Lammin Sanneh provides another example of this westernized Christian narrative, and he says in time, Christianity expanded from Europe into Asia and Africa, among other places, and was able to break out of its western cultural confinement by repeating the process by which the church's missionary center shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch and beyond. The dominant concept of Christian history is now that Christianity went from its multicultural beginnings in first century Palestine, across a Western trajectory of European and North American captivity to only now reflect global diversity. It is a common misconception that requires further conversation. Many contemporary missiologists and church historians would have us believe that Christianity came into Africa and Asia from Europe when the reality is quite the opposite. In several significant respects. Christianity is not becoming a global religion, it has always been a global religion. He was home to many of the earliest biblical manuscripts and had an organized ecclesiastical hierarchy no later than the late second century. Ethiopia became a predominantly Christian nation in the fourth century and along with Nubia function under the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Egypt. Syriac-speaking Christian merchants brought Christianity along the Silk Road to the Persian Empire in the early third century to Central Asia in the mid-fourth century, and as far east as China in the mid-sixth century. While it is possible that the apostle Thomas brought the gospel to India in the first century, Syriac-speaking Christians reported missionary activity to India no later than the late third century. These traditions spread rapidly across the continents of Africa and Asia, and took on indigenous forms at a time when the majority of northern and western Europe practiced pagan religion. Despite the persisting association of the Christian faith with Western culture and whiteness, Christianity has always been a global religion that spread from Jerusalem in every direction.

Maila Kim 18:11

Vince, can you tell us what your experience was writing this portion? Did it just flow? Or was it a struggle to write this portion of the book?

Vince Bantu 18:20





Yeah, it was pretty flowing. I, you know, I mentioned earlier that, you know, I went to seminary in a place where I was able to connect theological content with my cultural context, and my community, and also my faith. But after that, you know, I felt called to go into get a doctorate. And in some ways, it was like, it was a great experience. But other ways it was little isolating, because I was one of the only people of color certainly the only black person in my in my department. But now as a scholar, I'm one of the only African Americans in the whole field of early Christianity, I don't I don't know of one other that focuses on the early church. So even going to academic conferences and publishing and there's a big disconnect, you know, between people, the guild of early Christian scholars, so writing the book was almost like the first time I was able to finally connect the field of study that I'm interested in, which is early African Christianity, and Asian, early Asian Christianity, but also connecting that with the missiological cultural perspective. I can be my full self in this book really, is kind of, you know, what it felt like because a lot of the multiethnic kind of believers that I most resonate with, and in terms of values, theologically, politically, socially, all that kind of stuff, hardly none of them are interested in early Christianity. On the flip side, most people again in the guild, who are really interested in early Christianity don't share my same again, cultural and theological kind of values. And so it feels kind of like sometimes like I'm the only one trying to bridge that gap. And so again, the book gave the opportunity to really try to do that.

Maila Kim 20:00

You know something about being probably one of the pioneers, or the only one in your area of interest is, it takes a lot of courage to say hard things. You can't look to your left and right and say, "Oh, they'll get it." I mean, you make bold statements, like too many people, both Christians and non Christians still perceive Christianity as a white man's religion. It's a pretty strong, true statement, but it's a strong and bold statement. So what are the reactions that you've gotten to your thesis statement? How have people received that?

Vince Bantu 20:29

It's been pretty positive, for the most part, mainly from the Black Christian side, which is probably, you know, my, my largest audience or my most direct audience and that I engage with the most. There's been a lot of really just kind of encouragement. And you know, just a lot of like, "Man, I didn't know that. That's amazing." And it's, I think it's been affirming to see how our ancestors have been part of the Christian story from day one. And even pre, again, even preceding a lot of European context. So it's been really encouraging. I think, um, in terms of



negative pushback, I haven't had a whole lot of that directly. One of my other Black audiences that I really tried to speak to is like, Black non-Christian religious communities again, I mean, I'm a, I consider myself a hood theologian. I'm a theologian for the hood, for the block. That's another way I try to decolonize my scholarship is, again, I'm just not really interested in speaking to or answering questions that are predominantly, that are white questions. CRT is like everyone's talking about it now. To me, that's a white question like even to, you know, to have an issue. I'm like, I don't I have no interest whatsoever in using my mental or time energy, trying to convince people that systemic racism exists. But for me, I'm interested in more like, good questions, like are Black people Hebrews? Or, you know, is Christianity a copy of, you know, Egyptian religion? Or, these are questions again, that in the dominant culture, that doesn't even ask, so that's another way we can decolonize right is like, who are we speaking to? And what questions are we seeking to ask? That's another demographic, like Black Hebrew Israelites, Semitic Orthodox and or conscious community? You know, five percenters? Like all these different kinds of Black, non-Christian and even anti-Christian religious communities are another audience that I definitely get a lot of pushback from, and things like that. So that's, I would say, that's been, you know, where a lot of the pushback has been, has been from, for the most part

Ed Gilbreath 22:16

Help me though as a, as a person and others out there who are sort of in the business of engaging with the white community on these topics. How do you push through, how do you persevere? What advice would you have for those who are in a context where they're presenting these ideas to white community that is resistant, oftentimes?

Vince Bantu 22:38

I don't think y'all are gonna like my advice. And feel free to disregard it. But again, I I'm just trying to be truthful and true to what I feel the Lord has laid on my heart. And going on with the analogy I just used, I honestly truly think the most loving thing we can do for white evangelicals at this point, is to just leave it alone. Honestly, God has sent them so many prophets that they have literally killed. And I feel like honestly, the most loving thing to do is to just repeat, you know, people of color, or even like white allies that really want to see justice done, please, we waste so much time trying to convince and labor with these people who say they love Jesus and hold so much power, and yet seem very uninterested in actually leveraging that power in the support and in the empowerment of those who are on the margins. We just waste so much time trying. And I think we think, "Oh, we can get them to change. There's so much great things that



can be done and all that kind of stuff." I'm like, but we just we literally spend careers, and years trying to get that to happen. And again, I'm not trying to, look, if God tells somebody to do something, yes, obey what the Lord said. But I just have this sneaky suspicion that I just wonder, is God actually really calling all of us to keep laboring with white Evangelicals, they have more money, they have more clout, they have more power that we're all looking for, we think--

Ed Gilbreath 23:59

Careful, careful,

Vince Bantu 24:00

You know, or do we think like nothing can really happen transformatively if they're not on board? They've been told, like, it's not a lack of love, it's not an apathy, but like they've been told. But again, I'm seeing so many other spaces in the margins that need and this is this is like maybe like off point, but I just have a thing. I just have a side kind of passion for people of color, who kind of walked the bridge, who are the bridges and who walked the line between like our communities of origin, and like dominantly-white evangelical space that many of us have access to. I just see so many of us giving so much of our time and energy to try to transform the white evangelical center. And oftentimes we don't have any energy left over for our community. Pour into our communities of origin, those places in the margins, and when people with power want to get involved in that and not need to be in charge and not need to be running it and not need to have their institution you know, their flag waving, then yes, there's a place for it. You know, there's like, like the rich man who talks to Jesus like, hey, come on, let's, let's do it. But you got to, you know, you got to leave...you "follow me." And when there's when there's a lack of desire to do that there's, you know, Jesus doesn't go chase after that dude. You know, he's not like, "Wait, but I need your funding for my ministry!" It was really hard for the rich man to enter heaven. But what was possible, what's impossible with humans is possible with God.

Maila Kim 25:25

Man, well, we're going to take a quick break. And then when we return, we'll continue our conversation with Vince and find out more about his personal writing habits and quirks. And then you'll also find a way to get a special discount on his book *A Multitude of Peoples*, so stay tuned, and thanks for listening to The Every Voice Now Podcast.



Promo 25:43

Maila Kim 26:54

You're listening to The Every Voice Now Podcast. And I'm Maila Kim. Today we've been talking with Vince Bantu, author of *A Multitude of Peoples*, and keep listening to find out how you can get a special 40% discount on his book at [ivpress.com](http://ivpress.com). But first, let's find out a little bit more about your writing habits and quirks, Vince. And so we'd like to kind of get an inside view on how you actually go about the discipline of writing. What are you like when you sit down and write? Do you sit down and write? Are you focused? Are you all over the place? What is your whole process of writing?

Vince Bantu 27:28

I guess the first thing that I think is important is like just having time for it that's scheduled in and that I just protect with my dying breath. You know, there's so many different meetings and opportunities that come up. But I just treat my writing time like it's a meeting. So I just like block it off. Like, no I'm, I have to write and so, because otherwise things will always come up and and things will always snatch away. I mean, it's almost like having time with the Lord that you want to protect that. And really just having time to be in the Word. It's you know, like not as important as that. But in a similar way, like one of you know, just block off time to write and not let it get snatched up. So I personally I and I do it in four hour chunks. So I have a I do four hours a day of writing. And every week, like Monday through Friday, well I'm doing that right now because I'm on sabbatical for a year. But when I'm not on sabbatical, I have to teach, I try to do at least three days a week, where three four-hour chunks a week of writing, but now in sabbatical I actually do every day, Monday, Friday, because to me four hours is like enough to I really could get some good stuff written because you know, an hour or 30 minutes, that's not enough because you just get into it, right? Personally, again, things might be different from people but I feel like maybe 6, 8, 7-8 hours of writing, that's a lot and I feel like a drain your brain and so it's just better having for me four hours is a good amount of time, you know, to get some good writing in and I'm really in it, I'm just my mind is just absorbed in it. And you know, I turn off the phone, I flip it over, I don't look at the phone and you know, close, you know, don't have my email open and I'm just I'm just in writing world. And some people you know, my wife, she cannot write in the





house, she needs to be at a cafe or library. I can't write NOT in the house. I love, I don't use the office, I don't use library. I mean if I have to go to get some stuff, but when I go to the library, I'm getting what I need. I'm getting out of there, I love having my shoes off and be in sweatpants and I can lay on my bed if I want to for a minute. And you know, I always have music on like, you know, some people can't do that. But I always have some some music on. I find that sometimes people fall into a writing perfectionism where it's like, overthinking every sentence and every word but then like they spend how many hours and there's like a sentence on the page or it reminds me that Fresh Prince episode where like the whole episode Will kept reading, "Welcome to the exciting world of chemistry." Sometimes, like we can get in that funk. You know, and I just I just I just think for a lot of people, not everybody but a lot of people like me, there's just something about when you produce words and put them on the paper and they're there. Yeah, they're imperfect. You can you can save them later. But they're just I think it can motivate you and it'll generate more ideas.

Ed Gilbreath 30:06

I'm curious about the writing of this book, was there anything that happened while you were working on it that you will never forget either a moment of personal insight or just something special that stands out to you and the experience of writing the book?

Vince Bantu 30:22

When I went to the monastery in [...], which was the capital Nubia, in the early medieval period, I went into this monastery and saw this painting that just struck me, and I had never heard of before, I hadn't seen anything published about it. But it was a painting of like these sub-Saharan African people wearing like, pretty typical looking African animal masks, and they were worshipping Jesus. And that really struck me. And this painting was from like, around the, you know, 10th or 11th century. So again, you know, long time ago, and I just felt like it was just a powerful picture of how, again, how the gospel was spreading all throughout Africa, Asia, not only in some of these areas that we have really good...evidence for. But there's also these hints that we get, things like that, how Christianity even spread in other places that we might not have as much evidence to know about, but how the gospel actually continue to spread, because this painting kind of indicated Christianity from the Nile Valley, which we, it's well documented, but even into other sub-Saharan African peoples, groups, to the west and to the south. And so I just got so struck by that image. And it's actually kind of like really fueling my current research, which is mainly focusing on the spread of Christianity from North and East Africa, into the rest of



the continent. It just felt providential that I, I got to see this while I was working on the book, and then the talks about what they wanted to be on the cover. So I was like, ooh, I want that to be on the cover. So that's the painting that, the picture that you see there on the cover,

Ed Gilbreath 31:48

Tell me what advice and encouragement would you have for up and coming academic authors of color, about the journey of getting published.

Vince Bantu 31:57

The most important thing is to have a message that's from the Lord, that really advances his kingdom, and gives God glory, and is something that is uniquely something that he has wanted to communicate, that he can only communicate through you, your experiences, and through your knowledge, and all of that. And, and let that really be the guiding principle, is knowing what you want to say to the world. And, and then, you know, after that, just going back to the earlier conversation I was having, I just want people to please write to people of color. It's cool to have people of color who are authors, I would also just encourage people to write towards that audience. Also, because I get, I think we've had enough books that are aimed towards white people, even written by people of color. But a lot of times when I'm reading books about Black theology, or the Black experience, a lot of times when I'm reading it, I can tell that the person is really writing towards white people and trying to...within to get certain things. And a lot of times, I'm not feeling like they're actually speaking directly to my community. And so that's what I would encourage people to do. Again, I mean, you know, the Lord put someone on somebody's heart, and that needs to be said, again, that hasn't already been said, I, I doubt that that's the case that if there isn't anything that needs to be said to the dominant culture that hasn't already been written, but you know, yeah, do that if, if there's something out there. But I just want encourage more people of color to please write towards audiences of color, and address people of color. which oftentimes don't get brought into the dominant conversation, is a yet another, another thing I would suggest.

Maila Kim 33:31



Well, Vince, we've come to the end of our time together. But before we go, we want to give you a few moments to share with our listeners any upcoming special projects you have going on, and also where people might be able to connect with you.

Vince Bantu 33:43

Oh, definitely, you can connect with me, I'm on social media on Facebook. I'm on Twitter. I don't really check it that much. But, but yeah, definitely feel free. And also, I would say, another African American school that I work with is the Meacham School of Haymanot. We actually also have a an academic theological society of Black scholars. and we have an annual meeting that we just had a couple of weeks ago. And we also have a Black theological journal, which just came out with Urban Ministries International. That's another thing that I want to, I don't want to get in trouble for either. But I would also say even like Black authors, or authors of color, publish with presses of color as well. Find black-owned, Asian or Hispanic-owned, Native-owned, you know, presses and published with them as well. I've enjoyed publishing with IVP, I'm actually some of the upcoming projects, I'm actually working on a book project, now two book projects actually, with the University of California Press. So you could be looking out for those. This this translation project that we're working on with University of California Press that I'm editing is going to be dozens and dozens of Chinese, Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Persian Christian texts, pre-colonial, acolonial but in English translation, so I love doing things like that with dominant presses and things like that. But also, I'm, you know, want to shout out a more recent thing that just came out is going back to our Gospel Haymanot societies, we actually just had our first journal come out or on Urban Ministries International Press, I give a shout out to them, one of the, by far the largest black Christian publisher in the country. So definitely want to encourage all people and and to really support the work that they're doing and other presses of color. It's got like over a dozen academic journals from biblical studies, theological studies, church history, practical theology from Black graduate students and scholars from across the country, as well as some book reviews. And so really the, I think it's one of the only Black theological journals in the country, and by a Black press. So that's, that's probably the most hot off the press thing that I've done recently, so definitely want to put that out as well.

Ed Gilbreath 35:48

Did I hear that you're also working on a podcast?



Vince Bantu 35:51

Oh, that's right. Thank you. Yeah. So um, you know, the Jude 3 project is a ministry that that is I really work closely with and, and yeah, that's I've done a lot of work with him in the past. But yeah, we're actually coming out with a kind of a specialized podcast that focuses on questions about early African Christianity. And again, that's, I think Jude 3 project is a is another great example of again, talking about an organization that's Black owned, that's Black run, and it addresses Black questions. And that's one of them. So yeah, that'll be coming out. It's called the Bisrat, which is excellent Ethiopian ancient Ethiopic word for the gospel. So it's got podcasts and yeah, that should be coming out pretty soon.

Maila Kim 36:30

Well, thank you, Vince. And to our listeners, we wanted to share with you all how you can find A Multitude of Peoples at [everyvoicenow.com](http://everyvoicenow.com) If you use the code EVN40, you can get 40% off and free US shipping, so visit our site to get a great deal on this insightful book.

Ed Gilbreath 36:50

Thanks, everyone for listening to The Every Voice Now Podcast brought to you by IVP. Our producer is Helen Lee. And our sound engineer is Jonathan Clauson. If you are enjoying our show, please share about it with your friends. We'd be grateful for your reviews and recommendations on Apple, Spotify or wherever you listen to your podcasts.

Maila Kim 37:09

And we'd love to hear from you directly anytime. You can find us on Instagram and Twitter @everyvoicenow. Or you can email us with your comments questions or suggestions at [evn@ivpress.com](mailto:evn@ivpress.com). And join us next time for another inspiring episode of Every Voice Now.





### About the Hosts:



#### **Maila Kim, Co-Host**

Maila is a marketing manager at IVP and part of the Every Voice Now steering committee; she holds a B.A. in English Language & Literature and a B.A. in Communication Studies from the University of Michigan, and an M.A. in Christian Formation & Ministry with a concentration in Bible & Theology from Wheaton College Graduate School. She enjoys photography, growing and caring for her plants, and listening to podcasts such as *This American Life*, *Invisibilia*, and *Unlocking Us*. Follow Maila on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).



#### **Helen Lee, Producer and Creator**

Helen is the associate director of strategic partnerships and initiatives; she has a B.A. from Williams College in bioethics, an M.A. from Wheaton College Graduate School in interdisciplinary studies, and an MBA from Babson College in entrepreneurship. She enjoys reading novels by authors of color, finding spots of natural beauty wherever she can, and listening to podcasts such as *Serial*, *The Rewatchables*, *Filmspotting*, and *The Disrupters*. You can find Helen on Twitter and Instagram @HelenLeeBooks.



#### **Ed Gilbreath, Co-Host**

Formerly an editor at IVP, Ed is currently an executive leader at Christianity Today; he earned his bachelor's in communication arts from Judson University and a master's in philosophy of history from Olivet Nazarene University. He is also the author of two IVP books: *Reconciliation Blues* and *Birmingham Revolution*. Follow Ed on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

### The Every Voice Now Podcast:

Twitter/Instagram: @everyvoicenow

Website: [everyvoicenow.com](http://everyvoicenow.com)

Producer: [Helen Lee](#)

Sound Engineer: Jonathan Clauson

Music: ["Staring at the Sun" by Gyom](#)

