

CORE 100: Diversity & Difference - Heartbreak

Wright; Two Cities; Belonging

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With thanks to Prof Rebecca DeYoung



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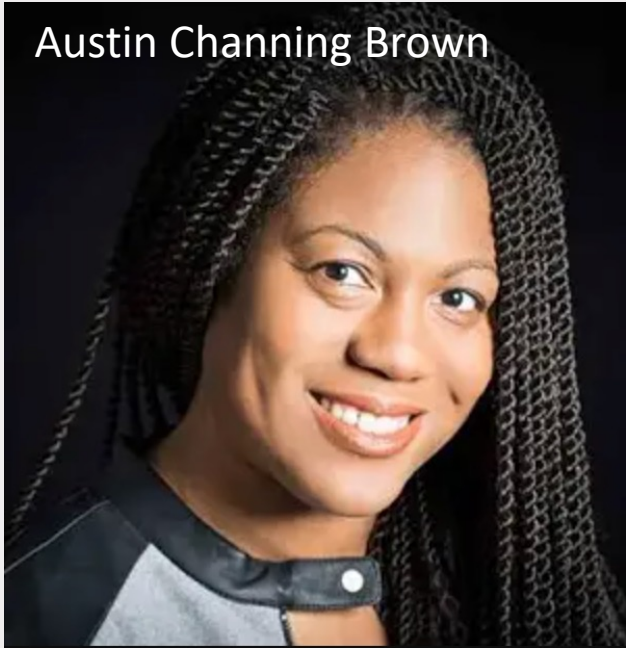
Alisa Tigchelaar



Joe Kuilema



Micah Watson



Austin Channing Brown

New Teams!

Back of Room

- Dean, Annelise, Alexis, Jimmy
- Valeria, Olivia, Tanner
- Jaden, Will, Nathan, Ronald
- Lily, Lilroy, Emma, Andy
- Leah, Luke, Nicholas, Brooke
- Ava, Josh, Ben, Kaylynn

Front of Room

Let's Disagree

- Consider the [outline of Wright's points from Ch. 6-7, 9-10](#)
 - Can you find a place where you disagree with my summary (I missed something or mis-characterized something)?
 - Can you find ideas of Wright's that *another of the author's we've read* would likely disagree with?
 - Are there ideas of Wright's that you personally disagree with?
- In any of those cases – what's your evidence?

HOW do we....

Read?

- [https://fs.blog/how-to-read-a-book/#learn to read](https://fs.blog/how-to-read-a-book/#learn_to_read)
- Elementary
- Inspectional
- Analytical
- Syntopical

Take notes while reading?

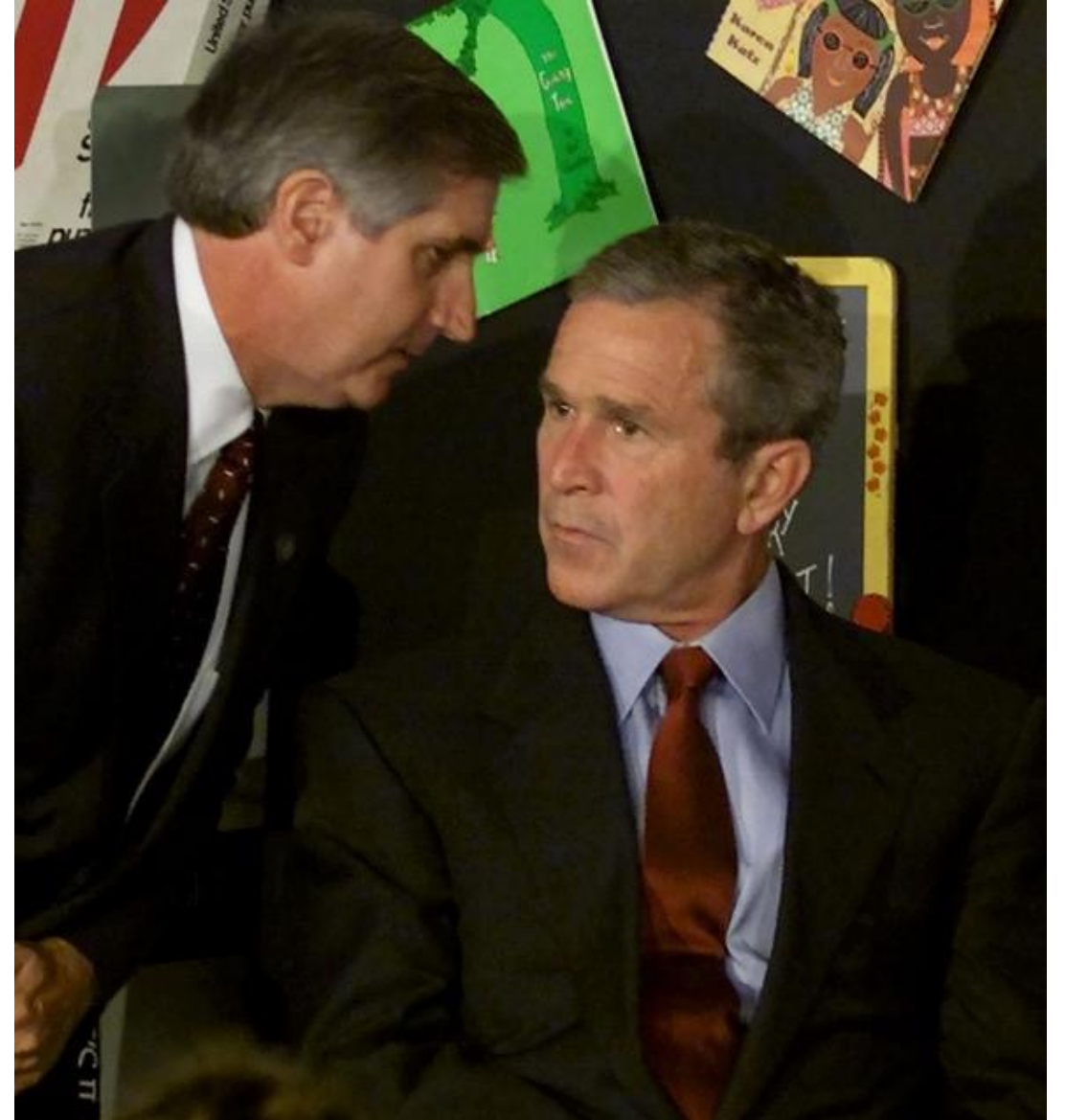
Author	General Topic	Main Claims	Reasons And Evidence	My Q's

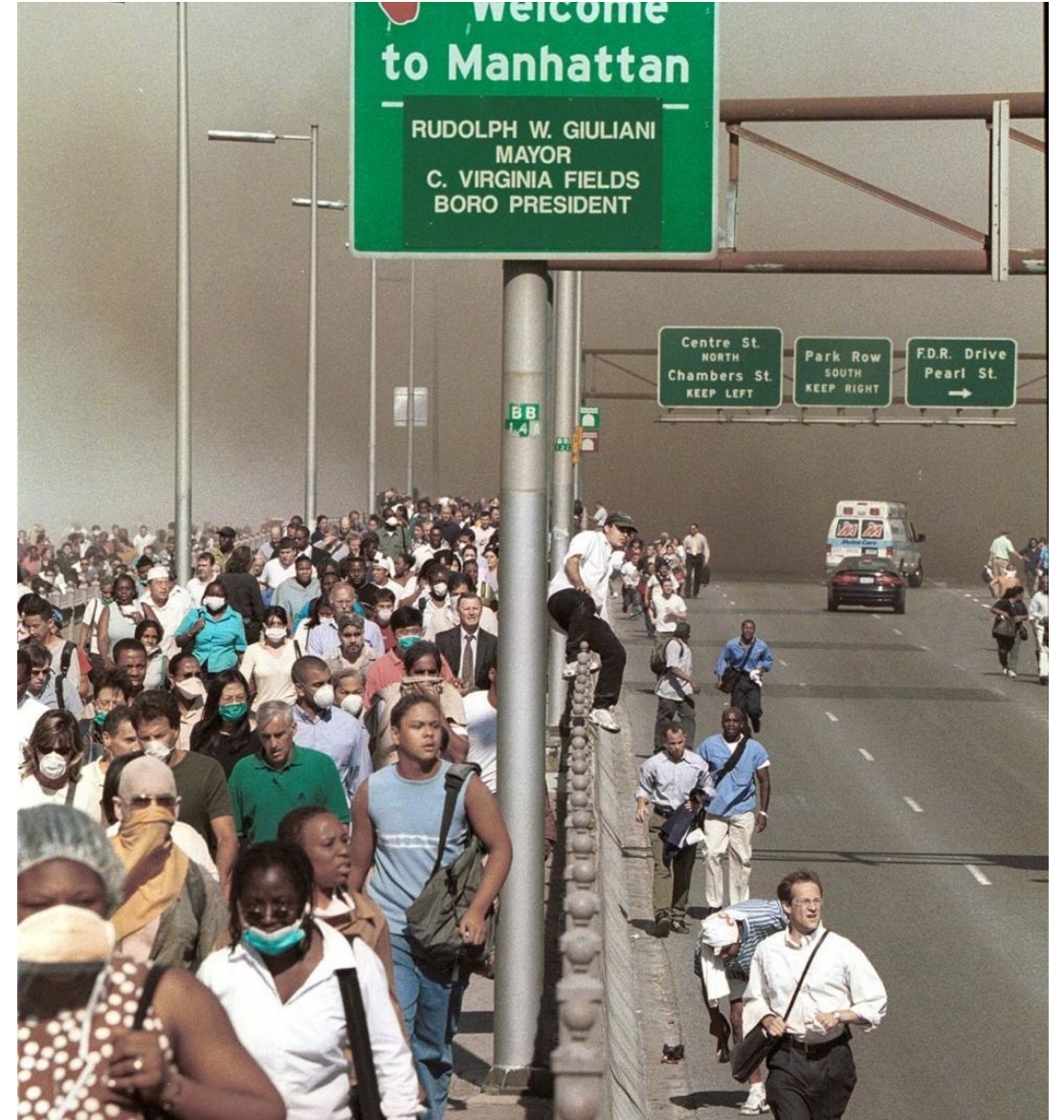
Framing Questions

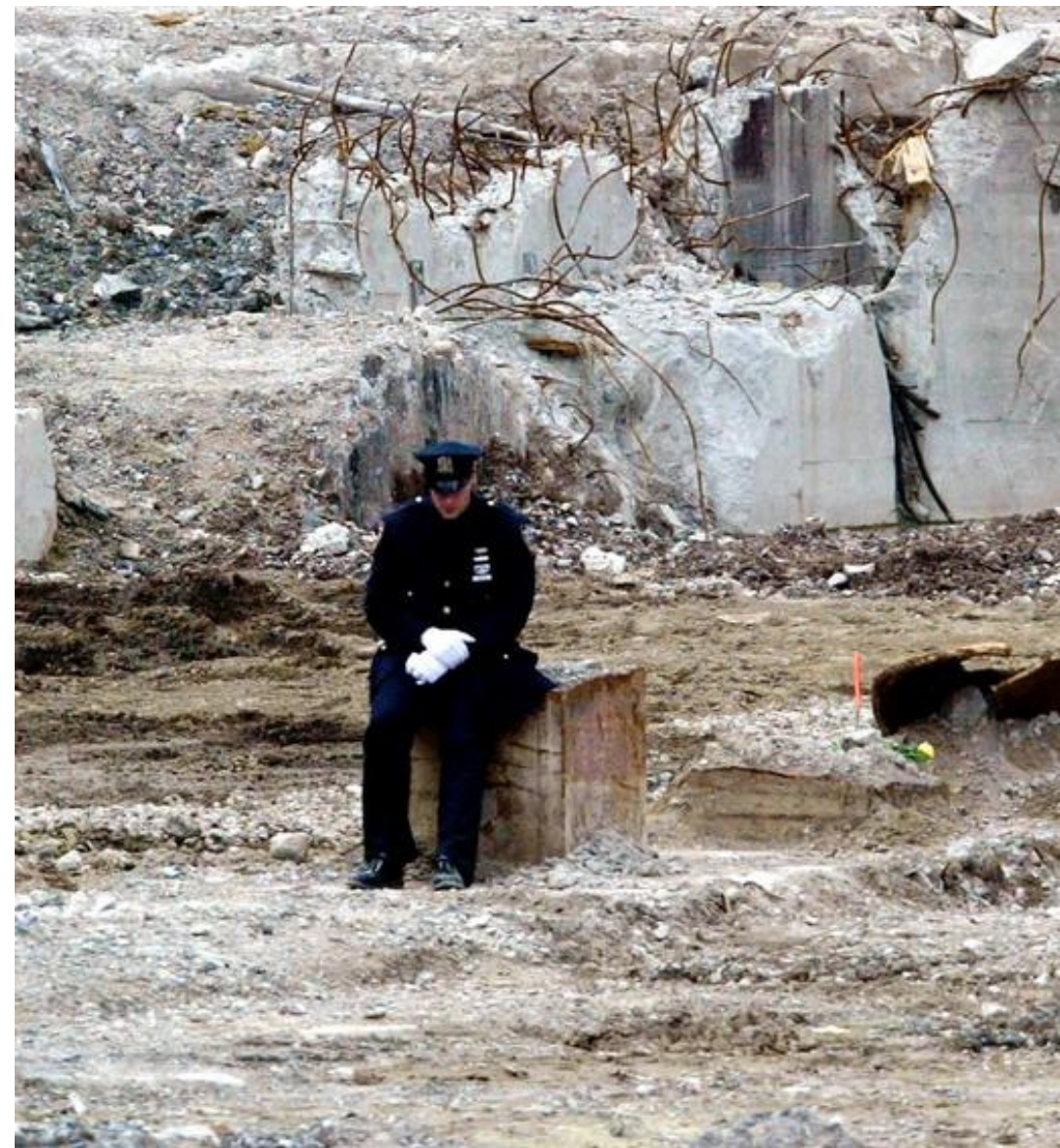
- Who am I? (What is my true identity?)
 - *Forged in crisis*
- Where is my (true) home?
 - *Asked in exile*
- In what do I put my ultimate hope?
 - *Confronted by loss/threatened by despair, what center holds?*
- Where (with what community) do I belong?
 - *Around what common ultimate objects of love will we organize and order our lives?*















Framing Questions

- Who am I? (What is my true identity?)
 - *Tested in crisis, asked in the rubble of my former self?*
- Where is my (true) home?
 - *Asked in exile, or as a fleeing refugee*
- In what do I put my ultimate hope?
 - *Confronted by loss/threatened by despair: what center holds?*
- Where (with what community) do I belong?
 - *Around what common ultimate objects of love will we organize and order our lives?*

Augustine's magnum opus

- Written late in life (up to the end)
- Took 13 years: 413 (Books I-III)-426 (the rest)
- Goth armies sacking Rome, refugees fleeing to N. Africa
- Civilization as they knew it—threatened, undermined
- An **identity crisis**...
- Augustine's answer to their fearful questions:
 - Where is my **HOME**? (where/how do I live?)
 - Where can I put my **HOPE**? (what/how do I love?)

His Answer: An Assurance—

- Civilizations rise and fall, but God's city lasts forever
- Don't overidentify church with empire (earthly institutions)
- Your true identity is not threatened
- Your membership is intact
- Your calling hasn't changed

The Two Cities

Names:

Jerusalem

The heavenly city

Civitas dei

The City of God

Babylon

The earthly city

Civitas mundi

The city of this world

[note: “city of Man”]

What they are **NOT**: earthly places, historical institutions, political/social orders (nations or countries), or times—this planet/temporal life now vs. “heaven”/everlasting life later

What *are* the TWO CITIES then?

- 2 fundamental, ultimate orderings of love & loyalty
- A condition of *your heart* that pervades all areas of life and all of your engagement in it
- Think of citizenship as your fundamental identity
- Each city is bonded together by a Common Object of Love, the greatest love of its citizenry
- Book XIV.28 [*can guess citizenship by the way you live*]

God

God's glory & power

Self

Your own glory & power

One heart, two possible objects: creation OR Creator

- Building a better neighborhood park, designing a better app, helping a patient through a procedure, teaching literature in high school (common projects)
- Augustine: done with different ultimate LOVES



Earthly citizens, heavenly citizens

- *Libido dominandi*: building my kingdom
- To make my name great & glorious
- “Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever”



Examples... [brainstorm]

- Godly citizens in earthly city institutions/places
 - Hopeful possibilities for transformation!
- Earthly citizens in God-aimed institutions
 - Dangers even for the ostensible 'Christian' !

How then shall we live?

“be *otherworldly in the world*” (Peter Brown)

- “Homesick”: on a journey but not there yet, hope/longing
- As *peregrini* (“pilgrims”, “resident aliens”, “temporary residents”
 - Abraham in **Hebrews 11**: he was “living in tents” in a foreign land, owning nothing, while “looking for a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (**Rev. 21**).
- Stewards not masters or possessors: *uti/frui* distinction
- “Failure”/“Disaster”? this is not all there is = theol. hope

“Being otherworldly in the world”, con’t

- “Engage” *all things* everywhere, but “keep *first things first*”
- Book XIX.17: seek common ground & common goods, work for peace/order/necessities of life,
- but never compromise on your *first love* and loyalty—your *ultimate* end—what you *worship*
- *Let that love shape “ALL THINGS” you do (Col. 1) under Christ’s lordship*

Augustine's Legacy in the Reformed Tradition

Common grace: *engagement* in the world (common goods)

Every area of life can be appreciated and renewed
Get involved in politics, scholarship, business, etc. (not “just” church ministry—all can be God-glorifying)
Faithful pilgrims, even “residents”

Anti-thesis: but as *transformers* (alternate institutions)

Every area of life can be corrupted or malformed: needs to be rooted in right love and loyalty and shaped through and through by it
Found distinctively Christian educational institutions, Christian labor unions, & political parties, etc.

Practices of Reformed people

- Found universities, K-12 schools:
 - Education is deeply formative
 - “Every square inch” of life—including the life of the mind, and all areas of study & scholarship—should be shaped by faith
 - Rom 12:1-2: “faith-integrated learning” “transformation”
 - not secular expertise + chapel, not everyday work + devotions, not S v M-F
- Engaged in business, politics, economics, etc.
 - “Ministry” can be done in all careers & God glorified there
 - Temporal institutions can and should seek common goods
 - Need Christians with the eyes of faith in these places too

QUOTES & QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Augustine, XIV.28

How does Augustine characterize sin, and wisdom or righteousness, here?

The earthly lifts up its head in its own glory, the Heavenly City says to its God: “My glory; you lift up my head.” In the former, the lust for domination lords it over its princes as over the nations it subjugates; in the other both those put in authority and those subject to them serve one another in love...

Augustine, XIV.28

How does Augustine describe sin, here? Compare with ideas from a previous author: Kimmerer, Wright, Smith, Plantinga, Skillen, Warners, Meyaard-Schaap, Tisby...?

...in the earthly city its wise men...have pursued the goods of the body or of their own mind, or of both. Or those of them who were able to know God 'did not honor him as God, nor did they give thanks to him, but they dwindled into futility in their thoughts, and their senseless heart was darkened...'

(note, quote is Augustine quoting Romans 1:21)

Augustine XIV.28

What does Augustine think a wise person is “hungry” for?

What about others – what “hunger” is wise to them?

In the Heavenly City, on the other hand, man’s only wisdom is the devotion which rightly worships the true God, and looks for its reward in the fellowship of the saints, not only holy men but also holy angels, ‘so that God may be all in all.’

(Note: quote is Augustine quoting 1 Corinthians 15:28)

JAMES 1: 19-27 – LISTENING & DOING

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because God desires. ²¹ But if you do not listen to the word, you will be deceived by it, and so deceive yourselves. You will then face judgment, but will not deny it.

²² Do not think that it is a gift from God if you are rich and you do not face trials. You will be tested, and so deceive yourselves. If you do what it says, the testing will not hurt you. It will only cause you to be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

²³ If anyone is lacking wisdom, let him or her ask God, and he or she will be given it abundantly. But let the person ask in faith, not doubting, for the person who doubts is like the wind-blown tree, tossed here and there by every breeze. That person will not receive anything from the Father.

²⁴ But if anyone lacks brotherly love, mercy, kindness, gentleness or self-control, that person's religion is worthless. Such a person's faith does not even count.

²⁵ The Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Those who
remember
and *act*

Listeners and
learners

Religion is
not culture

WARM-UP CONVERSATION

SMALL GROUPS →

INTRODUCE A TEAMMATE

Austin begins the book with a story about how her parents gave her the name Austin in hopes that it would help her bypass racial discrimination.

- What's the story behind your name?
- What factors were considered when you were named (was race, or other parts of your/your family's identity, among them)?

Have you ever been in a space where you experienced ***belonging*** (even if it was imperfect in other ways)?

What made it so?

Think about experiencing times when you were/are surrounded by people: “like you” or “not like you.”

What experiences does Brown relate about [not] belonging?

“Justice comes before reconciliation because justice is so much harder,” Brown said. “We overcome that exhaustion by doing work as a community, not as individuals... the pursuit of racial justice relies on us; no one person is working alone.”

*Can you relate this to
Brown’s Chapter 1?
Augustine’s Two Cities?
To any of Wright’s ideas?*

–Brown, <https://www.grcc.edu/about-grcc/news/school-news-network-feature-austin-channing-brown-starts-diversity-lecture-series-discussing-faith>

Behind the curtain... Harmony?

Bonus: Can you
pull ideas from the
podcast(s) into
your
conversation?

- How does Brown explain that there might be a lot “behind the curtain” of apparent racial harmony in many groups and organizations?
- How might we begin to explore what lies behind the curtain of “racial harmony” where you work, worship, live or attend classes at Calvin?
- Are there practical and concrete actions we can take individually this week?
- Are there concrete actions that you need faculty and administrators to take?