

You were born to be loved

By [Ryan Dueck](#)

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In ministry, there are sometimes moments when something unexpected happens, something that spills out of our careful containers of planning and order, something that points simply, poignantly, and powerfully to the hope of the gospel in a way that no eloquent sermon or finely crafted liturgy ever could. I love these moments. Even when I don't notice them.

During worship last week, a university student played and sang a song toward the end of the service. She comes from a missionary family and spent most of her school years in Japan. She wanted to sing us one of her favorite songs in Japanese. Before she sang, she translated the words for us in English. I don't remember all of the words, but the one refrain that stuck in my head was this: "You were born to be loved."

The song was beautiful and beautifully performed. After the service, I thanked her for her song and told her how much I appreciated it. She excitedly said to me, "Did you hear what happened?" I had not heard anything. I was listening to the song, but I was also mentally preparing for my next part in the service. As it turns out, there was a young Korean man near the back of the sanctuary who had been singing along with her throughout. It seems that the song that she was singing in Japanese was originally a Korean song—a song that was one of his favorites, too, a song that reminded him of the home he missed, a song that he hadn't had many opportunities to sing since moving to Canada to work with L'Arche. And so he sang.

In [Ephesians 3:1-12](#), the text I chose for that day's sermon, Paul talks about the "mystery of Christ" as the astonishing fact that non-Jews had been welcomed as fellow heirs with Israel, fellow beneficiaries of and participants in the covenantal promises of the people of God. Christians often understand the mystery of Christ in very individualistic terms. We think of the mystery that God would become a human being like us or the mystery of individual forgiveness and salvation or the mystery of the empty tomb opening the door to eternal life after we die. But for Paul, the mystery of Christ is that God's embrace is wide. For Paul, the mystery of Christ is

that God was in Christ reconciling human beings to each other, breaking down old, old walls of division, and creating *one new humanity* that collectively shares in the promise of God.

As I thought about this text and about our service last week, I became even more grateful for this holy moment, even though it passed me by at the time. What a beautiful picture of the mystery of Christ: two young people—a Canadian raised in Japan and a Korean living far from home—performing an unplanned Japanese duet in a small church on the frozen Canadian prairies. A song of longing and hope and gratitude for the love of God. A hymn of praise to the God of all tribes and tongues.

*You were born to be loved.* Wherever you come from, whatever the color of your skin, whatever language you speak, however far from home you might be. You were born to be loved by the God whose embrace is truly wide enough for all.

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