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COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS TACKLES ISSUE OF INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

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By Trinity Harris

Photo credit Alec Bailey



Northwest University hosted a Courageous Conversation on Mar. 21, a panel conversation centered on the topic of interracial marriage and dating. It also discussed the effects that interracial relationships can have on family dynamics. There were three couples and one woman who were part of the panel discussion, many of whom grew up with interracial parents and learned to bridge the culture gap between two very different individuals.

Dr. Nina Hanson, the Director of Multicultural Life, led the meeting and was the moderator of the panel. The discussion was mostly based on the movie "Loving." The movie tells the story of Mildred and Richard Loving who were an interracial couple wanting to get married in the 1960s. Their journey resulted in the Supreme Court case *Loving vs. Virginia* in 1967, a historic civil rights decision which invalidated interracial marriage prohibition laws.

The panelists answered questions on how they felt growing up in an interracial home and how it affected them and how the church supports them. Many of the panelists felt that the church often ignores the topic of interracial marriage, dating, and families because they do not know how to approach the topic.

"We all have that one token minority person who preaches once a month on race, but it's not enough," said one panelist who requested anonymity.

Another couple talked about how one profound moment was when her husband saw an Asian-American individual who was preaching one day at church. After the service tears came to the husband's eyes because he told his wife he didn't know what it would feel like to see someone like him in an authority position.

The night then ended with Dr. Hanson opening up the room for questions from the audience as well as talking about how her interracial marriage has been affected by current affairs and politics. This is one key element that NU has implemented in order to help spark conversation about diversity both on and off campus. It has resulted in a campus-wide talk about diversity and how Christian students can make a difference, especially in this harsh political climate.