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**Neighborhood**

- If you had to borrow a tool, is there a black family on your street you would ask for it?
- Who is the black family that lives closest to you?

**Children**

- If you needed a baby sitter for your children, is there a black person you would trust to do it?
- Do your children have black friends they might invite to spend the night?
- Look at your children's bookshelf. Do they have any books about or by black people?
- If you wanted a black Christian to have an impact on your children, is there someone you would invite to participate in their lives?

**Work**

- If you were to choose one coworker to do a vitally important project with, is there a black person you could choose?

**Church/Spiritual**

- If you were to choose a black prayer partner, is there someone you know well enough to ask?
- Is there a living black Christian who has had an influence on your spiritual development?

**Social**

- If you decided to ask a black person out to dinner, is there someone you could invite?
- If you're married, is there a black couple you and your spouse would invite to dinner?
- If you were to invite someone to join you in your favorite recreational activity, is there a black person you would invite?

**Mentors**

- Is there a living black person who has made a significant impact on your life?
- Look through your bookshelves. Do you have any books by black authors? What about black Christian authors?

If nearly all of your answers were no, ask yourself why. Is it because

## Acknowledgments

*More Than Equals* would not have been possible without some special people in our lives.

*Spencer:*

It took a very insightful God to give me my wife, Nancy. Her insight continually helps me crystallize ideas and concepts that I am able to write down later. She is my equal in every way, and she is willing to go with me wherever God leads. I'm also grateful to my father, who taught me how to see and understand more clearly the world around me and who demonstrated to me a no-nonsense gospel; and to my mother, who has loved me unconditionally over the years and has been patient with my slow understanding of God's call on my life.

*Chris:*

A Chinese proverb says, "When drinking water, don't forget the source." God put into my life three extraordinary people whose examples I have sipped deeply from along the stream of reconciliation: Mom and Dad, who pioneered for me what it means to love God through a life of risky faith; then my wife, Donna, my coseeker, who walked the path before me, who is our better half in servanthood, and whose steady perseverance and integrity before Jesus have continually inspired me to reach higher. God has knit us as one in heart and soul.

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Finally, we have gained strength from struggling believers and bodies of believers all over America, especially our comrades in the Christian Community Development Association, who have the courage and commitment to swim against the currents of our time and wrestle with their own prejudices and insecurities in order to demonstrate to the world a gospel in which Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, all drink from the same cup.

## Notes

### Introduction to the New Edition

- <sup>1</sup>Orlando Patterson, *The Ordeal of Integration* (Washington, D.C.: Civitas/Counterpoint, 1997), pp. 15–16 (italics mine). A profound book offering a mountain of persuasive documentation, Patterson’s work is a must read for understanding black-white relations at the end of the twentieth century. I am indebted to his scholarship and insights.
- <sup>2</sup>The Gallup Poll Social Audit, *Black/White Relations in the United States* (Princeton, N.J.: Gallup Organization, 1997), p. 18 (italics mine).
- <sup>3</sup>“The Good News About Black America,” *Newsweek*, June 7, 1999, p. 40.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup>Patterson, *Ordeal of Integration*, p. 52 (italics mine).
- <sup>6</sup>“Good News About Black America,” p. 40.
- <sup>7</sup>Patterson, *Ordeal of Integration*, p. 61.
- <sup>8</sup>Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler, *All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), p. 2.
- <sup>9</sup>Gallup Poll, p. 15
- <sup>10</sup>Patterson, *Ordeal of Integration*, p. 199.
- <sup>11</sup>The following books are highly recommended for further understanding of Asian Americans and Latinos and their role in racial reconciliation: Justo Gonzalez, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990); Virgil Elizondo, *The Future Is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet* (New York: Meyer Stone, 1988); Andrew Sung Park, *Racial Conflict & Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996); Jeanette Yep, ed., *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998); Tom Lin, *Losing Face & Finding Grace: 12 Bible Studies for Asian-Americans* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

### Chapter 1: Race Fatigue

- <sup>1</sup>Jonathan Kaufman, “The Color Line,” *Boston Globe Magazine*, June 18, 1989, p. 21.

### Chapter 4: Who Is My Neighbor?

- <sup>1</sup>“Evangelicals and Racism: The Lausanne II Press Conference,” *Transformation*, January 1990, p. 29.

### Chapter 5: White Blinders

- <sup>1</sup>Quoted in Steven Waldman, “Sports, Politics and Race,” *Newsweek*, August 17, 1992, p. 35.

**Chapter 7: Black Residue**

<sup>1</sup>Walter Shapiro, "Unfinished Business," *Time*, August 7, 1989, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), p. 44.

**Chapter 8: Silence Gives Consent**

<sup>1</sup>Elie Wiesel, "Unanswerable Questions," *The Plough*, September 1986, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Lerone Bennett Jr., *Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America*, 5th ed. (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 1982).

**Chapter 9: A Little Respect**

<sup>1</sup>Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character*, (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), pp. 68–69.

**Chapter 10: From Anger & Guilt to Passion & Conviction**

<sup>1</sup>Mary King, *Freedom Song* (New York: Morrow, 1987), p. 500.

<sup>2</sup>Nicholas Lehmann, *Promised Land* (New York: Knopf, 1991), pp. 177–78.

**Chapter 11: Weapons for the Battle**

<sup>1</sup>Ben Carson, *Think Big* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), p. 121.

**Chapter 12: Acts: A Reconciliation Story**

<sup>1</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990), p. 185.

<sup>2</sup>Ken Sidey, "Evangelical Ministries Do Not Attract Blacks, Other Minorities," *Christianity Today*, February 5, 1990, pp. 41–42.

<sup>3</sup>William Pannell, "A New Generation of Olds?" *World Vision*, December 1989–January 1990, p. 29.

**Chapter 14: White Fear**

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in James Cone, *Martin and Malcolm and America* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991), p. 141.

**Chapter 15: More Than Skin Deep**

<sup>1</sup>Walter Shapiro, "Unfinished Business," *Time*, August 7, 1989, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), p. 12.

**Chapter 16: Soul Mates**

<sup>1</sup>Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990), p. 21.

**Chapter 18: Kingdom Choices**

<sup>1</sup>Rodney Clapp, "Is the 'Traditional' Family Biblical?" *Christianity Today*, September 16, 1988, pp. 25–26.

**Chapter 20: Playing the Grace Card**

<sup>1</sup>Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997), pp. 80–81.

## Resources

*\*\* Indicates a resource that is highly recommended*

### **National Networks**

Call to Renewal  
2401 15th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 328-8842  
<<http://www.calltorenewal.com/>>

A network of spiritual renewal and social justice weaving together Protestant evangelicals, mainline churches, Catholics, Pentecostals and black churches. Resources include *Sojourners* magazine, grassroots organizing, conferences and a study guide, *Crossing the Racial Divide*.

Christian Community Development Association  
3827 W. Ogden Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60623.  
(773) 762-0994  
<<http://ccda.org/>>

Founded in 1989, CCDA boasts five hundred organizational members —grassroots churches and ministries working interracially to redeem impoverished communities. Many CCDA organizations provide opportunities to serve and volunteer. Resources include an annual conference and *Restorer* newsletter.

Hope in the Cities  
 1103 Sunset Ave.  
 Richmond, VA 23221  
 (804) 358-1764  
 <<http://hopeinthecities.org/>>

An interracial, multifaith network fostering racial healing through honest conversations in many U.S. cities. Resources include an excellent handbook on facilitating city-wide interracial dialogue and partnership, and a video “Healing the Heart of America.”

### Classics

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Dial Press, 1963. Autobiographical novel of the early 1960s racial crisis.

DuBois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1903. A great scholar and activist’s classic work written as America entered the twentieth century.

Griffin, John Howard. *Black Like Me*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961. The gripping autobiographical story of a white man who had his skin darkened and traveled through the segregated South of the 1950s.

\*\* Malcolm X and Alex Haley. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Grove, 1965. An unforgettable book with much uncomfortable truth.

Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery*. New York: A. L. Burt; Doubleday, Page, 1901. Autobiography of an ex-slave who became a great achiever and voice for black Americans.

Washington, James M., ed. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King Jr.* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. Speeches, writings and letters from America’s prophet of reconciliation.

### Christian Reconciliation

Alcorn, Randy. *The Dominion*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 1996. Novel about a black journalist and redneck homicide detective tracing a crime through a maze of inner-city violence and racial conflict.

Dawson, John. *Healing America’s Wounds*. Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1994. Why the sins of the past still matter, and how they infect the church today.

DeYoung, Curtiss. *Reconciliation: Our Greatest Challenge, Our Only Hope*. Valley Forge, Penn.: Judson Press, 1997. A holistic Christian approach addressing barriers of race, class and gender. Filled with vivid stories.

- \*\* Ortiz, Manuel. *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996. Distinctives, models and principles for building multiethnic churches. Invaluable for local churches.
- Pannell, William E. *The Coming Race Wars? A Cry for Reconciliation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1993. Call to a costly gospel amid America's increasingly multiracial society.
- \*\* Perkins, John M., ed. *Restoring At-Risk Communities*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995. Fifteen contributors active in faith-based community development share biblical foundations, principles and strategies.
- Ustry, Glenn, and Craig Keener. *Black Man's Religion*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996. Deeply researched analysis of religion and history showing why racism is not inherent to Christianity.
- \*\* Washington, Raleigh, and Glen Kehrein. *Breaking Down Walls*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1993. A black-white team sharing principles shaped by their experience in an interracial church and ministry in inner-city Chicago. Study guide also available.
- \*\* Yancey, Philip. *What's So Amazing About Grace?* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997. If Christians took this book's message seriously, it would rock the world.

### Theological Works

- Park, Andrew Sung. *Racial Conflict & Healing: An Asian-American Theological Perspective*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996. A Korean-American's unique perspective, with many powerful insights on the general racial landscape.
- *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993. Groundbreaking exploration of the Korean concept of han, the deep scar upon oppression's victims.
- \*\* Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996. The most important contemporary theological work on reconciliation.
- \*\* *Word in Life Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993. A Contemporary English Version study Bible with references, articles and background information linking biblical texts and stories to racial and ethnic healing. A very valuable resource for biblical study.

### History/Biography

- Berk, Stephen. *A Time to Heal*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997. Biography of John Perkins, a major black leader of an unheralded but highly influential post-civil rights movement to rally Christians across economic and racial lines.

- Branch, Taylor. *Parting the Waters* (1988), and *Pillar of Fire* (1998). New York: Simon & Schuster. Two books (the first a Pulitzer Prize winner) chronicling the civil rights movement, placing its origins in the black church.
- \*\* Cone, James. *Martin and Malcolm and America: A Dream or a Nightmare*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991. A leading black theologian and scholar analyzes two of the twentieth century's most important black leaders in a classic debate of solutions.
- Franklin, John Hope. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*. 7th edition. New York: McGraw Hill College Division, 1994. A classic survey.
- Lincoln, C. Eric, and Lawrence Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African-American Experience*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990. The finest sociological study in this area.
- \*\* Marsh, Charles. *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997. Extraordinary stories of five combatants on different sides of the Mississippi civil rights movement and how Christianity impacted their beliefs and actions.
- McCray, Walter Arthur. *The Black Presence in the Bible: Discovering the Black and African Identity of Biblical Persons and Nations*. Chicago: Black Light Fellowship, 1990. A groundbreaking study.
- Oates, Stephen. *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King Jr.* New York: Harper & Row, 1982. A powerful and highly readable biography.

### Personal Stories

- \*\* Freedman, Samuel. *Upon This Rock*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. A moving, wonderfully written portrait of the life and miracles of a black church in Brooklyn.
- Gordon, Wayne. *Real Hope in Chicago*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995. The amazing story of Chicago's "Lawndale miracle"—how a church of blacks and whites transformed their decaying neighborhood.
- Kadlecek, Jo, and Pamela Toussaint. *I Call You Friend*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999. The life stories of four women, two white and two black, and how they were woven together.
- Lupton, Robert D. *Theirs Is the Kingdom*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989. Stirring, honest stories of failure and success from a white urban activist in Atlanta.
- \*\* Perkins, John M. *Let Justice Roll Down*. Glendale, Calif.: Regal, 1982. The powerful autobiography of Spencer's father, who grew up in a sharecropping family facing racial violence and hate, left Mississippi, then returned after his conversion to pioneer in racial reconciliation and ministry among the poor.

- \*\* Raybon, Patricia. *My First White Friend: Confessions on Race, Love, and Forgiveness*. New York: Penguin, 1996. An elegant, personal African-American narrative of hope for healing the scars of race.
- Weary, Dolphus. *I Ain't Comin' Back*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1990. Growing up in rural poverty, vowing to leave Mississippi behind, Weary returns to his hometown to plant a church-based work of love and reconciliation.

### Contemporary Racial Analysis

- DuBois, Paul, and Johnathan Hutson. *Bridging the Racial Divide: A Report on Interracial Dialogue in America*. Brattleboro, Vt.: Center for Living Democracy, 1997. Success stories and principles for effective interracial dialogue.
- Intergroup Relations in the United States: Programs and Organizations*. This 1998 publication of the National Conference for Community and Justice (New York) is an annotated directory of over three hundred diverse organizations that focus on race and intergroup relations.
- Kozol, Johnathan. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Crown, 1991; San Francisco: HarperPerennial, 1992. Heart-rending exposé of inequality in public education.
- \*\* Loury, Glenn. *One by One from the Inside Out: Essays and Reviews on Race and Responsibility in America*. New York: Free Press, 1995. One of the most important books of the 1990s for those who think seriously about race.
- Moskos, Charles, and John Butler. *All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way*. New York: BasicBooks, 1996. How the U.S. Army overcame 1970s racial division to achieve widespread integration by the 1990s, with lessons for civilian society.
- \*\* Patterson, Orlando. *The Ordeal of Integration*. Washington, D.C.: Civitas/Counterpoint, 1997. A profound book by a historical sociologist offering a mountain of persuasive documentation about both astounding racial progress and deep-seated remaining problems. A must read for understanding black-white relations at the end of the twentieth century.
- \*\* Steele, Shelby. *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America*. New York: St. Martin's, 1990. Extremely honest and insightful dissection of the black psyche.

### Video

- \*\* *Eyes on the Prize*. The compelling PBS series on the civil rights movement (available at many local libraries).
- \*\* *Roots*. This series, based on Alex Haley's best-selling book tracing his family from Africa to slavery to freedom, has impacted millions of Americans.

## Study Guide

### How to Use This Study Guide

The purpose of this study guide is to encourage group discussion of racial reconciliation using *More Than Equals* as a guide. This resource can be used as follows:

1. By an individual in his or her reading and processing of the book. While the material is geared toward groups, it can be adapted for personal reflection.
2. For studying the book with a friend or an associate, especially of a different ethnicity. This is a much better use of the material.
3. In a discussion group at church, on campus or in a peer group, organization or neighborhood. A newly formed group or an existing group such as a pastors' fellowship, interracial network or business group would find the greatest benefit from this study.

The primary focus of *More Than Equals* is black-white reconciliation. However, study guide questions can be adapted to other crossracial experiences and contexts as well. Modify them according to your needs.

### Forming Your Group

People of different ethnicities, political views and life experiences often approach race very differently. The more diverse your group, the greater the possibility of growth. If your efforts to be ethnically mixed fall short, don't be discouraged. Start where you can, with those who are willing.

### Narrowing Your Focus

You may want to narrow the group's focus to reconciliation in a specific shared context. In one study, ten students focused on their own relationships with one another. In another, a Chicago ministry divided its staff into small

groups and discussed how to make reconciliation visible in the organization. In still another, one black and one white church each brought five leaders into a discussion group. The study became a launching pad for collaboration between their congregations.

### Format & Time Frame

The study guide has five sections: *Beginning—Race & My World*, *Admit—Facing the Truth*, *Submit—Embracing a New Beginning with God & Others*, *Commit—Transforming Our World*, and *Wrap Up*. Your study can be condensed into a month or extended over several months. Pick and choose the pieces that seem most important for your group. If you have a limited time frame, the sessions and questions that are bulleted (• •) are essential.

### Ground Rules

Choose race as your topic and often everybody's walking on eggshells. Adopt ground rules: "Beginning—Race & My World" offers some suggestions.

### Meeting Tips

- Start every meeting by briefly reviewing your group's purpose and ground rules (see the next section).
- The study guide is built upon chapter material. The more people read the assigned chapters, the better your discussion will be.
- Don't be enslaved to the questions. When you hit one that captivates the group, stick with it. *The process your group goes through together is just as important as what you discuss.*
- Leave at least ten minutes at the end for prayer. One way to do this is to have everyone pray for someone in the group, such as the person on their right. Prayer binds the group and keeps it focused on God's truth and will for the group.

Like the book, this study guide is not a formula. Hopefully the Holy Spirit will shake up your agenda along the way. Don't resist—that's when real transformation begins.

Remember, sessions and questions marked with two bullets are highly recommended.

## BEGINNING "Race & My World"

### •• *Session One*

Before beginning the book study, your group should talk about its purpose, commitments and ground rules.

1. *Agree on your group's purpose.* Read the following out loud. Use it as a starting point to discuss and agree on your group's purpose.

The purpose of this group is to seek and to speak the truth in love about racial reconciliation. The apostle Paul pleaded for Christians to “keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace,” calling us to “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:1-16). In verse 15 lies a key to this unity and maturity: speaking the truth to each other in love. Speaking the truth in love is not only being honest about our personal thoughts and feelings but seeking and speaking what we believe is God’s truth. Truth seekers are willing to be changed by what they discover. We are to speak “in love,” seeking the best interest of the other, in the hope of helping each other become mature in the fullness of Christ. “Love without truth is a lie; truth without love kills.”

2. *Agree on your commitment to the group.* Talk honestly about your expectations for regular attendance and reading of the book. *More Than Equals* holds out a process of reconciliation. The best groups become a continuing conversation, each session building upon the previous discussions and experiences. Missing meetings will deprive you of the benefit of the growth process.

3. *Agree on ground rules.* The following ground rules have proven extremely helpful. Read them over and adopt what seems best for your group. Write down your shared ground rules and have someone read them at the beginning of every meeting.

In this group we commit to:

- Focus on what is right, not who is right.
- Make it safe to bring up anything. We give each other permission to ask honest questions.
- Protect confidentiality.
- Give each other the benefit of the doubt. We assume everyone is here because they have chosen to grow.
- Not take ourselves too seriously.

•• **Session Two: Personal Stories & Expectations**

*Step one:* Take ten minutes to reflect quietly on the five questions below.

*Step two:* Beginning with the first question, have each member of the group respond. Have everyone respond before moving to the next question. Listen carefully to the person to your right. You will pray for them at the end.

1. What is your first memory of when race was an issue?
2. What is your most vivid negative personal experience regarding race?
3. What is your most vivid positive personal experience regarding race?
4. What is one thing in your world that is different from your parents’ world in terms of race?
5. What one thing do you most hope for as a result of this study?

*Step three:* Have each person pray for the person to their right.

**Optional Action Idea**

Spend the first fifteen minutes of each meeting with a new person telling their story until everyone in the group has done so. This can be a profound experience of understanding what makes a person “tick” and will enrich the group’s dialogue.

**ADMIT “Facing the Truth”**

“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. . . . ‘I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s house, have committed against you.’”

—Nehemiah 1:4, 6

**Introduction & Chapter 1: Race Fatigue**

What do you think is meant by the title of this book, *More Than Equals*?

- On a scale of one to ten with ten being excellent, what score would you give race relations in America today? What about in the church? Give the reason for your score.
- The authors contend that integration was once the dominant national ideal for race relations, but now a higher ideal of reconciliation is needed. How do the two ideals differ?

•• **Personal Reflection**

What signs do you see of race fatigue, nationally and/or in your own world? Have you ever felt it? When and how?

**Chapter 2: Foot Soldier**

How does Spencer’s experience in this chapter compare to yours?

- Spencer concluded that “I could not allow my anger and bitterness to defeat me. If I was to be a follower of Christ, I would have to try to be like him—to keep on forgiving.” What is the significance of this statement, and how does it impact your understanding of racial reconciliation?

•• **Personal Reflection**

Much of this chapter focuses on the influence of Spencer’s parents. How would you describe your parents’ racial attitudes and choices? How did those influence you?

**Chapter 3: At the Crossroads**

- List some tensions and issues of the 1983 reconciliation meetings at Voice of Calvary (VOC). Do any resound with your own experience and understanding? Which are unfamiliar to you?

List outcomes of the racial reconciliation meetings. In your view, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the meetings? Do you think the meetings were a step forward or backward, and why?

•• Despite a high level of racial integration at VOC before the 1983 meetings, a racial explosion occurred. What might be some differences between being racially integrated and racially reconciled?

•• **Personal Reflection**

Think back. Have you ever been in a context where there was a real opportunity for racial interaction or partnership, but you didn't act? In hindsight, what actions could you have taken, and why didn't you?

#### Chapter 4: Who Is My Neighbor?

•• Have one group member read the story of the good Samaritan out loud (Lk 10:27-37). Discuss the following:

What do you think of when you think *neighbor*? How does Jesus' definition compare to yours?

In terms of racial reconciliation, where do you see yourself in this story: as the person who was assaulted and ignored, the person who passed him by or the person who went out of his way to help?

If Christians were to live out this neighbor principle in our lives and churches, what would be different?

Is loving our racially different neighbor optional or a nonnegotiable of the gospel?

Read and discuss the quote from Vinay Samuel on page 67.

•• **Personal Reflection**

What kind of person would Jesus use as neighbor if he was speaking to you?

According to Spencer, Matthew 6:14-15 makes it clear that our forgiveness from God hinges on our willingness to forgive others. Discuss the implications of a call to unconditional forgiveness of others. How would the racial climate be different in the world if this principle was practiced? How would your world be different (don't think just in terms of race).

#### Chapter 5: White Blinders

•• This chapter argues that attitudes, practices and systems that uphold white advantages are protected by often-unconscious white blinders. Compare and contrast your understanding of racism to blinders. How does the concept of white blinders impact your understanding of the race problem?

In what ways, if any, do you think that the issue of race is fundamentally different for a white and a black person?

"If a person is born white in America, the chances are good he or she is

wearing racial blinders.” Do you agree or disagree?

•• *Personal Reflection*

What did you think and feel about the “reconciliation inventory” (pp. 78-79), and how did you score? Honestly evaluate the impact of another ethnic group upon you and your world.

### **Chapter 6: School Daze**

•• Compare the racial dynamics of Spencer’s experience with Dick with his experience integrating the white school in Mendenhall. Discuss their different effects on Spencer. Was Spencer’s retreat into his all-black world justified?

•• *Personal Reflection*

Spencer’s experience of frequently being the only African-American in settings during high school and college and otherwise is not uncommon. Have you ever been the ethnic minority in a situation or setting? What did you learn from your experience?

### **Chapter 7: Black Residue**

Discuss how black anger and self-doubt may each have played a role in the 1983 reconciliation meetings.

Spencer contends that anger is present in nearly all African-Americans. Why were Spencer and the blacks of Mendenhall angry? Do you understand why black people as a group are angry?

•• In the authors’ understanding, racial reconciliation is not just about whites changing. Obstacles in both the white community and in minority groups need to be honestly faced for the sake of the gospel. Discuss how this is different from other approaches to racial solutions familiar to you.

“It is easy to remain angry with a faceless white race. It is much harder to direct that anger at a particular white brother or sister who has a name and a face.” What are the implications of this principle as a hopeful step toward racial reconciliation?

### **Chapter 8: Silence Gives Consent**

•• According to Mark Dyer of International Teams, “We excluded blacks not by design, but by not going out of our way to build relationships. We were going out and seeking whites to join our organization, but not blacks. . . . Our financial structures, literature, locations, networks, and even style of worship often create barriers to non-Anglo involvement with us in ministry.” Using the International Teams story as a case study:

1. What were the specific institutional blinders at the organization?
2. What advantages and disadvantages did these blinders result in?

Pick one area of society (e. g., banking, public education, law), and imagine that these kinds of institutional and social blinders are pervasive. Brainstorm what the unconscious systems, patterns, preferences and attitudes might look like in that arena and play out their negative impact on a particular ethnic group.

One definition of *racism* is as follows: “For one ethnic group to think they are better than another ethnic group, and to act on that belief by segregating, discriminating, or eliminating the other group(s).” A second definition makes a distinction between prejudice and power, defining *racism* as “prejudice plus power.”

1. Choose one definition for the sake of discussion, and discuss how “silence gives consent” to racism.

2. Can blacks be racist? If so, how are black and white racism different? If not, what is the nature and name of racial wrongs committed by ethnic minorities?

Consider the stories of Mark Dyer, Kay Muller and Nehemiah, and the institutions they impacted. What similar steps and journeys were involved with each of them in moving from where they were to their ultimate actions and choices?

### •• *Personal Reflection*

This chapter, in fact the entire book, is not so much concerned with overt racism. Its focus is unconscious attitudes, systems, preferences, practices—the social and institutional blinders—which do not intentionally exclude, harm and discriminate but nevertheless have the same result. Do an honest examination of your life and circles of influence for how silence may be giving consent to social and institutional blinders. What do you “see”?

## Chapter 9: A Little Respect

•• Use the chapter’s example of the Maori and white New Zealanders as your starting point to discuss the following: “If a society is less productive, we assume it must be inferior. Never mind that its people love and care for each other more than we do. . . . What is superior: a culture that values technological advancement or one that values relationships? The people who accumulate wealth and power, or the Maori who give it away?” (pp. 122-23). What is normally used as the standard by which a culture is measured? What should be the standard? Are all cultures equal?

•• What is the difference between appropriate ethnic pride and ethnocentrism? When is making cultural value judgments wrong or harmful? When is it right and useful? (You may want to distinguish between issues of cultural preference and issues of truth.)

Spencer writes, “Many blacks feel that the only setting in which they can be fully respected is among other blacks” (p. 127). Someone once said, “When minorities want to be in their own group, it’s called ethnic pride. When whites do that, black people march.” Is there a double standard, or is there a different need among ethnic minorities for ethnic-specific groups to ensure that their concerns and needs are addressed?

•• *Before Moving On*

Admitting means coming to terms with painful truth we don’t like to face. These questions are to assist you, in the presence of a loving and gracious God who cares passionately about justice and truth, to honestly examine yourself and the obstacles you face in racial reconciliation.

Which of the following four terms best characterizes your life’s path thus far in terms of racial reconciliation: racially integrated, isolated, separated, or reconciled?

*From Your Perspective*

What specifically about other ethnic groups makes you wonder if reconciliation can really happen?

Is there anything in your world said behind closed doors and thought behind closed mouths that is not admitted in public?

What do you think other races think and say? (Remember, even if you disagree with a generalization made about your group, if others believe it is true, then for the sake of reconciliation it needs to be addressed.)

Is there one thing you wish others could understand about you or your racial group?

As a voluntary act of love for God, examine your attitudes, experiences, lifestyle choices, theology, family, blinders, residue and “silent consent.” In the light of the gospel of reconciliation, is there anything you need to “admit”?

What conditions do people often put on offering forgiveness and on doing justice? What conditions does God put on them? When it comes to racial reconciliation, what would it mean to be committed to both unconditional forgiveness and unconditional justice?

**SUBMIT “Embracing a New Beginning with God & Others”**

“See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.”

—2 Corinthians 7:11

**Chapter 10: From Anger & Guilt to Passion & Conviction**

Spencer and Chris experienced the racial reconciliation meetings of 1983

“totally differently.” How was this true? What lessons do you draw from that difference?

•• Compare and contrast SNCC’s racial crisis and VOC’s. List the similarities of tension leading to each crisis. Contrast the conclusions. How was SNCC’s worldview different from VOC’s? What principles and strengths did VOC draw from their Christianity that enabled them to not only endure but become stronger?

Chris writes, “The gulf between black and white can be crossed only on a bridge built by the hands of God. . . . Without God at the center, there is no basis for reconciliation.” This is a bold statement. What does it mean to put God at the center of reconciliation, and why do you think Chris and Spencer believe this so deeply?

•• *Personal Reflection*

Describe how Spencer and Chris each found growth and hope in the aftermath of the crisis. Do you draw any lessons that offer you hope?

### Chapter 11: Weapons for the Battle

•• What are some resources and distinctives of Christian faith that should offer Christians an advantage in taking leadership in racial healing?

•• *Personal Reflection*

Which of the weapons do you need to call on the most at this stage of your reconciliation process?

### Chapter 12: Acts: A Reconciliation Story

Make a list of barriers, baggage and residue that existed between ethnic groups in the days of the early Christians. What stands out to you the most in looking at the struggles of the early church?

•• Summarize the four lessons drawn from the story in Acts 6 (pp. 156-58). Which one stands out to you and why?

•• *Before Moving On*

Which “weapon” from chapter eleven (“Weapons for the Battle”) best describes where you are today? Why?

1. I need to confess, forgive and be forgiven.
2. I need to internalize this purpose as my own.
3. I need to persevere through the pain of racial reconciliation.
4. I don’t see how this issue applies to me.

Writes Chris: “At best, we want to wipe away the pain that race causes; at the least, it’s tempting to look for a quick fix to rid ourselves of our pangs of guilt. But God is taking us through a process, and it’s important not to try to find shortcuts.” In your prayer together, ask God to take you through the journey he desires for you, in his timing and in his own way.

**COMMIT “Transforming Our World”**

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

—Romans 12:1-2

**Chapter 13: The Character of a Reconciler**

Multiethnic Antioch, not Jerusalem, became the headquarters for taking the gospel to the world. In light of the examples from this chapter and chapter twelve, and the vast tribal, ethnic and racial tensions in the world, what benefits does a multiethnic base bring to Christian ministry in the world?

•• Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the nine fruits of the Spirit. First, using Peter’s story over the last two chapters, make a list of ways in which Peter likely matured in specific fruits as a result of his reconciliation journey. Second, discuss the benefits of spiritual growth for you and the church in pursuing reconciliation.

Thinking back over the Acts story in the last two chapters, where was it positive to “see color,” and where was color-consciousness harmful? What lessons do you draw?

•• How might a church or other group committed to being multiethnic look and act compared to one that is homogeneous?

•• *Personal Reflection*

Consider the confrontation between Paul and Peter in Galatians 2. What in your world may need to be confronted publicly out of a commitment to reconciliation?

Peter and Paul were often misunderstood by both Jews and Gentiles. They were walked on from both sides and pressured to choose one side over another. Their choices often alienated them from “their own.” How might a commitment to reconciliation lead to the same consequences for you?

**Chapter 14: White Fear**

•• Pick two or three of the following situations and discuss whether the fear is reasonable or prejudicial. Discuss the differences between the two fears. (There isn’t necessarily a “right” answer in each case. Change the ethnicity of the characters and see how it influences your perspective.)

Jim is walking down an empty downtown street at night. A black youth approaches, and Jim notices his heart is pounding.

A security guard in a clothing store notices he pays much more attention to black shoppers than to others.

Duane lives in the suburbs, and he’s driving through an urban, high-crime,

mostly black neighborhood. He is very low on gas when he see a convenience store ahead. But he passes it, praying he can make it out of this neighborhood before stopping.

The black student union is holding a dialogue titled “Confronting Racism.” A black acquaintance invites Susan (who is white) to come, and Susan finds herself looking for an excuse not to go.

Meredith pulls up next to a car with a black man inside. She discreetly hits the power lock button on her doors.

Rich (who is white) is on an elevator alone. It stops, the door opens, and a black man, professionally dressed, steps on. The door shuts, and Rich finds himself feeling nervous.

In the last six months, three black families have moved onto the street in David’s all-white, middle-class neighborhood. David is starting to wonder what the effect will be on his property’s value and the thought hits, *I wonder if it’s time to sell.*

Spencer writes, “I am convinced that much of the racism and hate that formerly prompted whites to separate themselves from blacks has now grayed into fear, anger and resentment. And we blacks need to be able to recognize the difference, even though to us these emotions look and feel nearly the same.” How would this new climate affect the challenge of reconciliation differently from the old climate?

•• **Personal Reflection**

Can you identify any fear inside yourself? What do you think is its source?

**Chapter 15: More Than Skin Deep**

“Love without truth lies, and truth without love kills.” How do you see this principle reflected in Spencer’s and Chris’ journeys? How does the principle apply to race relations?

•• Chris uses the phrase “kingdom culture” and contrasts it to blackness and whiteness. How is “kingdom culture” different? In what specific ways might a commitment to putting kingdom culture first speak to and influence our own ethnic culture?

•• **Personal Reflection**

Chris contends that every culture needs the vision of those outside of their culture to see their group weaknesses clearly. At this point in your reconciliation “surgery,” what could a person of another race do to further your growth process?

**Chapter 16: Soul Mates**

•• Describe Spencer’s dilemma as to whether or not he should marry Nancy. Which were legitimate issues, and which were not?

Why do you think interracial dating and marriage has been so vehemently opposed even by many Christians? Why has so much energy been invested in opposing it by racists throughout history?

•• *Personal Reflection*

How might we combat the fact that empathy tends to flow along racial lines? Spencer writes, “The people who will be most committed to racial reconciliation are the people for whom it has become a personal issue.” How could you make racial reconciliation more of a personal issue for you? Your church?

**Chapter 17: Unlikely Comrades**

•• Spencer and Chris found they had much more to learn from each other than racial reconciliation. How did Spencer and Chris enrich one another’s lives in ways unrelated to race?

•• *Personal Reflection*

Chris writes, “We had hung in with each other long enough to see that beneath the bitterness, anger and fear, we shared some dreams about being the people of God.”

1. What dreams do black and white Christians share?
2. What might an area of common mission be for Christians of different races in your context?
3. What work will be necessary to reach the point where you can work as a team?

**Chapter 18: Kingdom Choices**

•• Read the story of the good Samaritan out loud (Lk 10:27-37).

1. Discuss ways in which the actions of the good Samaritan were not “normal,” uncomfortable, inconvenient and costly.
2. Discuss kingdom choices in the area of racial reconciliation that would be not “normal,” uncomfortable, inconvenient and costly.
3. Discuss the outcomes for the kingdom of the good Samaritan’s actions and your own.

This book contends that racial reconciliation is about intentionally going out of our way for the sake of the gospel. Racial solutions are often approached as adding “more color” to the circles and institutions we already travel in and control. What would it look like, instead, to go out of our way, seek where God is already at work among our neighbors and serve their leadership, institutions and efforts in areas where you identify a common mission?

•• *Personal Reflection*

What kingdom choices could you or your group make for the sake of reconcil-

iation that would provide a clear and compelling contrast to “normal” race relations in your setting?

### **Chapter 19: Friends & Yokefellows**

Spencer writes of partnership with Chris, “If our yoke was broken, each of us would lose half our power.” In what ways does this become true in a yokefellow partnership?

#### **•• Personal Reflection**

“The cause of the gospel needs interracial teams who are willing to take the dangerous point position to penetrate the gray, unknown territories that have traditionally separated white and black Christians.” As you look across the nation and world, your city, and the mission field of the church, what missions are compelling enough to put an interracial yokefellow commitment together for? Dream together about some “unknown territories” you see and some specific interracial partnerships that, if formed, could begin to penetrate them.

### **Chapter 20: Playing the Grace Card**

•• In the eyes of the world, what must whites do to be “worthy” of embrace by blacks? What must blacks do to be “worthy” of white embrace? How do God’s eyes of grace see things differently, and what are the implications for racial reconciliation?

According to Philip Yancey, “Grace is unfair, which is one of the hardest things about it.” What are some specific “unfair” steps that Christians of different ethnicities can take on behalf of another ethnicity?

Discuss this quote from Spencer: “My willingness to forgive oppressors is not dependent on how they respond. . . . When we can forgive and embrace those who refuse to listen to God’s command to do justice, it allows them to hear God’s judgment without feeling a personal judgment from us. Which, in the end, gives our message more integrity. Being able to give grace while preaching justice will make our witness even more effective.”

### **WRAP UP**

#### **•• Session One**

1. On a scale of one to ten with ten being excellent, what score would you give race relations in America today? What about in the church? Give the reasons for your scores. How do your scores compare to those you gave at the beginning of the book study?

2. What impacted you the most from the book? What have you learned?

3. What one thing has been most impressed upon you through this study

that could change the way you live out Christianity?

4. What opportunities do you see now that you've overlooked in the past?

5. What might you have to sacrifice as the price of a true commitment to be a reconciler?

•• **Session Two: Before the Meeting**

1. *Determine your focus.* The goal is for your group to come to a shared understanding of what racial reconciliation looks like in your specific context—whether your church, city, organization, campus or other setting. (As an example, “Sunnyside Christian Church” will be used as the shared context. Substitute your church, campus, organization or other setting where “Sunnyside Christian Church” is mentioned.)

2. *Advance preparation.* Develop a survey sheet with the following questions and pass it out several days in advance. (Assure people that their answers will be anonymous.) It should be completed by each group member before the brainstorming meeting and brought to the meeting.

List three or four words that honestly describe your perception of the level of commitment to reconciliation and the state of race relations at Sunnyside Christian Church.

Name one or two strengths that you perceive at Sunnyside Christian Church in terms of racial reconciliation. Name one or two weaknesses or barriers you perceive.

Name a different ethnic group from your own and list one or two strengths that you perceive that group might bring to the reconciliation process as it affects Sunnyside Christian Church. Second, name two weaknesses or barriers you perceive in that ethnic group that are obstacles to reconciliation at Sunnyside Christian Church.

•• **The Meeting**

1. *Summarize individual feedback: 30 minutes.* Gather the survey sheets and have someone read through them out loud, quickly and anonymously. Have another group member use a flipchart to list responses for each of the survey questions. (Don't attempt to be exhaustive; go for the big picture. If an area is mentioned more than once, check it each time it's mentioned again.)

2. *Small-group discussion: 1 hour.* Break into groups of no more than five or six. Each group should be as ethnically diverse as possible. Have one volunteer in each group facilitate and another record your key discussion points. Discuss the following:

If the people of Sunnyside Christian Church were to achieve genuine racial reconciliation and healing, how would it look and feel? How would it be different from the current reality?

What are the barriers to moving toward this new reality?

- What are some assets and opportunities available to us in moving toward this new reality?
- What are the most important next action steps?
- What are assets that you bring and would be willing to engage in extending reconciliation?
- What other key individuals or groups must be engaged in this process?

3. *Large group: 30 minutes.* Have one person from each small group summarize their discussion with the large group. Have someone list group results on a flipchart.

4. *Next steps: 30 minutes.* What are the most important next steps in moving toward racial reconciliation at Sunnyside Christian Church?