

## **Beyond Racial Gridlock**

### Small Group Discussion Guide (Part 1)

#### **Chapter 1: Two Views of Racism**

- Going into this book discussion on a Christian response to racism in the United States of America, what concerns you and excites you?
- How have you experienced racism in your life? Has that experience changed over time or even in recent years?
- Yancey writes, “*There are two dominate ways in which people in the United States define racism: the individualist definition and the structuralist definition*” (20). What are these two definitions and how do you see them at work in our society?
- Yancey summarizes the United States divide over how to frame race as follows: “*The groups who have benefited from historical abuse tend to want everyone to forget about the past and move on. The groups who have been historically abused tend to want to focus on historical evils and gain recompense for the wrongs done to them*” (24). Do you agree that a person’s racial and/or social standing may influence how he or she defines racism? Why or why not?
- Yancey asserts: “*Our sin nature seeks to be released from all accountability*” (24). How does framing racism as a sin issue change the conversation?
- What might be a meaningful Christian response to the racism in our local community?

#### **Chapter 2: Color Blindness**

- Re-read Yancey’s definition of Colorblindness in paragraph 2 on p. 29. How do you see the colorblindness model at work in your local community? What about in the church?
- Yancey says the colorblindness response has its roots in the push towards equality during the Civil Rights Movement. He notes that many believe that we have now achieved equality and should thus strive to be a “colorblind” society. Are there circumstances in which you feel “colorblindness” can be helpful? Conversely, are there situations in which you feel colorblindness can actually work against the goal of equality?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the colorblindness model? Have you personally been impacted by this model?

- Yancey notes that many (mostly white) Christians who adopt the colorblindness attitude specifically oppose affirmative action (pp. 37-38). Why might Christians feel uncomfortable with affirmative action and/ or reparations? Are there reasons Christian might support these measures? (Consider both Biblical and cultural factors.)
- *Bonus Question:* Besides the legal and economic issues of colorblindness, how do you see this approach at play in your interpersonal relationships across races?

### **Chapter 3: Anglo-Conformity**

- Re-read the opening section of this chapter (pp. 41-42). How do you see the Anglo-conformity model at work in your local community? What about in the church?
- How does economic disparity impact race relations? Do you agree that class is actually a bigger divide than race in our society?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Anglo-conformity model? Have you personally been impacted by this model?
- What is a “white-savior complex”? Do you think “white-savior complex” is a real phenomenon? If so, how might white Americans approach racial disparity differently?
- Why is the Anglo-conformity model especially popular among white Christians who serve low-income urban populations?

### **Chapter 4: Multiculturalism**

- In what ways do you see multiculturalism at work in our country? in the church?
- Can you give an example of how learning about another culture different than yours changed your perspective on something?
- On pg. 62 Yancey states "the problem with Christian multiculturalism is not that it is wrong, but that it is inadequate to offer a complete Christian answer." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- Key quotes/sections to focus on: pg. 53-top of 54, definition of multiculturalism. pg. 59 first full paragraph - middle of pg. 60, some positives and challenges to Christian multiculturalism.

## Chapter 5: White Responsibility

- How does the white responsibility model help us to see sin from a more structural perspective rather than just an individual perspective? Can you give an example?
- Have you had any personal experience with the white responsibility model of racial relations? What was that like?
- Do you think it's possible to build bridges with the white responsibility model or does it only assign blame? Why?
- Key quotes/sections to focus on: pg. 64-top of pg. 65, definition of the white responsibility model. middle of pg. 68- end of pg. 69, some strengths and weaknesses of white responsibility.