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A Resource for Christians to Discuss Racial Unity from the Foundation of Scripture: Review of the Small-group Curriculum *Reconciled: A Biblical Approach to Racial Unity*

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This review of the small-group curriculum *Reconciled: A Biblical Approach to Racial Unity* provides context for its importance and relevance in today's culture. The format of the six sessions is described along with two additional significant resources – the evaluation mechanism for models of racial reconciliation and the glossary. Christians must be willing to engage in relationships with one another; it is through our love for each other that God's love will be evidenced.

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Reconciled: A Biblical Approach to Racial Unity by Monique Duson with Krista Bontrager (2021) is a small-group curriculum for evangelical Christians to discuss racial unity. It covers the scripture-based main ideas for Christian communities to engage with current societal realities of racial tensions. Duson has presented the currently missing biblical fundamentals, alongside the relevant sociological theories and philosophies. This has been molded, with pragmatic group discussion tactics, into a psychologically and spiritually provoking small group experience.

In the introduction, Duson immerses participants directly into current context; these are conversation topics which trigger overwhelming emotions. Starting with Christian commonalities, participants are reminded of what unifies believers: 1) the Bible as authority, 2) Christians as family, and 3) all people as one race. The visioning for the future reminds us of the hope of what can emerge as brothers and sisters engage in difficult conversations, “The hope is that unity will be built into your group and that as understanding grows, so will friendship” (p. 11).

As Duson seeks to define what the *ministry of reconciliation* is, she begins with brief descriptions of current models being used in churches. Duson acknowledges that many Christian racial-reconciliation advocates have a worthy goal...but one that is predicated on a naturalistic worldview rather than a biblical worldview. Scripture teaches that the human heart is wicked and needs a Savior. The love and light of Christ will change the heart and the power of the Spirit will provide wisdom and strength to love others, regardless of differences. It is our identity in Christ that must rule, with all other identities in subjection. As family, believers are called to reflect on redeemed ideas about who we are and redeemed possibilities in perceiving each other. As Duson described, “If we are serious about racial unity, we must conform our thoughts, emotions, and actions to biblical truth” (p. 39). This means asking the Holy Spirit to reveal personal responsibility in seeking my own way apart from Him and consequently creating disunity.

The purpose of the curriculum is to introduce people to the reality that scripture itself addresses Christians in relationship. Throughout the six weeks, the book of Acts is studied as well as many of the epistles (e.g., Corinthians, Ephesians, Philemon). While the curriculum does not, nor should it, attempt to address all issues and answer all questions, it provides a foundation for believers to seek the Holy Spirit to guide them in deeper study. Duson provides a list of books, videos, podcasts, and blogposts for further learning each week.

At the end of the curriculum are two helpful resources. First, Duson proposes an evaluation mechanism that should be used for any model for racial unity. Currently, there are few theories or models in existence regarding racial reconciliation. A comparative analysis of these models and new ones that are developed would allow exploration of their alignment with historic Christian beliefs.

The other resource is the glossary provided by Dr. J. R. Miller. Unfortunately, the glossary does not introduce in what context the words are defined. While the curriculum is defined and discussed from a biblical context, the glossary appears to be defined in a modern cultural context. This lack of contextualization, however, does not diminish the wonderful support a relevant glossary can be for the desired small-group conversations in which people will have a variety of familiarity or experiences with current cultural terminology.

How are Christian leaders challenged to advance their capacities to engage in discussions of unity when confronted with the accelerating societal disunity? The foundation of scriptural principles along with critical assessment of innovative and heuristic approaches is essential, especially when addressing potentially charged group paradigms. This is a practitioners' curriculum that can be used multi-generationally. Duson has applied a Christ-focused approach to challenge the existing propositions associated with current divisions. As Christians seek to engage in constructive discourses vital to the present realities, the ideas of this curriculum will resonate in the solid foundation of scripture truth in revolutionary perspective.

About the Authors

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Reference

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<https://www.centerforbiblicalunity.com/reconciled>