

UNITED

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Thank you for reading United: Captured by God's Vision for Diversity. One of the purposes of United is to open doors for greater awareness and communication about diversity, race and ethnicity, friendships, and the Body of Christ. My hope is that these questions will facilitate beneficial reflection and discussion on this important topic. The questions may be used in personal study or would be great in a discussion group or small group setting.



INTRODUCTION

1. Do you find it difficult and/or scary to enter into the conversation about diversity and racial issues? If so why or why not?
2. What kind of conversations do you think that Christians need to have that will lead to racial reconciliation and encouragement?
3. Why do you think the desire for greater diversity within the church can seem daunting? How might the vision at the beginning of the chapter encourage your faith for the future?



CHAPTER 1: MY NEW IDENTITY

1. Did the stories in this chapter of the divisions between African Americans and whites surprise you or have you experienced racism or cared for a friend who had?
2. How does being “in Christ” change the discussion of race? How are our identities now new?
3. Have you ever made conclusions about a person based on outward appearance? How might thinking of others as made in the image of God transform those thoughts?
4. What gives you confidence that your identity is secure in Christ?



CHAPTER 2: MY WHITE CHURCH

1. Have you ever experienced that odd sense that you're alone even when you're in the midst of hundreds of people? Have you ever felt like a lonely snowflake? Share about that experience.
2. The fear of rejection can lead to despair. Have you ever feared being rejected because of reasons outside of your control? If so, how did God replace your fear of man with a fear of Him?
3. How does understanding we are adopted children of God and accepted because of Jesus change your view of ourselves and others?



CHAPTER 3: LONGING FOR DIVERSITY

1. Asking questions to get to know others is helpful but as discussed in Chapter 1, can be scary. How do you think asking questions about the experiences of others can bridge gaps and help build understanding and ultimately build up the Body of Christ?
2. Have you experienced a struggle that might be good to share? Why do you think we suppress struggles and desires? How do you think God might be faithful with your openness?
3. Do you think the topic of race and church has been neglected? If so, why?
4. What does this statement mean to you: “True unity is found first through being reconciled to God and then to each other”?



CHAPTER 4: GOD'S PROVISION OF DIVERSITY

1. Could the pursuit of diversity be as simple as branching out in your friendships? How could you begin to include others who are not like you in your life?
2. What is imago dei and how does it affect race?
3. Race is a complex topic but one that the Bible doesn't shy away from. How does studying what the Bible says about race assist our discussion about the topic? What have you learned from scripture that you did not know?
4. Sin corrupts and divides and, because we continue to wrestle with sin, our differences can be the catalyst for that divide. How have you seen this in your own life?



CHAPTER 5: DIFFERENT BUT THE SAME

1. How, as Christians, are we really the same? Does that seem like a new concept to you? Is it strange to think of Christians from all over the world as brothers and sisters? Why?
2. God's family is special and set apart. How does Jesus express the importance of this new family?
3. How might understanding the family of God be a weapon against racial intolerance?



CHAPTER 6: GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST

1. What do you think of when you hear the term “diversity”?
2. How might we tangibly benefit from relating with those unlike us?
3. Do you find it difficult to invite others into your life (to lunch, church, etc.)? What are ways you can also pursue diversity within your church beyond ethnicity?
4. How might a love for others motivate the pursuit of those unlike yourself in friendship?
5. How does the sin of partiality affect the pursuit of diversity?



CHAPTER 7: HIS BRIDE

1. What are you looking for when you search out a church?
2. We've heard the saying "be the change you want to see." What do you think about that saying? Do you think that it could be useful in the context of selecting a church?
3. Have you resisted getting to know people within your church? How might developing authentic relationships help or change your church experience?
4. If you've developed relationships already, how has it helped your church experience?
5. How do you believe God views the church and its role in the believer's life?



CHAPTER 8: A DIFFICULT PURSUIT

1. There is beauty in diversity, but there are also real obstacles that some experience in this pursuit. What obstacles come to mind?
2. How might the pursuit of diversity be reduced to a trend? How do we fight against the temptation to make it “cool” and “trendy”?
3. How might the changing demographics in our nation affect churches in 20 years?
4. Is your church pursuing diversity? If so, how? If not, do you think it is because of some of the difficulties mentioned in this chapter? How might they be overcome?



CHAPTER 9: FOR OUR KIDS

1. Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech has come to fruition in many ways. How have you seen our country change and grow in race relations? Where do you see that there is still room to grow?
2. What have you learned that leads you to believe that God has a vision for diversity in the church and all of life?
3. When your children are adults, what do you think their churches will look like?
4. What is your hope for the church as it relates to race and ethnicity?
5. Where do we go from here? How do you begin to implement the needed changes in order to see this vision come to life?