

Seven months ago, the world erupted when a police officer knelt on the throat of George Floyd for seven minutes as Floyd suffocated to death. A few weeks ago, we watched as a group of white supremacists led a mob into the U.S. Capitol for the first time since the war of 1812. Yesterday we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Tomorrow we will celebrate the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. All of these things carry a common thread.

To look at almost any aspect of modern American society today and not see racism as a part of it is denial. From politics to law enforcement, education to religion, entertainment to society at large, racism affects our whole society. I would like to say, “even the Church”, but the Church has been one of the bigger forces reinforcing our societal racism. I’m sick and tired of hearing the phrase, “Sunday morning at 11am is the most segregated hour of the week.” But sadly it remains true. And while the Evangelical Covenant Church is the fastest growing denomination in America in terms of diversity, we are still at a dismally low percentage of non-majority culture churches. And while our denomination has more minority congregations, our congregations themselves are still far too monochromatic.

This is not a new problem for the church. In the earliest days of the fledgling church, the minority Greek widows complained that they were being ignored in favor of the majority Jewish widows when it came to food distribution ([see Acts 6 for this story](#)). Their answer was to appoint leadership from the minority culture to oversee this system. We could learn a lot from the early church.

And this was not a single event in the early church. In [Acts 15](#), the entire leadership of the Church held a council to determine how they should welcome the minority gentiles into the Church. We don’t see councils of this size to determine any other issue in scripture. And in individual churches, the racism was bad enough to incite the Apostle Paul to write to the group of churches in Galatia his famous passage, “²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:28-29).”

We usually memorize Gal. 3:28, but can we hear the words of verse 29? What makes us children of God is not our race, but our faith. And it is not enough for us to not actively exclude people because of their race. Because we love one another, we need to closely examine our own actions, our own histories, and our own institutions to see where racism exists that we can effect. This is the purpose of our Racial Righteousness small groups, and this is a requirement of our faith.

Racism is not a Christian value. In fact, just the opposite. Because every person is created in the image of God, racism is inherently anti-Christian. Where has our church been complicit in the racism of our society? Where has my family? Where have I? We all need to ask and answer these questions before we can claim that we are anti-racists, just as God is.