

Opening Prayer (Facilitator)

UMC Discipleship Ministries offers [Praying for Change: Daily Prayers for Anti-Racism](#) as a resource for prayer.

Scriptural Passage:

Revelation 7: 9-10

“After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

Meditation:

The apocalyptic vision given to John presents an image of hope- one day in the future people from all different backgrounds will come together to worship God, saying with a singular voice “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

Sadly, throughout human history, humans have chosen to believe in a false hierarchy of human value, that some people are inherently better than others. And in our state and country, we encoded that belief in laws that, among other things, segregated us from each other. Black and White children could not go to the same schools, could not live in the same neighborhoods, could not worship together. Humans thwarted this Biblical vision of unity and togetherness.

And as our video this week points out, the separate schools and hospitals and Six in 10 Gen Zs and 56% of millennials say that systemic racism is fairly or very widespread throughout society.were anything but equal. And the legacy of this unequal treatment and racial segregation is still everywhere around us. For almost any statistic we can still see a persistent gap among racial groups, with White folks faring better than other racial groups in family wealth, life expectancy, infant mortality, homeownership, the list goes on. And though we are more than 65 years past the landmark Brown vs. Board Supreme Court Case that outlawed segregated schools, Black and White children are actually less likely to be in school with each other than they were in the 1970's.¹

Our churches don't fare much better. In 2019 only 16% of American churches had multiracial congregations.²

¹ <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/5/17080218/school-segregation-getting-worse-data>

² “defined as those in which no one racial or ethnic group constituted more than 80 percent of the congregation’s participants.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/study-multiracial-churches-are-growing-but-racial-unity-may-be-elusive/2020/11/13/d688163a-25b6-11eb-8672-c281c7a2c96e_story.html

Video: Massive Resistance in Farmville

We, the people of God, are called forward to this vision of the future in Revelation. And yet we struggle to make it a reality in our communities, our schools, our churches. There is a clear Biblical call for us to come together, and to heal the wounds of the past and the injustices of the present. Let us go forth and do the hard work to fulfill the kingdom hope that all nations will live and worship together, side by side.

Discussion questions:

1. What were your experiences of school growing up with regards to race? Were you in segregated schools? Live through integration or bussing? Share personal stories with one another about race and your school experience.
2. Statistics show that we still live fairly racially segregated lives. Has this been your experience?
3. Have you ever been part of a multiracial community? If so, what did you learn from the experience?

Ideas for action:

1. Research the racial disparities in your community. Find some organizations who are working on racial equity, racial justice, or use a racial equity lens in their community change work. Invite them to share their work and any opportunities for partnership.
2. Build relationships across differences: find a willing church or other faith community that has a different demographic makeup to yours and see what opportunities might exist to build *authentic* relationships across differences (i.e. not power or charity based).
3. Research [ResourceUMC](#) to investigate more ideas for action. .

Closing Prayer

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Participant: [Click Here](#) to learn more about Cameron Patterson, Executive Director, Moton Museum.