

Ethnic and Cultural Awareness

The Covenant church is growing and so is our understanding of the wholeness of the kingdom of God. This is especially true as it relates to our sensitivity and understanding of brothers and sisters in Christ whose ethnicity and culture varies from our own.

Even if we do not live in a place where there are a variety of ethnicities and cultures, we still have a mission as spiritual mentors to make children aware of the fullness of God's kingdom. Not all of God's children look the same, talk the same or act the same, but we are all still part of the same kingdom, the same family and, *"if one member suffers, all suffer together, and if one member is honored, all rejoice together."* 1 Corinthians 12:26

"Only as children grow older and absorb poisons from adults does color begin to blind them."

Roy Wilkins
Civil Rights Activist

Thoughts for You, as Leaders, to Ponder

- ❖ Have you ever been followed around a store by the owner or security personnel?
- ❖ Have you ever not been served in a restaurant?
- ❖ Have you ever been trapped in your own neighborhood?
- ❖ Have you ever feared traveling across the country?
- ❖ Has your church ever been burned?
- ❖ Have you ever been falsely accused of a crime and not been able to afford good counsel?
- ❖ Have innocent children been killed in your neighborhood?

Most of these things still happen every day in the US. But we have *both* an opportunity *and* a mandate from God to change this. (Leviticus 19:18; Micah 6:8; Matthew 25:34-40; I Corinthians 12:14-22; Galatians 3:28)

Practical Ways of Getting Started

- ❖ Does our curriculum reflect the whole of God's kingdom, or primarily one group? What do the pictures look like? What are they telling our children?
- ❖ If more churches asked publishers to offer more ethnically inclusive curriculum, they would do so.
- ❖ Plan sessions on this specific topic.
- ❖ Encourage positive dialogue about ethnicity; discourage negative dialogue in the same way you would other negative behavior.
- ❖ Consider whether your church reflects the breadth of ethnicities in your community.

God's Kingdom is Inclusive

- ❖ How integrated is our community?
- ❖ How integrated are our curriculums?
- ❖ How integrated is our church?
- ❖ How integrated is the culture within our church?
- ❖ Who is our local congregation partnering with to break down ethnic and cultural barriers?