

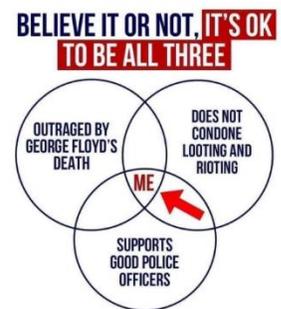


Intersections
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The message was repeatedly taught to me growing up. Both as a pedestrian and a new driver, I heard the same warning, “Use care when you approach an intersection. Look both ways.” Many a time this lesson helped me from being blindsided. I thought I had it mastered until I began working for the Presbytery, at our office in West Allis. There, I found my first 6-point intersection. It remains dizzying! Thank heaven for stop lights to manage the traffic.

Today, the words “intersection” and “intersectionality” have taken on nuanced meaning. Exercising caution while navigating these intersections remains good advice though.

For example, have you seen the Venn diagram with three interconnecting circles showing a person at the intersection of three viewpoints: outrage at the death of a black man, unwillingness to condone looting and rioting, and supportive of police officers? Though we are encouraged to be polarized by these viewpoints, we might find ourselves at the intersection of all three. Being in the middle – at the intersection – doesn’t reflect disloyalty. It reflects that we are multi-faceted people, who have the intellectual and emotional capability to function in complex societal relationships.



Similarly, as we continue our work in anti-racism, intersectionality comes to the forefront. It is one thing to speak of the experience of black people, but a black woman will have a different experience than a black man. There will be points of similarity, but a black woman stands at the intersection of two distinct experiences, one based on race and one based on gender. I commend to you the report from our General Assembly on the [Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls](#) (02-020) that dives into the impacts of that intersection and offers concrete steps for action. In similar fashion, a Queer Latino will have a different experience than a straight Latino because of those intersections. Imagine now that we’re at a 6-point intersection like the one in West Allis that also includes nationality, class, age, family status, and more. At the center, we see the complexity of human creation. No people group is monolithic though we use labels to pretend we are.

Being at these intersections can be lonely and isolating. You might have experienced being lumped unfairly into one category or another by people who don’t know you at all. Those loitering at the corners can be quick to condemn one who is not quite man-enough, Korean-enough, blue-enough... At the middle of these intersections, we can find ourselves simultaneously being in all categories and none of them sufficiently. In those times, it’s helpful to look for traffic signals that help us navigate these intersections with kindness and dignity toward others.

Each of us stands at the intersection of categories that society uses to define us, but no category alone can do justice to the beauty and depth of God’s creation. I pray that we will come to celebrate God’s hand in that complexity – not to erase it or neutralize our differences – but to see the complexity of God’s creation in its fullness and celebrate it.