

1 **REPORT OF THE AD INTERIM COMMITTEE**
 2 **ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC RECONCILIATION**
 3 **TO THE FORTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**
 4 **OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

5
6
7 **Introduction**

8
9 The 44th General Assembly, in response to a Overture 45 from Potomac Presbytery,
10 established an ad interim committee to study issues related to Racial Reconciliation. Our
11 committee had a four-part mandate. First, the committee was charged to “assess the current
12 situation in the PCA concerning racial and ethnic reconciliation.” Next, we were to “identify
13 specific problems the PCA needs to address to promote racial reconciliation and ethnic
14 diversity.” In addition, the committee was to “develop constructive guidelines and suggest
15 concrete steps for the use of the PCA, including all presbyteries and sessions in order to make
16 progress toward the work of racial reconciliation.” Finally, the committee was to “report to the
17 45th General Assembly” (*M44GA*, p. 84).

18
19 Over the past two years, the committee has made strides toward fulfilling this mandate. The
20 45th General Assembly assisted the committee significantly by approving our plan to utilize
21 LifeWay Research Services in order to survey current attitudes on issues of race among our
22 teaching and ruling elders. Working with LifeWay has allowed us to collect significant data
23 that will allow us to assess the current situation, identify specific problems that our
24 denomination needs to address, and offer concrete steps to make progress on this issue. We
25 also recommend further assessment in order to provide longitudinal study to determine change
26 and progress over time.

27
28 As the committee has worked, we have been conscious that we are building on previous work
29 done by preceding Assemblies. We remember that the 30th General Assembly (2002) pledged
30 itself to “strive, in a manner consistent with the Gospel imperatives, for the encouragement of
31 racial reconciliation, the establishment of urban congregations, and the enhancement of
32 existing ministries of mercy in our cities, among the poor, and across all social, racial, and
33 economic boundaries to the glory of God” (*M30GA*, p. 262).

34
35 We have worked within the definitions and direction of the Pastoral Letter on Racism
36 approved by the 32nd (2004) General Assembly (*M32GA*, pp. 427-457; p. 121). And so, we
37 have presumed the definitions of race and racism contained in that document:

38
39 • *Race*

40 The word “race,” as used in this pastoral letter, is not a scientific
41 classification; rather, in the language of one author, the term “race” is used
42 to denote “a social phenomenon with a biological component” (Sowell, *Race*
43 *and Culture*). That is, the term “race” not only pertains to the color of skin
44

1 and other biological factors, but also may include the cultural factors,
2 associations, and assumptions that we attach to certain races as well
3 (*M32GA*, p. 436).
4

5 • *Racism*

6 Racism is an explicit or implicit belief or practice that qualitatively
7 distinguishes or values one race over other races. Racism includes the social
8 exclusion or judgment, or the segregating, of an individual or group of
9 individuals based on racial differences, which always include physical
10 appearance and its underlying genetic structure that are hereditary and
11 unalterable (*M32GA*, p. 435).
12

13 While we recognize the good biblical-theological work offered by the Pastoral Letter, in our
14 report we return to some of that ground in order to provide the necessary biblical-theological
15 framework for reflecting upon the data received from LifeWay Research Services as well as
16 to consider our analysis and suggestions for moving forward.
17

18 Of course, we have also been mindful of the recent action of the 44th General Assembly
19 (2016), which acted to “recognize, confess, condemn, and repent of corporate and historical
20 sins, including those committed during the Civil Rights era, and continuing racial sins of
21 ourselves and our fathers...[and] of past failures to love brothers and sisters from minority
22 cultures in accordance with what the Gospel requires, as well as failures to lovingly confront
23 our brothers and sisters concerning racial sins and personal bigotry...” (*M44GA*, p. 70, p. 76).
24 That Assembly also recommitted “itself to the gospel task of racial reconciliation, diligently
25 seeking effective courses of action to further that goal, with humility, sincerity and zeal, for
26 the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel” (p. 76).
27

28 These Assembly actions have served as frameworks for this committee’s study and
29 recommendations. However, we also know that from the very beginning of the PCA’s
30 existence, the biblical-theological framework was present to deal with issues of racial sin and
31 to seek racial reconciliation and justice. Not only did the Advisory Convention of the
32 Continuing Presbyterian Church, meeting in August 1973, declare that our church would
33 “welcome fellow believers in Christ regardless of race” (*Minutes of the Advisory Convention*
34 *of the Continuing Presbyterian Church*, Asheville, North Carolina, August 7-9, 1973, p. 27).
35 In addition, at the first General Assembly, O. Palmer Robertson gave an address that provided
36 the necessary theological framework for moving forward on this issue.
37

38 Robertson declared that the continuing church movement that gave birth to the PCA was
39 committed to searching out “the implications of Scripture for the totality of human life.” Far
40 from a narrowing fundamentalism, the PCA’s theological commitment was to determine how
41 “the faith” related to spiritual and social issues, which had to include racial reconciliation,
42 justice, and diversity. Indeed, “it is to the faith of Christianity in its fullness, as it relates to the
43 whole of creation, that the Continuing Church commits itself,” he said. “May the hallmark of

1 the lifestyle of its members be an awareness that Christ came preaching the Kingdom of
 2 God.”¹ As the Bible teaches over and over, this saving rule of God would extend to the nations,
 3 to a multi-racial, multi-ethnic people.

4
 5 In other words, the committee was not starting from scratch in offering its report. Rather, we
 6 are building upon biblical-theological insights and pastoral reflection that has been present in
 7 the PCA since before her founding in December 1973. Our report opens with a series of
 8 affirmations and rejections that the committee adopted at the beginning of its work as guiding
 9 principles for our study. From there, we offer three sections of biblical-theological, confessional,
 10 and pastoral-mission reflections that frame the work of racial reconciliation. We move then to
 11 report in summary fashion the research data collected by LifeWay Research Services with
 12 specific suggestions for advancing the cause of racial reconciliation in church planting, mono-
 13 ethnic congregations, presbyteries, and academic institutions. The report concludes with
 14 recommendations for the 46th General Assembly to consider that will extend this committee’s
 15 work in a longitudinal manner and create an on-going assessment process for our church as it
 16 engages in this work. Our great hope is that this report will offer a pathway for our church to
 17 reflect the eschatological body of Revelation 7, drawn “from every nation, from all tribes and
 18 peoples and languages” (Rev. 7:9).

20 **Guiding Principles: Affirmations and Denials**

21 *Affirmations*

- 22 • We affirm the Bible as “God breathed” – infallible and inerrant.
- 23
- 24 • We affirm the vision of the redeemed in Revelation 7:9-11, where all nations and
- 25 ethnicities are fulfilled in Christ.
- 26
- 27 • We affirm the image of God reflected in all people.
- 28
- 29 • We affirm the image of Christ reflected in His body.
- 30
- 31 • We affirm that for the Christian, all human identities must be subordinate to identity
- 32 in Christ.
- 33 • We affirm that biblical righteousness has dimensions of both piety and justice.
- 34
- 35 • We affirm that biblical righteousness has dimensions of both piety and justice.
- 36
- 37 • We affirm the Westminster Standards.
- 38
- 39
- 40

41 *Denials*

- 42 • We reject theological liberalism – defined by J. Gresham Machen in *Christianity and*
- 43 *Liberalism* as a “different gospel” from the Scriptural gospel.
- 44

¹ O. Palmer Robertson, “The Continuing Church and the Faith Once Delivered,” *Addresses Delivered During the First General Assembly* (Birmingham, AL: Continuing Presbyterian Church, 1973), 20.

- 1 • We reject Marxism and Socialism, and all ideologies based on either one or both.
- 2
- 3 • We reject racism in all its forms; ontological, cultural, systemic, et al.
- 4
- 5 • We reject as aberrant and anti-biblical any theological formulations incorporating
- 6 racism or racial superiority (e.g., Kinism).²
- 7
- 8 • We reject “intersectionality” not solely based on biblical norms.³
- 9
- 10 • We reject human identities that demand precedence over identity in Christ.
- 11
- 12 • We reject human identities based on unbiblical lifestyles or behaviors.
- 13
- 14 • We reject the notion that God’s people are designated by anything other than God’s
- 15 sovereign election.
- 16
- 17 • We reject as inadequate any analysis of racism that does not recognize sin and the fall
- 18 of mankind as its root.
- 19

20 **Biblical and Theological Foundations**

21

22 The Bible does not begin with the fall; it begins with creation. Actually, it begins with God,

23 the majestic sovereign creator of the universe. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning, God

24 created the heavens and the earth.” The Hebrew word that is translated “create” is “bara.”

25 This particular form of the verb always refers to divine activity. It is used to show that God is

26 the one who took the initiative to create. He took the initiative to bring into existence

27 something that never existed before — the heavens and the earth. He created them out of

28 nothing by the word of his power. He did so in a space of six days. Repeatedly, as God creates,

29 the first chapter of the Bible tells us that “God saw that it was good.” God shaped and

30 fashioned his creation into a good and beautiful place. His creative works were excellent; as

31 Augustine noted, “Therefore, because He is all-powerful and good, He made everything

32 exceedingly good.”⁴ And God’s creative works display his glory, so much so that Calvin

33 would observe that the creation is the “theater of God’s glory.”⁵

² Kinism is “based on the concept of living with one’s own kind or kin.” Typically, Kinists claim to believe standard Christian doctrine while affirming white supremacy. See Anti-Defamation League, “Kinism: A Racist and Anti-Semitic Religious Movement” (2013):

<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Kinism-Racist-and-Anti-Semitic-Religionfinal2.pdf>.

³ Intersectionality is the idea that individuals do not have “a single, easily stated, unitary identity”: Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 10-11.

⁴ Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. 1, ed. John Hammond Taylor (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982), 122

⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J. T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.5.8 (p. 61), 2.6.1 (p. 341).

1 Why is it important to know that God is creator in a document about racial reconciliation?
 2 Because if God is the creator, that means he has authority over all his creative works. As the
 3 Psalmist will later reflect, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world and
 4 those who dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1-2). This world belongs to God and those who dwell in this
 5 world belong to God as well. Further, God has structured his world so that it will operate and
 6 function as he intended. Some of these structures include responsibility, roles, rules, freedom,
 7 university, limits; another divine structure is diversity. There was diversity present in the
 8 beginning; diversity was not added later, after the fall, during the Enlightenment, or in some
 9 other time. Diversity was present in creation from the beginning by divine design. And it is
 10 good—exceedingly good.

11

12 In the very first verses of the creation account, there was no diversity. As Dr. Douglas Kelly
 13 observed, “Genesis 1:2 clearly indicates that the original, created elements of verse 1 were not
 14 yet differentiated, separated, and organized.”⁶ The newly created earth was without form and
 15 empty, desolate and waste. Darkness was over the face of the deep; the Spirit of God brooded
 16 over the waters. However, when God created, he entered into an artistic process whereby he
 17 gave shape, substance, and light to the newly created earth. This process turned chaos into
 18 cosmos and brought differentiation, organization, and distinction to God’s world. Indeed,
 19 God’s work during the six days of creation in Genesis 1-2 brought divine diversity.

20

21 We can see diversity being brought to the earth during the first four days of creation. The Lord
 22 made distinctions in creation and distinguished the creation. On the first day of creation, God
 23 distinguished the light from darkness and called the light day and the darkness night. On the
 24 second, the sky was distinguished from the waters; on the third day the seas were distinguished
 25 from the dry land. Kelly noted that these distinctions “were the great divine works of the third
 26 day, preparing the world for the introduction of animal life, and finally, all would be ready for
 27 mankind: the crown of God’s creation.”⁷ Another distinction made on the fourth day further
 28 displays divine diversity. God distinguished the daytime from night-time by creating two great
 29 lights in the expanse of the heavens. He fashioned and made the sun to rule over the day and
 30 the moon to rule over the night.

31

32 Creation is not a picture of uniformity. Rather, from the inception of creation, there is
 33 diversity. And in the continuing divine work of creation, God continued to foster diversity. In
 34 the creation of plant life and animal life, we have the repeated phrase “according to its/their
 35 kind.” God did not create a homogeneous plant and animal life. God created plants and
 36 animals according to various kinds, not according to the same kind. God created different
 37 kinds of plants and fruit trees. He created different kinds of sea creatures and birds. He created
 38 different kinds of livestock, creeping things and beasts of the earth. As Abraham Kuyper
 39 declared,

40

41 Raise your eyes, look up at the starry heavens, and you will see not just a
 42 single beam of light but an undulating, scintillating sea of light coming from

⁶ Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change: Genesis 1.1-2.4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms* (Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 1997), 81

⁷ *Ibid.*, 189.

1 myriads of bright-shining stars, each of which the Lord calls ‘by name’ for
2 the simple reason that each has a name, a nature, and a substance of its own.
3 They all differ in the speed of the light they emit and each of them sparked
4 along its own path. Uniformity in God’s creation! No, rather infinite
5 diversity, an inexhaustible profusion of variations that strikes and fascinates
6 you in every domain of nature, in the ever-varying shape of a snowflake as
7 well as in the endlessly differentiated form of flower and leaf. Where in
8 God’s entire creation to you encounter life that does not display the
9 unmistakable hallmark of life precisely in the multiplicity of its colors and
10 dimensions, in the capriciousness of its ever-changing forms?⁸

11
12 These words are true not simply for animate and inanimate creation; these words are also true
13 for the crown of God’s creation, humanity. Humanity is the most excellent of all God’s
14 creative works. In Genesis 1:26, God says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”
15 God created male and female together to be the crown of his creation. Adam and Eve as the
16 fountainhead of humanity are made in the image of God and all of their progeny bear that
17 image as well. In addition, Adam and Eve as the fountainhead of humanity represent all races
18 in themselves; while they are not identifiable by race or ethnicity, they contain all races and
19 ethnicities. And those races and ethnicities that spring from our first parents bear God’s image.
20 Hence, racism or ethnocentrism—which presumes that one’s race or ethnicity is superior to
21 another—is a denial that all people have been created in the image of God.

22
23 Thus, all humanity has in common the image of God. And yet, what diversity springs from
24 the fountainhead! As Adam and Eve fulfill the creation mandate—“Be fruitful and multiply
25 and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds
26 of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28)—and as that
27 creation mandate is restated to Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:1, 7), the diversity found in the table
28 of nations (Gen. 10) is the result: “their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations”
29 (10:5, 20, 31). This diversity was not a mistake, mishap, or miscalculation. Rather, diversity
30 was by divine design. Indeed, man did not create diversity, but God did.

31
32 Of course, Adam and Eve’s fall into sin happened. And that means that not only is every race
33 contained in Adam and so created in the image of God; every race is contained in Adam and
34 so experiences the effects of the fall (Gen 3). The fountainhead was poisoned at the beginning,
35 affecting all people and every people. We all participate in the sin of our first parents; we all
36 carry the contagion with us. Hence, no race or ethnicity is more sinful than another; whites
37 are not more sinful than blacks, Asians not more sinful than Latinos, Irish not more sinful than
38 Italians. We all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Rom 3:23).

39
40 Further, the fall has affected the creation mandate. The result means that image bearers will
41 abuse and misuse the mandate to exercise dominion over other image bearers through
42 oppression, abuse, and presupposed superiority. Human nature is now embedded with a sinful
43 desire to dominate other people. Cain’s murder of his brother Abel was the first example of

⁸ Abraham Kuyper, “Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life,” in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 34.

1 one image bearer misusing dominion over another. Cain did not value his brother's life, so he
2 took it. He was not his brother's keeper.

3
4 From that moment to this, human history is filled with examples of image bearers not being
5 keepers of one another. Throughout the history of the world, nations and ethnic groups have
6 made claims of superiority over other nations and ethnic groups. These claims and beliefs in
7 some self-crowned superiority are lived out in how these nations and ethnic groups treat other
8 people whom they deem inferior. We see it in other sins as well: murder, abortion, slavery,
9 abuse, sex-trading, oppression, injustice. We see it in the presumption that one culture is
10 superior and demands that all other cultures must assimilate. The sinful desire to have
11 dominion over others cripples the various ethnicities from understanding and lovingly
12 embracing their differences and diversity. This dominion over others, both intentional and
13 unintentional, is at times manifested in misuses and abuses by men in positions of power,
14 leading to the voicelessness and broken fellowship of brothers from minority groups. Indeed,
15 all men struggle with power. We struggle with the power of lordship of our very lives, but
16 Jesus came to re-orient relationships of power, and we submit and surrender to the power of
17 the Holy Spirit. We seek to see others as greater than ourselves.

18
19 In the midst of all of this sin and sinning, God responds. He elects and he covenants. He
20 chooses Abraham, a pagan from Ur, an Aramean from Chaldea; and he gives Abraham an
21 amazing set of promises that connects to God's larger purpose to bless all of his created peoples.
22 God promises, "I will make you a great *nation*...and in all you all the *families* of the earth will
23 be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). The word for "families" shows up repeatedly in Genesis 10, most
24 often translated "clans" (Gen. 10:5, 20, 31, and 10:18, 32). How is God going to deal with the
25 problem of sin that has affected the vast diversity of his peoples, affected them to such a degree
26 that they falsely claim authority over each other and oppress one another? Through Abraham's
27 offspring, the vast diversity of peoples, ethnicities, races will be blessed.

28
29 Through the rest of the Old Testament, we can trace this thread of how God will bless the
30 nations, how God will include them in his people, and how God intends to do this through a
31 son of Abraham. God speaks through a grandson of Abraham, who promises his own son
32 Judah that a ruler will come from his line to whom "shall be the obedience of the peoples"
33 (Gen. 49:10). God makes provision for the "foreigners" who joined Israel in the Exodus,
34 creating a pathway of inclusion in the people of God (Ex. 12:38, 43-51). God meets Rahab, a
35 Canaanite, so that she is ready to forsake her people to join Israel (Josh. 2) and he meets Ruth,
36 a Moabite, so that she finds rest under Yahweh's wings (Ruth 1:16-17, 2:12).

37
38 And especially in the promises made to David, we see God pursuing this intention to bring
39 unity once again out of the diversity, redeeming the nations and bringing them under the rule
40 of a forever king in a forever kingdom (2 Sam. 7:12-17). Over and over in the Psalms, the
41 Davidic king is promised the nations. For example, in Psalm 2:8, God urges his the Anointed
42 One established in Zion, "Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of
43 the earth your possession." In Psalm 22, after the redemptive suffering of God's Messiah, we
44 hear the declaration, "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the
45 families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he

1 rules over the nations.” Of course, in Psalm 67, we have a grand vision of God as the God of
2 all peoples and nations; and in Psalm 87, those from Philistia, Tyre, and Cush, “born” in Zion,
3 are part of God’s people. This is part of what the Davidic King does—he rules over the entire
4 world (“from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth”) so that people from
5 every point on the compass belong to his people (Ps. 72:8-11). This is what the son of David
6 will do—effect redemption and bring the nations into God’s own people so that there will be
7 diversity within the unity of God’s people.

8
9 Isaiah looked forward to this as well. As J. Daniel Hays noted, “The book of Isaiah advances
10 the concept of equal salvation for all peoples and nations more than any other prophetic book.
11 The prophet paints an eschatological picture of people from all nations blending together with
12 the remnant of Israel as the true people of Yahweh.”⁹ And the diversity of races and ethnicities
13 are brought under God’s rule through his Davidic King.

14
15 And so, for example, Isaiah 2 envisions a day when “all the nations shall flow” to Mount Zion,
16 to be ruled by the Lord. All ungodly oppression, injustice, superiority, violence will come to
17 an end: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
18 nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Is. 2:4).
19 In Isaiah 11, as the Davidic Branch, the Root of Jesse, “stands as a signal for the peoples—of
20 him the nations inquire,” he gathers people from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar,
21 Hamath, from the coastlands (Is. 11:10-11). The nations come into God’s people under the
22 rule of the Davidic king. Isaiah 42 looks forward to the Servant who will be “a covenant for
23 the people and a light for the nations” (Is. 42:6; cf. 49:6; Acts 13:47). And Isaiah closes with
24 a vision of the new creation coming in which God will gather people from “all nations and
25 languages,” some of whom will be priests and Levites” (Is. 66:18-21; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).

26
27 By the time one gets to the end of the Old Testament, the expectation is set. How is God going
28 to bless all the families of the earth—all the diverse races and ethnicities than have filled the
29 earth? God is going to bless them through a son of Abraham, a son of David; somehow this
30 individual, this King, will redeem diverse men and women, bringing them into his people, and
31 he will restore his image-bearers. He will honor their particularity even as he redeems it and
32 enfolds it. He does not do away with our ethnic particularity in this world; rather, he honors
33 us as the “nations” even as he includes us in his “people.” He will rule over us in his kingdom,
34 the Kingdom of God.

35
36 When one turns the page to read the first words of the New Testament, that reader finds pages
37 filled with import: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of
38 Abraham” (Matt 1:1). With these words, the Gospel writers tell us that the promised Davidic
39 King, the promised family-blessor—here he is. Here is the one who will redeem us as
40 individuals: “He will save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). Here is the one who will
41 include the diversity of the nations among his people—as evidenced even by his own
42 genealogy, which includes Canaanites and Moabites, enemies of God, racial others.

⁹ J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2003), 106.

1 And Jesus does this through the cross. Through the cross, he deals with the sin that poisons
2 us, the sin that convicts us before a holy God. His cross reconciles us to God because on the
3 cross he who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of
4 God through him (2 Cor. 5:21). Through the cross, Christ made propitiation for our sins; he
5 was our atoning sacrifice that satiated God’s wrath and satisfied God’s justice (Rom. 3:24;
6 1 John 4:9-10).

7
8 But it is also through the cross of Jesus that God pulls down the dividing wall of hostility that
9 alienates races and ethnicities from one another. In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul tells the Gentiles
10 that they were alienated from God and from God’s people; they were “alienated from the
11 commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise” (2:12). Not only were
12 they without hope and without God, but they were actively hostile toward one another—there
13 was a “dividing wall of hostility” between Jew and Gentile, that was both religious and racial.
14 “But now” because of our common union in Jesus and because of the blood of Jesus, we have
15 been brought near to God, his promises, and his people (2:13). Christ has become our peace,
16 our shalom, our wholeness and well-being—and he has done this by making us “one new
17 man,” breaking down “in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” (2:14-15). Regardless of
18 racial background reinforced by religious pre-commitments, now in Jesus we have been
19 reconciled to God “in one body through the cross” (2:16). We have a common access to the
20 Father by the Spirit (2:18) and we are fellow citizens of God’s commonwealth (2:19). Whether
21 Jew or Gentile, whether white or black, Asian or Latino, or other races and ethnicities—
22 through the cross of Jesus, we have been and are being reconciled, displaying one new
23 humanity to the watching world.

24
25 Paul makes this same point in Colossians. As the preeminent one over creation and new
26 creation, through Jesus God is reconciling “to himself all things, whether on earth or in
27 heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross” (1:20). “All things” includes all things that
28 God has created through Jesus (1:15-17), but also his church which is the body of Christ
29 (1:18). This reconciliation through the blood of Jesus is how we have been reconciled: “You,
30 who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his
31 body of flesh by his death” (1:21-22). We have been reconciled to God through the blood of
32 Jesus. But we are also reconciled to one another across racial and ethnic lines: “Here there is
33 no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ
34 is all, and in all” (3:11). The same God who fills Christ with his fullness fills us, regardless of
35 race, with his fullness so that we might be one new humanity, reconciled by Christ’s blood.

36
37 This does not do away with ethnicity or race: but this one new humanity points us in the
38 direction of Revelation 7 in which people “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and
39 languages” (cf. Gen. 10:5, 20, 31) are brought together by the blood of Jesus to sing his praise.
40 The particularity and individuality of the nations, tribes, peoples, and languages is not done
41 away with; rather, the diversity-in-unity of the praise, each in their own language, will redound
42 to the splendor and praise of the God who redeemed his people with the blood of his Son,
43 Jesus. And even at the end of the biblical story, “the kings of the nations” will bring their glory
44 into the new city—all that is good as a result of our diversity will be present, not in a “color-
45 blind” fashion, but precisely in the rich diversity that God has made (Rev. 21:24-26; cf. Is. 60).

1 Thus, the biblical storyline shows us how God the creator purposes for diversity and unity to
2 cohere together. Through the work of Jesus the Messiah, the son of Abraham, the son of
3 David, those who are redeemed by the blood of the cross are brought together into one body,
4 called the church. Jesus has not reconciled us to one another simply so we can tolerate each
5 other. He reconciled us together so we can love one another in humility.

6 7 **Confessional Support**

8
9 This biblical-theological story-line finds its place in our confessional documents. While the
10 word “race” is not found specifically in the Westminster Standards, there are theological
11 categories within our standards that shape our approach to racial reconciliation and justice. As
12 this report has already demonstrated, Scripture, which sets down “all things necessary for
13 [God’s] own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life” (*WCF* 1:6), addresses a range of issues
14 with regard to the Gospel and race, either expressly or “by good and necessary consequence.”
15 We look to Scripture, as well as our confessional documents, for guidance on this issue.

16
17 Our documents direct us to the Triune God, who is being in community, diversity in unity
18 (*WCF* 2:3); God’s image in humankind is not only displayed in the diversity of male and
19 female as one flesh, but also in the diversities of races brought together into one community,
20 the people of God. God’s image is not restricted to one ethnicity, but is evidenced in all
21 humanity, in each race or ethnicity, and in each human being (*WCF* 4:2). We all share a
22 common humanity and so share a common participation in the *imago dei*.

23
24 We further share a common inheritance from our first parents, Adam and Eve. Not only were
25 they the fountainhead of humanity, but they were also the headwaters of depravity. Hence,
26 every race shares both God’s image and Adam’s sin (*WCF* 6:3; 9:3). In addition, every race
27 stands under God’s providence; he governs all his creatures and all their actions (*SC* 11). The
28 development of races throughout the world stands under God’s oversight, governance, and
29 purpose. In each of these ways—creation, fall, providence—we see the working out of God’s
30 covenantal relationship with humanity (*WCF* 7:1).

31
32 Even with this commonality that the diverse races share, there is a fundamental distinction,
33 one that cuts across all races, namely God’s electing decree (*WCF* 3:6, 7). The fundamental
34 division is not between races, but between the elect and the lost. God’s movement toward
35 humanity for salvation in the covenant of grace is not toward a single race or ethnicity, but
36 toward all nations (*WCF* 7:4, 6). Christ the Mediator came to die for sinners from every nation
37 and race and from every age (*WCF* 8:5, 6): our confessional documents speak of reconciliation
38 here. There is reconciliation between God and humans from every race through the blood of
39 Christ (*WCF* 8:5).

40
41 God applies his salvation by sending his Spirit to people from every race and nation,
42 effectually calling them and enabling them to answer his call, embracing the grace offered to
43 them (*WCF* 10:2). There is not a preference given to one particular race over another; rather,
44 God calls men and women from every race, justifies them by pardoning their sins and
45 accounting and accepting their persons as righteous for Christ’s sake alone (*WCF* 11:1). God

1 through his Spirit adopts people from every race as his children, sanctifies them, grants them
2 saving faith and repentance, enables them to persevere and produce good works. As we live
3 out of the repentance that God’s grace grants us, we confess our sins to each other—including
4 sins of racism—and so are “reconciled” to each other (*WCF* 15:6).

5
6 God’s Law regulates the way we as Christians live with one another (LC 97). And especially
7 the second table of the God’s Law urges us to “love our neighbor as ourselves”: we honor
8 those in every station of life, “inferiors, superiors, and equals” by seeking to “regard the
9 dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another, and to rejoice in
10 each other’s gifts and advancement, as [our] own” (LC 131). We also seek to preserve the
11 lives of our brothers and sisters, regardless of race or ethnicity, through “a readiness to be
12 reconciled” as well as through a just defense of their rights. Reconciliation and justice are
13 embedded in the sixth commandment (LC 135). We honor one another’s marriages, regardless
14 of racial composition, recognizing that “it is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are
15 able with judgment to give their consent” as long as such marriages are subject to biblical
16 requirements “in the Lord” (*WCF* 24:3). We further recognize that the eighth commandment
17 points us to economic justice toward others, regardless of race—“justice in contracts and
18 commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due...[and] an endeavor, by all
19 just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of
20 others, as well as our own.” In addition, the catechism also calls us to the “restitution of goods
21 unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof”; and so, restitution is necessary to
22 reconciliation and justice (LC 141). As we seek legal justice for those who do not have voice
23 in our society, we keep the ninth commandment (LC 145). And finally, we desire to live
24 charitably with all, especially those of the household of faith (LC 147).

25
26 In each of these ways, we love our neighbor through faithfulness and justice—and we do this
27 especially within the church, which “consists of all those throughout the world that profess
28 the true religion, and of their children” (*WCF* 25:2). Peoples from various nationalities and
29 races are to be part of God’s church; they are saints “bound to maintain a holy fellowship and
30 communion in the worship of God.” But they are also saints who must render spiritual services
31 and mutual edification through sharing “outward things, according to their several abilities
32 and necessities” (*WCF* 26:2). Hence, our communion with each other involves sharing our
33 financial resources with each other.

34
35 The preeminent way we share in this communion of the saints is through common worship
36 around Word and sacrament. The sacraments “put a visible difference” between the church
37 and the rest of the world—and so, our common baptism and our common Table should be
38 common to every Christian regardless of race as we stand together against the world (*WCF*
39 27:1). These blessings of Word and sacrament come from Christ, the King of the church; and
40 he has appointed a government in his church with officers drawn from every race and ethnicity
41 (*WCF* 25:2; 30:1). These elders are formed into synods and councils and share in this common
42 government to determine controversies of faith—again, not restricted to any race, but open to
43 all the elect who profess Christ and who have been elected to office (*WCF* 31:2).

1 On the Last Day, the elect, drawn from every race and ethnicity, will be displayed to all the
2 watching world. Once again, the fundamental dividing line among humanity—the elect and
3 the wicked—will be seen, regardless of race and ethnicity (*WCF* 33:2). “All persons that have
4 lived upon the earth” will appear before Christ’s judgment (*WCF* 33:1) and the elect from
5 every race will join their voices to praise Christ and honor him.

6
7 As should be clear, the biblical-theological story-line traced in the initial section of our report
8 is faithfully represented in the confessional standards to which we subscribe. While the
9 seventeenth-century framers of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms did not have
10 “race” as a framework, nothing in what they summarized of Scripture’s teaching is inimical
11 to our church’s developing understanding of racial reconciliation and justice. In fact, our
12 confessional documents demand that we lean into these issues faithfully in obedience to the
13 Scriptures themselves. To fail to see these issues as “Gospel issues,” that is as the proper
14 ethical response to biblical teaching, is to fail to live faithfully to our own confessional
15 standards.

16 17 **Pastoral and Missional Considerations**

18
19 We live in a time where the global is becoming local. Our neighborhoods, schools, and places
20 of work are undergoing rapid social and demographic change, yet our call to neighbor-love
21 remains the same. We must wrestle with the reality that the PCA will struggle to communicate
22 the heart of God to her surrounding neighbors if she does not have the heart of God for her
23 surrounding neighbors. Inasmuch as we fail to love our diverse neighbors in both word and
24 deed, we are rebelling against the Lord, contradicting our Christian identity, and working at
25 cross-purposes with our stated mission.

26
27 It should be said that cross-cultural love has nothing to do with being politically correct.
28 Rather, this cross-cultural love has everything to do with faithfulness to God’s Word and its
29 central message: the good news of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. The message of racial justice
30 is critical for the world to hear Christians talking about, almost as important as other critical
31 social justice issues such as abortion in America. The dying world longs to hear God’s people
32 speak truth in love that we might become the mature body in Christ (Eph. 4:15). Theologically,
33 our goal is not to seek diversity as an end in itself because this would be too small an endeavor
34 relative to God’s mission. Rather the great end of this pursuit is doxology through diversity.
35 Our goal should be to glorify our Savior by cultivating a cross-cultural community that
36 maintains a cross-cultural witness to the grace and glory of God. When rightly considered, the
37 Christian life and community should be a symphonic expression of the “breadth and length
38 and height and depth of the love of Christ” (Eph. 3:18). This love requires humble listening,
39 teachability, and wisdom as well as the proactive pursuit of individual and institutional
40 change. By God’s grace, as God changes us, we will become a foretaste of God’s Kingdom.
41 Again, diversity is not and never should be our ultimate goal; God’s glory is.

42 43 *Pastoral Considerations*

44 If the PCA is going to grow as a cross-cultural church, then our pastors and elders must
45 become faithful cross-cultural shepherds. In order for this to happen, first, pastoral leaders and
46 elders must keep in mind the diversity that may surround their particular local church. Even
47

1 if one's congregation is mono-ethnic, keeping in mind the surrounding diversity in one's
2 neighborhood will force pastoral leaders to come to Scripture with different questions that will
3 bring new interpretative perspectives. Faithful pastors will carry both their own congregants and
4 their diverse neighbors in their hearts and studies as they prepare sermons and lessons.

5
6 Of course, in order to account for the diversity of one's neighborhood, pastoral leaders actually
7 need to know the demographic realities of their neighborhood. Discovering the diversity
8 within a one-mile, three-mile, and five-mile radius of one's church facility will assist pastoral
9 leaders in becoming culturally intelligent and sensitive. Too often, elders presume that they
10 "know" their neighborhoods or they think that demographic work is something church
11 planters do. But churches and pastoral leaders that fail to reach their neighbors—all of their
12 neighbors, not just the ones who look like them—with the Gospel are churches that will prove
13 unfaithful to their calling and God's mission for them.

14
15 As pastoral leaders learn about the diversity surrounding their congregations, as they pray for
16 those neighbors and neighborhoods, and as they come to know their diverse neighbors, such
17 relationships should shift the way our churches engage issues. They cannot help but grow in
18 loving relationships of mutuality with those whom they have come to know; the issues,
19 suffering, and pain of neighbors becomes theirs (1 Cor. 12:26). They may not fully understand
20 the depth of pain that is expressed, but they do understand pain and sorrow and long to enter
21 with Gospel healing. As elders shepherd those who are different culturally, racially, and
22 economically from themselves, they work to listen first and at length. Leaders will remain
23 keenly aware of the fact that Jesus does not deal with a vague, generalized notion of sin. Jesus
24 deals with particular sins of particular, culturally located people, with a particular ministry of
25 Gospel admonishment and restoration. Furthermore, Jesus deals with the particular wounds
26 of particular people who have been sinned against. This involves a particular call to particular
27 repentance of particular sins. But such a ministry starts with a confession of the leader's need
28 for Christ, as revealed through honest reflections on his own broken soul.

29
30 Practically speaking, our pastors and elders will seriously consider how this cross-cultural
31 way of life can take shape in the ordinary moments. Elders will create the necessary space to
32 listen well to their people. They will consider their functional shepherding values as they are
33 revealed through their schedules and calendars. They will take disciplinary action when
34 members are found guilty of racial sins and practices that betray the hospitality and love of
35 Jesus Christ. Pastors and elders will hold out to their people the more beautiful, Christ-like
36 way of relating to the marginalized and downtrodden. Pastors and elders will model faith,
37 repentance, and reconciliation on this very point of racial and ethnic unity.

38
39 The elders and pastors of the PCA must not shrink back from proclaiming to our people what
40 is profitable for their souls. We must teach them the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). But
41 we must begin with ourselves. If we do, we will become living witnesses who are able to
42 confirm the transforming power of the Gospel we preach with a peculiar gravitas. The weight
43 of our own testimony and the evidence of grace in our own lives and relationships will be felt
44 by our people and impressed upon their souls with a singular urgency. If the pastors and elders
45 of the PCA heed the costly call of discipleship and leadership at this point of reconciliation,

1 then we will indeed be consistent with our mission: "Faithful to the Scriptures, true to the
2 Reformed faith, obedient to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ."

3
4 *Missional Considerations*

5 The mission of the church is integrally related to the mission of Christ. Jesus says as much
6 when he addresses his disciples with the following words, "As the Father has sent me, even
7 so I am sending you" (John 20:21). As noted in the biblical-theological section, God's own
8 mission is to form a multi-racial, multi-ethnic people; the nations come under the rule of the
9 son of Abraham, the Son of David; this is the way God fulfills his promise to Abraham to
10 bless all the families of the earth through him (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8).

11
12 This biblical-theological perspective will cohere with the insights that we may gain through
13 common grace disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology. As Reformed
14 Christians, we gladly affirm that all truth is God's truth. However, the biblical material must
15 always remain central; when it is, we find ourselves starting with Jesus, the truth of God, and
16 with his declaration of his mission, which is nothing less than the Kingdom of God (Mark
17 1:15). And that Kingdom will encompass people from every nation, language, clan, and
18 people in God's world.

19
20 That means, then, that in the light of the data in this report, we need to ask ourselves some
21 challenging questions. Are there disparities between the biblical Jesus and the preached Jesus
22 in our churches? Does our preached Jesus love, befriend, and empower the poor and
23 disenfranchised? Does our preached Jesus warrant the kind of faith that leads people into the
24 cultural fray as gentle peacemakers and courageous mediators? Does our preached Jesus call
25 people to repurpose their privileges and release their power for the benefit of the outsider
26 (Phil. 2:6)?

27
28 These questions are important because we all have a tendency to fashion Jesus into our own
29 cultural image. However, the true biblical Jesus will enable our pastors and elders to traverse
30 the cultural frontiers of our particular mission fields—our diverse neighborhoods—and will
31 help us to encourage, challenge, and care for our diverse people. Yet, knowing this Jesus will,
32 at times, prove to be excruciating because the love he warrants from us will mean our death.
33 God's mission goes through the cross; we are called to be a cruciform people (Matt. 16:24).
34 As it was for Jesus, so it is for us. We preach free grace, not cheap grace.

35
36 For all our talk of conformity to the likeness of Christ, it seems we have scarcely reckoned
37 with the fuller implications of this reality. We must dig more deeply into the identity and
38 activity of Jesus Christ if we are to be faithful missionaries to our fields of ministry. We must
39 preach the biblical Jesus who was, in himself, a breathtaking union of two radically different
40 worlds—God and man—without confusion, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably, as
41 the Chalcedonian Creed puts it. The very person of Christ calls out: "Unity in diversity!" This
42 is the particular vision that we are called to shepherd into the body of Christ. Common union
43 is central to the identity of Christ and it is to be central to the corporate identity of the church—
44 it is that in which we participate every time we take the bread and drink the cup in communion
45 (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

1 Jesus becomes what he was not, out of love for the Father, so that the “other” might share in
2 that most profound love. We must call our people to this cross-culturally transformative love.
3 Jesus fully inhabits a particular culture without falling into racial hubris, ethnocentrism, or
4 idolatry. Jesus embodied his Jewish culture in a way that did not demean other ethnicities, but
5 rather dignified them. Thus, we must equip our people with a vision broad enough to burst the
6 doors of their cultural prisons. We must call our people to embody their ethnic identity in a
7 way that dignifies rather than demeans all the others. In other words, God’s mission does not
8 call our church to become “color-blind,” the negation of race or ethnicity; rather, it calls to
9 become “one new humanity,” in which that diversity remains diverse and yet finds a new and
10 true unity (not uniformity) through the blood of Jesus (Eph. 2:13-18).

11

12 The Son of God allowed his existence to be altered permanently by the needs and afflictions
13 of the “other.” He remains a true man to this day, a true man with the scars to mark the depths
14 to which he was willing to go for love’s sake. Our preaching must not leave people with the
15 conclusion that they can safely elude such life alteration in the fulfillment of God’s mission.

16

17 Jesus empathizes with the “other” and is fully engaged with the “other” in mind, will, and
18 emotions. We must call our people to such cross-cultural empathy and engagement. As we
19 theologize through God’s mission, it becomes increasingly clear that our current approach to
20 mission requires deep alterations. We must consider how the Son of God enters into a foreign
21 context and willingly locates in order to be present with the “other.” We must allow this reality
22 to confront us when we are inclined to remain geographically distant from the undesirable
23 neighborhoods, allowing fear, selfishness, or apathy to rule us. We must marvel at the way
24 Jesus mediates between the holy culture that he owns and the broken culture that he embraces
25 in order to make that which was his by nature to become ours by grace. This type of
26 Christological reflection demands that we equip our people to be a community of mediators,
27 bringing healing in fractured neighborhoods through repentance, faith, and courageous action.

28

29 The apostle Paul tells us in the book of Ephesians that Jesus brings the outsider, those
30 historically estranged from himself, near (Eph. 2:13). Those pastors, elders, and churches that
31 would be like Christ must do the same. Paul tells the Philippians that Jesus humbly and
32 willingly repurposes his rights for the advantage of the “other” (Phil. 2:6). Do we call our
33 people to repurpose their rights for the benefit and blessing of those who are disempowered
34 and culturally foreign to them? There would be no Gospel if Christ refused to use his power
35 for the benefit of the weak. There would be no Gospel if Christ did not care for, and empathize
36 with, the poor. These truths are central to the Gospel message, and we must not allow these
37 realities to remain peripheral to our missionary encounter with our neighbors.

38

39 The heart of Christ was so large, so enflamed with love, that he wept over the brokenness of
40 his place (Luke 19:41-44). Are we touching the hearts of our people with such longing for
41 renewal and concern for the welfare of their city, town, or neighborhood? Do our people
42 understand the Father’s plan is to replicate the heart of this same Jesus in each one of us? This
43 is the Jesus who is held out to us in Scripture and this is how he fulfilled God’s mission.
44 Therefore, this is the Jesus whom we must hold out to our people and this is the manner in
45 which we must fulfill his mission.

1 **Research Results and Analysis (See Attachment, p. 2429, for more detail)**
2

3 After taking bids from various research consulting groups, the study committee contracted
4 with LifeWay Research Services (hereafter LRS) in order to understand the landscape of race,
5 racism, and reconciliation perspectives within our denomination.
6

7 The study was built on both qualitative and quantitative data. In the initial qualitative phase,
8 there were in-depth interviews completed with thirty PCA teaching and ruling elders
9 representing a diversity of races and ethnicities. These interviews provided the basis for the
10 kinds of questions that would be asked in the larger quantitative phases.
11

12 The first quantitative phase involved an online survey of PCA teaching and ruling elders.
13 Working with the Stated Clerk’s office, LRS made contact with teaching elders via email asking
14 them to complete an internet-housed survey. Teaching elders were also requested to share that
15 survey’s internet link with ruling elders on their sessions. There were 2,618 total responses
16 (1,498 teaching elders and 1,120 ruling elders). This survey was completed by the end of
17 November 2017 and the committee received the data and analysis in January 2018. The full
18 report as well as the data which formed this executive summary can be found as Appendix 1
19 to the committee’s report.
20

21 The second quantitative phase is still on-going, an online survey of PCA staff and students at
22 Covenant College and Covenant Seminary. That phase was not completed in time for the
23 committee’s report, but the data will be shared with respective institutional leaders and will
24 be summarized for the denomination at some future point.
25

26 Hence, the executive summary below is based only on the qualitative and the first quantitative
27 phase. In the quantitative phase:
28

- 29 • 88% of respondents were White, 3% Asian-American, 2% African-American, 1%
30 Hispanic/Latino.
- 31 • Most of the respondents had graduate degrees (80%).
- 32 • Ruling elders in the study were significantly older than teaching elders: 79% of ruling
33 elders were 50+ years old while only 47% of teaching elders were 50+ years old.
34

35 One further research note: the questions for the research surveys intentionally left the
36 definitions of “race” and “racism” open to allow respondents to reflect upon how they have
37 experienced these issues in their own contexts. While some elders expressed their frustration
38 with that choice in their answers to the open-ended survey questions, that was part of the
39 research design.
40

41 LRS’s findings revealed **four major areas** for our consideration.
42

43 ***1. Seeing the Need for Racial Reconciliation***

44 The overwhelming majority of elders believed that they have “a biblical understanding of
45 racism” (91% agree/strongly agree) and believe that the Bible teaches racism is a sin (94%

1 agree/strongly agree). However, fewer are aware of the Presbyterian Church’s past history
 2 and practices that would meet a standard of racism (68%). Even fewer understand why the
 3 PCA is dealing with this issue (57%) or what the denomination is “trying to accomplish”
 4 on this issue (39%).

5
 6 Hence, while the denomination’s elders rightly recognize racism as sinful, only a little
 7 more than half believed that the action of the 44th General Assembly in confessing
 8 corporate involvement in the sins of racism during the 1960s was extremely or very much
 9 needed (52%). Nearly 20% felt that action by the Assembly was “not at all needed.”
 10 Notably, ruling elders were less enthusiastic about the work of the 44th General Assembly:
 11 only 39% believed that the overture was extremely or very much needed.

12
 13 Likewise, while two-thirds of our elders (65%) felt that racial reconciliation was extremely
 14 or somewhat needed, there was more enthusiasm for this work among teaching than ruling
 15 elders. Nearly 70% of teaching elders said that racial reconciliation was extremely or very
 16 much needed; only 59% of ruling elders said the same.

17
 18 There was also some disagreement about how racism manifests itself in culture and
 19 church. While 47% slightly to strongly agree that racism is more an individual problem,
 20 53% believe that it is more systemic and structural. Notably, there was a division between
 21 teaching and ruling elders on this point: 63% of teaching elders believed that racism was
 22 primarily systemic while 56% of ruling elders believed that racism was more of an
 23 individual problem. While 59% believe that racism is more a societal or cultural than an
 24 ecclesial problem, 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. And while
 25 very few see PCA staff or processes as contributing to racism and very little personal
 26 racism among elders, it is hard to reconcile the data—if it is at least somewhat structural
 27 and if elders are still sinners being sanctified, then one would expect to see it manifested
 28 in PCA structures and processes in some form or fashion.

30 **2. *Characterizing the Amount of Racism in the PCA***

31 Respondents were asked to characterize the amount of racism perceived in specific
 32 areas/spheres (among church congregants in their local churches, presbyteries, policies/
 33 practices, and among denominational agencies) within the PCA, based on their experiences.

34
 35 Elders believed that while our congregants might have a moderate, significant, or extreme
 36 amount of racism (38% in presbytery; 32% in own church), the plurality (largest number
 37 under 50%) of elders in local presbyteries had no racism (40%) or little racism (31%); and
 38 the numbers were even higher in one’s own congregation (50% no racism; 31% little
 39 racism). Thus, there was some measure of perceived difference between elders and
 40 congregants in the amount of racism, but the vast majority of elders believed that they and
 41 their fellow elders had very little involvement in the sin of racism. Moreover, whatever
 42 racism that does exist among elders was perceived to be more unintentional than
 43 intentional. And virtually no church disciplines members for racism; only 3% of
 44 respondents said their church disciplined for such a sin.

1 Perhaps part of the issue in understanding how much racism might or might not exist in
2 our denomination could be discovered in our congregations' willingness to be multi-
3 ethnic. While 43% of respondents agree or strongly agree that their local congregations
4 were making an effort to be multi-ethnic and/or multi-cultural, 37% of respondents
5 indicated an unwillingness to "lose their preferred worship style to accommodate other
6 cultures" (ruling elders were less willing to lose their worship style, 45% to 30% of
7 teaching elders). Moreover, 80% of the congregations represented by responding elders
8 were Anglo-majority (with over 80% of the membership made up of white members). And
9 so, the question might be rightly raised about how willing PCA leaders actually are to have
10 their churches become multi-ethnic and multi-cultural.

11 12 **3. *Personal Experiences with Racism in the PCA***

13 Half of the respondents (50%) shared that they have personal experiences with racism in
14 the PCA. These responses broke down into three categories: Affected by racism,
15 Unaffected (but aware of racism), and Unaffected (and unaware of racism).

16
17 For those *affected* by racism, the most common examples were racist comments, speech,
18 and/or jokes; 19% of respondents noted this. Other examples included influence of culture
19 on racism, observing general racism in the church and/or session, experiencing exclusion
20 due to race, observing homogenous preferences and priorities, and inequity in financial
21 resources such as salary.

22
23 For those *unaffected* but *aware* of racism, respondents reflected a general understanding
24 of its existence and impact, but also saw themselves as unaffected mainly because of
25 mono-ethnic personal and church contexts. When respondents were made aware of
26 racism's impact, their attitude toward the committee's work was positive and saw racial
27 reconciliation as necessary.

28
29 For those *unaffected and unaware*, respondents dismissed the value of addressing the
30 problem through a committee, doubted the ability of solving the problem through a change
31 in policy, categorized racism as a sin or heart issue that must be dealt with on an individual
32 basis and local church level rather than a corporate level, and indicated a sense of "reverse
33 racism" being imposed and wanted the attention on the topic to stop altogether.

34 35 **4. *Barriers for Greater Racial/Ethnic Diversity***

36 When respondents were asked to share some barriers hindering greater cross-cultural
37 integration in their own congregations, there were three main areas.

38
39 Established church practices, including:

- 40 • Worship styles, including preaching style and overly academic hymns
- 41 • Educational barriers to ordination
- 42 • Cultural and personal preferences
- 43 • Comfort and traditions
- 44 • Non-existent outreaching efforts
- 45 • Denominational reputation

1 Inexperience with minority groups and cultures, including:

- 2 • Lack of diversity in leadership
- 3 • Little knowledge of or interest in African American history and culture
- 4 • Little exposure to other ethnicities or cultures
- 5 • Mono-ethnicity of surrounding neighborhood
- 6 • Sense of discomfort when around those who are different

7
8 Experienced racism and societal realities, including:

- 9 • History of overt racism
- 10 • Gentrification
- 11 • Socialized prejudice
- 12 • Socio-economic differences
- 13 • History of mistrust among different racial groups in local area

14
15 Of all aggregated responses, the number one barrier for greater racial and ethnic diversity in
16 our congregations was “worship style/traditional liturgy,” with 19% citing that response.

17
18 In summary, the LRC consultation revealed that for a vast majority of the leaders in our
19 denomination, there is general awareness that our policies, practices, and behaviors reveal
20 favoritism with perceived inequity along ethnic lines, but such favoritism is mostly
21 unintentional. Furthermore, while there is a strong desire to see change in our midst, most are
22 uncertain as to how to move forward, but recognize the need for more resources, education,
23 and opportunities to engage in diverse environments.

24
25 **Specific Suggestions for Racial Reconciliation**

26
27 One key part of the mandate that the General Assembly gave to this study committee was to
28 recommend concrete steps that sessions and presbyteries might take in order to pursue racial
29 reconciliation in their local contexts. Our committee believes that the greater part of the
30 progress we as a denomination might make is at the local level. As congregations learn to live
31 and love locally, pursuing each other and valuing the diversity-in-unity that the Cross of Jesus
32 brings, we will serve as images for what God’s ultimate purpose is—to unite all things in
33 Christ (Eph. 1:10).

34
35 We do, however, also have some suggestions for General Assembly Agencies and Permanent
36 Committees. While we prize our “grassroots” orientation as a denomination, we also believe
37 that our polity teaches that the General Assembly “represents in one body all the churches”
38 and “constitutes the bond of union, peace, and correspondence among all its congregations
39 and courts” (*BCO* 14-1). Thus, what happens at General Assembly—both during our annual
40 meeting and in the work of the various committees—affects the rest of the church. Hence,
41 racial reconciliation and justice must play out both locally and nationally in our connectional
42 polity.

1 *General Suggestions*

2 The 44th General Assembly had urged congregations and presbyteries to “prayerfully confess
3 their own racial sins as led by the Spirit and strive toward racial reconciliation for the
4 advancement of the Gospel, the love of Christ, and the glory of God” (*M44GA*, p. 78). Our
5 committee joins that previous Assembly in urging such reflection, confession, and
6 commitment. If the data set from LRS shows anything, it appears that many of our teaching
7 and ruling elders believe that there is a minimal level of racism and racial sin presently within
8 our congregations and presbyteries. As was noted in that section, our committee wonders how
9 it is possible for elders to believe that remaining sin is present in all of us and that (as Calvin
10 noted) the seed of every known sin is in our hearts, that racism is at least partially structural
11 and hence generational, and yet to believe that there is no racism or very little present in our
12 denominational life.

13
14 Part of the way, perhaps, to gain insight into the way that racism remains in our congregations
15 is to pursue cultural intelligence about our contexts and how those contexts have shaped us.
16 While reading books would be helpful in that regard, undoubtedly the best way of gaining
17 insight into the experience of minority races in the PCA and in North America is to be in
18 intentional relationship with those from other races, ethnicities, and cultures. This is more than
19 “having a black acquaintance” within one’s proximity; this involves entering into a genuine
20 relationship over the long haul where honest reflection and communication might happen.
21 Once our hearts and minds are engaged with the real hurt and pain of others, we are shown
22 the cultural blind spots that cause us to sin against our brothers and sisters.

23
24 In turn, when we begin to see ourselves as we are—as sinners who commit racial sin too—
25 then we can begin to explore why we have sinned in this way. Some of it is individual and
26 personal; but much of it is structural and generational. We have sinned as our forefathers
27 before us. And part of the biblical pattern is to confess our sins as well as our covenantal
28 involvement in the sins of the previous generations before us (Lev. 26:39-42; Ps. 106:6;
29 Is. 3:25; Is. 14:19-20; Dan. 9:5-7, 15; Neh. 1:5-7; Ezra 9:6-7; Luke 11:48-51). We appreciate
30 the sentiments expressed by the faculty of our denominational seminary, Covenant Seminary,
31 and underscore their 2017 statement on biblical social justice. In particular we appreciate this
32 understanding of racial reconciliation:

33
34 Issues of racial reconciliation and justice are subsets of larger issues that
35 marginalize all kinds of people in our failure to love God and love neighbor.
36 Prejudices and ethnocentrism fuel racism and many other forms of mistreatment
37 of people across various ethnic differences and socioeconomic strata. However,
38 application to the issue of racial sin against African Americans is of particular
39 relevance in the PCA, and the United States of America in our long and sad
40 history. It is right to name it, repent of it, grieve it, and steward present and
41 future opportunities to make things right going forward.¹⁰

¹⁰ “Covenant Seminary Statement on Biblical Social Justice,” (2017):
<https://www.covenantseminary.edu/covenant-seminary-statement-biblical-social-justice/>.

1 As an Assembly, we have done this, both in 2002 for our covenantal involvement in the sins
2 of chattel slavery and in 2016 for our covenantal involvement in the sins related to the Civil
3 Rights era. Some of our historic congregations—most notably First Presbyterian Church,
4 Montgomery, Alabama; First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi; First Presbyterian
5 Church, Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Independent Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee;
6 and First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia—have considered their own covenantal and
7 generational involvement in sins of racism and have confessed. A few presbyteries have done
8 the same. However, far too few congregations and presbyteries have taken a serious look at
9 their present sins of racism and their past involvement in racial injustice. It is hard to imagine
10 being a church in the American South, for example, from 1973 on without having some
11 racially-motivated sin of which to acknowledge, confess, and repent.

12
13 Not only did our Assembly call us to confess and repent, but also to commit ourselves to
14 particular practices of reconciliation and justice that will show how the Cross of Jesus brings
15 the races together. In what follows, the committee makes suggestions on practical steps that
16 we might take.

17 *Specific Suggestions for Congregations*

18 There are a number of practical and creative ways to implement this shared vision and
19 theological commitment to racial reconciliation. The following are merely suggestions and
20 not prescriptions, for the ways that a local church might move forward in the work.

21
22
23 Designate a season of prayer, lament, discernment, and discussion for your session. Seek the
24 Lord for a unified commitment to racial reconciliation among the leaders of your church. Pray
25 for “soft hearts and thick skin” at the very beginning of this journey, a spirit of humility, and
26 an openness to the possibility that we’ve been wrong on the issue. Ask the Lord to give his
27 wisdom, insight, and conviction so that your leaders can celebrate evidence of grace, repent
28 of particular sins and failures, and pursue the fruit of repentance in specific actions. Pray that
29 the Lord would make your neighbors visible to you because there are often representative
30 people groups in our neighborhoods that you have not really seen. This is also a good time to
31 discuss each member’s personal story with regard to racial self-awareness, shaping experiences/
32 influences, and ways that your past affects your present thoughts on race for good or ill. This
33 may take time, but be patient, prayerful, and expectant that the Lord will hear your prayers.

34
35 Initiate Congregational Dialogue and Season of Prayer. After working through these issues at
36 the leadership level, seek to replicate something of that process with your congregation.
37 Whether through a congregational meeting, or a ministry initiative, signal to your congregation
38 that racial reconciliation is an important matter in the Christian life that your church is going
39 to explore and address. Depending on the size of your church, you can invite members or
40 representatives in your church to share personally about their experiences of racial formation,
41 their hopes for the growth of your church, and the progress that can be celebrated in your
42 community. Invite ownership of the change you seek in your church among your members.
43 Your local church could invite guest speakers to address issues where your leadership senses
44 a lack of competency on certain issues. This is one place where the goodness of being a
45 connectional church can shine. A good goal in this corporate discussion is to make the time

1 about real people who are inside of, and outside of our churches. Spend less time debating
2 theories and ideas and more time discerning how your church can love and care for the real
3 people of your community. Spend time thinking of ways that this conversation can be put into
4 action by your community. Whether you have small groups, community groups, care clusters,
5 or some other way of living in community, utilize those opportunities to foster conversation
6 and sharing.

7
8 Address Racial Reconciliation Through Liturgy and Preaching. In our PCA churches, our
9 deepest values are often reflected in the amount of “air time” that we give to issues and themes
10 during worship, particularly in the preaching moment. Utilize these opportunities for the
11 discipleship of your people through the sermon series. Be aware of your liturgical choices and
12 what they reflect about your commitments, your desires, and the breath of your mission. This
13 is not as much about the style of your liturgy as it is about the substance of your liturgy. We
14 corporately repent of all manner of sins every Sunday and we invite all of our people to confess
15 together. Include sins of racism, partiality, racial hubris, lack of love for neighbors, self-
16 righteousness of a racial or ethnic hue, fear of different people, and any other sins that disrupt
17 racial reconciliation.

18
19 As elders, hold one another accountable to shepherding racial reconciliation into the lives of
20 your members. When we sit with our people, we cover any number of topics that relate to
21 their life in Christ, their sin and need, their spiritual formation, and their participation in the
22 life of the church. This is also a good time to shepherd our people into what may be a very
23 different way of life. As elders, we must encourage one another to ask the hard questions.
24 How our people are embodying the call of Christ to reconciliation and neighbor-love is every
25 bit as important as what they are looking at on their computer screens when nobody is around
26 or how they are loving their spouse. Invite their honest thoughts. As Paul tells Titus: “Declare
27 these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” Use the word of
28 God to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2).
29 Leaders in God’s church need one another to live a life worthy of the gospel and to lead in a
30 way that adorns the teaching of Scripture.

31
32 Gather data from your neighbors. We do not have to guess what our neighbors are thinking
33 on issues of race, ethnicity, and reconciliation. Many will gladly share with us. It is a good
34 idea to spend time learning from your particular neighbors, expressing your local church’s
35 desire to be a reconciling force in the community. This can be done through formal or informal
36 means. You could give your members a short questionnaire and ask them to find a few neighbors
37 who will respond to the form. You could also have a day of hospitality, a community party
38 where you invite your neighbors to eat, drink, and connect. During this outreach, you could
39 ask your guests to fill in a short questionnaire as your church seeks to learn more about how
40 you can love your neighborhood. Gather this data and present it to your church with some
41 specific ways that your leadership plans to address the needs. Not only will this have a positive
42 impact on the way that your neighbors perceive your church, but it will further catalyze your
43 people and connect the ideas and theory of racial reconciliation to actual neighbors that you
44 long to win to Christ.

1 Learn Best Practices From Other Churches. Local churches do not have to reinvent the
2 proverbial wheel when it comes to racial reconciliation. There are other churches that are
3 doing this work and seeing good fruit. Learn from these brothers and sisters and gather some
4 best practices that you can put to work in your local context. Keep notes, share among your
5 local church's leadership team, and think together on what you can implement in your church.
6 Nearly all of the PCA pastors who are fully engaged in this work would be delighted to be of
7 help if called upon. Again, this is a beautiful aspect of being a connectional church.

8
9 Send Representatives of Your Local Church to Be Equipped for the Work of Racial
10 Reconciliation. In addition to the annual sessions at General Assembly, there are conferences,
11 cross-cultural institutes, and education opportunities available for gaining a better
12 understanding of how racial reconciliation can be implemented. Your church might think
13 about sending representative leaders to one such opportunity to take advantage of learning
14 from other believers and teachers so that they can bring practical and creative ideas back home
15 to your local church. Not only will the investment in these members be appreciated, but it will
16 also help with leading your people to take ownership of the responsibility to participate in this
17 work locally. In many cases, the benefits will far outweigh the costs of sending some of your
18 people to learn over a weekend.

19
20 Build Partnerships with Other Local Churches or Parachurch Organizations in your Area.
21 Many of our churches are surrounded by other churches and parachurch organizations that are
22 filled with brothers and sisters from different walks of life and even theological convictions.
23 Herein lies a wonderful potential for catalyzing the work of reconciliation. It is a small step
24 for local pastors and elders to form friendships with other local pastors and leaders in their
25 place who are culturally different. Over time, there will be opportunities to serve our places
26 together, to worship together, to fellowship together, to pray together, and to build a
27 relationship of fraternal love that models healthy catholicity. Pray for these partners during
28 your worship service and for your shared kingdom work in your place. Such partnerships
29 obviously call for discernment and wisdom, but more often than not, it is a "mess worth
30 making." This kind of partnership is a testimony to your neighbors of the reconciling power
31 of the cross. This is one of the ways that we can begin to embody the prayer of Jesus in John 17
32 for oneness in our local context.

33
34 Support the minority-focused ministries overseen by MNA, MTW, and RUF. The 44th General
35 Assembly approved the establishment of the PCA Unity Fund, which was created for the
36 purpose of assisting ministerial candidates under care with their presbyteries, to pursue seminary
37 education for the purpose of seeking ordination in our denomination. Congregations might
38 pursue restorative justice by dedicating a portion of their giving monthly or annually to this
39 fund. Likewise, congregations could focus on financially supporting MNA's ministries (e.g.,
40 African American Ministries; Haitian American Ministries; Hispanic American Ministries;
41 Korean ministries; Native American and First Nations Ministries) and MTW's recruitment of
42 African Americans for missions through the Reformed African American Delegates (RAAD).
43 Working with RUF in their minority outreach and development, especially by way of financial
44 support, will assist interns and staff to be developed for campus ministry.

1 ***Specific Suggestions for Presbyteries***

2 In order to coordinate efforts in regional ways, Presbyteries may want to consider forming
3 committees—either standing or ad hoc—for the purpose of racial reconciliation. Such
4 committees might focus on encouraging ruling and teaching elders to grow in the knowledge
5 and wisdom needed to understand the issues and concerns that need to be addressed in order
6 for deeper reconciliation among races to occur. A committee could host days of training and
7 reflection on racial reconciliation and justice for the presbytery. It also should work to invite
8 crucial minority cultural perspectives to be shared as a standing part of a presbytery meetings.
9 This could happen not only by inviting minority elders to preach at presbytery, but also by
10 inviting minority elders to presbytery any time there is a challenging issue facing the
11 presbytery in order to gain their perspective and wisdom. If a presbytery does not have
12 minority elders, they might invite others from outside the presbytery to share with them.
13 Above all, such a committee could continue to assess the diversity of the presbytery. Such an
14 assessment could identify problems that need to be addressed, develop guidelines and steps
15 for use in the presbytery’s congregations to promote the work of racial reconciliation, and
16 assist the presbytery in aspiring to become more diverse, reflecting both their own region as
17 well as the Kingdom of God.

18
19 Another suggestion for presbyteries is to become more intentional in developing and
20 recruiting minority candidates for gospel ministry. When churches have staff openings,
21 presbytery leaders can work to place minority pastoral candidates in those churches. Further,
22 when there is church planting within the presbytery, the presbytery should encourage multi-
23 ethnic intentionality in that planting. When churches experience numerical decline because of
24 transitioning neighborhoods, presbyteries should press those churches not to abandon their
25 locations, but rather reshape their ministries to reach the neighborhood and so become more
26 diverse racially. Likewise, when there is opportunity to start an RUF campus ministry, priority
27 should be given to historically black colleges and universities where there is opportunity to
28 reach a more diverse people group with the gospel.

29
30 Finally, presbyteries could foster racial reconciliation and cross-cultural ministry through their
31 examination of candidates for ministry. Especially, it is vital that candidates for ministry
32 understand the full background of PCA history. It is not enough to be able to name the four
33 organizations that lead to the PCA’s formation nor to name the date and place of first General
34 Assembly. Candidates need to be able to talk meaningfully about the theological and social
35 contexts that led to the PCA’s founding.¹¹ Credentialing committees should also ensure that
36 ministerial candidates are able to articulate the biblical foundations for racial reconciliation—
37 such as given in this report—so that they might demonstrate that reconciliation is a Gospel
38 imperative that flows from the nature of the Gospel itself. As part of exploring a candidate’s
39 sense of call to a particular place, the credentialing committee might explore their commitment
40 to racial and cross-cultural reconciliation in their potential call, especially if they are going to
41 a work of revitalization. And when examining candidates in the area of church discipline,
42 committees might inquire whether they see racism as grounds for church discipline, in line
43 with what the 32nd General Assembly previously stated in its “Pastoral Letter on Racism.”

¹¹ To assist with this, see Sean Michael Lucas, *For a Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2015).

1 ***Specific Suggestions for Academic Institutions***

2 Our denominational college and seminary have opportunities to shape the future of our church
3 by working to ensure that racial reconciliation and justice are woven into the life of their
4 institutions in curricular and co-curricular ways. In addition, through representing minority
5 voices in faculty and administrative hiring as well as board representation (below), academic
6 institutions may provide representation for minority leaders to shape the next generation with
7 the biblical-theological perspective offered in this report.

8
9 Faculty and administrative staff hiring. While our institutions have hired minority faculty and
10 staff, more must be done in order to develop minority faculty and administrators. Working
11 with students at the college level and identifying those who would make solid graduate
12 students, assisting them financially in order to receive that training, and providing teaching
13 opportunities when they are ABD (all but dissertation completed) are all ways to work toward
14 minority hiring. In addition, the finding of qualified administrative candidates, both those who
15 are in agreement with PCA doctrinal standards as well as those who are willing to work within
16 those standards, should be pursued as well. Minority faculty and administrators are key for
17 diverse student recruitment, and our educational institutions must be even more aggressive in
18 developing future leadership in this regard.

19
20 Curriculum development. Within the main undergraduate and graduate degree programs that
21 our academic institutions offer, faculty and administration should consider how many textbooks
22 are written by minority authors. Are there any? If so, how many? Where might there be
23 opportunities within the curriculum for recommended readings by minority authors? In addition,
24 in curriculum development, are there opportunities for lectures or even whole classes that
25 would speak to the minority experience or viewpoint within a majority world? In history
26 classes at the undergraduate or graduate level, how much time is given to the minority
27 experience in America or to other global cultures? How are students exposed to the biblical-
28 theological, confessional, and pastoral-missional perspectives offered in this report?

29
30 Co-curricular opportunities. In chapel services, special lectures, invited faculty lectures, there
31 are opportunities to expose students to minority voices that offer different experiences and
32 perspectives. In addition, field trips, partnerships with local cross-cultural ministries, and
33 dialogues with black church pastors would provide valuable insight to seminarians and
34 undergraduates alike. Offering space for students to process race in the United States and our
35 biblical response to standing with those who are oppressed or who experience injustice would
36 also assist in shaping the next generation in meaningful ways.

37
38 ***Specific Suggestions for Committees and Agencies***

39 In our system of government, the General Assembly does its coordinated work through its
40 Permanent Committees and Agencies. In order to foster diversity, we make several suggestions.

41
42 Diversify staff with qualified minorities. This would involve staffing at every level of a
43 Committee or Agency. Presently, there is only one minority elder who coordinates a
44 Permanent Committee or Agency; as those positions come open, search committees should
45 intentionally consider and interview qualified minority leaders who might fill those roles. At

1 other levels of the organizations, Permanent Committees that have oversight responsibility
2 should direct their coordinators to work to develop minority staff. Seeking input from
3 denominational minority leaders and networks could help yield candidates for such positions.
4

5 Nominate qualified minorities to serve on governing boards of Agencies or on Permanent
6 Committees. These boards chart the direction for these Agencies and will be made richer with
7 the additions of other ethnic voices in the image of Christ. For our Agencies that have boards
8 that generally recommend their own trustees, board leadership should ensure that diverse
9 minority representation is present. For Permanent Committees whose membership is
10 determined by the Assembly’s nominating committee, we urge the nominating committee to
11 be more intentional in placing qualified minority elders before the Assembly for election to
12 Permanent Committees.
13

14 As appropriate, consider partnering with other similar agencies outside of the PCA who share
15 our core distinctives and who represent ethnic diversity. There are number of denominations
16 and networks that are working toward ethnic diversity from whom we might learn. In church
17 planting, working together with the Acts29 network might assist us in learning how they have
18 developed minority church planters. In campus ministry, consulting with Campus Outreach,
19 InterVarsity, or Cru might assist in further insight in how they are doing the work of cross-
20 cultural ministry on our increasingly diverse campuses. In education, as regional and
21 professional accrediting allows, determining how alternative approaches might foster greater
22 diversity of baccalaureate and/or seminary graduates should be explored.
23

24 Listen to other voices (than those in the majority culture) when planning PCA calendar,
25 events, and programs. For Assembly host committees, we should ensure that there are
26 minority elders and lay people involved in the work of hosting our annual meeting. This would
27 provide other perspectives on planned women’s and children’s events to make sure that they
28 are generally inclusive of the racial and cultural diversity of the commissioners; in addition,
29 it would allow worship planning committees to make sure that the platform speakers present
30 diverse ethnic voices in the ministry of the Word. Likewise, as Committees and Agencies plan
31 events, programs, and conferences, they might do so with consideration to inviting minority
32 keynote speakers, workshop facilitators (on topics that do not necessarily deal with race) and
33 general representation on the staff and Permanent Committees. This would facilitate greater
34 awareness to and appreciation for the diverse perspectives on a variety of topics within the
35 denomination.
36

37 *Summary of suggestions*

38 As one can tell from the various suggestions, central to them all is *intentionality*. Unless and
39 until church leadership becomes intentional in developing cross-cultural relationships and
40 partnerships, fostering diverse leadership, and elevating such leadership to platform positions,
41 very little will change in the life of our church. Once we recognize that our structures and
42 natural networks work against diversity in leadership, then we must become intentional in
43 forging new networks and producing new structures that will involve all of our brothers in the
44 connected leadership of our churches. The larger goal in this intentional care of God’s people
45 is that we might show the world that this diverse body is united in Christ: “There is *one* body

1 and *one* Spirit—just as you were called to the *one* hope that belongs to your call—*one* Lord,
2 *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all”
3 (Eph. 4:4-6). May God make it so!

4
5 **Committee Recommendations**

- 6
7 1. That the General Assembly receive the report of the ad interim committee on racial
8 reconciliation and distribute it to the presbyteries and congregations of our denomination.
9
10 2. That the General Assembly direct the Committee on Discipleship Ministries to publish
11 this report for sale and distribution, along with the other actions of the Assembly related
12 to racial reconciliation, especially the actions of the 30th, 32nd, and 44th Assemblies, as the
13 PCA’s statements on the Gospel and racial reconciliation.
14
15 3. That the General Assembly direct the Committee on Mission to North America to budget
16 and plan for renewing the research with LifeWay Research Services, or some other
17 research service, to report back to the 51st General Assembly (2023) in order to establish
18 a longitudinal study of our denomination on the issue of racial reconciliation.
19
20 4. That the General Assembly dismiss the committee with its thanks.

21
22 Respectfully submitted:

23 RE Sylvester Brown (advisory)

24 TE Carl F. Ellis, Jr. (voting)

25 RE Alexander Jun (voting)

26 TE Sean M. Lucas (voting)

27 RE Otis Pickett (advisory)

28 TE Jonathan P. Seda (voting)

29 TE Richie Sessions (voting)

30 TE Alexander Myron Shipman (voting)

31 TE Kevin M. Smith (chair)

32 TE Russell Douglas Whitfield (advisory)

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ATTACHMENT

PCA Racial Reconciliation Study
Elder Survey



Research Phase 2: Teaching and Ruling Elder Survey

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Research Background & Goals

In June of 2016, the 44th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America passed Overture 43 - "Pursuing Racial Reconciliation and the Advance of the Gospel." The assembly further passed Overture 45 which mandated the formation of a study committee "to develop specific steps that could be taken to effect racial reconciliation and the advance of the gospel." In this regard, the members of the study committee contracted with LifeWay Research to help investigate areas related to racism and racial reconciliation within the PCA. The findings would then help support the committee's mandate in providing key recommendations and strategies in advancing Overture 43's goals.

LifeWay Research proposed a primary research investigation which included three phases:

Phase 1 – In-depth Interviews with PCA Elders of different ethnicities (qualitative phase – Completed October 2017)

Phase 2 – An online survey among PCA Teaching/Ruling Elders (quantitative phase)

Phase 3 – An online survey among PCA Staff and College Students (CCU) (quantitative phase)

The following report is a summary of findings from **Phase 2**.



Research Methodology

This phase of research includes an online survey to both Teaching and Ruling elders in the PCA. The investigation will attempt to explore the range of attitudes, opinions, perceptions and behaviors regarding issues of racism in the PCA church today. Specific areas of investigation include:

- **Need for Overture 43 and racial reconciliation in the PCA (in general)**
- **Degree of racism perceived among PCA elders, congregants, staff and policy/practices**
- **Personal experiences with racism in the PCA**
- **Level of understanding issues of racism from a biblical perspective**
- **Comfort discussing and teaching about issues of racism**
- **Causes and effects of racism on the church**
- **Preferences and willingness for greater racial integration in own church**
- **Recommendations to the study committee for greater racial reconciliation in the PCA**

Survey details include:

Survey dates: October 11, 2017 to November 27, 2017

Survey Length: Approximately 14 minutes

Number of participants: 2,618 Total Survey Respondents (1,498 Teaching Elders, 1,120 Ruling Elders)

Survey Response Rate: 58% (4,484 emails were received by participants, with 2,618 completing or partially the survey)

Anonymity and Confidentiality

To ensure anonymity and encourage survey participation, survey respondents were assured that their participation would be held strictly confidential to LifeWay Research, and that no identifying information will be collected or linked to participants' answers in any reporting of the data.



Summary of Findings



Seeing the Need for Racial Reconciliation

1. While most acknowledge a need for the creation of Overture 43 (81% of respondents), elders are somewhat mixed in regards to the degree of that need, with about half (52%) feeling Overture 43 is *Extremely* or *Very Much Needed*; Others felt a lesser need, where 20% rated *Somewhat Needed* and 9% *Slightly Needed*. Another 18% feel the Overture is *Not at all Needed*.
 - Analyzing significant differences between groups reveals... Ruling elders, ages 50+, those less educated and respondents from Southern states rated the need for Overture 43 significantly lower than other groups. Additionally, Caucasians, Latino/Hispanic and Other ethnicities rated significantly lower than African Americans and Asian-Americans.

2. In regards to the PCA needing to work towards greater racial reconciliation in general, responses are more positive, but still somewhat mixed, with 65% rating *Extremely* or *Very Much Needed*, 22% *Somewhat Needed* and 6% *Slightly Needed*. Another 8% feel this work for greater racial reconciliation is *Not at all Needed*.
 - Note: Ruling elders, ages 50+, and those less educated rated the need for greater racial reconciliation significantly lower than other groups. Additionally, Caucasians, Latino/Hispanic and Other ethnicities rated significantly lower than African Americans and Asian-Americans.



Characterizing the Amount of Racism in the PCA

3. Respondents were asked to characterize “the amount of racism” in specific areas/spheres of the PCA based on their experiences. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure their characterizations (e.g., *An extreme amount*, *A good amount*, *A moderate amount*, *A little* and *Not at all*). While few rated *An extreme amount* for any category (about 2% for most categories), the data revealed that most (50% or more) perceived some level of racism across all areas measured, with the greatest amount of racism perceived among church congregants:
 - 72% rated some level (A little to An Extreme Amount) of racism among church congregants in their local presbyteries
 - 72% ...among church congregants in their own church
 - 60% ...among elders in their local presbytery
 - 50% ...among elders within their own church
 - 51% ...among within PCA policies and practices
 - 50% ...among PCA agency staff
 - Note: Ruling elders rated significantly lower amounts of racism in these areas than Teaching elders; Ages 50+, those less educated rated significantly lower amounts of racism in these areas compared to other groups; Caucasians, Latino/Hispanic and Other ethnicities rated significantly lower amounts of racism than African Americans and Asian-Americans.
4. While most note some level of racism among congregants and elders, few respondents say that their church has ever disciplined a church member for racism (3%).



Characterizing the Amount of Racism in the PCA (cont'd)

5. While most characterize racism as more “*unintentional*” in nature, respondents perceive more *intentional* racism among church congregants...

	Intentional	Unintentional	Both
Church congregants in their local presbyteries	5%	64%	31%
Church congregants in their own church	5%	65%	30%
Elders in their local presbytery	4%	74%	22%
Elders in their own church	3%	79%	18%
PCA policies and practices	2%	85%	13%
PCA agency staff	3%	84%	13%

- Note: Teaching elders rated Both (intentional/unintentional) significantly higher than Ruling elders for all areas except PCA staff, while Ruling elders rated Unintentional significantly higher for all areas except PCA staff and Elders in your own church; Those living in Southern states rated Both significantly higher for PCA elders in their local presbytery; Ages 18-49 rated Both significantly higher while those 50+ rated Unintentional significantly higher for PCA congregants in their church and local presbytery.



Personal Experiences with Racism in the PCA

6. When asked to share personal experiences with racism in the PCA, 50% of respondents offered feedback, while the another 50% said they either had no (or limited) experiences. Of those offering feedback, comments fell under 3 basic categories: *Affected by racism*, *Unaffected (but aware of racism)*, and *Unaffected (and unaware of racism)*. Examples of each category include...

Affected by racism...

- Racist comments
 - occasionally overt
 - oftentimes, through subtle comments
 - often revealed in casual conversation with other elders or members of the congregation
- Restricted Financial Resources:
 - local churches unwilling to support inner city church plants
 - A local presbytery willing to support inner city church plants when local churches are not
- High Educational Requirements (limit opportunities of service for minority leaders)

Unaffected (but aware of racism)...

- Reflect a general understanding of its existence and its impact
- Unaffected mainly due to a monoethnic personal and church context
- When made aware of its (racism) impact, sentiment towards racial reconciliation and the work of the committee seemed positive and viewed as necessary

Personal Experiences with Racism in the PCA (cont'd)

Unaffected (but unaware of racism) ...

- Dismiss the value of addressing the problem through a committee
- Doubt the ability of solving the problem through a change in policy
- Categorize racism as a “sin,” “heart,” or “spiritual” issue that must be dealt with on an individual basis and local church level
- Shared concerns that PCA leadership will attempt a one-size fits all solution
- Indicate a sense of “reverse racism” being imposed
 - Bothered by expectation to harbor “white guilt”
 - Resent what they describe as an “entitled” mentality
- Asked what are the ultimate expectations of non-minority pastors in the PCA:
 - Asked if they are expected to repent for sins committed by others in a previous time
 - Indicated concern that there is an expectation to continue to carry white guilt
- Describe the discussion of racism as “useless” or “nonsense”
- See advocates as having a political or cultural agenda (rather than spiritual or Gospel agenda)
- Describe this study as a proactive attempt to be divisive
- Want the attention on the topic to stop altogether

Personal Experiences with Racism in the PCA

When aggregating individual responses, the top 6 categories included:

Category	% Respondents
Comments, speech (ex. jokes, subtle racist undertones)	19%
Influence of culture on racism	6%
Observed racism in general ex. (in church, in session, in PCA overall)	5%
Examples of someone personally excluded due to race	4%
Homogenous preferences, priorities	4%
Financial resources. Salary	4%

Understanding Issues of Racism

7. Most agree that they have a “biblical understanding of racism” (91% *Agree/Strongly Agree*) and they believe the Bible teaches racism as sinful (94% *Agree/Strongly Agree*). However, fewer are “aware” of the Presbyterian church’s historic practices in the past that would meet a standard of racism (68% *Agree/Strongly Agree*), and even less understand why the PCA is “tackling” the issue of racism or what they are “trying to accomplish” on this issue (57% and 39% *Agree/Strongly Agree*, respectively).

- Note: Teaching elders have more of a biblical perspective of racism and a better understanding of what the PCA is trying to accomplish on this issue.

8. Relatedly, most have read books/articles on the subject of racism (73% *Agree/Strongly Agree*), while 77% have had conversations with someone from a minority group to better understand their personal experiences.

- Note: Teaching elders rated more agreement than Ruling elders in these areas.

Discussing Issues of Racism with Others

9. Among Teaching elders, about two-thirds (64%) have preached on the topic of racism to their congregation within the past year, with most (89%) feeling comfortable preaching on the subject from the pulpit.

Overall, both Teaching and Ruling elders feel comfortable discussing the topic of racism, but comfort varies slightly within certain contexts:

- 79% agree they feel comfortable discussing issues of racism in public forums
- 89% agree they feel comfortable discussing issues of racism with those of other races 96% agree they feel comfortable discussing issues of racism with congregants one-to-one

• Note: Teaching elders rated their comfort levels significantly higher than Ruling elders.

10. Further, most respondents (90%) agree that discussing the topic of racism is “healthy” for the church. However, fewer respondents (35%) agree that they are often in contexts where they are the minority.

Understanding Issues of Racism

11. Most respondents agree that racism is a sin, with 79% rating *Strongly Agree*, 18% *Agree*, 2% *Slightly Agree* and 1% *Slightly Disagree*. Teaching elders rated *Strongly Agree* significantly higher than Ruling elders (86% vs. 70%, respectively).

12. While most believe that racism is a sin, respondents are somewhat split on whether racism is “systematic” (structured, organized) in the church or more of an “individual” problem, with 53% agreeing and 47% disagreeing it’s a systematic issue and 47% agreeing and 53% disagreeing it’s an individual problem. The majority, however agree racism is a societal/cultural problem (59%).

- Note: Those thinking racism is more a systematic problem in the PCA are: Teaching elders, ages 18-49, African-Americans and Asian-Americans and more educated. Those thinking racism is more of an individual problem in the PCA are: Ruling elders, ages 50+, from Southern states, Caucasian/Hispanic/Other ethnicities and less educated

Willingness to being Multi-ethnic

13. Most respondents (69%) agree that their church is intentional in seeking to be multi-ethnic/cultural (with 43% rating *Agree/Strongly Agree*). Most also agree their intention to be multi-ethnic/cultural is primarily based on scripture (86%).
14. In regards to areas that might hinder outreach to certain ethnic groups, most respondents believe that socio-economic issues hinder outreach more than either political party affiliation or immigration issues...
- 82% agree socio-economic issues hinder some church's outreach to certain ethnic groups (59% Agree/Strongly Agree)
 - 61% agree immigration and legal status issues hinder some church's outreach to certain ethnic groups (36% Agree/Strongly Agree)
 - 53% agree political party affiliations hinder some church's outreach to certain ethnic groups (35% Agree/Strongly Agree)
 - Note: Those feeling more strongly that political party affiliation, socio-economic and immigration status hinders engagement include: Teaching elders, ages 18-49, African-Americans / Hispanics and those more educated.

Willingness to being Multi-ethnic (cont'd)

15. In regards to ethnic and political make-up of their congregations, most disagree they would prefer their congregation to be more mono-ethnic (96%) or of the same political party (81%).
- Teaching elders rated *Strongly Disagree* significantly higher in preferring a more mono-ethnic and preferring a similar political party affiliation among congregants.
16. In regards to losing their ethnic or cultural identity in their church, most disagree in preferring to not lose their own racial identity in their church or their church's cultural identity or worship style...
- 69% disagree they prefer not to lose their own racial identity in their church
 - 68% disagree they prefer their church not to lose its cultural identity
 - 63% disagree they prefer not to lose their preferred worship style to accommodate other cultures
 - Note: Ruling elders, ages 65+, Asian-Americans and Other ethnicities agree significantly higher in preferring not to lose their church's cultural identity; African Americans and Asian-Americans agree significantly higher in preferring not to lose their own racial identity in their church; Ruling elders and ages 65+ agree significantly higher to not losing their preferred worship style to accommodate other cultures.

Willingness to being Multi-ethnic (cont'd)

17. Most respondents seem willing to accommodate other ethnicities in their services as well as engage other churches for ministry efforts (of other ethnic make-up)...

- 76% agree cultural differences should be taken into consideration when adapting church services to be inclusive of other culture and ethnicities
- 87% disagree that it is OK to have a church with no racial diversity as long as congregants prefer this
- 90% disagree that they would prefer to accommodate one ethnicity/culture than multiple ethnicities/cultures in their church
- 96% agree they are willing to proactively engage or partner with other ethnic PCA churches (ethnicities other than their own church's dominant ethnicity) in their local area for ministry purposes
- 78% agree that most congregants would be comfortable inviting those of other ethnicities to attend their church
- Note: Teaching elders, younger age groups, Asian-Americans and those more educated agree significantly higher in adapting services to accommodate other ethnicities; Teaching elders and younger age groups disagree significantly more in believing it's OK to have a church with no diversity as long as congregants prefer this; Teaching elders rated Strongly Agree significantly higher in their willingness to proactively partner with other ethnic PCA churches; Ruling elders, ages 50+ and Other ethnicities agree significantly more that most of the congregation would be comfortable inviting those of other ethnicities to attend their church.

Workplace Discrimination

18. Most have not experienced racial discrimination as it relates to hiring and job advancement opportunities...

- 95% disagree that they have not been chosen for a position because of their race
- 94% disagree they have not been given equal opportunities to advance in leadership positions because of their race
- 95% disagree that those within PCA leadership would not appreciate their presence in leadership roles because of their race.
- Note: Teaching elders, those living in Western states, African-Americans and Asian-Americans agree significantly more that they have not been chosen for positions in the church they were qualified for because of their race; Teaching elders, ages 18-49, African-Americans and Asian-Americans agree significantly more they have not been given equal opportunities to advance in leadership positions because of their race; Teaching elders, ages 18-49, African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanics agree significantly more that current PCA leadership would not appreciate their presence in leadership roles because of their race.

Ethnic Mix of Respondent Churches

19. Most respondent congregations are primarily Caucasian...

- 80% have congregations made up of 80% or more Caucasians
- 17% are more multi-ethnic, having congregations made up of less than 80% of one ethnic group
- 1% have congregations made up of 80% or more Asian-Americans
- <1% have congregations made up of 80% or more African-Americans
- <1% have congregations made up of 80% or more Latino/Hispanics
- Note: Teaching elders stated significantly higher racial/ethnic mixes in their churches compared to Ruling elders. Respondents in the Northeast and West regions and those with higher education represented significantly higher multi-ethnic congregations, while those in the Midwest and Southern regions represented significantly higher Caucasian dominant congregations.

20. Responses are mixed in regards to how much respondents' churches reflect the ethnic mix of their local neighborhoods/communities, with 14% stating *Extremely Close*, 25% *Very Close*, 24% *Somewhat Close*, 16% *Slightly Close* and 20% *Not at all Close*.

- Note: Asian American respondents and those living Southern states rated *Slightly/Not at all Close* significantly higher than other regions.

Incorporating Strategies for Greater Racial/Ethnic Diversity

21. 49% of respondents said they incorporate strategies towards reaching a variety of ethnicities in their local area.

- Note: Teaching elders answered Yes significantly higher than Ruling elders. Respondents in the Northeast and South regions answered Yes significantly higher than those in the Midwest and West regions.

22. When asked to share some of their strategies, feedback included a variety of efforts, mainly reflecting outreach programs/ministries, partnerships with others churches, a general focus on "others" and continuing the "work" of the church...

Outreach programs and ministries

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL • Pantries (food, clothing) • Day camps • Disaster relief (local after hurricane) • Mercy ministries • Buses to black and Hispanic neighborhoods • Community soccer program • Foster care • Mentoring in schools • Holiday food boxes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block parties • Prison outreach • Refugee outreach • Church planting • Medical clinic |
|--|---|

Incorporating Strategies for Greater Racial/Ethnic Diversity (cont'd)

A focus on others...

- Built relationships with pastors and churches of various ethnicities
- Hired non-Caucasian church staff
- Incorporated minority group preferred worship songs
- Created space for minority leadership in church ministries
- Started bi-lingual worship services
- Shared church facilities with diverse groups
- Offered Spanish translation for worship services
- Offered Non-English worship services
- Participated in joint activities with Spanish speaking congregation

Reaching out and partnering with others...

- Established partnerships with evangelical groups
 - minority
 - multicultural
- Met with community leaders
- Hosted conferences on race and the church
- Created a racial reconciliation committee
- Modeled diversity in relationships by cultivating friendships with people of other ethnicities



Incorporating Strategies for Greater Racial/Ethnic Diversity (cont'd)

Continuing the work of the church...

- Prayed for God to work in the church
- Fostered a welcoming and caring environment
- Preached the Gospel
- Made disciples

When aggregating individual responses, the top 7 categories included:

Category	% Respondents
Neighborhood outreach/evangelism	18%
Partnerships with minority churches/ministries	17%
English as a second language (ESL) training	12%
Changes to worship style/worship leadership	7%
Food bank/Clothing bank/Mercy ministries/Disaster relief	6%
Hosted community events	6%
Multi-ethnic staff/lay leadership	6%



Barriers for Greater Racial/Ethnic Diversity

23. When respondents were asked to share some “barriers” they see as hindering greater cross-cultural integration in the own church, many offered a variety of comments which mainly centered on the following areas:

Established church practices...

- Worship style
- Overly academic hymns
- Educational barriers to ordination
- Cultural and personal preferences
- Comfort and traditions
- Non-existent outreach efforts
- A Session’s unwillingness to “stir the pot”
- Preaching style
- Denominational reputation

Inexperienced with minority groups and cultures...

- Apathy
- Lack of diversity in leadership
- Little knowledge of African American history
- Little experience or exposure to other ethnicities or cultures
- Busyness and self-centeredness
- Mono-ethnicity of surrounding neighborhood
- Majority culture members unaware of the experiences of those in minority cultures
- Sense of discomfort when around those who are different
- Fear of change

Barriers for Greater Racial/Ethnic Diversity (cont’d)

Experienced racism and societal realities...

- History of overt racism
- Gentrification
- Socialized prejudice
- Socio-economic differences
- History of mistrust among different ethnic groups in a local area

When aggregating individual responses, the top 9 categories included:

Category	% Respondents
Worship style/Traditional liturgy	18%
No ethnic diversity/Demographics of area	13%
No interest in integration	10%
Socio/Economic differences	10%
Cultural differences	7%
Language	5%
No ethnic diversity in congregation	5%
Location of the church	5%

Recommendations for the Study Committee (for Racial Reconciliation)

24. Lastly, respondents were asked to offer recommendations to the study committee in helping to advancing racial reconciliation within the PCA. Respondents offered a variety of solutions and opinions on the matter, including:

- Establish more diversity in PCA leadership
- Listen to other voices (than those in the majority culture) when planning PCA calendar, events, programs
- Focus efforts of racial reconciliation and avoid attempting to please many groups at once
- Provide concrete strategies/encouragement for how to reach across racial divides in our community
- Call for public discipline and repentance for those found guilty of racism
- Reach out to leaders of minority congregations on a local level
- Establish diversity among the committee members themselves
- Develop more non-Caucasian pastors
- Train congregations on diverse worship styles
- Plant churches in racially diverse areas
- Solicit input from Godly people outside the denomination

Recommendations for the Study Committee for Racial Reconciliation (cont'd)

When aggregating individual responses, the top 8 categories included:

Category	% Respondents
Educate/More education	40%
Communicate	26%
Seek God	19%
Use caution	12%
Diversify leadership	12%
Provide clarity and direction	12%
Listen, understand, hear	11%
Biblical values, Bible studies, focus on the Bible	10%

Demographic Insights:

25. Ruling elders in the study are significantly older than teaching elders, with 79% of Rulings elders ages 50+ compared to 47% of Teaching elders.
26. 88% of respondents are Caucasian, 3% Asian-American, 2% African-American, 1% Hispanic/Latino and 6% "Other" ethnicities
27. Most respondents have Graduate degrees (80%); Teaching elders have significantly higher levels of Graduate degrees than Ruling elders (98% vs. 55%, respectively).
28. 44% of respondents graduated from PCA affiliated schools; Teaching elders had significantly higher rates of attendance from PCA affiliated schools than Ruling elders (79% vs. 10%).

Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this research reveal the complex nature of racism and the challenges it presents the PCA in addressing this issue. Beyond the recommendations that survey participants themselves offered, the following are other recommendations for the study committee to consider in supporting the goals of this study.

- Certain concerns were expressed in regards to wanting more clarity surrounding the issues being addressed. The committee should consider developing communication strategies that clearly...
 - Define the purpose/intention of the study committee itself with clearly stated goals in pursuing racial reconciliation and integration in the church
 - Address suspicions among elders who perceive more “negative” motives, suggesting...
 - The committee and its work serving as a distraction from gospel ministry
 - The survey content appears to be shaped by cultural trends rather than biblical principles
 - The potential solutions attempting to make changes via policy and ignoring sin as a root issue for racism
 - Provide a clear definition of *racism* and its effects on the church
 - Provide the church’s position on related topics that may also be hindering effort towards greater racial integration (e.g., socio-economic, political, immigration, etc.)

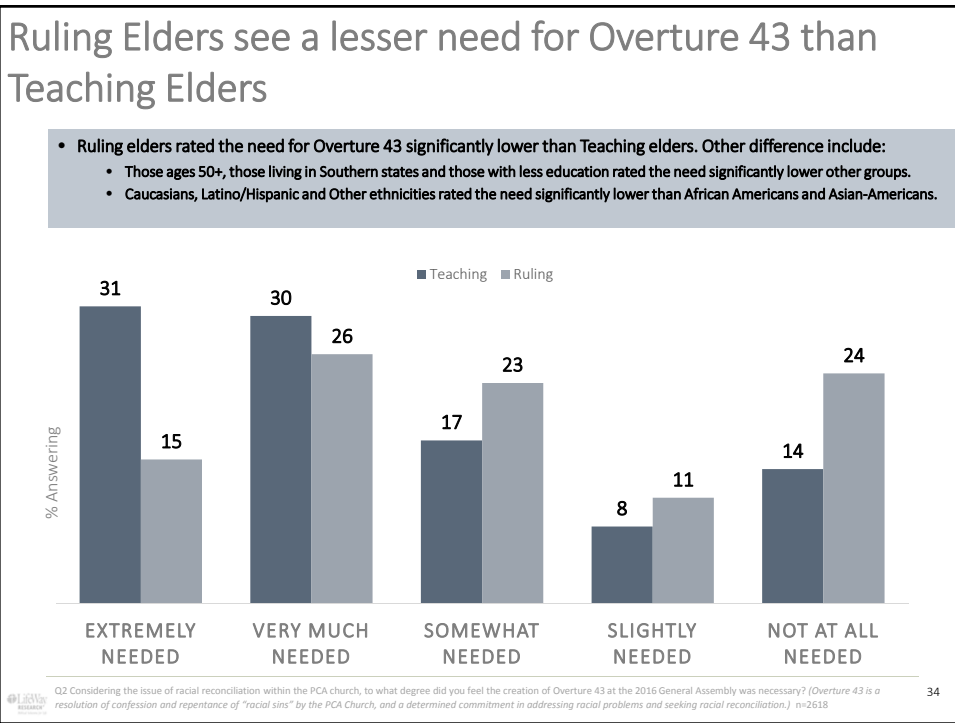
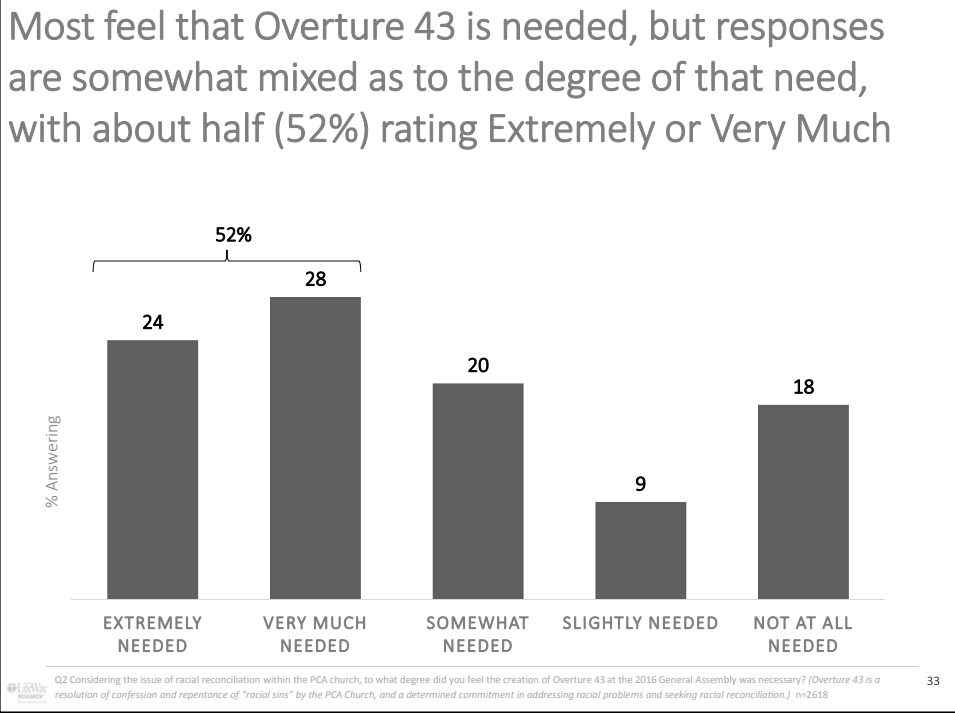
Conclusions and Recommendations

- The data suggests a need for specific education in the following areas:
 - The Presbyterian church’s history surrounding racism
 - The words, terms and phrases surrounding racism and racial reconciliation, (e.g., ethnicity, race, cross-cultural integration, micro-aggressions, white privilege, social justice, etc.)
 - Understanding the experiences of minorities (in general), allowing for heightened awareness and sensitivity in order to avoid more “unintentional” experiences of racism
 - A biblical understanding of racial/cultural identity and its place in church
- The committee may also consider specific educational training in:
 - Methods/skills in preaching on the topic of racism
 - Personal skill development when encountering racism (how to react or not react, etc.)
- Based on certain positive responses by survey respondents, capitalize on the high level of willingness to:
 - Partner with PCA churches of other ethnicities in their area by encouraging this with a variety of examples and ideas
 - Discuss issues of racism with people of other races by encouraging this dialogue in a variety of ways
- Directly address fears such as there being an agenda to make every church multi-ethnic or to over-use the label.

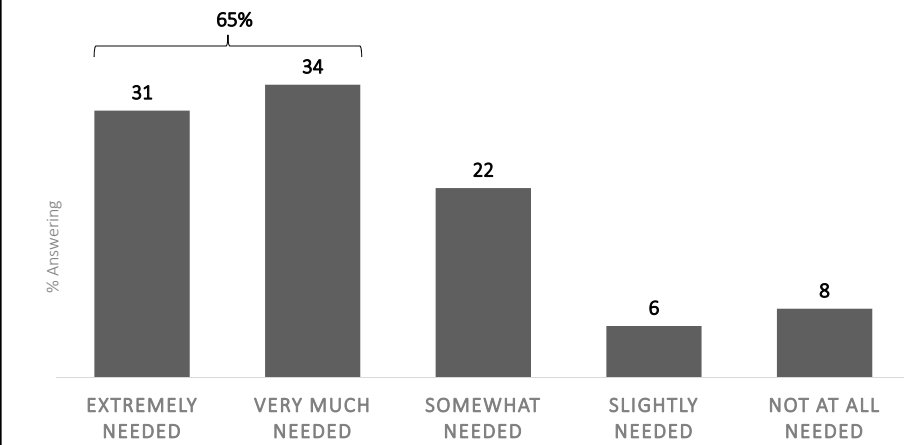
Conclusions and Recommendations

- Affirm the many good activities that are already taking place in the church (e.g., outreach, conversations, sermons, etc.).
- Develop varying strategies that acknowledge that people have varying degrees of recognition that racism exists around them (e.g., address those who see little or no racism in their congregation or PCA policies but another strategy may address those who see racism to encourage them to act).
- Seek ways to raise the awareness of congregations to racism within the church (given that most racism is noticed within congregations despite the fact that most teaching elders are preaching on racism).
- Create opportunities for minority group leaders to lead among majority culture participants.
- Encourage Caucasian elders to serve under/with minority leaders in practical church settings.
- Mentor young/developing minority leaders by national and regional PCA leadership.
- Invite minority elders, pastors, and teachers (from other groups, denominations, etc.) to events, training, and conferences...filling the role of leading and influencing young leaders.

Detailed Findings



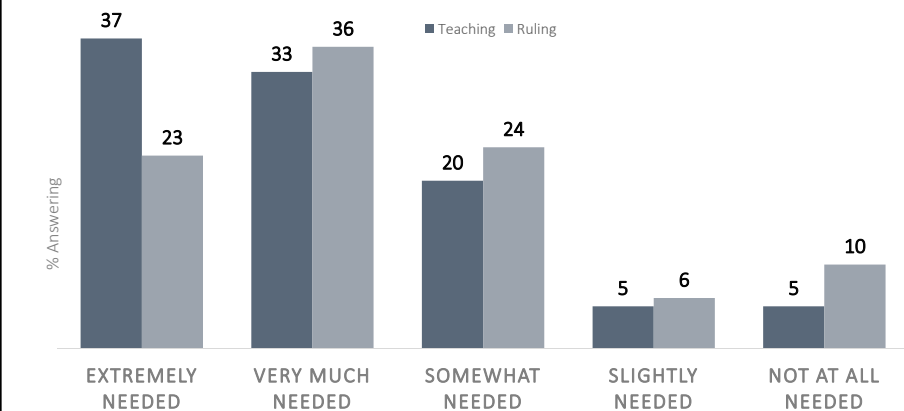
Most respondents feel that PCA leaders need to work towards greater racial reconciliation, but responses are (again) somewhat mixed, with about two-thirds (65%) rating Extremely or Very Much



Q3 And similarly, to what degree do you feel that PCA leaders need to work towards greater racial integration within the PCA in the United States? n=2618 35

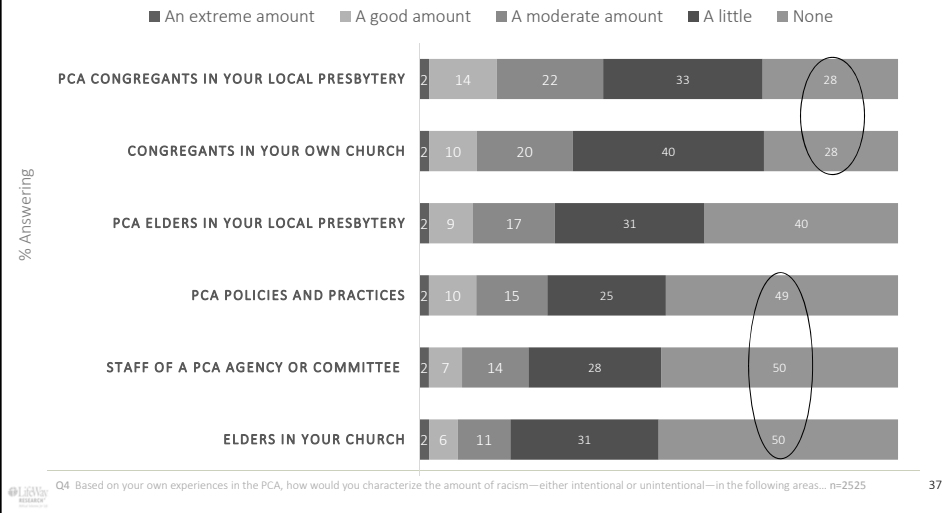
Ruling elders see a lower need for racial reconciliation than Teaching elders

- Ruling elders rated the need significantly lower than Teaching elders. Other differences include:
 - Those ages 50+ and those with less education rated the need significantly lower other groups.
 - Caucasians, Latino/Hispanic and Other ethnicities rated the need significantly lower than African Americans and Asian-Americans.



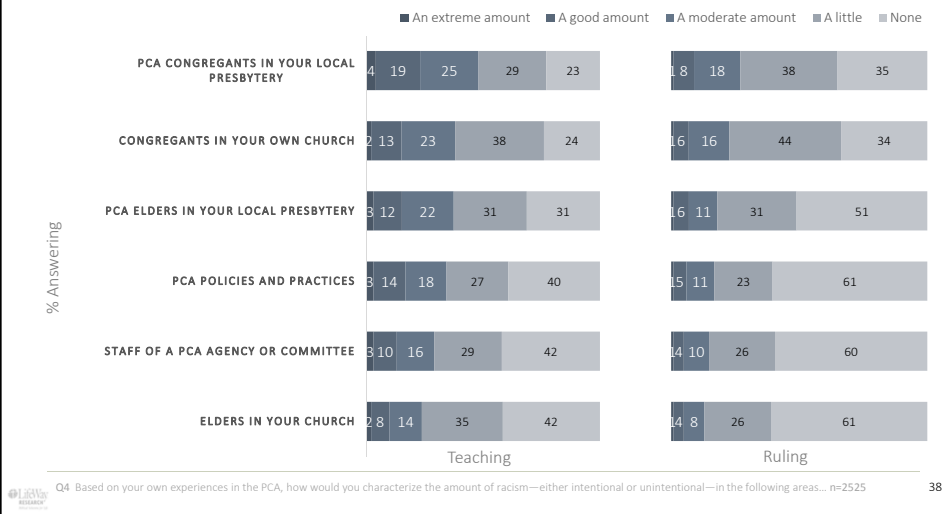
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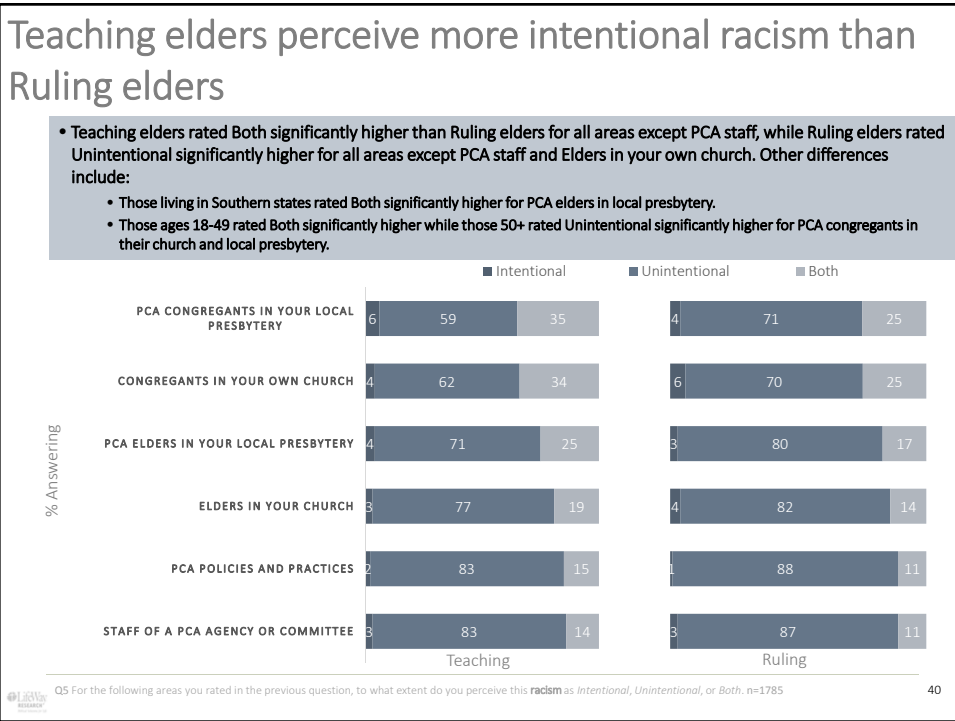
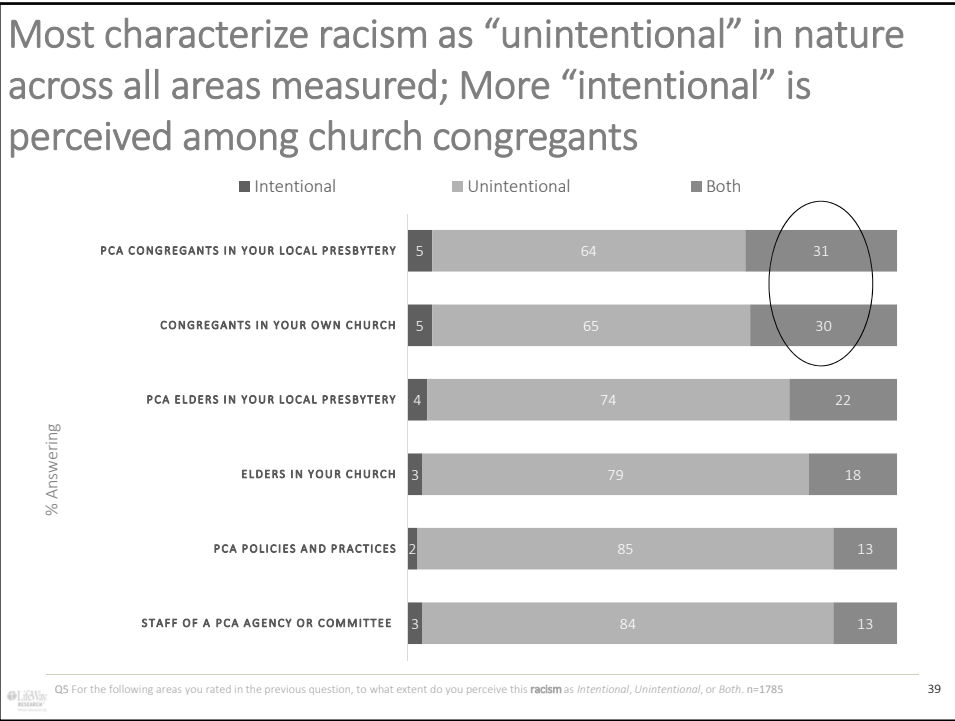
Respondents perceive the most amount of racism among PCA church congregants



Ruling elders perceive less racism than Teaching elders

- Ruling elders rated significantly lower amounts of racism in all areas than Teaching elders. Other differences include:
 - Ages 50+, those less educated rated significantly lower amounts of racism in these areas compared to other groups.
 - Caucasians, Latino/Hispanic and Other ethnicities rated significantly lower amounts of racism than African Americans and Asian-Americans.





Half of respondents (50%) shared either experiences or observations with racism within the PCA; Many noted interpersonal experiences with other PCA members along with dominant cultural experiences (denominational/societal)

Answer Categories	%		#
	Respondents	Answers	
No Experience with racism	48%	37%	312
Low (or limited) experience with racism	2%	1%	11
Unique experiences/observations with racism - 32% of Respondents			
Comments, speech (ex. jokes, subtle racist undertones)	19%	15%	126
Observed racism in general ex. (in church, in session, in PCA overall)	5%	4%	35
Examples of someone personally excluded due to race	4%	3%	23
Apathy towards racial reconciliation	3%	2%	17
Acknowledges racism (even when not personally affected by it)	1%	1%	6
Denominational culture/influences - 15% of Respondents			
Denominational culture (in general)	2%	2%	14
Ordination requirements (ex. Req. education, biased towards white and upper middle class)	4%	3%	29
Financial resources. Salary	4%	3%	24
Lack of diversity in churches (ex. predominately white)	2%	2%	16
Welcoming and Unwelcoming churches	2%	1%	12
Societal culture/influences - 13% of Respondents			
Influence of culture on racism	6%	5%	41
Homogenous preferences, priorities	4%	3%	26
Majority culture, minority culture	3%	2%	17



Q6 Can you please share some of your own personal experiences where you may have been affected by racism in the PCA? (open end). n=650

41

Experiences with racism (Cont'd)

Answer Categories	%		#
	Respondents	Answers	
Response indicates a negative view of this project - 12% of Respondents			
Negative view of this project (in general)	3%	2%	18
Reference to reverse racism	5%	4%	32
Reference to influence of politics, political motivations, agendas shaping the topic	3%	2%	20
Denial of racism	1%	1%	6
Context influences - 4% of Respondents			
Low diversity contexts (church, community)	3%	2%	20
High diversity context (church, community)	1%	1%	9
Previous history with racism in a situation	2%	2%	15
Racism as spiritual issue, sin	2%	1%	12

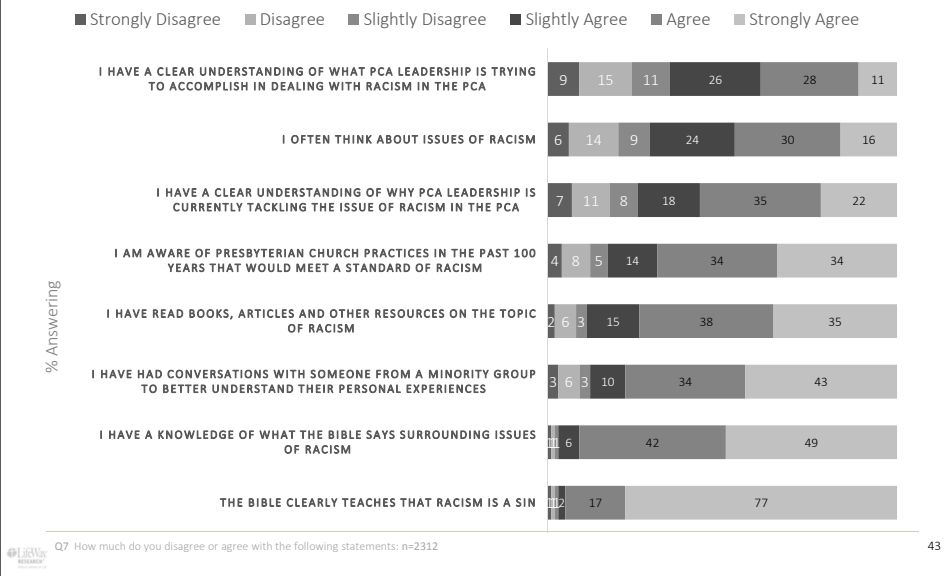
For more detailed analysis, please refer to *Appendix: Experience with Racism*



Q6 Can you please share some of your own personal experiences where you may have been affected by racism in the PCA? (open end). n=650

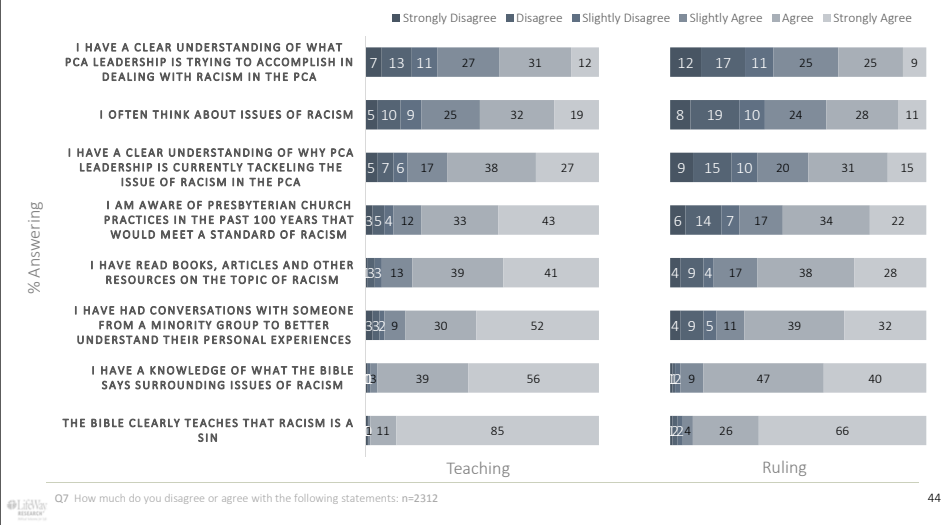
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Most agree that scripture teaches racism is a sin, but many are unclear what the PCA is trying to accomplish

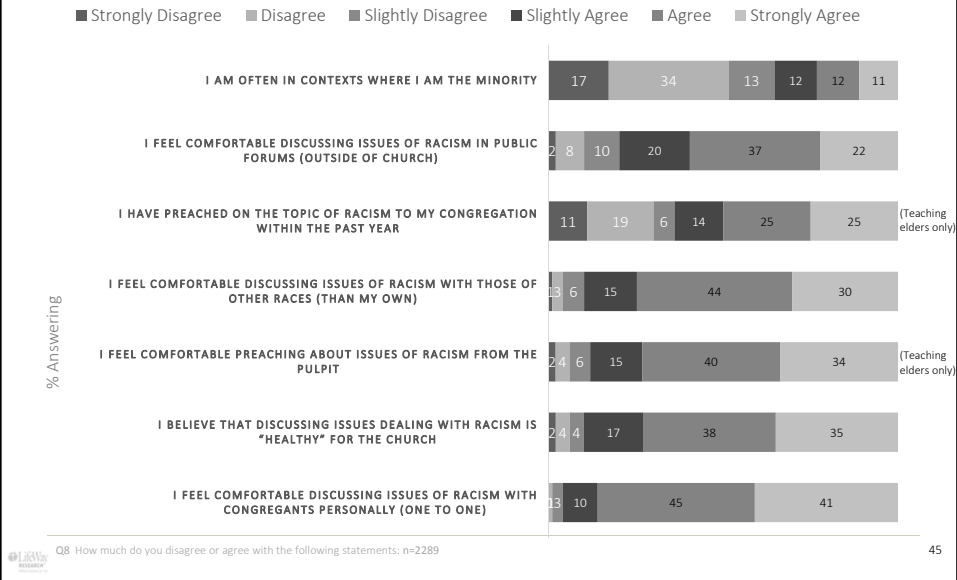


Ruling elders have less agreement that the Bible teaches racism is a sin and what leadership is trying to accomplish

• Ruling elders rated disagreement (either higher disagreement or less agreement) significantly higher across all areas measured.

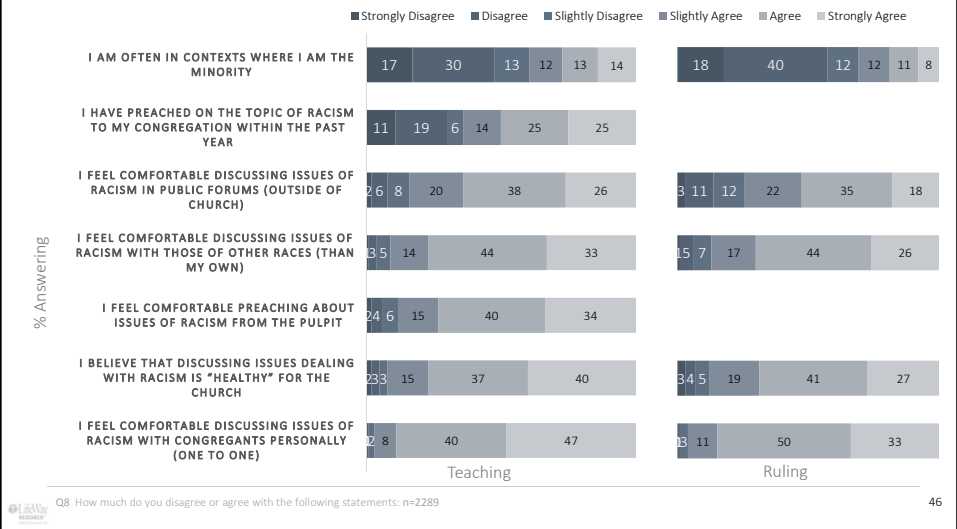


Most are comfortable discussing or teaching about racism; However, few are in “minority” contexts

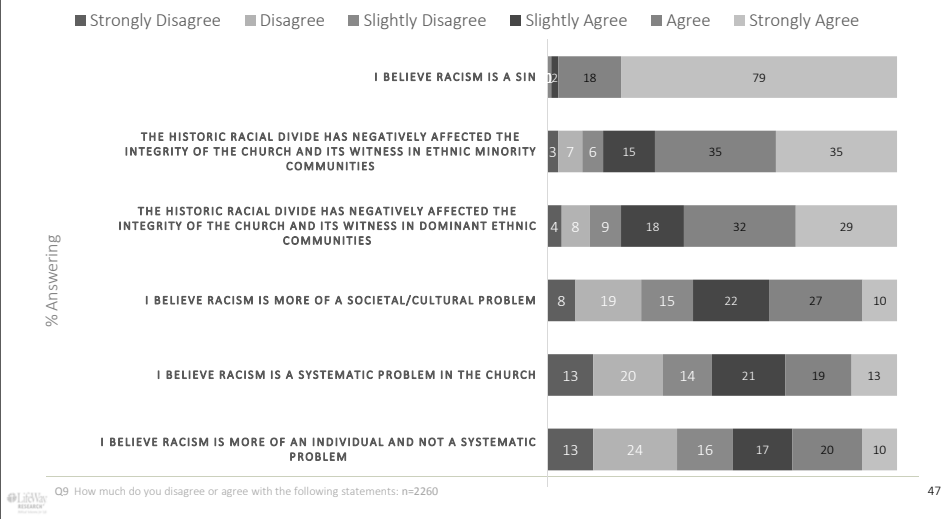


Teaching elders are more comfortable teaching and discussing issues of racism

• Teaching elders rated Strongly Agree significantly higher in all areas measured.

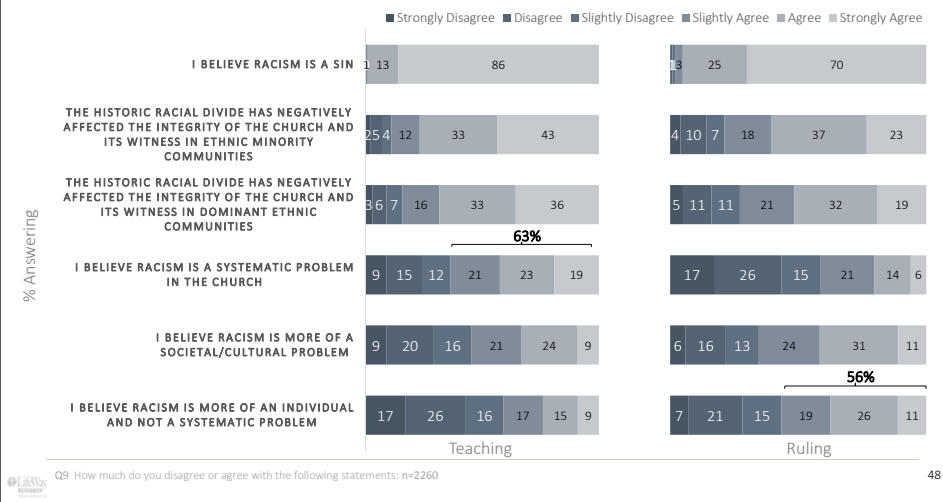


Most agree that racism is a sin, and its practice has negatively affected the church's witness; Agreement is mixed as to its source (individual vs. systematic)



Teaching elders more strongly agree that racism is a sin and it's a systematic problem in the church

- Those thinking racism is more of a systematic problem in the PCA are: Teaching elders ages, 18-49, African-Americans and Asian-Americans and more educated.
- Those thinking racism is more of an individual problem are: Ruling elders, ages 50+, from Southern states, Caucasian/Hispanic/Other ethnicities and less educated

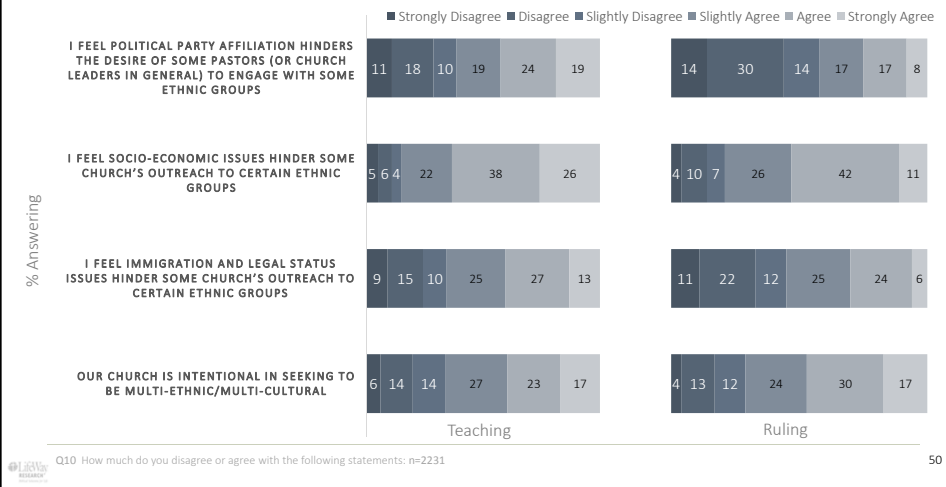


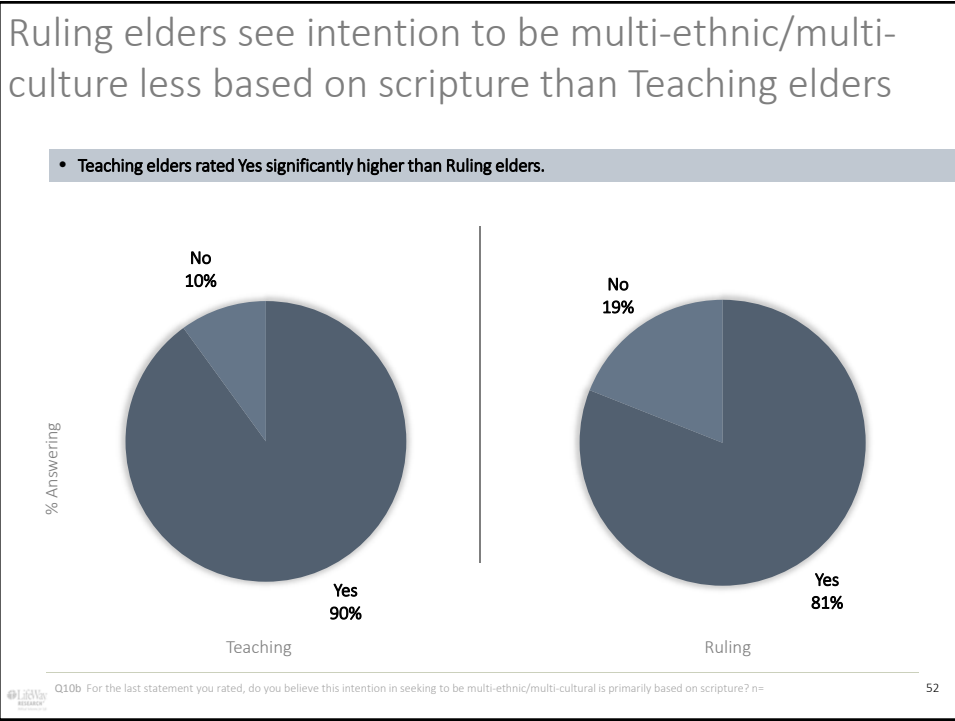
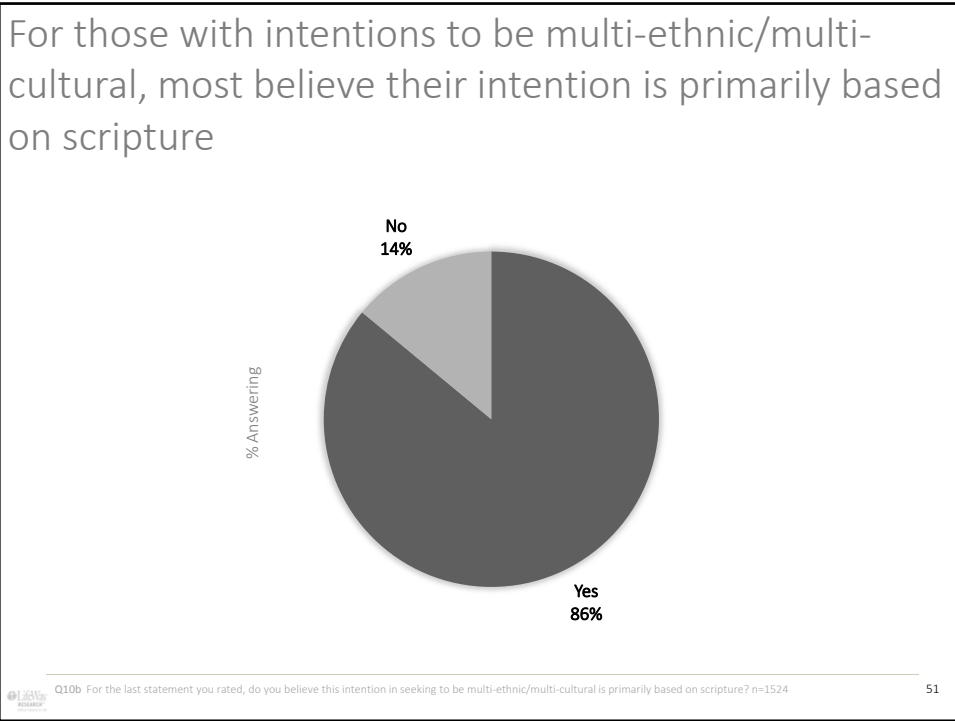
Most agree their church seeks to be multi-ethnic; Socio-economic issues hinder outreach more than party affiliation or immigration issues



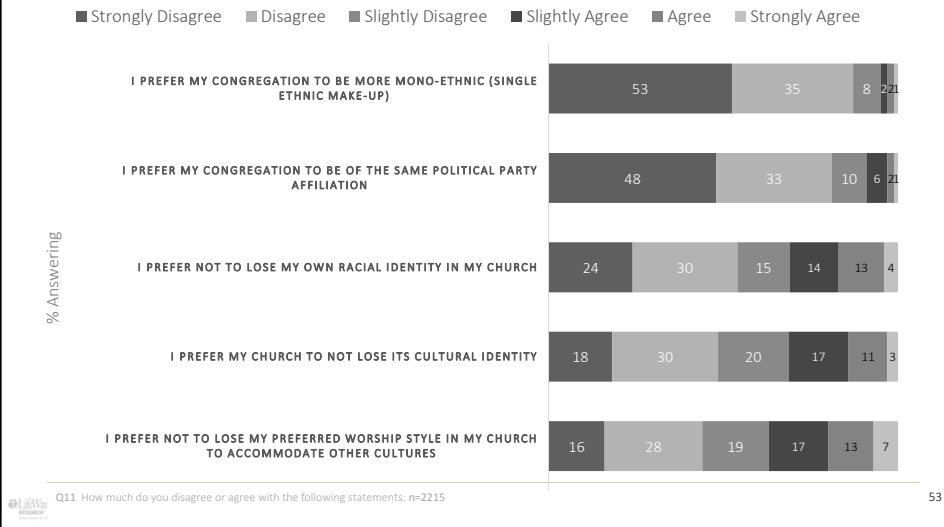
Teaching elders feel socio-economic, political and immigration issues hinder outreach more than Ruling elders

• Those feeling more strongly that political party affiliation, socio-economic and immigration status hinders engagement include: Teaching elders, ages 18-49, African-Americans / Hispanics and those more educated



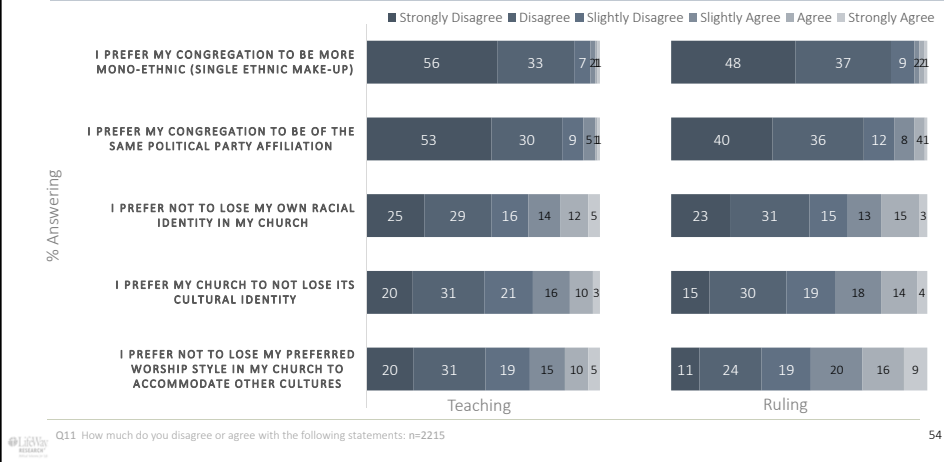


Few agree they would prefer their congregation to be more *mono-ethnic* or of the same political party; Most would allow changes to their church culture



Teaching elders prefer a diverse congregation

- Teaching elders rated Strongly Disagree significantly higher in preferring a more mono-ethnic and preferring a similar political party affiliation among congregants.
- Ruling elders, ages 65+, Asian-Americans and Other ethnicities agree significantly higher in preferring not to lose their church's cultural identity.
- African Americans and Asian-Americans agree significantly higher in preferring not to lose their own racial identity in their church.
- Ruling elders and ages 65+ agree significantly higher to not losing their preferred worship style to accommodate other cultures.

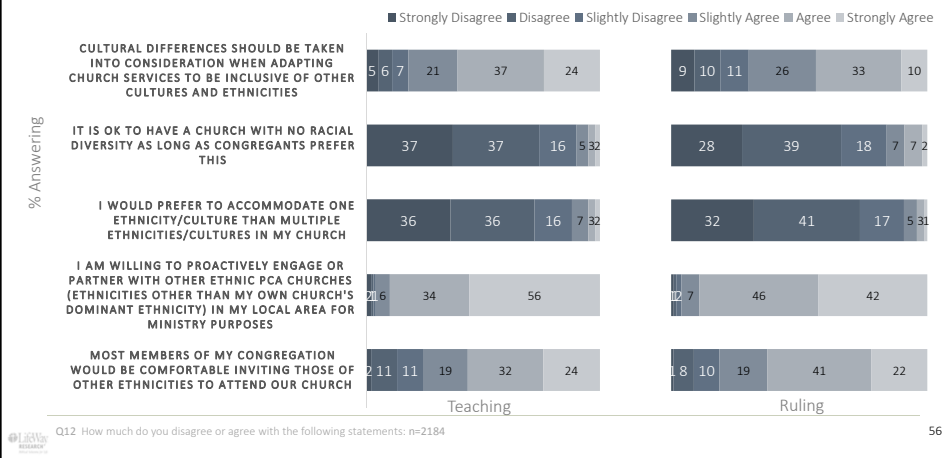


Most are open to multi-ethnic/cultural services; Most are also willing to partner with other churches (of other dominant ethnicities)



Teaching elders are more willing to engage with others

- Teaching elders, younger age groups, Asian-Americans and those more educated agree significantly higher in adapting services to accommodate other ethnicities.
- Teaching elders and younger age groups disagree significantly more in believing it's OK to have a church with no diversity as long as congregants prefer this.
- Teaching elders rated Strongly Agree significantly higher in their willingness to proactively partner with other ethnic PCA churches.
- Ruling elders, ages 50+ and Other ethnicities agree significantly more that most of the congregation would be comfortable inviting those of other ethnicities to attend their church.

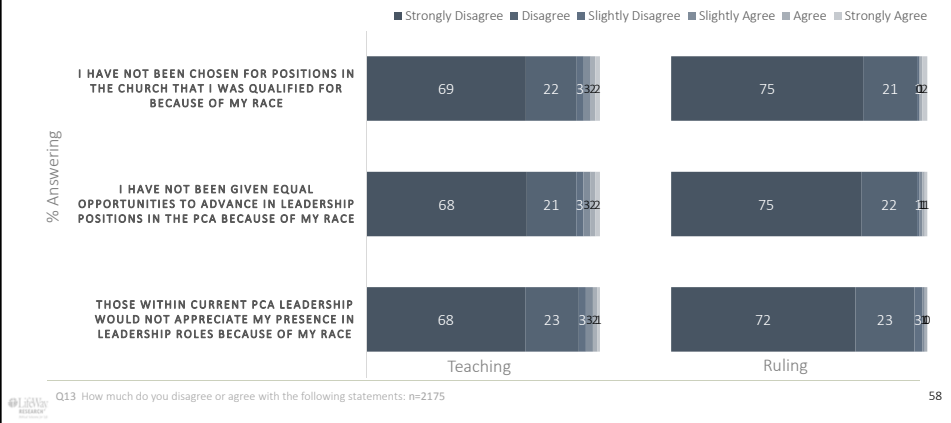


Most have not experienced racial discrimination as it relates to hiring and job advancement opportunities

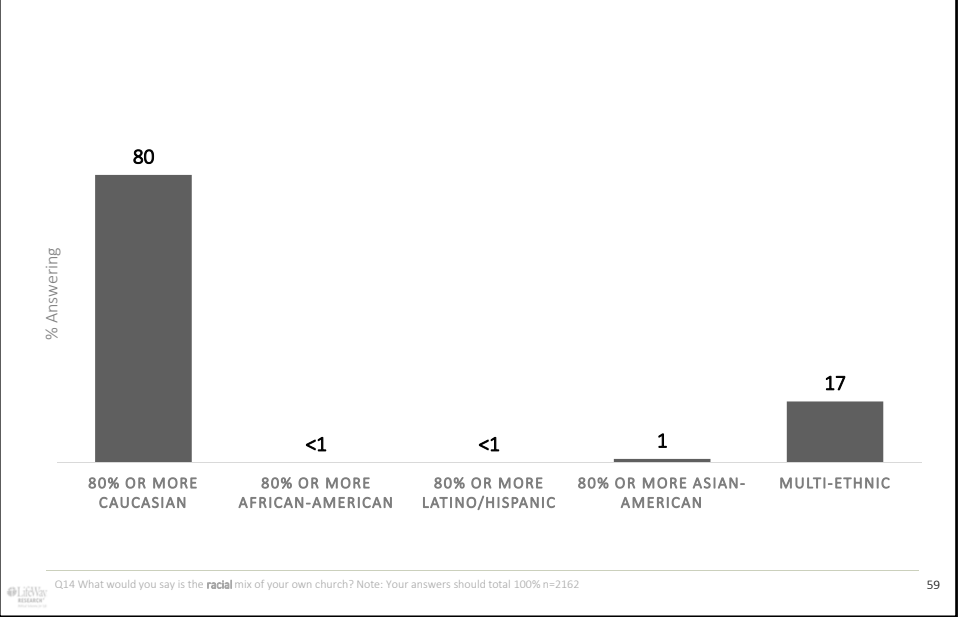


Teaching elders have slightly more experiences with workplace discrimination (based on race) in the PCA

- Teaching elders, those living in Western states, African-Americans and Asian-Americans agree significantly more that they have not been chosen for positions in the church they were qualified for because of their race.
- Teaching elders, ages 18-49, African-Americans and Asian-Americans agree significantly more they have not been given equal opportunities to advance in leadership positions because of their race.
- Teaching elders, ages 18-49, African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanics agree significantly more that current PCA leadership would not appreciate their presence in leadership roles because of their race.

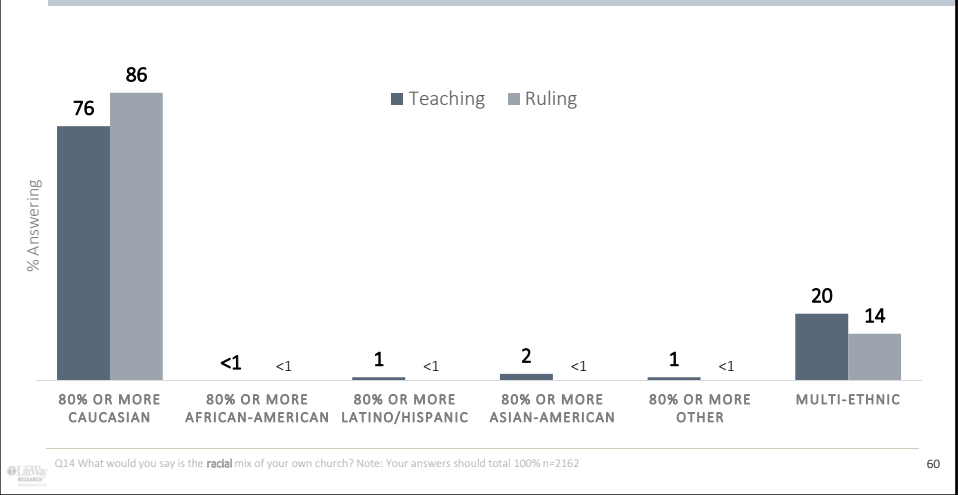


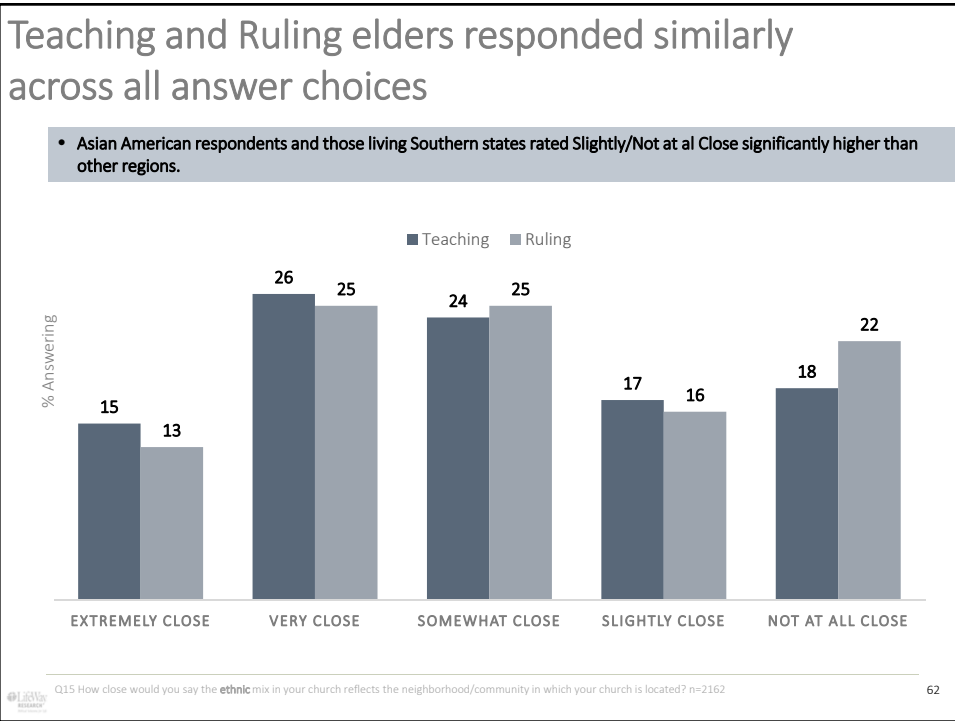
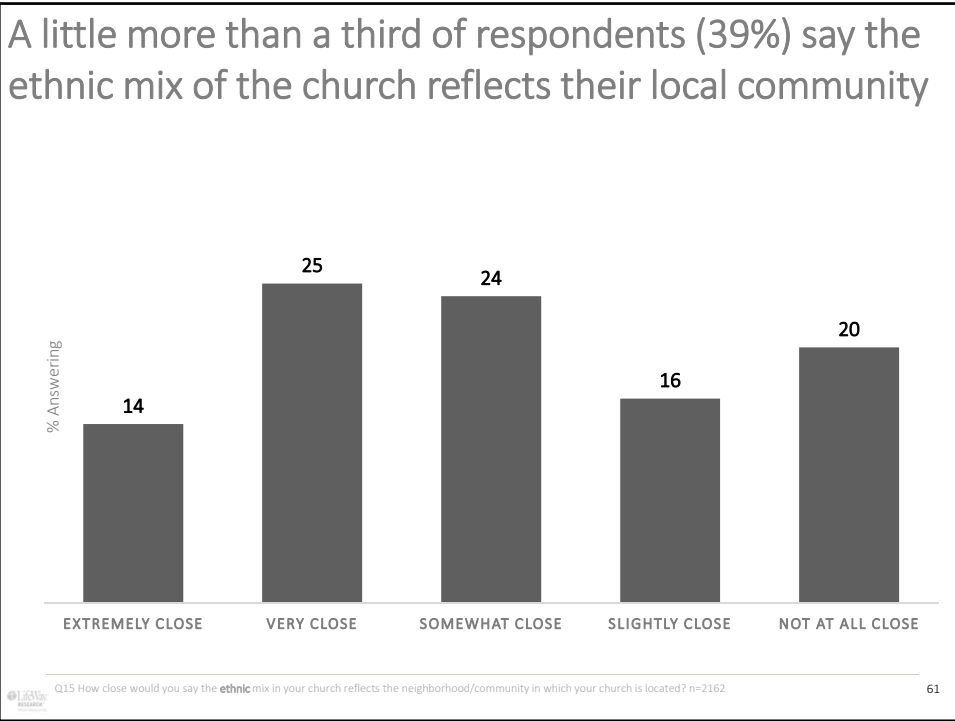
Regarding ethnic mix of churches, 80% of respondent church's include 80% or more Caucasians

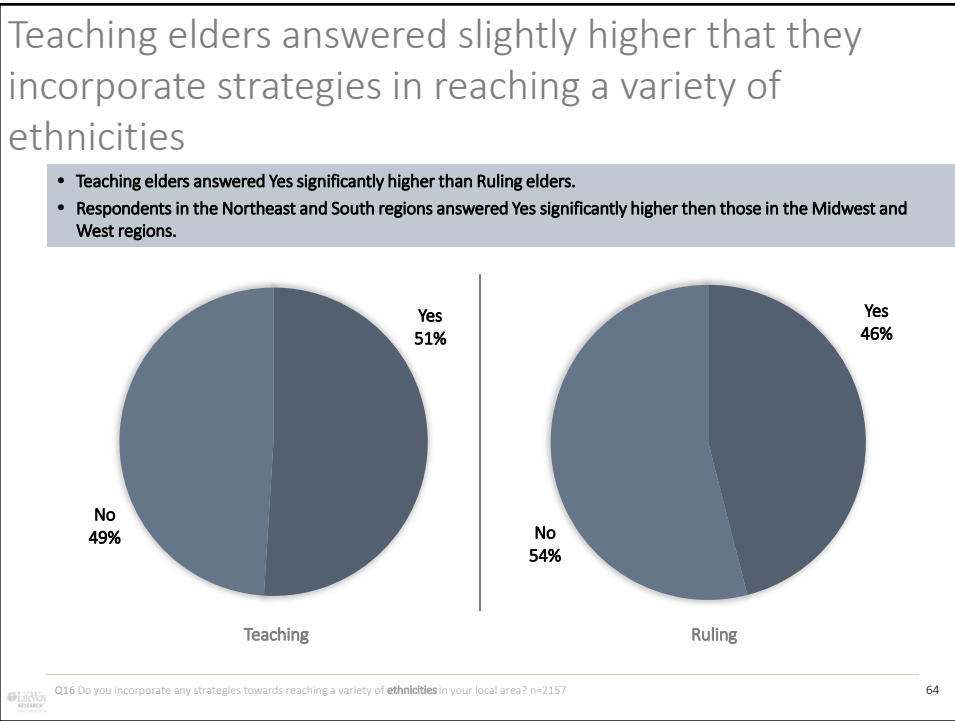
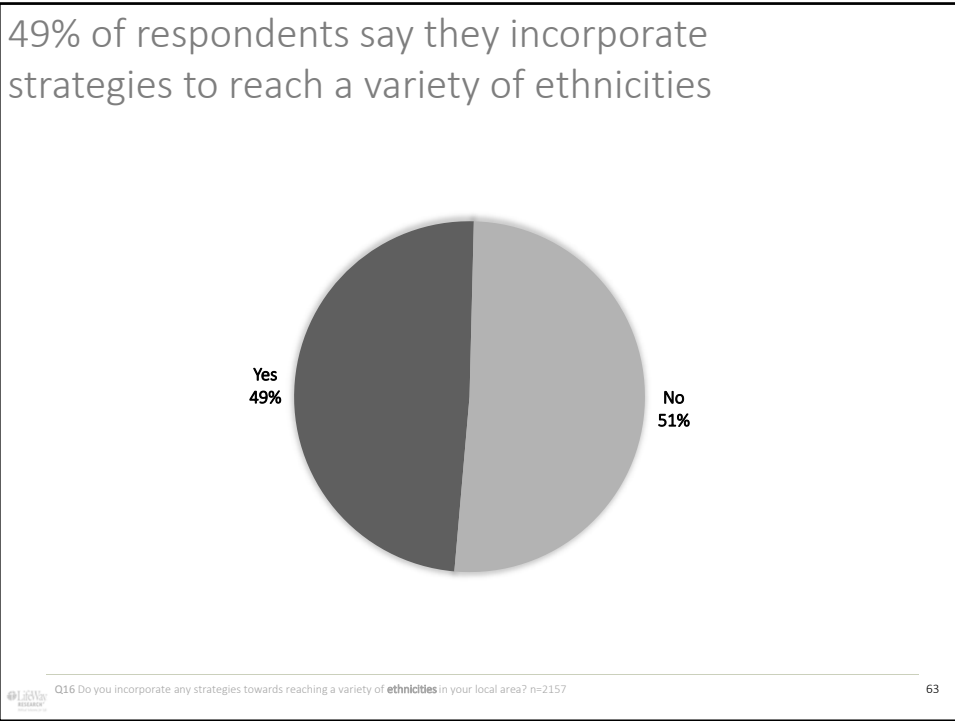


Teaching elders in the survey represent more ethnically diverse churches

- Teaching elders stated significantly higher racial/ethnic mixes in their churches compared to Ruling elders.
- Respondents in the Northeast and West regions and those with higher education reflected significantly higher multi-ethnic congregations, while those in the Midwest and Southern regions represented significantly higher Caucasian dominant congregations.







Respondents use a variety of strategies in reaching a different ethnicities; Many involve evangelism and partnerships with minority churches

Answer Categories	%		#
	Respondents	Answers	
Neighborhood outreach/evangelism	18%	15%	83
Partnerships with minority churches/ministries	17%	14%	79
English as a second language (ESL) training	12%	10%	54
Changes to worship style/worship leadership	7%	6%	31
Food bank/Clothing bank/Mercy ministries/Disaster relief	6%	5%	30
Hosted community events	6%	5%	29
Multi-ethnic staff/lay leadership	6%	5%	28
Bible study groups for adults/Discipleship	5%	4%	23
Tutoring/After school ministry/Christian school	5%	4%	21
Backyard Bible clubs/VBS/Summer camps	4%	3%	19
Building friendships/relationships with other ethnic groups	4%	3%	18
Community development/community leader training	4%	3%	17
Ministry in local schools	3%	2%	14
Refugee ministry	3%	2%	13
International student ministry	3%	2%	12
Sports ministry	2%	2%	11
Multi-cultural/Multi-ethnic church planting	2%	2%	10

Q17 Can you please share what you've done (in regards to incorporating strategies towards reaching a variety of ethnicities in your local area) (open end) n=447 65

Strategies to engage different ethnicities (cont'd)

Answer Categories	%		#
	Respondents	Answers	
Financial services/Financial training	2%	1%	8
Preach the Gospel/Preach against racism	2%	1%	8
Offer Spanish speaking services	2%	1%	7
Outreach in minority neighborhoods	2%	1%	7
Serving with college/campus ministry	2%	1%	7
Bilingual worship service	1%	1%	6
Inner city ministries	1%	1%	6
Youth ministry	1%	1%	5
Missions	1%	1%	4
Prison ministry	1%	1%	4
Trail Life Boys/American Heritage Girls	1%	1%	4
International Church Planting/International mission trips	0.4%	0.4%	2
Legal assistance	0.4%	0.4%	2

(447 respondents gave 562 answers) 562

Q17 Can you please share what you've done (in regards to incorporating strategies towards reaching a variety of ethnicities in your local area) (open end) n= 447 66

Some Respondent Quotes...

Adopt a local school from the inner city to tutor children weekly. Offer Faith/Finance Classes on Sunday and during the week. Provide financial services to local families. Open our facilities of "off site" groups of various ethnicities.

Children's VBS during the summer is used as an outreach program. We go door to door through the local neighborhoods to invite children to this event. Please consider that my church is located in a rural farming community, where 80% of congregants have family ties to the local church. The local Presbytery USA church has an overwhelming majority of African American congregants. There are also two Baptist churches close by. The community has historically been racially segregated, with old family owned farms going back many generations. Only in the past twenty years has the community experienced development, with several neighborhoods being built. Over the last ten years we have experienced a shift from a majority of elderly congregants to a more healthy mix of elderly, middle aged, and young families. The worship style is very traditional, probably contributing some to the lack of ethnic diversity.

Common Ground Shoals is an affiliate ministry of Common Ground Montgomery that we have aided this year. We are praying for their leaders, providing administrative support for the ministry, and assisting their fundraising efforts to get the first year of ministry funded. It is a new ministry and already we are seeing fruit within the larger community from engaging with a more racially diverse neighborhood.

Creation of an organization seeking reconciliation and healing with the African-American community through volunteering at an elementary school, helping with finding jobs for single mothers, work days at homes of African-American widows, partnering with African-American churches, and reaching out to and welcoming African-American members to worship with us. Also participate in public events supporting African-Americans (e.g., MLK events, Juneteen celebrations, etc.).

We are partnering with other churches to support local ministries and provide education (theological and vocational prep). We do not want to pull minorities out of the city to worship out in the county, but we do want to reflect the love of Christ in how we care for, minister to AND learn from others. While they may not live in the county, the city is close enough for us to be involved. Roanoke is also an area populated with refugees in transit, so we have had opportunities for people of different ethnic groups to worship and/or fellowship with us for the time they are here.



67

Some Respondent Quotes...

At Christmas we hold a dinner for families of imprisoned parents (most of them black). We give gifts to children in attendance, and we invite those attending to join us for worship. They enjoy the meal, take the gifts, and do not return. We hold a sunrise Service with a black congregation at Easter, and we have invited the pastor of that congregation to preach in our church.

1. Diverse worship styles, 2. Minority leadership at all levels, 3. Outreach in our diverse community (tutoring, summer camps, housing, ESL, finances, etc.), 4. Partnering with local universities with diverse students, 5. Living in majority-minority neighborhood for 12 years, 6. Involvement in local minority pastor networks.

All our elders have goals of befriending those in other racial and ethnic communities for the sake of listening and gaining understanding into the needs to make our church a more hospitable place.

Home/Community-based hospitality; Community events (Picnics at parks); Joining other care/service groups in the city to connect with broader range of community members; cultivating a faithful presence in a local school (donate funds and time to help food-insecure kids, supply various needs, develop relationship with counselor and administrators, etc).

I have African Americans sing as I lead multi ethnic chapel services at the hospital where I serve. I have hired an African American chaplain to serve with me. I started a MLK commemoration service that is widely recognized in my community as a celebration event and is attended by both whites and blacks on MLK day. My colleague and I rotate preaching at the daily chapel service and we have a mixture of music when we have music in our services.

Our worship is bi-lingual (Spanish/English) and our style of worship incorporates Latino styles. We offer an ESL class weekly and a Spanish class weekly. Our assistant pastor is Mexican. Our Hispanic members are involved in various groups in the area, and use their involvement as an opportunity to invite others to our church. Our majority culture members are also beginning to invite Hispanics they know.



68

In regards to barriers, many respondents mentioned worship style and liturgy as hinderances to greater cross-cultural integration

Answer Categories	% Respondents	% Answers	# Answers
Worship style/Traditional liturgy	18%	12%	113
No ethnic diversity/Demographics of area	13%	9%	86
No interest in integration	10%	7%	63
Socio/Economic differences	10%	7%	62
None	9%	6%	55
Cultural differences	7%	5%	47
Language	5%	4%	34
No ethnic diversity in congregation	5%	4%	33
Location of the church	5%	4%	32
Personal Prejudice/Racism	4%	3%	28
No relationships with different ethnic groups	4%	3%	27
Political differences	4%	3%	27
Doctrinal differences/Reformed theology	4%	3%	25
Comfort level of church	4%	3%	24
Segregated community/History of segregation	4%	3%	24
Fear of change	4%	3%	23
No intentional ministry/Not a priority	3%	2%	20
Education levels	3%	2%	17

Q18 What are some major barriers you see that hinder greater cross-cultural integration in your own church? (open end) n= 645

Hinderances to cross-cultural integration (cont'd)

Answer Categories	% Respondents	% Answers	# Answers
No diversity in church staff	2%	2%	15
Lack of evangelism	2%	2%	14
Lack of understanding	2%	2%	14
Preaching style	2%	1%	13
Did not see the topic or survey as necessary	2%	1%	12
Congregation not seeing racism as a problem	2%	1%	11
Sin	2%	1%	10
Perceptions of Presbyterian churches	1%	1%	9
Lack of hospitality	1%	1%	8
Not focusing on the Gospel	1%	1%	8
Stereotypes/Distrust	1%	1%	7
Uncomfortable discussing race	1%	1%	7
Age of congregation	1%	1%	6
Ignorance	1%	1%	6
Individualism	1%	1%	6
Not willing to make sacrifices/Busy lives	1%	1%	6
News media/Social media	1%	0.4%	4
PCA academic requirements Q18	0.5%	0.3%	3
Don't know	2%	1%	12

(645 respondents gave 911 answers)

911

Q18 What are some major barriers you see that hinder greater cross-cultural integration in your own church? (open end) n= 645

Some Respondent Quotes...

1) Lack of vision and will by Session and pastor (mostly because we don't know how, or don't have time, or lack imagination). 2) I think our white church is more open and ready to accept black folk into ministry with us, than black Christians are willing to become part of our church. 3) And white folk don't want to join a black PCA church, because there aren't any we know of. If there were, I think more whites would join black PCA churches than vice versa. 4) So planting black churches, and seeding them with white folk would integrate PCA churches, and encourage black leadership.

Broadly speaking, are issues would be largely socioeconomic at the core, and with no real desire to culturally accommodate our styles to those that others would be comfortable to become a part of.

Congregations of other cultures in our area a pretty liberal, not very orthodox. There is then some concern as to how much we work with them. In addition, they would look at our involvement with them as our attempt to steal their members or to work in their neighborhoods. Our focus would have to be on those of other cultures who are unchurched, i.e. those in our local neighborhoods. BUT our hang-up is developing an evangelistic spirit in our members towards ANYONE, even within their culture. It is hard to be thinking cross-culturally when you are battling in-grown-ness

Currently, we are racially monolithic. This can be an obstacle for people of other races/ethnicities. We also recognize that there are cultural barriers (preaching style, music, implicit cultural expectations, assumptions about transportation and mobility), and while we seek to address these in beneficial ways, we know that these are often so deeply engrained that detecting them is quite difficult.

I think the most difficult thing in our churches is the socio economic issue. We've turned our churches into country clubs where we get together with like minded and equally educated people. Whites do it, African Americans do it, Hispanics and Asians do it. We have to turn our churches into places of worship that are welcoming and warm. Places where politics and "what we do for a living" are irrelevant and not the topics of discussion. We need to learn to meet people where they are and lead each other into the presence of our King. In doing so, we then become like Jesus who stopped down to become like us and to rescue us. Leave politics out of the pulpit, but make the human condition the topic. Lets repent where we need to repent and let's move on and step out of our comfort zone.



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Some Respondent Quotes...

1. Leadership pipelines & theological standards, 2. Lack of minority presence in social and spiritual networks of PCA people/churches, 3. Cultural blindness of our white people, 4. Cultural sacrifice for our minority people 5. Lack of quality, diverse musicians in PCA networks.

1. Our church is in a largely white area of Denver. Greater cross-cultural integration is possible, but it would require a lot of intentionality from our leaders and congregation, and ethnic minorities would have a bit of a drive to attend our church. 2. Cross-cultural integration would require changes in our worship style, and in other aspects of our church. These changes would be difficult and controversial. 3. I have only been pastoring my current congregation for a year. I need to spend more time building trust, raising awareness, and developing a vision before we could effectively make the necessary changes to be multi-ethnic.

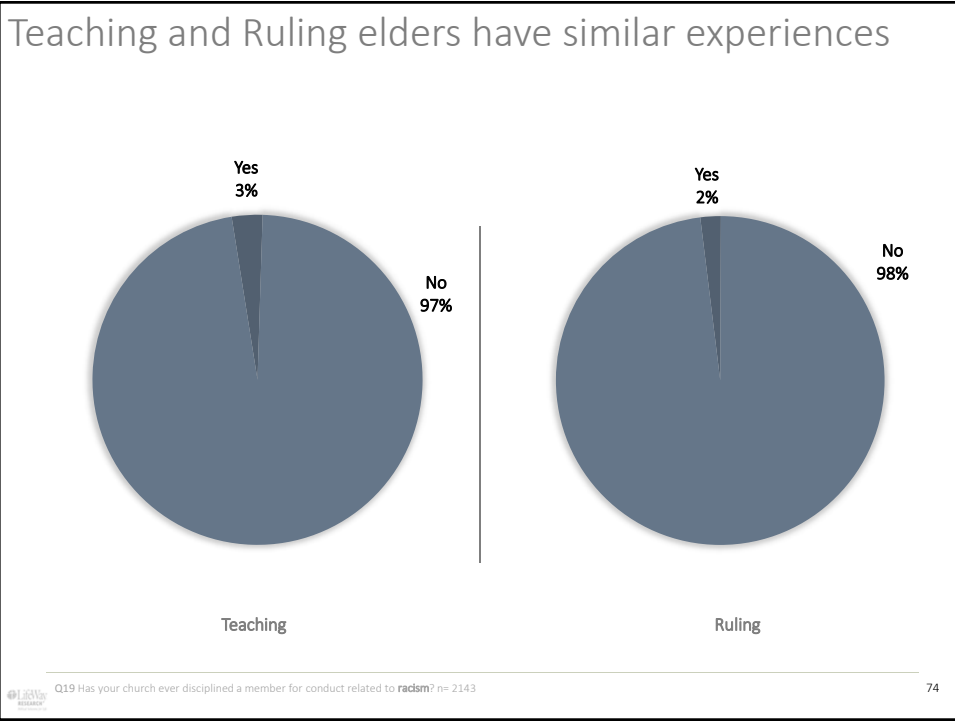
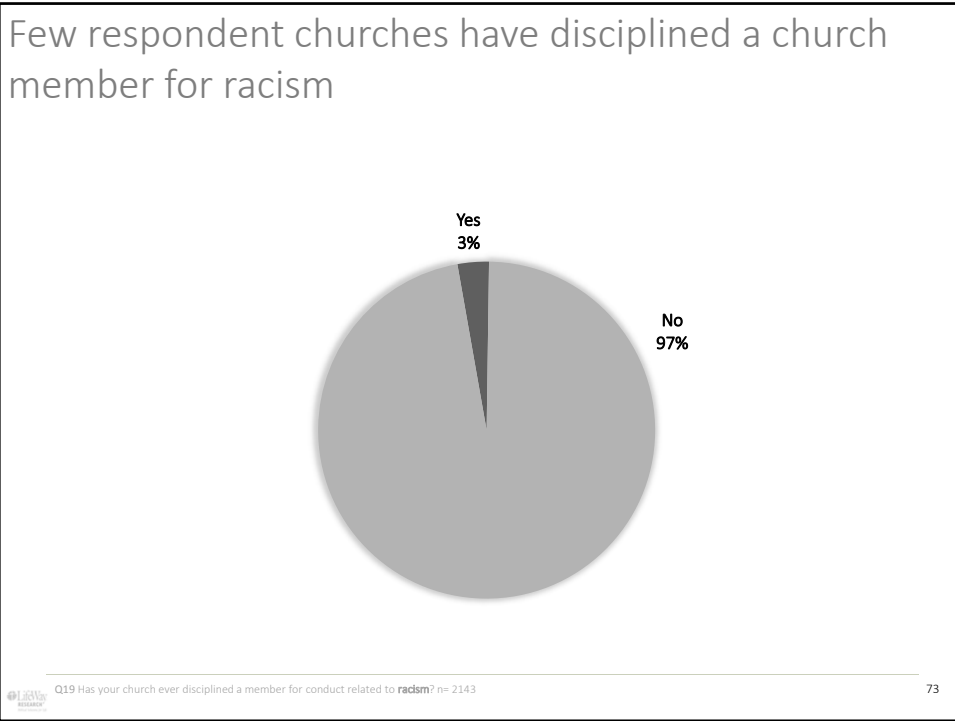
A major barrier is simply making race issues binary, and focusing on social justice as an alternative to the gospel. This is even reflected in this survey, which limits the participants to answers that only suggest racial issues are the cause of worship styles, leadership roles, etc. We are importing secular racial ideology into the PCA (and again, even within this survey).

At first there was a small but vocal group in our church planting core who treated the immigrant Brazilians as second class citizens. Because we are the ones who have the mortgage on the building and these people were part of the ones who helped make that possible, they were quick to be the "lords" of the building. I think that the vibrancy and success of the Brazilian church in reaching young families was intimidating to our older white crowd. Those people are gone from our congregation now and the ones who are here and are attending love the Brazilian partnership, are intrigued and enamored by it. Right now it's a good thing.

By far the biggest issue is the social segregation in our broader community. There is not much racial tension, but African-Americans tend not to trust historic churches from a white heritage. So it is very hard to get them to come unless they have a strong attachment to Reformed theology. In our partnership with an African-American church there is a fair amount of reticence on the other side to participate with us. I am close to the pastor, however, and he greater desires to see his people be more willing to interact with us.



72



Respondents offered many recommendations for achieving greater racial reconciliation within the PCA, most of which surround communication, education and seeking God

Answer Categories	% Respondents	% Answers	# Answers
Communicate - 51% of Respondents			
Communicate (in general)	26%	11%	171
Listen, understand, hear	11%	4%	69
Understand friendships, relationships	8%	3%	50
Conversations	4%	2%	28
Communication	2%	1%	12
Communication	1%	0.2%	4
Seek God - 47% of Respondents			
Seek God (in general)	19%	8%	123
Biblical emphasis	11%	4%	69
Biblical values, bible studies, focus on the bible	10%	4%	68
Too influenced by the world	4%	2%	26
Pray	3%	1%	20

Q20 And lastly, what recommendation do you have for the Study Committee on Racial Reconciliation in dealing with (or advancing) racial reconciliation within the PCA body? (open end) n= 650 75

Recommendations (cont'd)

Educate - 46% of Respondents			
Educate/More education (in general)	40%	16%	260
Conferences or events	2%	1%	11
Define terms	1%	1%	9
About racism	1%	0.4%	7
Young minority leaders	1%	0.4%	6
On Best Practices	1%	0.2%	4
Train churches	0.2%	0.1%	1
On Study findings	0.2%	0.1%	1
How to listen and communicate	0.2%	0.1%	1
About cross cultural intelligence	0.2%	0.1%	1
None/No recommendation	24%	10%	157
Use Caution - 23% of Respondents			
Use caution (in general)	12%	5%	81
Concerns about political motives	5%	2%	31
Don't pursue, stop	5%	2%	30
Disband committee	1%	0.4%	6
Don't fit one solution to all churches	0%	0.2%	3

Q20 And lastly, what recommendation do you have for the Study Committee on Racial Reconciliation in dealing with (or advancing) racial reconciliation within the PCA body? (open end) n= 650 76

Recommendations (cont'd)

Answer Categories	% Respondents	% Answers	# Answers
Provide clarity and direction - 22% of Respondents			
Provide clarity and direction (in general)	12%	5%	76
Provide churches with recommendations, guidance	5%	2%	35
Training	3%	1%	18
Provide support	2%	1%	14
Diversify leadership - 21% of Respondents			
Diversify leadership (in general)	12%	5%	78
Mentioned ordination, standards, qualifications	4%	1%	23
Raise up young leaders	3%	1%	19
Pursue minority leaders	3%	1%	19
Be encouraged - 9% of Respondents			
Be encouraged (in general)	6%	3%	41
Said 'Thank you'	3%	1%	19
Church discipline	2%	1%	15
<i>(650 respondents gave 1,606 answers)</i>			1606

Q20 And lastly, what recommendation do you have for the Study Committee on Racial Reconciliation in dealing with (or advancing) racial reconciliation within the PCA body? (open end) n= 650