

Race—and how little we understand



Race relations

Perception

vs.

Reality

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

53% of Presbyterians think that people of color have the same job opportunities as white people.
14% think people of color have an advantage over white people.
39% think color doesn't matter.

Racial discrimination in recruitment, hiring, and promotion continues.

14% of African Americans are unemployed, compared to **7%** of whites (US Bureau of Labor, 2012).
 White job candidates have a **50%** higher callback rate than black candidates.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

46% of Presbyterians think that students of color have the same educational opportunities as white students.
4% think children of color have a better chance for a good education.
37% think color doesn't matter.

Students of color are more educationally segregated now than two decades ago.

71% of white high school students, but only **57%** of black students, have access to a full range of math and science courses. (Dept. of Education, 2013)
 Black and Latino students are **twice** as likely as white students not to graduate from high school.
24% of black middle/high schoolers, vs. **7%** of white students, get suspended.

ACCESS TO HOUSING

54% of Presbyterians say that color doesn't make a difference in opportunities to find housing.

Subtle forms of housing discrimination persist, with people of color told about and shown fewer homes and apartments by real estate and rental agents. (HUD, 2012)

DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH

77% of Presbyterians think the church should be at the forefront of our society's efforts against racism.

But **45%** of members prefer to worship in a congregation where most people who attend share their race or ethnicity.

55% of Presbyterian members believe that attracting more people of color is essential for the PC(USA) to stop membership losses and help the church grow.

Only **16%** of members think that predominantly white congregations should have pastors of other racial-ethnic groups.

Presbyterians are overwhelmingly (**97%**) most comfortable with a white man serving as pastor of their congregation.

HOW PRESBYTERIANS EXPERIENCE RACE IN THEIR CONGREGATION

31% heard a sermon preached on racial justice.
12% joined a study group or class about racism.
18% worshiped with a congregation of another racial-ethnic background.
20% worshiped in a style or language different from the congregation's dominant culture.

It's news to no one, except maybe to many white Americans: a child's educational opportunities have a lot to do with that child's race. The US Department of Education released new data in March reinforcing a connection learned quickly by most children of color. One of the main findings was that children of color are disproportionately suspended and expelled from schools. These same students are also more likely than white students to be enrolled in underfunded public schools where all teachers may not meet state teaching requirements and where students are less likely to have access to a full range of math, science, and arts courses.

Because the best way to alleviate poverty is through education, unequal access to quality public education means unequal access to college and successful careers.

Despite a plethora of books about racial inequalities, this information does not seem to get out to many white, non-Hispanic Americans. In a recent Presbyterian Panel survey, about 40 percent of the members and ruling elders who responded said they believe that children of color have about the same chance of getting a good education in the United States. Only about half understood the reality expressed by the statistics.

What can you do? Host after-school and preschool education programs in your congregation that provide free or low-cost registration for children from low-income families. Start a book study in your congregation (start with *The Shame of the Nation* by Jonathan Kozol). Visit PC(USA) websites to learn more about how you can help advocate for children: pcusa.org/racialjustice, pcusa.org/child, and pcusa.org/poverty-alleviation.

» Other findings: pcusa.org/research