MISSION
INSTITUTE

Racial Justice Audit
of Westminster Presbyterian Church

The Mission Institute

Introduction

Greetings, Beloved Children of God,

On behalf of The Mission Institute, we would like to take a moment to thank you for undertaking this important work of racial justice and healing. We enter the work of auditing Westminster Presbyterian Church with profound respect and a deep sense of sacredness. From the beginning, the love and care expressed for the people and ministry of Westminster was palpable and inspiring. We are grateful to accompany Westminster in the work of racial justice and healing.

This audit builds upon the work the community of Westminster has already begun. It takes courage and great love to undertake work like this. It requires individuals and the community to lay themselves bare to outsiders in order to look deeply at where racism and white dominant culture are showing up at Westminster. We invite you to join us in peeling back the layers of racism and white dominant culture, which not only show up at Westminster but are part of the very fabric of the broader Church and the United States.

By engaging complex adaptive frameworks (What? So what? Now what?), we lift up dominant patterns (the "what"), provide reflections (the "so what"), and offer recommendations ("now what"). As researchers, we understand that our perspective is just that: our perspective. Therefore, we invite you to engage with this report—to see if the patterns resonate with you, grapple with making sense of why these patterns exist, and contemplate ways you might participate in creating change. This audit is most impactful when the community comes alongside it and makes meaning for themselves. Don't just take our word for it.

These pages are the culmination of nearly seven months of research. This report is not an academic paper or a scientific study but rather an attempt to convey some of the multitudes of truths that exist at Westminster. It is also an exercise in recording a narrative which is at the heart of the Christian tradition. We participate in that tradition in these pages, conveying and interpreting the words and stories of nearly 80 leaders of Westminster. It is an enormous privilege to be entrusted with this responsibility.

We invite you to step into your full being, knowing that God has bestowed on each of us wide and deep intelligence of body, spirit, and mind. Don't forget how this audit might impact you intellectually, spiritually, and in your body. Take your time as you read through

this report; take breaks, and breathe.

This report is not a destination but rather a stepping stone on the path towards Beloved Community. May God bless you greatly on this journey.

Donna Bivens, Rev. Katie Ernst, Zena Link, and Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Mae Magill
The Mission Institute

Background

In 2020, the people of Portland and this country went through the upheaval of a pandemic and the racial uprising that followed George Floyd's murder. Westminster, along with countless other communities, was awakened once again to the inequity, horror, and injustice People of Color experience, along with the continued white backlash that came on the heels of the 2016 election, which had a stronghold in the Pacific Northwest through various white supremacy factions and groups.

This prompted Westminster Presbyterian's leadership to engage racial justice and healing in a new and concerted way. A Racial Justice Working Group was formed in the spring of 2019, and efforts were made to study, read, and learn. In 2021-2022, members participated with other Portland congregations in a program called Reckoning with Racism, out of which a land acknowledgement video was created and shared with the broader community of Westminster, uncovering the hard and complicated history of the land upon which Westminster Presbyterian sits, and racist policies and the subsequent impact they had on People of Color and community of Portland—including members of Westminster Presbyterian.

The work continues through book studies, film screenings, and workshops. Additionally, the work expands past the doors of Westminster and into the broader community through Barbie's Village and Black Lives Matter vigils.

In the fall of 2021, the Racial Justice Audit Task Force approached The Mission Institute to conduct a racial justice audit of the leadership and ministry of Westminster. In the spring of 2022, The Mission Institute began the audit by sending out a survey to 99 leaders across various ministries at Westminster. The goal of the audit was to listen deeply to the community, lift up patterns of white dominating culture, make sense of these patterns, and point to places of influence for creating transformation. The audit builds on the work and dedication to racial justice and healing already underway at Westminster Presbyterian.

Process and Methodology

Using the academic approach of grounded theory[1] and the theoretical framework of critical race theory[2], we at The Mission Institute were able to start with openness to hear what was said, rather than starting with pre-existing assumptions and conclusions. This audit, in particular, has aimed to magnify the voices of People of Color[3], and, in particular, leaders of Color, while at the same time looking for church systems and structures that have been created by, and now maintain, the authority of white dominant culture[4].

As with all research, this audit is situated firmly in 2022, and all that we report is specific to this place at this particular time.

While statistics are important to this research, they cannot tell the full story of human experience, and statistics can be used to hide the pain experienced by People of Color in a primarily white institution. The researchers prioritized people on the margins and focused heavily on the stories that were told in the interviews. We are dedicated to a biblically grounded belief in the power and truth of storytelling.

This Racial Justice Audit included two sections: an online survey tool[5] to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, and a series of interviews, providing additional qualitative data. The survey was sent to 99 leaders[6] of the community. In total, 73[7] individuals completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 74%.

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[1] For more information on grounded theory, see Glaser, Barney G., & Anselm L. Strauss. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.*

[2] In short, critical race theory is a social and theoretical framework that understands race as a salient and viable lens through which to seek understanding of phenomena that occur in the world. It insists, like critical theory at large, that social problems are created by structures and institutions, rather than by individuals. Numerous scholars have contributed to the work of critical race theory, including Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado.

[3] The phrase "People of Color" was intentionally chosen to describe a group of diverse people who do not identify as white. There was considerable conversation among the researchers about whether "People of Color" or "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)" should be used. Please see the *Tensions* and *Glossary of Terms* sections for more of our reasoning.

[4] Throughout this report, the terms "white dominant culture", "white dominating culture", and "white supremacy culture" are used interchangeably. We have chosen to favor white dominant/dominating culture to try to describe more accurately what is taking place: an active dominating of other peoples and cultures. Whichever phrase is used is trying to convey the same principle. Please see the Glossary of Terms for a definition of these terms.

[5] Measures were taken to ensure those who didn't have internet access could submit a paper survey which was then recorded digitally.

[6] Members of the Racial Justice Audit Task Force, in communication with the Pastoral staff, identified the various groups of leadership which included committees, session, elders, deacons, staff, etc.

[7] N=73 in all of the quantitative data sets.

The survey addressed a variety of demographic categories, including race, age, ordination status, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, education, ability, and time at Westminster. It included questions about definitions of various terms related to racial justice, such as "race," "racism," "racial equity," and "white dominant culture." It also asked a number of questions about experience with racism and other forms of discrimination, both personal and witnessed. It concluded with a handful of questions to assess behavior and values associated with white dominant culture.

Upon completion of the survey, individuals were invited to express their willingness to participate in an interview with a team from The Mission Institute. This self-selection was digitally separate from the survey itself, providing only a name and whether or not they identified as a Person of Color. The Mission Institute intentionally prioritized interviews of People of Color. All interviews took place online. Initially, 23 people volunteered to be interviewed, 20 people were invited to participate in the survey, and 18 of those volunteers were interviewed by The Mission Institute[8].

The interviews, which lasted 45 minutes each, were intended to surface stories and patterns about race and racism at Westminster, as well as difficult or surprising truths. In grounded theory research, the questions are open ended and lead to storytelling. The researchers listened deeply, to avoid imposing their own understandings and to listen for each individual's experiences and the meanings they make of those experiences. Participants were asked about their understanding of race and racism and the role they play in this specific church context.

We have been careful to preserve anonymity. We do this in part to ensure candid responses, but also to encourage our focus to remain on issues rather than individual stories or personalities. Although it may be possible to assemble clues from quoted words to figure out who the speaker is, our invitation is to forgo that natural tendency and receive these words as inspired text. Such a process of sacred listening not only embodies the way of Jesus; it also honors the courage, vulnerability, and trust with which people have shared their stories.

The reflections and analysis presume that Westminster, like all churches, is a complex adaptive system, with each part influencing other parts in changing ways. Similarly, the

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[8] Multiple attempts were made to contact people, reschedule interviews, and accommodate schedules to ensure we heard from 20 people.

findings presume that each separate item is intertwined with the other findings of the report.

Although we attempted to stratify the data, particularly by racial identity, the low numbers of People of Color who took part made it impossible to report anything beyond how many participated.

The Mission Institute used the tool of adaptive action[9] to evaluate the interviews and written responses to the surveys. By paying attention to phrases and ideas that appeared most often (rather than what was interesting to the researchers), 14 initial patterns emerged. This was further narrowed to the five presented in this report.

The researchers then asked how these patterns show up. Why might these patterns exist? What do the patterns reveal about the rules of leadership at Westminster, and who fits within these rules? What claims might we make about the church in response to these data? What questions are we left with? What are the theological implications of these data?

See the *Dominant Patterns Theory and Framework* section for further details.

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[9] https://www.hsdinstitute.org/resources/adaptive-action.html

Beloved Community, Westminster's Leadership

Below is a summary of the quantitative data collected in the survey. As you read this section, consider the following questions:

➔ What stands out to you? What is important in these data?

➔ What questions does it leave you with?

➔ What patterns do you see?

➔ What are the implications of these data for racial justice work? For Westminster Presbyterian as a whole?

Response Rate

The overall response rate to the leadership survey was 74%.

● 99 leaders were surveyed and 73 responded.

● Leadership included staff, session, elders, deacons, committees, and task force.

Overarching Demographics

Age

The age of Westminster's leadership is weighted towards the older generation; 49% of respondents are 71+ and 30% are aged between 56 and 70. The 41–55 year olds who responded comprised 12% of the leadership, and only 8% are under 40.

Gender

The majority of responses came from women leaders (73%); men, 25%; transgender/non-binary/genderqueer, 1%; and 1% preferred not to say.

Sexual orientation

LGBTQ+ representation among respondents from the leadership comes in at 4%, just shy of the general population of Portland (5%)[10]; 92% identified as straight; and 3% preferred not to say.

Education

Westminster has an exceptionally high percentage of leaders who have obtained a master's (48%) or doctorate/professional degree (19%). In the broader Portland population, only 19% of people have a master's or doctoral degree. Additionally, 26% of respondents have a

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[10] https://news.gallup.com/poll/182051/san-francisco-metro-area-ranks-highest-lgbt-percentage.aspx?utm_source=Social%20Issues&utm_medium=newsfeed&utm_campaign=tiles

bachelor's degree. How might this impact the assumptions around how people behave, interact, lead, preach, teach, and share with one another?

Socioeconomic class

Most of the respondents among the leadership place themselves in the middle class (68%) and upper class (26%). Certain behaviors and beliefs (broadly speaking) come with being encultured in those social locations; for example, the value placed on investments/savings, what is deemed appropriate dress and behavior, how conflict is handled (or not), and expected ways of communication.

Physical ability

The majority of leaders identify as able-bodied (93%); 5% are differently abled; and 1% preferred not to say.

Neurodivergent

The majority of leaders identify as neurotypical (90%); 5% as neurodivergent; and 4% preferred not to say.

Race

Among the leadership, 90% of those responding to the survey identify as white, compared to 70% of the broader Portland population[11]. Awareness of this discrepancy ought to lead to curiosity about why this might be. Be careful about using this figure to make an argument for the necessity of becoming "more diverse"[12].

Below is the breakdown of the racial identity as reported by those among the leadership who responded to the survey:

- Indigenous or Native American   0%
- African American/Black   3%
- Latino/a/x or Hispanic American   1%
- African Immigrant   0%
- Middle Eastern or Arab American   0%
- Afro-Caribbean   0%
- Multiracial   1%
- East Asian or Asian American   3%

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[11] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/portlandcityoregon,US/PST045221
[12] See pattern, Limitations of Integration and Diversity

- White   90%
- Other   1%

Religious background

The majority of those responding to the survey among Westminster's leadership (58%) came to the Presbyterian tradition later in life and by choice, with 48% of respondents from a mainstream Protestant background; 5%, Evangelical Protestant; 4%, other; and 1%, Catholic. This leaves 41% of the respondents identifying as lifelong Presbyterians. For most of those who responded, the formative theological years were not Presbyterian.

Definitions

Race

Among respondents from the leadership, 41% define race as a combination of biology/genetics, physical characteristics, human-made categories of people, and ethnicity or culture. Twenty-five percent define race as biology/genetics; 23% define race as a human-made category. This data implies that the leadership doesn't have a cohesive definition of what race means.

Racism

Overall, 79% of leadership respondents define racism as a combination of racial prejudice or discrimination, a system that grants power to one social group, and racialized violence or hatred. The vast majority of respondents share the same definition of racism. This is crucial and shows that leadership can clearly define the complexity of racism, both systemically and interpersonally. Often a difference in understanding/defining racism is a barrier to the work of anti-racism. This shows that, at least intellectually, leaders have a similar understanding.

Racial equity

Respondents among leadership are divided on their definition of racial equity, with 38% defining it as providing equal opportunity to every individual regardless of race, and 49% defining it as addressing root causes of oppression, not just their manifestations. Making sense of this discrepancy will be important, as racial equity is about what can be done in the face of racism, not just what racism is. This lack of clarity can manifest in different understanding about what transformation looks, feels, and sounds like.

White dominant culture

Again, leadership is split on their definition of white dominant culture, with 23% defining it as dominant cultural practices, beliefs, and norms that are seen as standard without being proactively named or chosen by the full group; and 27% defining it as a set of standards and assumptions put in place by those in power and by which everyone else is judged and evaluated. More than a third of respondents, 40%, see it as a combination of these two plus a multifaceted set of characteristics such as perfectionism, sense of urgency, fear of open conflict, and individualism, among others.

Racism Work at Westminster

RACISM WORK AT WESTMINSTER

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ not sure/don't know

Racial justice work IS foundational in the life and ministry of Westminster.
- 0%
- 12%
- 18%
- 49%
- 19%
- 1%

Racial justice work SHOULD BE foundational in the life and the ministry of Westminster.
- 1%
- 1%
- 5%
- 32%
- 60%
- 0%
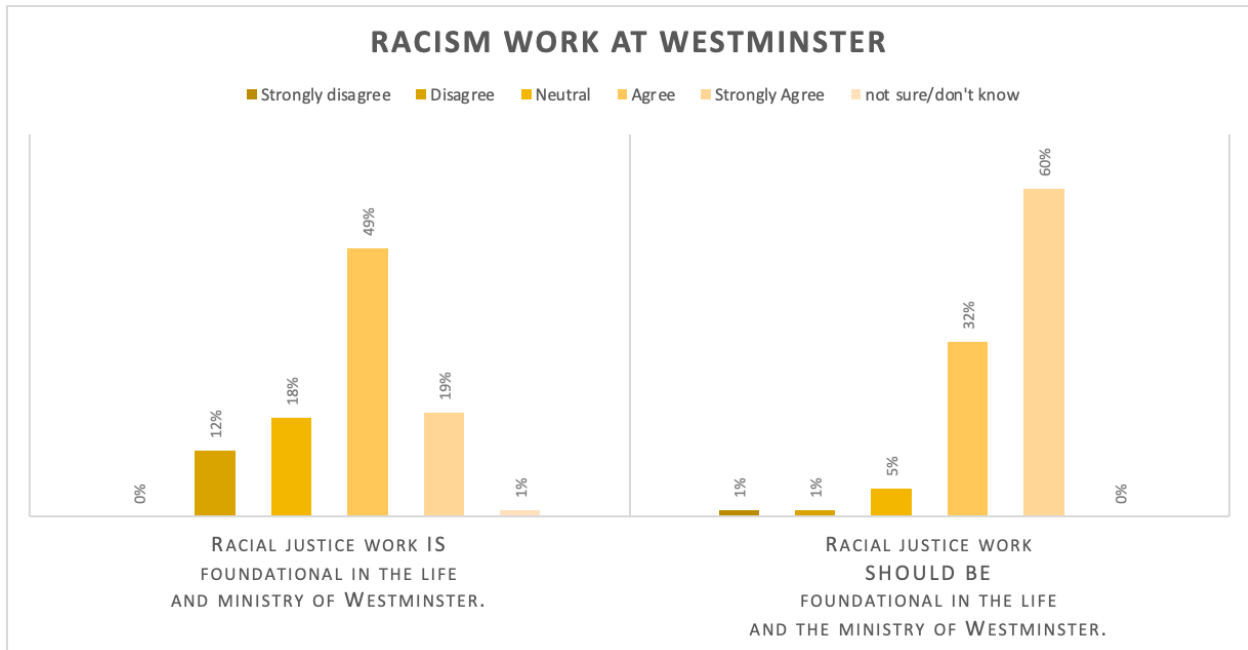
Highlights
➔ The majority of leadership agrees (49%) or strongly agrees (19%) that racial justice work *is* foundational in the life and ministry of Westminster, with 12% disagreeing and 18% as neutral. When asked if racial justice *should be* foundational, the data moved firmly into the affirmative, with 32% agreeing and 60% strongly agreeing. These data imply that leadership already feels racial justice is foundational and has the conviction and energy to move even more deeply in that direction. The leadership is primed and ready to do even more significant racial justice work at Westminster.

Experiencing Discrimination

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE FOLLOWING THINGS IN YOUR TIME AT WESTMINSTER?

Legend: ■ Not at all ■ Occasionally ■ Frequently

Category	Not at all	Occasionally	Frequently
YOU WERE TREATED WITH LESS COURTESY OR RESPECT THAN OTHER CHURCH MEMBERS.	85%	14%	1%
YOU DID NOT FEEL SUPPORTED.	84%	14%	3%
YOU RECEIVED FEEDBACK ON HOW YOU SPEAK, DRESS, OR INTERACT WITH PEOPLE.	85%	14%	1%
PEOPLE ACTED AS IF THEY THOUGHT YOU WERE NOT SMART.	92%	8%	0%
PEOPLE ACTED AS IF THEY WERE AFRAID OF YOU.	96%	4%	0%
PEOPLE ACTED AS IF THEY THOUGHT YOU WERE DISHONEST.	99%	1%	0%
PEOPLE ACTED AS IF YOU WERE NOT AS GOOD AS THEY WERE.	92%	8%	0%
PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT OR WERE NOT CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR CULTURE AND CONTEXT.	73%	25%	3%
YOU WERE CALLED NAMES OR INSULTED.	99%	1%	0%
YOU WERE INTIMIDATED, HARASSED, OR SUPPRESSED.	99%	1%	0%
PEOPLE ACTED AS IF YOU KNEW LESS ABOUT FINANCES.	88%	12%	0%
PEOPLE ASSUMED YOU KNOW LESS ABOUT PRESBYTERIAN TRADITION AND LITURGY.	85%	15%	0%

A few highlights:
- ➔ Of the leaders who responded, 25% reported that they occasionally experienced people not having knowledge about, or not being curious about, their culture and context, and 14% occasionally experienced feedback on how they spoke, dressed, or interacted.
- ➔ The leadership occasionally experienced people assuming they knew less about Presbyterian tradition (15%), did not feel supported (14%), were treated with less courtesy or respect (14%), and acted as if they knew less about finances (12%).
- ➔ When asked the main reason for their experience, 22% of respondents reported they didn't know; 11% said it was their gender or sex; 10%, their age; 8%, race; and 5%, level of education. When asked if there were any other factors, 25% reported age; 15% ticked socioeconomic class, level of education, and don't know. Lastly, 14% marked gender or sex and race.
- ➔ Since the majority of leadership is white, highly educated, and middle to upper class, it makes sense that most of the respondents would attribute their experiences to these factors. It is important to keep in mind that within a white dominant culture, it isn't just People of Color who experience backlash or oppression from white dominating culture—it impacts everyone through various forms of oppression.

Observing Discrimination

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE YOU OBSERVED THE FOLLOWING WITH FELLOW PARISHIONERS AT WESTMINSTER?

■ Not at all   ■ Occasionally   ■ Frequently

Category	Not at all	Occasionally	Frequently
A PERSON OF COLOR BEING TREATED WITH LESS COURTESY OR RESPECT THAN OTHER PEOPLE.	88%	12%	0%
A PERSON OF COLOR RECEIVING LESS SUPPORT THAN OTHER PEOPLE IN A SIMILAR ROLE.	90%	10%	0%
A PERSON OF COLOR RECEIVING FEEDBACK ON HOW THEY SPEAK, DRESS, OR INTERACT WITH PEOPLE.	92%	8%	0%
PEOPLE ACTING AS IF THEY THINK A PERSON OF COLOR IS NOT SMART.	93%	7%	0%
PEOPLE ACTING AS IF THEY ARE AFRAID OF A PERSON OF COLOR.	88%	12%	0%
PEOPLE ACTING AS IF THEY THINK A PERSON OF COLOR IS DISHONEST.	96%	4%	0%
PEOPLE NOT HAVING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT OR NOT BEING CURIOUS ABOUT A PERSON OF COLOR'S DIFFERENT CULTURE AND CONTEXT.	64%	32%	4%
A PERSON OF COLOR BEING CALLED NAMES OR INSULTED.	99%	1%	0%
A PERSON OF COLOR BEING INTIMIDATED, HARASSED, OR SUPPRESSED.	99%	1%	0%
PEOPLE ACTING AS IF A PERSON OF COLOR KNOWS LESS ABOUT FINANCES.	96%	4%	0%
PEOPLE ASSUMING A PERSON OF COLOR KNEW LESS ABOUT PRESBYTERIAN TRADITION AND/OR LITURGY	90%	10%	0%

A few highlights:
➔ Of the respondents among the leadership, 32% occasionally observed people not being knowledgeable or curious about People of Color. Twelve percent witnessed People of Color being treated with less courtesy and people being afraid. Finally, 10% observed People of Color receiving less support and being assumed to know less about Presbyterian tradition and/or liturgy.

➔ There is a discrepancy between what people *experience* and what they *observe*. This could be because this question specifically asked if one *observed* a Person of Color experiencing discrimination. The discrepancy is accounted for when it is acknowledged that most people believe these things happened to them for reasons other than race. Also, it could also be due to the low numbers of People of Color in the community.

➔ When asked the main reason for their experience, 29% of respondents reported that they didn't know; 32% said other—citing lack of People of Color; and 15% checked race. When asked if there were any other factors, 33% left the item blank; 27% didn't know; 15% said age; 8% said ancestry; and 7% said race.
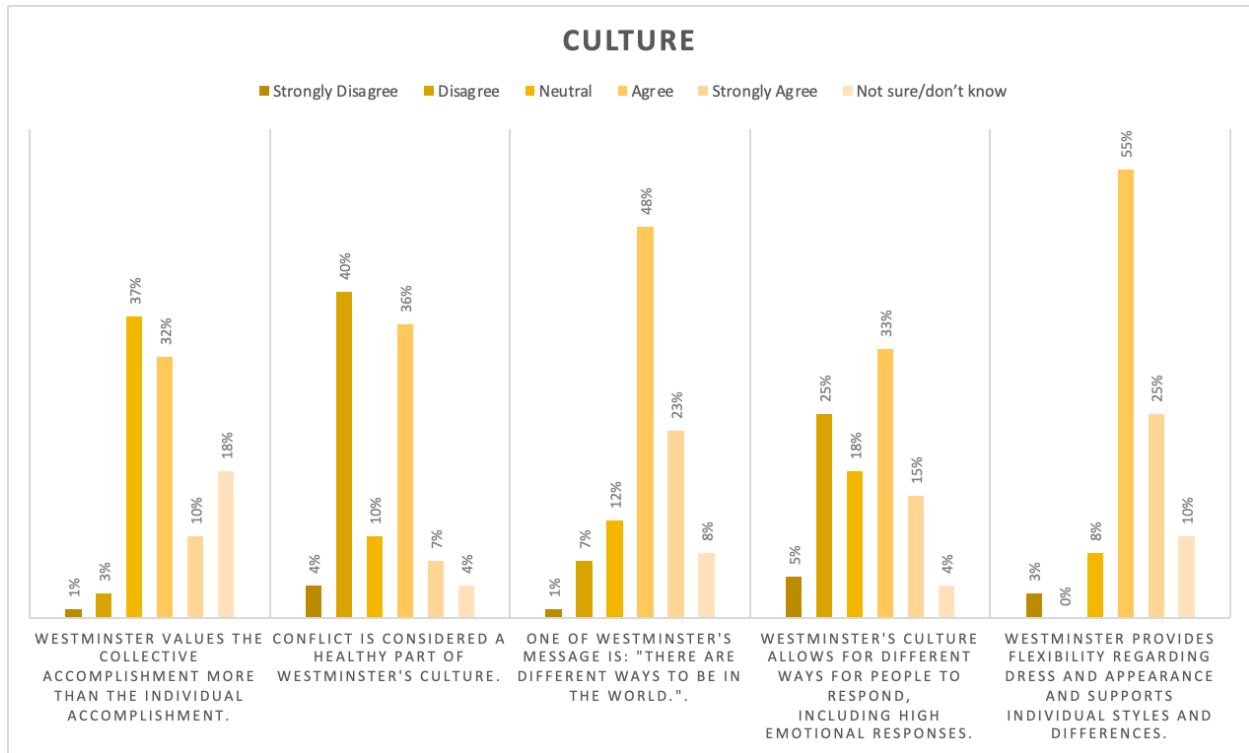
Talking about Race and Racism

A few highlights:

➔ The majority of respondents among leadership at Westminster are comfortable talking with colleagues about race or racism, with 67% either comfortable or extremely comfortable talking with colleagues.

➔ Of those surveyed, 47% of respondents reported that they have not brought up issues of race or racism to colleagues. When issues were brought up, 8% of responders reported that their concerns were validated, and active steps were taken to address them.

➔ When issues were raised, 19% of leadership said people listened but no tangible next steps happened or adequate response given; 16% said people were genuinely interested and made efforts to right behavior; and 12% mentioned that people didn't know what they were talking about or ignored their concerns.

The impact of racial inequity, racism, and/or white dominant culture

A few highlights:

➔ Of the respondents among leadership, 70% said that racial inequity, racism, and/or white dominant culture impacts them; 12% said maybe; 11% said no; and 7% were not sure. When asked to expand on their answer, many white respondents mentioned that they are privileged by being white. Others simply said it impacts us all, while others shared personal experiences of racism and oppression.

Assessment of Behavior and Practices
Culture

CULTURE

Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Not sure/don't know

WESTMINSTER VALUES THE COLLECTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT MORE THAN THE INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT.
1% 3% 37% 32% 10% 18%

CONFLICT IS CONSIDERED A HEALTHY PART OF WESTMINSTER'S CULTURE.
4% 40% 10% 36% 7% 4%

ONE OF WESTMINSTER'S MESSAGE IS: "THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO BE IN THE WORLD.".
1% 7% 12% 48% 23% 8%

WESTMINSTER'S CULTURE ALLOWS FOR DIFFERENT WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO RESPOND, INCLUDING HIGH EMOTIONAL RESPONSES.
5% 25% 18% 33% 15% 4%

WESTMINSTER PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY REGARDING DRESS AND APPEARANCE AND SUPPORTS INDIVIDUAL STYLES AND DIFFERENCES.
3% 0% 8% 55% 25% 10%

A few highlights:
- ➔ In terms of Westminster valuing collective accomplishment more than individual, 37% were neutral; 32% agree; 10% strongly agree; and 18% don't know or are not sure. Leaders seem indifferent or unsure about what they have experienced, while others are fairly confident.
- ➔ Leadership seems to have opposing views around conflict being a healthy part of Westminster's culture: 40% of respondents disagree; 36% agree.
- ➔ There was a similar response pattern regarding whether Westminster's culture allows for different responses, including emotional responses. Thirty percent of respondents among leadership strongly disagree (5%) or disagree (25%); 18% are neutral; 33% agree and 15% strongly agree.
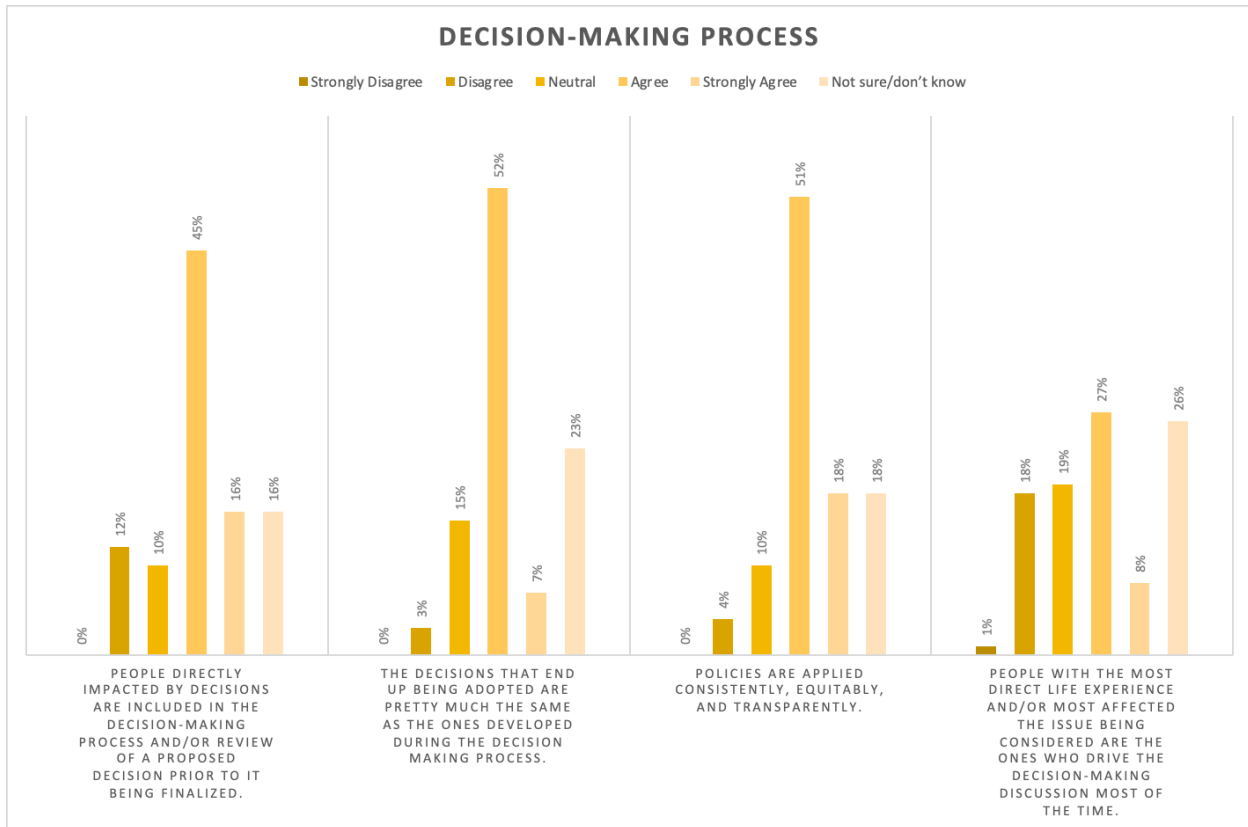
Hiring, Electing, Recruiting, and the Promotion Process

HIRING, ELECTING, RECRUITING, AND THE PROMOTION PROCESS

Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Not sure/don't know
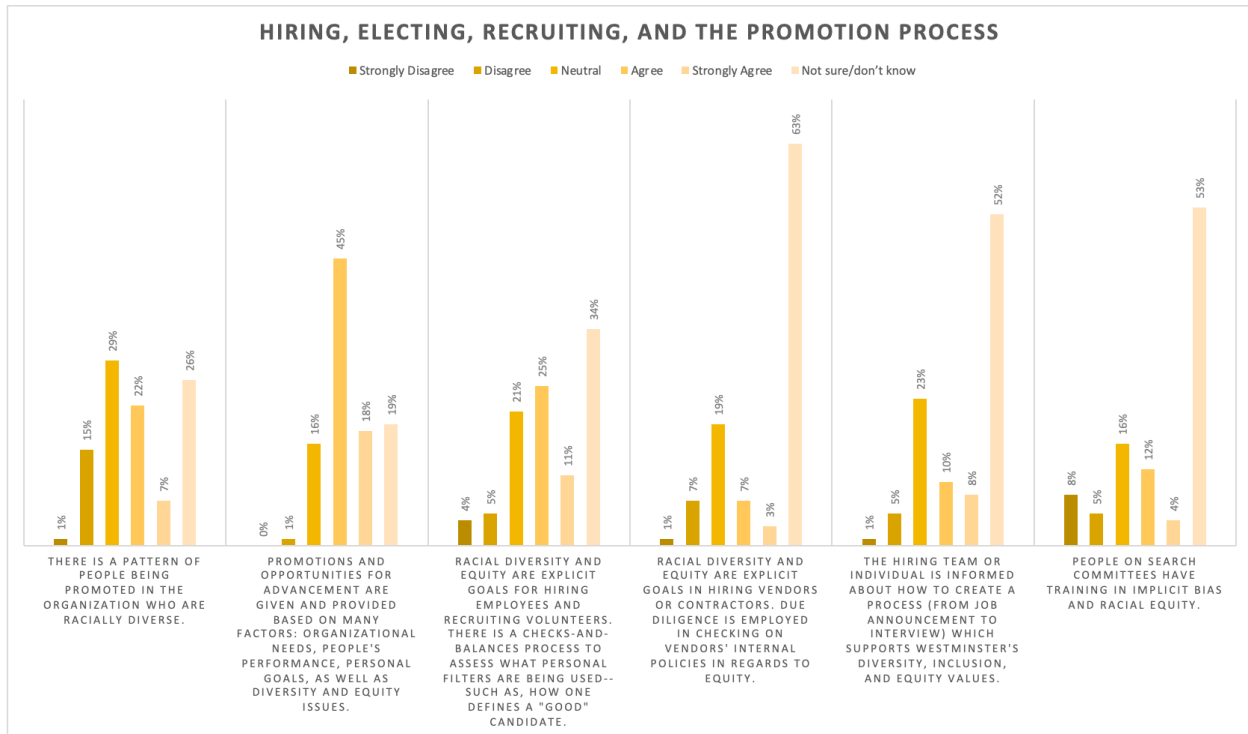
A few highlights:
- ➔ In this category, most leaders who responded to the survey didn't know or were not sure about the specifics of each question. This is particularly true for the last three statements.
- ➔ Could the pattern of not knowing be related to a lack of policies supporting racial equity and practices at Westminster? Does it point to a lack of transparency/communication? Or is it something else entirely? It will be important for leadership to get a sense of why this might be.
- ➔ The majority of leaders agree (45%) or strongly agree (18%) that racial equity goals are part of an array of considerations when looking to promote or hire a person.
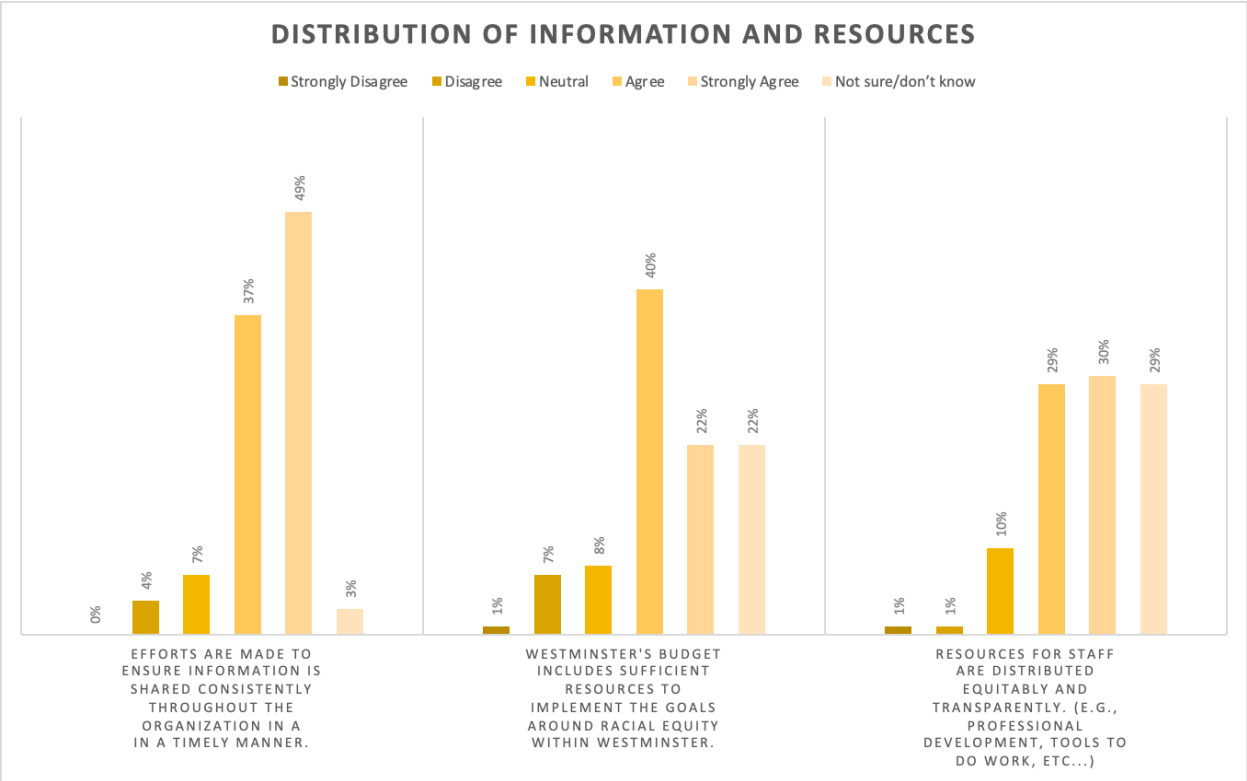
Decision-making Process

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Not sure/don't know

PEOPLE DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY DECISIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND/OR REVIEW OF A PROPOSED DECISION PRIOR TO IT BEING FINALIZED.
- Strongly Disagree: 0%
- Disagree: 12%
- Neutral: 10%
- Agree: 45%
- Strongly Agree: 16%
- Not sure/don't know: 16%

THE DECISIONS THAT END UP BEING ADOPTED ARE PRETTY MUCH THE SAME AS THE ONES DEVELOPED DURING THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS.
- Strongly Disagree: 0%
- Disagree: 3%
- Neutral: 15%
- Agree: 52%
- Strongly Agree: 7%
- Not sure/don't know: 23%

POLICIES ARE APPLIED CONSISTENTLY, EQUITABLY, AND TRANSPARENTLY.
- Strongly Disagree: 0%
- Disagree: 4%
- Neutral: 10%
- Agree: 51%
- Strongly Agree: 18%
- Not sure/don't know: 18%

PEOPLE WITH THE MOST DIRECT LIFE EXPERIENCE AND/OR MOST AFFECTED THE ISSUE BEING CONSIDERED ARE THE ONES WHO DRIVE THE DECISION-MAKING DISCUSSION MOST OF THE TIME.
- Strongly Disagree: 1%
- Disagree: 18%
- Neutral: 19%
- Agree: 27%
- Strongly Agree: 8%
- Not sure/don't know: 26%

A few highlights:

➔ How decisions are made is key to analyzing power and engaging in racial justice and healing. A majority of leaders in the first three categories agree or strongly agree with the statements around decision making. This indicates a level of awareness around how power operates and ways to disrupt that by ensuring that those who are most affected by decisions are part of the process and that consistency and transparency about decisions are consistent. Open discussion about these questions might bring out the view of those few who don't feel as good about this process, and to figure out when this is happening.

➔ One thing to note: the question asking about whether those with most experience or who are directly affected by a decision are able to drive the decision-making process has the highest level of disagreement in this section. Those who disagree are 18%, 19% are neutral, 27% agree, and 26% not sure/don't know. This might indicate that even though folks who are directly impacted are consulted or are part of the process, the process doesn't necessarily put them at the center, or perhaps they are not given the power to drive the process.
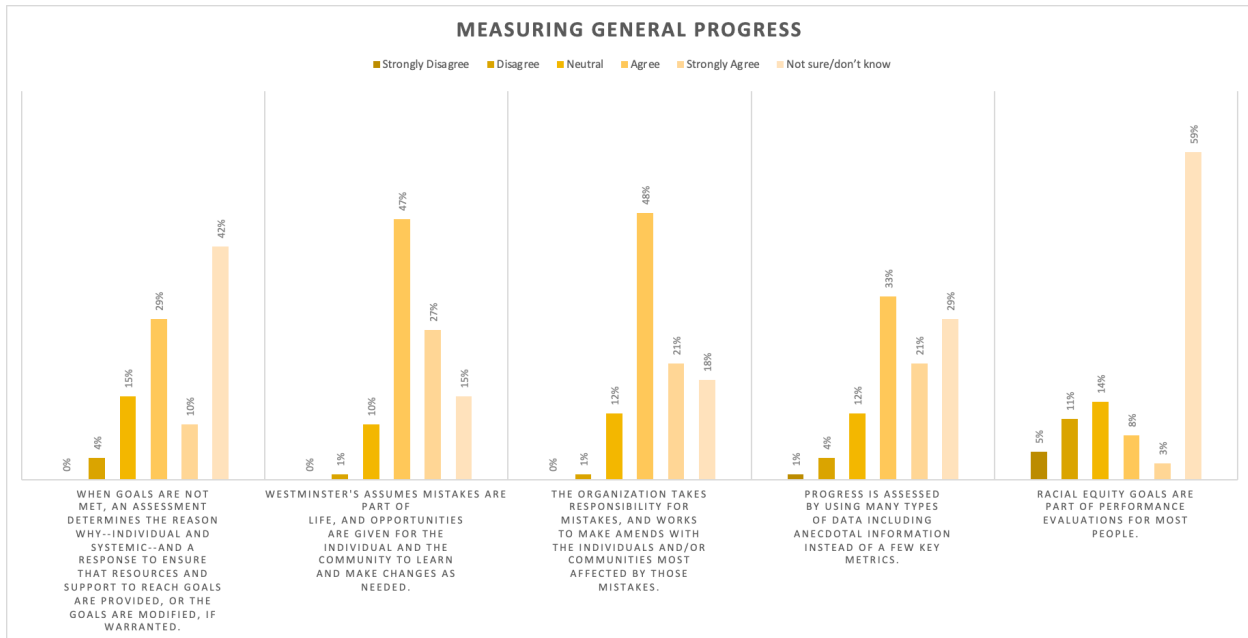
Distribution of Information and Resources

DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Not sure/don't know

EFFORTS ARE MADE TO ENSURE INFORMATION IS SHARED CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION IN A IN A TIMELY MANNER.
0% 4% 7% 37% 49% 3%

WESTMINSTER'S BUDGET INCLUDES SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE GOALS AROUND RACIAL EQUITY WITHIN WESTMINSTER.
1% 7% 8% 40% 22% 22%

RESOURCES FOR STAFF ARE DISTRIBUTED EQUITABLY AND TRANSPARENTLY. (E.G., PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TOOLS TO DO WORK, ETC...)
1% 1% 10% 29% 30% 29%

A few highlights:

➔ In all three categories, a majority of the leaders surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that information is shared consistently, that the budget includes sufficient resources for racial equity, and that resources are distributed equitably. This level of knowledge and transparency around resources is important as this can often be a barrier or way in which unhealthy power and mistrust can fester in systems.
It could be important to determine where those who disagree are feeling left out.

Measuring General Progress

MEASURING GENERAL PROGRESS

Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Not sure/don't know

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure/don't know
WHEN GOALS ARE NOT MET...	0%	4%	15%	29%	10%	42%
WESTMINSTER'S ASSUMES MISTAKES ARE PART OF LIFE...	0%	1%	10%	47%	27%	15%
THE ORGANIZATION TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISTAKES...	0%	1%	12%	48%	21%	18%
PROGRESS IS ASSESSED BY USING MANY TYPES OF DATA...	1%	4%	12%	33%	21%	29%
RACIAL EQUITY GOALS ARE PART OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS...	5%	11%	14%	8%	3%	59%

A few highlights:

➔ An area of strength for Westminster is its response to mistakes. A total of 74% of respondents among leadership agree or strongly agree that Westminster assumes mistakes are part of life and opportunity is given to learn and make changes, while 69% agree or strongly agree that Westminster takes responsibility for mistakes and makes amends. This is important as mistakes are part of this process, and nurturing a culture that expects and owns up to mistakes is essential.

➔ In this section, very few respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with any of the categories, with the highest disagreement being 11% on racial equity goals being part of performance evaluations and 59% not knowing. This can mean either Westminster is doing a good job at measuring progress as it relates to racial equity or, given the higher response rate of neutral and not sure/don't know, people might not have enough information.

Faith Formation
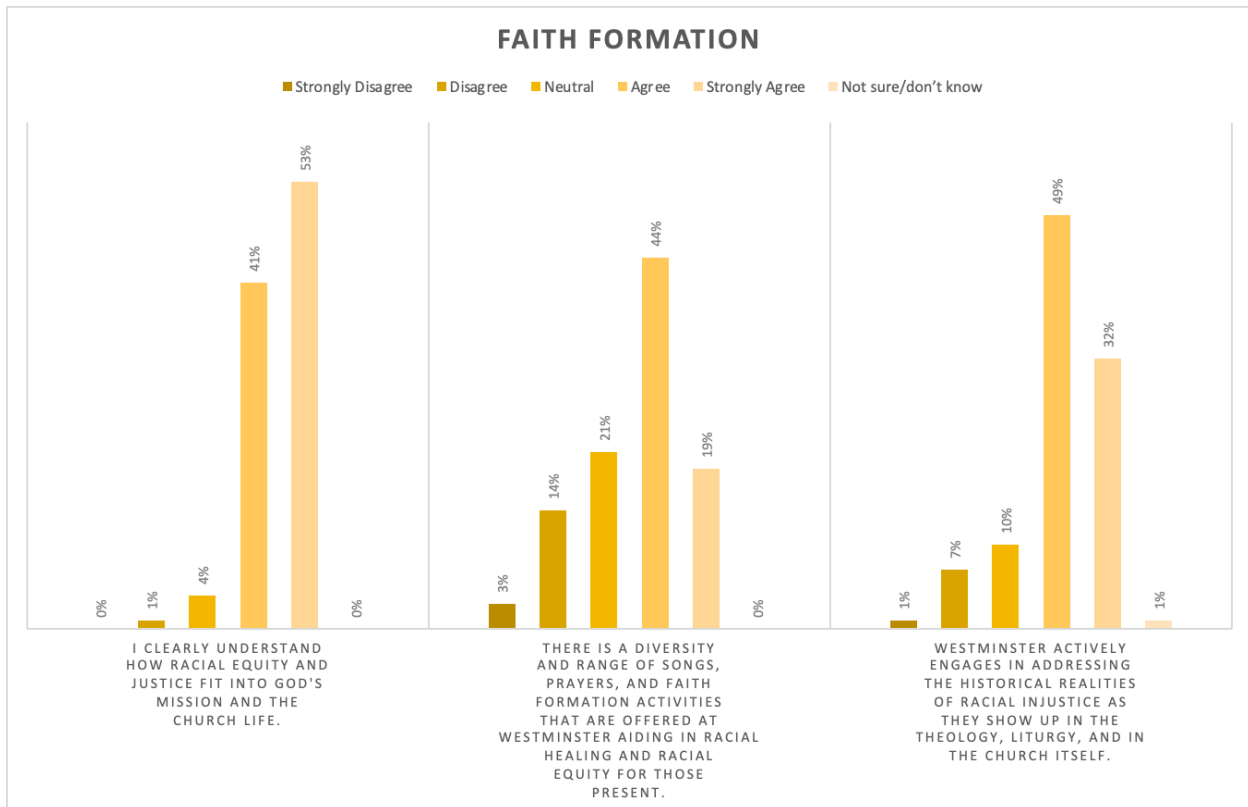
A few highlights:

➔ This was one of the only sections where the "not sure/don't know" percentage was relatively low compared to the other sections. Most respondents among leadership agree or strongly agree that racial equity and justice fit into God's mission and the life of the church (94%), and that Westminster actively engages in addressing the historical realities of racial justice as it shows up in the theology, liturgy, and the church (81%).

➔ Of the leaders who completed the survey, 17% strongly disagree or disagree that there is diversity and range of songs, prayers, and faith formation that aid in racial healing and racial equity; 10% are neutral; and 81% agree or strongly agree. Follow-up could include a discussion of what diversity *means* with respect to songs, prayers, and faith formation.

Dominant Patterns Theory and Framework

As we engaged the dominant patterns, the following theories and frameworks accompanied our approach and are the foundation of our analysis.

Complex Adaptive Systems[13]

Racism is a complex adaptive system with multiple individual parts that affect the whole. Seemingly autonomous agents interact with one another to create system-wide patterns, and these patterns then influence the behavior of the agents. Therefore, one's approach to engaging with racism requires a complex adaptive response with multiple approaches, influences, and pattern recognition. Once patterns are lifted up and recognized, particular attention is paid to making sense of these patterns. The questions: *what, so what*, and then *what now,* are applied to areas of influence within the system. Complex adaptive systems like racism require us to continue this engagement in a cyclical approach which names the "what," "so what," and "what now ," again and again.

Dysconsciousness

For this audit we drew on the work of Dr. Joyce King. Dr. King puts forth the observation that systemic racism in the US is not simply plagued by unconsciousness about racism but also struggles with dysconsciousness. She defines dysconsciousness as "an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the given order of things as a given."[14] That is, most who deny or cannot see racism have no idea of the history and culture that created it and so believe it is just the way things are, or that it is the natural order of things. She juxtaposes this idea with critical consciousness, which is needed to change what human beings have put in place over time, and to undo or correct oppressive systems and structures.

While the September 2020 presidential memo[15] disallows government funding on critical race theory training, this is appropriate for discussion in churches, where we should consider adaptive action to improve our theologies to address these issues.

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[13] For more information, use Human System Dynamic Institute (HSD) and Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown.

[14] King, J. (1991). Dysconscious Racism: Ideology, Identity, and the Miseducation of Teachers. The *Journal of Negro Education, 60* (2), 133–146. doi:10.2307/2295605

[15] https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/M-20-34.pdf

Stages of Anti-racism Organizations

Miller and Katz[16] provide a tool for discussing the paths organizations can take toward anti-racism work. Churches are made up of very diverse subsystems that can each be at different places in their anti-racism journey. In guiding such a large and complex organization, the work of navigating these differences in context and meaning-making influence what each person is hearing.

Embodiment and Racism as Trauma

One other concept that was critical to us as we sought to better understand what we were hearing was the idea of embodiment—especially its relationship to racialized trauma and to theological education. For this work, we drew from Resmaa Menaken [17] and Sonya Renee Taylor[18], as well as pioneering and contemporary work on embodiment work by feminist, womanist, other white, People of Color, LGBTQ etc. theologians. One way to embody racial justice work is to turn to your liturgical foundations for support. The Presbyterian Church USA offers an embodied litany *Kneeling in Repentance*[19], which includes body movement and singing. *Resources for Structural Racism*[20] offers additional worship resources.

White dominant Culture or White Supremacy Culture[21]

Oftentimes what keeps harmful systems and behaviors in place are the hidden norms and standards that get passed off as normal, respectable, good, and *just the way things are*. These hidden norms make up white dominant culture. In anti-racism work, attention is often given to the harmful effects of these behaviors and beliefs. This is important, but if it is done without looking at the very behaviors and practices that dominate and harm, then the work will be less effective, and may not last. Therefore, we choose to enter anti-racism work keenly aware of how and where white dominant culture operates and sustains racism explicitly—and, more importantly, implicitly. White dominant culture values some ways—ways that are more familiar and come more naturally to those from a white, Western tradition—of thinking, behaving, deciding, and knowing, while devaluing or rendering invisible other ways. And it does this without ever having to explicitly say so. [22]

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[16] https://www.mcds.org/uploaded/Campus_and_Community/CC365/The_Path_from_Exclusive_Club_to_Inclusive_Organization.pdf
[17] Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother's hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies.* Central Recovery Press.
[18] Taylor, S. R. (2018). *The body is not an apology: The power of radical self-love.* Berrett-Koehler.
[19] https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/-racial-justice-resources/kneeling_in_repentance.pdf
[20] https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/M25-Racism.pdf
[21] See the *Glossary of Terms* section for a definition of white dominant/white supremacy culture.
[22] https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/2_Gulati_AB3.pdf

The Theological Study of Racism

As a church, our primary concern is our relationships with our God, our neighbor, and ourselves. Approaching racial justice with a theological lens asks us to see the ways that racism interrupts our relationships with our neighbors, not only on an interpersonal level, but also systemically. And when our relationships with our neighbors are broken, our relationship with ourselves and with God is disrupted. We understand sin as falling short of the mark and thus understand racism as requiring repentance. We do not assume that we will never sin, for it is part of the human condition. We aim to walk gently and do no harm, but we are only human and will ultimately fall short of our hopes and desires. It is then that we repent, turn back to God, and repair the harm done. Redemption and reparation sets all of us free from evil, sin, and death. We are prepared for this redemption through prophets among us who call us back to God and show us our need for redemption.

At a meeting in Portland, Oregon, in 2016, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) added the 1986 Confession of Belhar to the Book of Confessions.[23] Although written with respect to South Africa, it was recognized to be relevant to the church as a whole. The study guide[24] is relevant to all churches today, and if the *Doctrine of Discovery* and the history of *Manifest Destiny* is used to replace the second session, it is of particular interest to churches in Portland, Oregon.

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[23] https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/belhar-confession/
[24] https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/belharstudyguide1.pdf

Five Dominant Patterns at Westminster Presbyterian Church

In writing this section, we used an adaptive action format as follows:
- Identifying a dominant pattern that emerged from our research
- Sharing direct quotes from those we interviewed and surveyed
- Offering a reflection on what we observed, trying to make meaning
- After going through all five patterns, focus on key questions that can be asked to delve more deeply into the patterns and to ultimately influence the system of racism and to make meaningful impact to move closer to the Beloved Community.

As you read this section, we invite you into this adaptive action format. Observe with us and reflect on what you notice. Circle back as needed. Rest as needed.
You might consider holding the following questions:
- What patterns resonate with you or are you seeing?
- What sense do you make of these patterns?
- What can be done to influence these patterns and bring Westminster Presbyterian closer to becoming the Beloved Community it strives towards being?

Finally, remember we have been careful to preserve people's anonymity. We do this in part to ensure candid responses, but also to encourage our focus to remain on issues rather than individual stories or personalities. Although it may be possible for someone to assemble clues from quoted words and figure out who is speaking, our invitation is to forgo that natural tendency and receive these words as inspired text. Such a process of sacred listening not only embodies the way of Jesus, it also honors the courage, vulnerability, and trust with which people have shared their stories

Limitations of Integration and Diversity

A pattern that arose throughout the data was a tension between two different desires: the desire for integration or diversity, and the acknowledgment of the limitations of such goals.

Some leaders approach racial justice through the lens of integration, representation, diversity, and inclusion. Within this group, many stick to these goals even in the face of new understandings of systemic racism and racial justice. Others recognize the challenge of inviting People of Color into predominantly white spaces and want instead to grapple with the racism that is grounded in the power dynamics of US culture and history, and specifically, the community of Westminster's culture and history.

Overall, the leadership expressed a commitment—and passion—for doing anti-racism work and being anti-racist, but this commitment is to two different ideals: an integrated church trying to reach more People of Color versus a church that joins larger coalitions to address city-wide justice issues. One group is calling for more outreach to individuals; the other, to using the power and resources that come with whiteness to change the broader community.

Quotes

"To me, there's almost a sinfulness about the need for people at Westminster to become diverse, so that they will feel better about themselves. So I think that's how race shows up is that these folks really, truly think that they want diversity, and I'm not sure they know why they do. I'm not sure they could articulate that. It'd be interesting to ask them theologically, socially and culturally, 'Why do you want to become diverse?', right? Because diversity's a buzzword."

"We are a predominantly white congregation, so that when a Person of Color shows up or is a part of the community (People of Color have been here for 50 years), you notice them because they don't look like the majority of people here. Special attention with good intention is paid to People of Color here. We white folks go out of our way to let them know they're welcome, that we love them, maybe to the point of annoyance for those folks. I'm not sure. But there is an effort to be welcoming and receptive to People of Color, because it's so clearly not the majority of folks here."

"Basically, there's still a struggle to see Black and Brown folks as human beings …[to] wonder about their hopes and dreams as opposed to 'how do we help?' Black and brown folks are just seen as 'other.' There's an attempt and want to see things from a liberationist perspective, from an intellectual level, but there's no feeling like Black and Brown folks are people with agency and are centered."

"It seems to me that the hiring of the new associate pastor was an effort by our church to take the next step in reaching out and in opening ourselves to People of Color and the issues around People of Color."

"I recognize that being white in this country makes life much easier. Have we talked about that specifically at Westminster? Perhaps. So if we did, I don't recall it…. [not discussing whiteness] may have something to do with economic class. I'm not sure about that, but possibly. I know that there has been discussion about how we would like to have our church more integrated. We would like to have more African Americans, Asians, Natives, whoever. We'd like to have more people with us, worshiping with us. I think there are efforts being made to make that happen."

"I thought at one time 50 years ago that racial integration was the goal. I don't think that's the goal any longer. Instead the goal is racial justice and racial equity. I'm okay with that, sort of. I'm a little sorry that people within minority communities, as well as the white community, are circling the wagons a little bit. I can understand it. But it's a regret I have. One of the things that I get from reading books like Ibram X. Kendi's, is that integration is not really the main focus; instead, it's racial justice and equality. The focus is not so much to bring People of Color into the church, but more to work, to reach out into the community and try to be— guess the word now is 'ally'—to be helpers in those issues."

"I would hope that someday in the fullness of time, we can really be an integrated society, which is not to say, a homogenized society. I think there needs to be a lot of diversity in people, that it's really the spice of life in a lot of ways. But in other ways, in terms of people's rights and in terms of people, the assumptions about who we are as a people, I want to see an acknowledgment of multi-racialism. And then, in the fullness of time, getting away from the idea of race entirely, but that's probably utopian at this stage."

"Well, I would like to see a more extensive, larger number of congregants that come from different communities, particularly People of Color. I think we've done okay with

interactions with gay people in terms of numbers, but I don't think we've done very well at all in terms of attracting People of Color into the congregation. I don't think it's our fault particularly, or I don't know, but we're not unusual in that way."

"But it's almost like you don't know what you don't know if you don't have the exposure to those discussions in multiracial groups. It's hard to know where, I'm sure I have racist tendencies just because of being unaware and maybe unaware of saying something that would be insensitive. But I haven't experienced anything. I know we have a partnership with an African American church, and I've been hoping that there would be more sharing and it really hasn't happened. We're still supporting them, but it's more project based than really doing any integration that I would see."

"At a meeting where we were discussing visitors who came to worship for the first time, one person literally said 'he was black and gay, he checks all the boxes!' It felt like a confirmation of how white people see People of Color—not as human beings but as tools for their success and assuaging white people's guilt. Literally, we are just a check on your liberal do-good list."

"I totally get why it is critical to focus on racial justice and equity. At the same time, this survey speaks to the broader and deeper challenge of tribalism—as it exists at WPC. It is easier to exist, pray, and meet with people like me who can also be diverse. As an older member, I love the traditional aesthetics, rituals and music. Yet, I do think my personal experience would be enriched by having a more diverse congregation that would enhance the influence that WPC would have in the community. How do we not get stuck maintaining the past and be open to really integrating diversity into our religious community? What would that vision look like? This seems like a key question that is worthy of honest, open discussion and study and a next step for this process."

Reflection
- When white people or predominantly white spaces measure "success" of racial justice by how many People of Color are at the church or serve on committees, one effect can be seeing People of Color as a means to an end and not as full human beings and peers. This deeply held desire for integration unintentionally creates an environment that perpetuates microaggressions and subtle forms of racism. Some People of Color can begin to feel fetishized and commodified—they are seen as a trophy or something to be toted around. Even if it is not the individual's or

community's intention to cause such impact, responsibility needs to be taken to ensure that racial justice work includes the interrogation, transformation, and liberation of white dominating culture and behavior, not just the illusion of "diversity."

- A majority of the leadership came of age around the time of the civil rights or freedom movement. As a result, attitudes about racial justice were influenced by and formed in the age of integration and the dismantling of the U.S. apartheid legal system, which was only one aspect of this era. This continues to frame many people's understanding and experience of racism and what racial justice looks like in action. As a result, many white people came to believe that the civil rights [movement's] goal was solely assimilation and integration. This notion was perpetuated and often manipulated by the media and other systems of power to present a white dominant narrative that masked new ways racism was shapeshifting in the larger society. This was not necessarily the narrative of the communities of Color who, at their core, wanted racial equity, to challenge the system that perpetuated violence, and economic justice for all.

- It seems that many leaders are coming to realize that they have been misled about what healthy racial justice work looks like, which looks like diversity, inclusion, and integration. They are realizing that diversity meant diversifying white spaces, that inclusion meant including People of Color into white spaces, and integration meant integrating People of Color into white culture. This awakening highlights the lack of racial equity and personal challenge of giving up the tenants of whiteness and white dominating culture. Therefore, with this realization, there is a subtle but pervasive sense of grief or loss and at its core an identity crisis.

- It has to be disorienting for white people to move from experiencing the first Black president (the ultimate goal of the vision of integration and diversity) to the backlash and polarization that came afterwards; to see and experience a widening wealth gap; to see the rash of public racialized or mass murders that are now in the public eye. This cognitive dissonance constituted something of a crisis that demanded, and demands, new analysis visions of change and healing.

Acknowledgement of Whiteness and Culture at Westminster

People often mentioned how "white" Westminster is as it relates to race. There was confusion and curiosity about what that means in terms of how welcoming or not the church is. Exploring this "why?" led to folks lifting up the predominant culture at Westminster Presbyterian as euro-centric, enjoying classical music, wealthy, educated, and approving of the behaviors that come along with that culture.

Additionally, some white people hadn't talked openly with other white people about the whiteness of Westminster, citing that they hadn't given much, if any, thought to it until fairly recently. Others identified that seeing and addressing whiteness, white identity, and white culture is key to making authentic connections with People of Color and engaging in anti-racism work together.

Leaders respected others who have different views, but some were clear that coming to a shared understanding of whiteness and the role of white people and predominantly white spaces was as important a part of addressing racism as understanding what was happening to People of Color and Communities of Color.

Quotes

"How does race show up? It has been invisible to us. I don't know what else to say about that. We don't understand what's in the water we're swimming in. Things aren't said that are intended to be hurtful, but they often are. We are a pretty stereotypical white, progressive elite, and no one is for racism, but we have a long way to being able to see racism in ourselves."

"So my whiteness permeates everything in all I do. The music I listen to, the books I read. Now, of course, I would hopefully say in the last 10 to 15 years, I've expanded a lot. I'm pretty white. I don't know anything about myself except white. That's who I am."

"I think because for white people, whiteness is normative. So why do we need to talk about it? I feel a lot of guilt as a white person for the privileges that other people don't have because of the color of their skin. I almost feel like I need to atone for being white, which doesn't sound right, but it's so hard because talking about the privilege of my whiteness is very painful for me, because my privilege means someone else does not have that privilege. Why don't we talk about it? And I think we don't talk about it because we'd have to change, and change is hard and painful. But you can't grow without changing. So I am

the beneficiary of structures that were set up that benefited white people and hurt People of Color. And so I don't know what to do with that."

"I'm not sure what I want to say other than I think there's potential and lovely human beings who want something better, even if none of us... I mean, I couldn't even articulate exactly what I would want, but who wants to do better and have been shocked into thinking about the fact that white supremacy has ruled us all. So there's potential if named and if worked on."

"I think [white] people are hypersensitive to the feelings that they might be racist. I remember one group where it was smaller; it was a breakout group. I said, 'Ah, I'm a racist.' And everybody looked kind of shocked. I said that 'We're all, because of implicit bias, we all have these kinds of things.' Some people looked kind of shocked, I think. I wasn't trying to shock anyone. I just thought that was sort of an obvious thing that we all had to understand."

"I would say most people understand it [white privilege] to be true, but I'm sure not all people in the congregation get it and believe that it isn't a reality, or at least not an issue. So not everybody is going to be on board with that, but I think a good number of people in the congregation are."

"I guess where I'm evolving is, white people have to help white people. We're the problem. And we have to reach out to each other, and help each other move along the journey, and see the ways in which we have benefited from oppression. And what are we going to do about that?"

"Overt racism isn't the issue here, but white dominant culture persists, and we should reflect on how that weaves its way into processes and decisions and our outward presence to newcomers."

"I would say, like most white progressive places, there is still overall a general savior-ism looking at People of Color, and not enough solidarity and feeling like People of Color are seen as actual human beings. Rather they are part of progressive talking points, assumed to be on the 'liberal' side."

"It's a straight, white, upper middle-class congregation. I feel deeply loved, but not like I belong."

Reflection

- In congregations like Westminster, there is a tendency to be aware of and acknowledge the reality of the space being predominantly white. Part of the work of a congregation like Westminster is to grapple with this reality and parse out the difference between identity or phenotype (being of European descent) and how power operates in insidious ways and produces a culture of *whiteness*.
- Congregations must look at the container that is whiteness. Whiteness is an ideology based on beliefs, values, behaviors, habits, and attitudes that result in the unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin color. Whiteness represents a position of power where the power holder defines social categories and reality. In other words, it creates a culture in which folks who operate out of and benefit from certain norms and "right behavior" feel at home and are comfortable. A lot of times, communities are maintaining this container without evening knowing it or realizing the ways in which they are privileged and/or diminished by it.
  - Toni Morrison talks about whiteness in this way: "It is like the fishbowl that contains both fish and water. Whiteness, in other words, provides the very context for meaning-making. It supplies the norms and categories against which all groups are measured. But the categories of whiteness are invisible as a constraint because we keep focusing on what is inside them—the water and the fish, rather than the fishbowl itself."[25]
- Reckoning with whiteness will enable the predominantly white community and white people to continue to explore ways in which whiteness both privileges *and* diminishes them. This is key in helping white folks understand that racial justice isn't only about helping, at best, or saving, at worst, People of Color. Instead, it allows white folks to name why doing this work is important for their own liberation as well as the liberation of all people. Naming the system of whiteness or white dominating culture allows for clarity regarding all levels of oppression (personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural) and a path forward to make intentional decisions that transform individuals and communities.

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[25] Thompson [2008]. Summary of Whiteness Theory

Spiritual Grounding and Motivation

People seem to be asking meaningful and deep questions about what racism means for them and for the church. Overwhelmingly, people centered their faith as the catalyst for doing racial justice work and said that it is what motivates them to continue the work. This extended not only to their personal spirituality but also to the life of Westminster Presbyterian. Many looked towards sermons, liturgy, and rituals as places that simultaneously enable them to do this work in an embodied fashion and how these locations of spirituality need to apply the lens of racial justice to challenge the ways whiteness is embedded in those practices.

Quotes

"Race and racial injustice really is so sinful, and we're negligent not paying attention to it because it really dishonors our relationship with God. And in no way is it excusable. I'm not saying some of the other priorities are excusable, but there are lots of ways to work on some of that. But for racial justice and racism, we don't have ways. We're learning, and we just need to pay attention to it."

"So it's really about living out our faith. I think that's why it's important for Westminster to do it, because it's causing people pain and God knows the Church, capital C church, historical church, has been a big player and in a bad way. So I think loving our neighbors is one of the primary responsibilities of the church. I think anti-racist work falls under the category of loving our neighbors. So I would say in terms of how we live out our faith, it is primary. So we have how we live out our faith. How do we learn about our faith?"

"The main thing I want to set expectations for is that more people are in touch and grounded with a faith that is deep, that is liberated from the white narrow ways of engagement with the sacred."

"So I look at it more as we have an opportunity with Westminster to create, in each member, a community organizer who is guided by their faith to… I would love to say eliminate injustices, but at least make the steps forward, make them fewer."

"It's what we ought to do, because you cannot profess a belief in God and say you're Christian without being open, without being accepting, without working for justice. That's part and parcel of who we are. And justice involves making sure that we

don't—discriminate is not the word—that we don't become so isolated and so ingrained that we leave everybody else out."

"It seems like if we're going to move forward and not just continue to be these highly educated people that are well informed about these issues and doing some good things here and there, it really does seem like it has to be visceral. By that I mean something where we are really engaged in some kind of ritual or something that really calls us out to a recognition that this is not our fault. Because people shy away from that and they say, 'Well, I didn't do it.' But our responsibility and our heritage is literally our heritage to deal with this. And I feel that's a heart, spirit thing."

"I am really glad we are doing this introspection, and I look forward to the directions it takes us as a faith community. I really appreciate the grounding in the love of God for us all as our starting point. It's so easy to feel we are all equal, but some are more equal than others. It's only in facing and acknowledging our biases that we can get beyond them. And we are called to get beyond them, if we are to follow Jesus with integrity."

Reflection
- Having an abundant and rich spiritual life is needed in the work of racial justice and healing. The foundation that is at Westminster Presbyterian will fuel resilience and longevity for the work.
- Being connected to the rich traditions, rituals, biblical stories, and faith enables individuals and the community to fall back on practices that can refocus and give guidance, especially when people feel disoriented or in crisis—often caused by doing racial justice work.
- There is a tendency in religious spaces to see spirituality and tradition as shielded from the effects of historical racism and colonization. However, as some community members lifted up, not only is spirituality a location of healing and motivation but it is also impacted by white dominant culture and ideology. As Westminster continues to unpack its racialized history and how to engage in the work, attention will need to be given to the way it shows up in the spiritual life and traditions of the church. This doesn't mean throwing out practices but does require examination and intentionality. It also means asking how your values and commitments to racial justice impact embodied spiritual practices, and how the community can engage in new ways that are not appropriating other cultures?

Exhaustion and Unsettling in a Time of Crisis

People spoke of fatigue and anxiety in general. Some people referred to "the Covid era" and others mentioned exhaustion about talking or focusing too much on racism and anti-racism. For others, it showed up as anxiety or stress about finding meaningful ways to address what they were learning or coming to understand about the pervasiveness of systemic racism. People mentioned the difficulty of navigating all of this while navigating the reality of their church community being disrupted during Covid as well (i.e., not being able to meet as easily, feeling isolated, etc.)

Quotes

"Everything is weird and colored by coming out of Covid. We're all figuring out how we get out of this pandemic and return to, I don't want to say normal life, but return to life without the anxiety of this contagious virus."

"The Trump years really ripped the lid off of what's here, what we've been living. I don't think we could ever go back to obliviousness again. And not that we were completely oblivious, but we were living with a certain amount of not looking very deeply. I don't think we'll ever go back, and I'm glad I want to go forward. And also, I would say, I don't think the church would survive if we tried to go back to ignoring things. Even if people express a little bit of fatigue, I have a lot of confidence in our church leadership that it won't change our direction."

"There's a lot of emotion around the issues of race more than I usually show, and sometimes more than I'm aware of, and it goes way back… It goes way back. And if I understand that it's a very emotional issue for me, I then need to acknowledge that it's probably a very emotional issue for other people too."

"Part of me is, okay, take some deep breaths, life is good. And so much of me right now is what the heck is going on in this world? And why do people not understand so much?"

"[A church leader] had heard from someone that we have fatigue about racial justice…And when I hear that, that really makes me sad and ticked off because I think this is still part of the white privilege that is there for much of our community. So I've been thinking about how to respond to that. If someone says something like that to me, I think my response is going to be something like, 'I know it's really hard. I know this is not comfortable, but any fatigue that I might feel about this is only an indication of the privilege that I have.' And so I hope that we'll keep being sensitive to people for whom being in a different skin color

means you have to deal with it every day. I don't know if I will have that conversation with anyone because I feel like the people who are likely to say that might not say it to me."

"I don't know to what extent I could say that everybody has confronted these issues within themselves, which would be a good thing to do, because it is sort of liberating to understand your own perspectives and your own lens [for] looking at people and understanding that you may have some imperfections in those lenses. At my age, I have many imperfections in my actual visual system, and there are similar ones in our psychological system."

"It's just, there really is a heaviness in the air and I just own it, totally. And just words come to mind like this is a demented world we're in right now and has been for a long time. And this is not a struggle. [I'm] still really engaged because this is what we need to do, and it is what is life-giving, but there are times when you just feel like you're running in place in many ways."

"So, we have to stretch a bit to be aware, I think. And it does make you tired. It really does make you tired. And it also brings up the feeling that, 'Oh, wait a minute, I'm not racist. I'm not racist.' Well, yeah, we are. I think we probably are."

Reflections
- Addressing racism can, in itself, be stressful. Talking about it together—when doing so is not the norm—can be very taxing. Therefore, communities that are doing this work need to be providing space for processing and rejuvenation. Continuing to cultivate joy and trust become key in creating sustainability in this work, especially for predominantly white spaces.
- In many ways, the Covid pandemic brought issues of race and racism to the surface in unprecedented ways as people made sense of who was most vulnerable to its ravages. Many people trapped at home by the pandemic had a front row seat to the lives of those on the margins: those who were impoverished or homeless, those who had to work in newly classified (but often invisible to those with more resources) "essential" jobs, George Floyd and subsequent murders and uprisings and the backlash that followed. All of this brought racial dynamics to the surface in new and profound ways for many people, especially white people.
- Without access to typical forms of community and rituals, like being in person for church, small groups, and other community spaces, exhaustion intensified for many

people. Being able to process the wait of racial injustice and white dominant culture is challenging and exhausting under "normal" conditions and therefore was that much more disrupting and unsettling because of the isolation of Covid.

- Most of those we talked to were elders and facing the last quarter, or less, of their life. They have had to navigate rapid change and uncertainty for themselves and for those future generations they will be leaving behind. If the stress of this reality goes unprocessed or unacknowledged by the broader community, there is a potential for it to come out sideways—from checking out, to doubling down on good intentions that can cause unintended harm, to carrying a sense of hopelessness. It was not clear to us how open that conversation is presently, but it will be significant to make it explicit.

Wrestling with Individual and Community Identity

From the onset of our work with Westminster, the level of respect and love that the community has for one another is palpable and uncanny. It is quite clear that people deeply care for, and are committed to, one another. This includes not being shy about having challenging and difficult conversations, ones that can be at odds with others' opinions.

A pattern arose of people actively wrestling with their own identity and the community's identity as being good and caring, alongside a sense of deep grief and confusion that the lack of People of Color and failure to engage more in the work of racial justice is a sign that something is wrong. This struggle played out in the intellectual learning about systemic racism, white privilege/culture and white guilt, historical racist truths, microaggressions and implicit bias, and more, in contrast to who the congregation knows themselves to be: good and caring people.

Quotes

"What I like about Westminster is they embrace the different focuses, instead of seeing a different focus and saying, 'We need to fix this.'"

"The people at Westminster are really well meaning, and yet we haven't been successful in attracting an integrated congregation."

"One of the reasons I enjoy Westminster is that somebody else having a different view is not a bad thing. It's like, oh, let's find out more about that. So I think Westminster has folks who can lead us. And I'm not specifically talking about the pastoral team. I'm also talking about congregants who are very active in this effort. And it's been wonderful to be able to see that and reap the benefits of the education that allows all of us to get a little bit more aware of our own biases. But it also gives us the comfort level to carry that out, to verbally or somehow challenge when someone says a racist [remark] or what I would think is a racist [remark]."

"I think there's still a lot of blindness and I'm sure I'm part of it, as I discover things that I didn't think about or didn't know about myself. I'm out on the cutting edge, I would say, within our congregation. And so I know, I still have a lot of blind spots, and I'm sure that there are more. I'm eager to get us in a place where we have a momentum of constant learning and change and are moving in an anti-racist direction and not getting complacent."

"I think the congregation has the best intent. I'm not sure that we know exactly what to do to make things better, but people are trying."

"We know on one level that we totally benefited, we live on stolen land. But on the other hand, I don't think we see it in just rolling into everything that we carry, our frames, our paradigms. There really is this sense of unconscious bias and internalized privilege that we don't even necessarily know and see. But the other thing is I think that there's almost like a barrier, and I want to say this really consciously because I want to say 'we.' That part of the barrier is our own sense of goodness and even doing this work. I don't know how else to say it. It's just like, we're all really well intended and we want to do this work, but it's also, in a sense, we're viscerally untouched, if that makes any sense. And I don't know if that's racism. It's the heritage of it in all of us. And it's like you just want to break through, in some way, even personally, as well as institutionally."

"Human beings want to feel better about themselves and to be inclusive and look around in this day and age for progressive white Christians and see that there are people other than white—this makes us feel better. Rather than how can we go outside our doors and be a presence in the community and not be the ones identified but instead be part of a team, part of the community, part of working on racism, part of whatever the justice issue is. We have some really good younger leaders that have been pushing us."

"I joined Westminster a few years ago because of its focus on social justice being foundational to our faith practices. It's affirming that Westminster has chosen to submit itself to this racial justice audit, knowing that it may be challenging and life-changing for the congregation."

"I think there tends to be almost like a Pollyanna kind of thing sometimes. That's the way it sometimes feels to me—that we're good, we're good at things. And we actually say we're a diverse congregation on the website, welcoming congregation. And we really intend it, and we mean it for sure. The people are highly educated and well informed. They're just, when I say the gift is the curse. It is also where we tend to go. We just do. And I say we all do because it's painful to go elsewhere."

Reflection
- There is a deep consideration for each other's change processes. While leadership seems to anticipate a lot of the long and hard work it will take to come to shared

understanding and commitment, there is commitment to face the inevitable conflict with respect and an attitude of learning about self and others.

- Becoming more anti-racist is a complex change process and not a linear path for individuals nor community. At times there will be deep discord within oneself and deep alignment, which could be experienced in the same hour or throughout the course of a lifetime. In doing the work of racial justice, removing the need to be seen as fully good and well meaning is important for white folks. When people move from that location it tends to create mistrust and disingenuous connection with others. Instead, white people need to see themselves as human beings that will make mistakes but are resilient enough to weather conflict, injury, and unintentional harm—remembering to always move towards repair within oneself and with others.
- There is value in exploring the difference between interpersonal interactions and the systems that we are a part of. Learning ways that good, caring people can perpetuate systemic oppression, and also ways that good, caring people can choose to interrupt systemic and cultural oppression is part of growing in our Christian faith.

Living into the Questions

Limitations of Integration and Diversity	What are understandings of racism within Westminster Presbyterian? How does Westminster continue to come to some shared understandings? How is this related to other priorities of Westminster? What is the strategic framework for Westminster's anti-racism work? How is it grounded in church mission? How can leadership support a shift in focus from actions to outcomes?
Exhaustion and Unsettling in a Time of Crisis	What is the nature of suffering within the Westminster community, and how is it related to larger justice issues in general and anti-racism in particular? How do you find joy and uplift in the work of anti-racism?
Spiritual Grounding and Motivation	How can anti-racism work deepen the spiritual grounding of Westminster? What spiritual practices strengthen Westminster's commitment to racial justice? How do the values and commitments to racial justice impact the embodied spiritual practices at Westminster? How does the community engage in new spiritual practices that are not appropriating other cultures?
Acknowledgement of Whiteness and Culture at Westminster	What does it mean to be "white"? What is "whiteness"? What is the anti-racism work of a predominantly white church?
Wrestling with Individual and Community Identity	How does Westminster use this work to deepen the strengths already present in the community? How might inevitable conflicts around doing this work be approached in a way that is generative and builds cohesion?

Recommendations

The following recommendations are meant for the team of people who will be holding the work of racial justice and healing at Westminster. It will be key for a team to hold this work, to internalize what it means, lead by example, and provide vision and leadership.

First Things First: Lay a Foundation
In order to set the framework and scaffolding of racial justice and healing work, the foundation needs to be carefully and intentionally planned. This work is ongoing and will take time. Years. This doesn't mean other engagement and work can't be done simultaneously. It does mean the work can't be rushed or circumvented. In this section, these recommendations enable and move Westminster towards a strong foundation.
Team Building ● For the most part, the stories we heard were not about hurting or being hurt or disappointed by or even trying to change each other. People are trying to understand where each individual fits into the work Westminster is committed to doing. Although some individuals have a long history of doing this work, Westminster seems to be at a new beginning of forming a guiding "team" to lead the congregation in this era's anti-racism work. ○ It will be helpful to keep in mind the *forming - storming - norming - performing - adjourning*[26] process of team building. The leadership is in a "forming" stage, where they are exploring what they as individuals can bring to the endeavor. They seem poised to "storm", to figure out what they will do together in the face of conflict. There is something to be built on about the way they critique each other and practice self-reflection. ○ It is important to find ways to creatively engage conflict that is inevitable in order to get through the "storming to performing" stages. How communities and teams handle conflict is in direct relationship with becoming the beloved community and addressing racism and white supremacy culture. Interrogating the culture of conflict at Westminster and determining if things need to shift will help in developing resilience and trust in the community.

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[26] https://www.wcupa.edu/coral/tuckmanStagesGroupDelvelopment.aspx

- - Remember that forming teams and engaging in racial justices are cyclical journeys. It is important to clarify, ground in, embrace and critique tenets of tradition, faith, and culture and then to choose together what to embrace and what to reject.
  - Those in leadership ought to continue to strengthen themselves as individuals and as a team committed to the entire community. This involves getting clear on the mission and purpose of the work, simple rules to guide it, tensions you are addressing, and time-specific strategies for doing so.
  - Remember that how the team is with itself is as important as how the team is with the congregation and the broader community. *What we practice on a small scale sets the patterns for the whole system.*[27]
  - Continue to build your systemic analysis. Practice spotting patterns of behavior, actions, and attitudes. [Human System Dynamic Institute](#) (HSD) provides ample resources to engage in this work. In addition to HSD, *Emergent Strategies* by adrienne maree brown offers rich foundations to building group dynamics around systemic engagement.

Cultivating Resilience

- We are in a VUCA time: that is, volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Racism keeps us from being able to access all at our disposal to thrive or even survive as a humanity. The core of religious traditions is to help people and communities to overcome the VUCA world. Westminster leadership is aware of this complexity and has developed shared leadership models to support it. It is crucial to continue to deepen the larger community's tolerance for facing this complexity.
- Move at the speed of trust and build resilience by building relationships.[28] A key place to start is by building muscles for engaging healthy conflict. We recommend this workbook, *Turning Towards Each Other.*

Digest and Metabolize the Racial Justice Audit
The framework of complex adaptive theory invites Westminster into the cyclical process of "what," "so what," and "now what." Considerable time ought to be spent digesting and

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[27] Emergent Strategies, adrienne maree brown, p.53.
[28] Emergent Strategies, adrienne maree brown, p.42.

metabolizing the "so what" of the audit. How do you make sense of what you have heard, seen, and felt? Adequate time needs to be spent feeling the impact of this report on your spirit, emotions, and body. Failure to do so will result in repeating patterns instead of transforming them.

Working Through the Audit
- The team should guide the broader leadership, and the congregation, through unpacking and grappling with the data and dominant patterns of the audit. It is common for most communities to receive the audit, read through it, and jump right to solutions or intervention. However, communities need to spend adequate time digesting and metabolizing information, which is really people's stories and experiences. Pay attention to how each item impacts your body, your spirit, your mind. Ask each other how they are reacting. This builds trust amongst the community, especially with People of Color, and creates accountability. This metabolization is the catalyst to lasting transformation.
- Inherent to racial justice and healing for predominantly white spaces is sitting in the discomfort of not knowing, letting go, and building resilience.
  - For the quantitative data, spend time making sense of the data.
    - Why might it be this way?
    - Is there anything that is surprising?
    - How does it feel to hear that X number of people have experienced Y?
  - For the dominant patterns, take time with each pattern, fleshing them out, and giving time for people to add their own perspective and stories.
    - For each pattern ask, *How have you seen or experienced this pattern for yourself?* If a person doesn't see it, examine the feelings that come up. If defensive, what is the person defending and why?
    - Spend time sharing stories and then more stories. Read the quotes, and meditate on them. Do not try to figure out who said what, but explore the impact it has on the congregation for a fellow community member to have had this experience or perspective.
    - Together, try to make sense of the patterns. Add your own perspectives to The Mission Institute's reflection. Are you in agreement? Why or why not? What would you add? How does it make you feel?

> - Pay attention to where more conversation is needed to process difficult feelings and emotions that arise. Do you need to make space for grief, anger, sadness, fear? If a rupture has occurred, how do you reconnect and repair?

Points of Influence and Transformation

This section addresses the beginning stages of creating influence and impact on systems and policies at Westminster. This should be done after people have engaged in digesting and metabolizing a significant amount of the racial justice audit.

Intergenerational Discussion
- Find ways to have intra- and inter-generational dialogue about race and racism and the differences between eras that support the growth and development of all. Consider work on stages of life, on grieving, on imagining a future.

Exploring Whiteness
- Continue to build on the excellent work done on the Land Story. Exploring lineage and relationship to the land (broadly defined) is a powerful way of making a distinction of one's self and humanity from racial identity. This can help see whiteness without the false identity that comes with unexamined whiteness. As the land story suggests, however, it means claiming the "good and the bad" and connecting or reconnecting to a larger circle of humanity and honoring its value and existence.

Gathering More Resources
- Give deeper attention to curating your resources list. Give suggestions for different levels of involvement, and be clear who you are hoping to reach. Sharing information these days needs special attention since people are bombarded with information. Also, personal testimonies of why a book or article is being suggested can inspire others to take the time to check things out.

Systematizing Racial Justice
- The *Culture* section of the audit points to the need to engage in healthy practices around conflict and different ways to respond to one another. Have the session, staff, and other key leadership bodies undertake the workbook, *Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook* (see Resources list).

- ○ Right to comfort and fear of open conflict[29] are two key characteristics of white dominant culture. Addressing how Westminster handles conflict will be key in racial justice and healing work.
- The *Hiring, Electing, Recruiting and the Promotion Process* section of the audit highlights that a large amount of leadership don't know or are not sure about specifics. Westminster's core leadership needs to assess if racial equity practices are integrated throughout this process — and, if they are, to make them more transparent; and, if they are not, to develop and put into place racial equity goals.
- The *Measuring General Progress* section shows that a large number of leaders didn't know or were unsure about racial equity goals in performance evaluations. Take time to assess if these goals are in fact integrated or not. Invite staff into naming what these goals might be, remembering racial equity is about addressing root issues to inequality. In addition to individual staff members having an evaluation, make sure the session, committees, and working teams have clear goals and desired outcomes, which are then assessed yearly as well.

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[29] See white supremacy culture article in Resources for more information.

Resources

White Dominant Culture
- [White Supremacy Culture–Still Here, by Tema Okun](#)
- [White Supremacy Characteristics Self-Reflection Guide](#)
- [Podcast: Facing Into Your Own Racism with Courage and Love](#)
- [From White Racist to White Anti-Racist](#) (for white people)

General Resources
- [Dismantling Racism](#)
- [Stages of Group Development](#)
- [Ruby Sales speaking about some of her work on developing intergenerational community](#)

Healthy Conflict
- [Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook](#)[30]
- How to Apologize and Why It Matters
    - [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)
    - [Holy Disunity,](#) by Layton E. Williams

Racialized Trauma
- [My Grandmother's Hands, by Resmaa Menakem](#)[31]
- [The Complexity of Racial Trauma](#) (for People of Color)
- [The Traumatic Roots of White Body Supremacy and Racism in America, by Resmaa Menakem](#)
- [White Supremacy as a Trauma Response](#)

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[30] Last few pages are rich with resources.

[31] This book has lots of prompts and practices to engage.

Addenda

Addendum A: **Executive Summary**

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**A Racial Justice Audit
of Westminster Presbyterian Church**
The Mission Institute
2022

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Executive Summary

Background

In the fall of 2021, the Racial Justice Audit Task Force at Westminster Presbyterian Church approached The Mission Institute to conduct a racial justice audit of the leadership and ministry of Westminster. In the spring of 2022, The Mission Institute began the audit by sending out the survey to 99 leaders across various ministries at Westminster. The goal of the audit was to listen deeply to the community, lift up patterns of white dominating culture, make sense of these patterns, and point to places of influence to create transformation. The audit builds on the work and dedication to racial justice and healing already underway at Westminster.

Process

The goal of this project has not been to determine whether or not systemic racism is present at Westminster, but to explore how it operates. Central to this research has been an attempt to answer these questions: What is the demographic makeup of the leadership of Westminster? What is their experience of race and racism in their leadership roles? How does white dominant culture operate?

This Racial Justice Audit included two sections: a survey tool, to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, and a self-selected sampling of respondents who participated in in-depth interviews about their experiences. In total, we collected survey data from over 73 leaders and interviewed 18.

Beloved Community, Who Are We?

The overall response rate to the leadership survey was 74%. Here are a few key demographic findings.

- ➔ 49% of leaders are 71 or older; 30% are aged 56–70; and 12% are aged 41–55.
- ➔ 67% of respondents had a master's or doctorate/professional degree.
- ➔ 90% of the leaders responding to the survey identified as white compared to 70% of the broader Portland population[32].

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[32] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/portlandcityoregon,US/PST045221

- → 58% came to the Presbyterian tradition later in life.
- → 92% believe racial justice work should be part of the life and ministry at Westminster.
- → 25% of leaders occasionally experienced other people not having knowledge about, or interest in, their culture and context; 15% occasionally experienced people assuming they knew less about Presbyterian tradition; and 14% occasionally experienced not feeling supported, or being treated with less courtesy or respect.

Dominant Patterns Theory and Framework
The following theoretical frameworks were used in analyzing the collected data.

- → Racism is a **complex adaptive system**, with multiple parts affecting the whole. Engagement with such systems requires a cyclical approach, naming the questions, *what?, so what?,* and *now what?* again and again.
- → An acknowledgment that we are embodied, and that **racism lives in the body as trauma**, has been fundamental.
- → **White dominating culture** or **white supremacy culture** are the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior embodied and enacted by the vast majority of institutions in the US. These ideas provide a useful rubric in auditing Westminster.
- → Understanding **racism as sin:** it distorts our relationship with God and all of Creation. **Responding to the Sin of Racism and A Call to Action**[33] was approved by the 224th General Assembly in June 2020.

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[33] https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000727

Dominant Patterns of Systemic Racism in Westminster
Key Recommendations for Westminster

➔ Develop a team to hold this work, keeping in mind the developmental stages of teams: *forming-storming-norming-performing-adjourning.*

➔ Move at the speed of trust and build resilience by building relationships.[34] A key place to start is by building muscles for engaging healthy conflict. We recommend this workbook, *Turning Towards Each Other.*

➔ Continue to build your systemic analysis. Practice spotting patterns of behavior, actions, and attitudes. Human System Dynamic Institute (HSD) provides ample resources to engage in this work.

➔ Work through the audit by leading the congregation and broader leadership through unpacking and grappling with the data and dominant patterns of the audit. Don't jump to solutions; spend time including many people in the discussion of what the audit says.

➔ Find ways to have intra- and inter-generational dialogue about race and racism and the differences between eras that support the growth and development of all. Consider work on stages of life, on grieving, on imagining a future.

➔ The *Hiring, Electing, Recruiting and the Promotion Process* section of the audit highlights that the leadership doesn't know or isn't sure about specifics of your process. Westminster's core leadership needs to assess if racial equity practices are integrated throughout this process—and, if they are, to make them more transparent; if they are not, to develop and put into place racial equity goals.

Going Deeper with the 5 Dominant Patterns

Limitations of Integration and Diversity
A pattern that arose throughout the data was a tension between two different desires: the desire for integration or diversity, and the acknowledgment of the limitations of such goals. Overall, the leadership expressed a commitment—and passion—for doing anti-racism work and being anti-racist, but this commitment is to two different ideals: an integrated church versus a primarily white church that joins larger coalitions to address city-wide justice issues.

Acknowledgement of Whiteness and Culture at Westminster
People often mentioned how "white" Westminster is as it relates to race. There was confusion and curiosity about what that means in terms of how welcoming the church is.

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[34] *Emergent Strategies*, adrienne maree brown, p.42.

Exploring this "why" led to folks lifting up the predominant culture at Westminster Presbyterian as euro-centric.

Spiritual Grounding and Motivation

People seem to be asking meaningful and deep questions about what racism means for them and for the church. Overwhelmingly, people centered their faith as the catalyst for doing racial justice work and said that it is what motivates them to continue the work. This extended not only to their personal spirituality but also to the life of Westminster Presbyterian.

Exhaustion and Unsettling in a Time of Crisis

People spoke of fatigue and anxiety in general. Some people referred to the Covid era and others mentioned exhaustion about talking or focusing too much on racism and anti-racism. People mentioned the difficulty of navigating all of this while navigating the reality of their church community being disrupted during Covid as well (i.e., not being able to meet as easily, feeling isolated, etc.)

Wrestling with Individual and Community Identity

A pattern arose of people actively wrestling with their own identity and the community's identity as being good and caring, alongside a sense of deep grief and confusion that the lack of People of Color and failure to engage more in the work of racial justice is a sign that something is wrong.

Addendum B: **Tensions**

Capitalization

Throughout this report, when referring to people (rather than to paradigms or other social dynamics), we have chosen to capitalize People of Color, Black, and other names of racial groupings, such as Asian, Latinx, etc. We have chosen not to capitalize white when referencing white people. Aside from Black, racial identifiers for People of Color reference a particular geography (Asian, Latinx, Middle Eastern, etc.). Black people in the United States and beyond who are descendants of enslaved Africans have been cut off from this tie to geography, and thus the capitalization of Black is an attempt to respect those lost histories. White has never referred to a particular geography. Whiteness has always been defined by domination, in opposition to blackness, and in service of white supremacy, which subjugates all People of Color. The bounds of whiteness have grown larger and smaller over time in order to maintain the hegemony of white supremacy. "White" thus acts as a descriptor only in that it refers to shared domination, and without a tie to a particular geography. We have chosen not to capitalize it.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color vs. People of Color

The term "People of Color (POC)", as defined in the glossary, emerged in the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying term which encompasses all non-white people. Building on this, the term "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)" emerged during the 2010s and seeks to emphasize the particular ways in which racism targeting Black and Indigenous folks is foundational to the development of white supremacy in the United States. While we have chosen to use "People of Color" in this report, we could have used either, and this choice has remained a very live tension throughout the research and writing process. At the time of writing, "People of Color" is the more widely used term across within churches, and we have chosen to remain consistent with this preference. We encourage readers to grapple with both the power and the limitations of each term. How might they create a sense of monolithic People of Color identity, where in fact there is vast diversity? How does it feel to hear the terms "People of Color" and "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color"? What impact have slavery and Native genocide had on the fabric of racism in the United States? Does the term "BIPOC" erase the experiences of other non-Black and non-Indigenous People of Color, such as Asian-American people, Latinx people, and others? Is there a discomfort we feel in naming Blackness directly?

Addendum C: **Challenges and Limitations of the Racial Justice Audit**

As with any project of research and reporting, this racial justice audit presented numerous challenges and necessitates an acknowledgement of some limitations.

The overall response rate to the survey was 74%. While this very high response rate confirms the validity of the findings, the report remains a sampling of the leadership of Westminster. The survey format presents its own limitation–each person reads and interprets the questions through their own lens.

Interviewees were self-selected from amongst those who completed the survey. This limits the results to the experiences of those who chose to share, and who were, at the moment of research, in positions of leadership. People who choose to be interviewed generally have something they feel is important to communicate. A few interviewees are from the same household. Additionally, there were 20 available spots for interviews; 23 people volunteered, and only 18 people took part in interviews.

This research was concurrent with two significant sociopolitical and cultural moments of our time: the Covid-19 pandemic, and continuation of the worldwide eruptions of protest and outrage in response to the police killing of George Floyd in May 2020. Both the survey and the interviews were conducted after the commencement of these two phenomena. Their effects on the research cannot be overstated. In reviewing the data, there is an obvious positioning of people's narratives in relation to pre-Covid and the ongoing effects of living in the aftermath of the racial uprisings and current realities of Covid.

Addendum D: **Survey Tool**

Racial Justice Audit Survey for Westminster

Addendum E: **Survey Results**

Racial Justice Audit of
Westminster's Leadership
73 total responses

Response Rate
74% (73 of 99)

2.) What order of ministry are you?

a.	Not ordained	38	52%
b.	Ordained - Pastor, Ruling Elder, Deacon	35	48%

3.) Age

a.	18 or under	2	3%
b.	19-25	0	0%
c.	26-40	4	5%
d.	41-55	9	12%
e.	56-70	22	30%
f.	71+	36	49%

4.) How do you identify your gender?

a.	Male	18	25%
b.	female	53	73%
c.	prefer not to say	1	1%
d.	Transgender/Non-Binary/Genderqueer	1	1%

5.) How do you identify your sexual orientation?

a.	LGBTQ+	3	4%
b.	Straight/Heterosexual	67	92%
c.	Prefer not to say	2	3%

6.) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

a.	Some high school	2	3%
b.	High school diploma or equivalent	3	4%
c.	Associate's degree	0	0%
d.	Bachelor's degree	19	26%
e.	Master's degree	35	48%
f.	Doctorate/other professional degree	14	19%
g.	Trade/technical/vocational training	0	0%
h.	Prefer not to say	0	0%
i.	some college	0	0%

7.) How would you describe your socioeconomic class?

a.	Upper class	19	26%
b.	Middle Class	50	68%
c.	Prefer not to say	0	0%
d.	Working class	3	4%
e.	Poverty level	0	0%
f.	Other	1	1%

8.) How do you describe your physical ability?

a.	Disabled/differently-abled/handicapped	4	5%
b.	Prefer not to say	1	1%
c.	Able-bodied	68	93%

9.) Would you describe yourself as neurodivergent?

a.	Yes - ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, etc..	4	5%
b.	Prefer not to say	3	4%
c.	No - neurotypical	66	90%

10.) How do you describe your race?

a.	Indigenous or Native American	0	0%
b.	African American/Black	2	3%
c.	Latino/a/x or Hispanic American	1	1%
d.	African Immigrant	0	0%
e.	Middle Eastern or Arab American	0	0%
f.	Afro-Caribbean	0	0%
g.	Multiracial	1	1%
h.	East Asian or Asian American	2	3%
i.	White	66	90%
j.	Other	1	1%

11.) What is your religious background?

a.	Not Christian	0	0%
b.	Mainline Protestant	35	48%

c.   Not religious   0   0%
d.   Catholic   1   1%
e.   Evangelical Protestant   4   5%
f.   Lifelong Presbyterian   30   41%
g.   Other   3   4%

12.) How would you describe your role at Westminster? *(could select multiple)*
a.   Staff   9   12%
b.   Ministry leaders/members (e.g., commissions, committees, task force, etc...) 46   63%
c.   Session   22   30%
d.   Volunteer   28   38%
e.   other   1   1%

13.) How many years have you been at Westminster?
a.   0-1 year   0   0%
b.   2-5 years   9   12%
c.   6-10 years   12   16%
d.   11-15 years   9   12%
e.   16-20 years   11   15%
f.   More than 20 years   32   44%

14.) How many years have you been in leadership at Westminster (e.g., staff, volunteer, vestry, ministry leaders/members, etc...)?
a.   0-1 year   5   7%
b.   2-5 years   26   36%
c.   6-10 years   8   11%
d.   11-15 years   6   8%
e.   16-20 years   6   8%
f.   More than 20 years   22   30%

15.) Which of the following is the closest to your definition of race:
a.   Who you are biologically/genetically or your ancestry   18   25%
b.   Ethnicity or culture   3   4%
c.   Physical characteristics (e.g. skin color)   3   4%
d.   Human-made categories of people   17   23%
e.   All of the above   30   41%
f.   None of the above   0   0%
g.   Not sure or don't know   0   0%
h.   other   2   3%

16.) Which of the following is the closest to your definition of racism:
a.   Racial prejudice or discrimination
     (i.e., microaggression, racist comments, exclusionary behavior, etc...)   8   11%
b.   A system that grants power to one social group   3   4%

c.	Racialized violence or hatred	0	0%
d.	All of the above	58	79%
e.	None of the above	0	0%
f.	Not sure or don't know	0	0%
g.	Other	4	5%

17.) Which of the following is the closest to your definition of racial equity:

a.	Diversity of racial identities in leadership	0	0%
b.	Providing equal opportunity to every individual regardless of race	28	38%
c.	Addressing root causes of oppression, not just their manifestations	36	49%
d.	None of the above	2	3%
e.	Not sure or don't know	2	3%
f.	Other	5	7%

18.) Which of the following is the closest to your definition of white dominant culture:

a.	Dominant cultural practices, beliefs, and norms that are seen as standard without being proactively named or chosen by the full group	17	23%
b.	A set of standards and assumptions put in place by those in power and by which everyone else is judged and evaluated	20	27%
c.	Multifaceted set of characteristics such as perfectionism, sense of urgency, fear of open conflict, individualism, along with others that are favored over other ways of being	2	3%
d.	All of the above	29	40%
e.	None of the above	2	3%
f.	Not sure or don't know	1	1%
g.	other	2	3%

19.) Racism work at Westminster

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	not sure/don't know
Racial justice work IS foundational in the life and ministry of Westminster.	0 0%	9 12%	13 18%	36 49%	14 19%	1 1%
Racial justice work SHOULD BE foundational in the life and the ministry of Westminster.	1 1%	1 1%	4 5%	23 32%	44 60%	0 0%

20.) To what extent have you EXPERIENCED the following things in your time at Westminster?

	Not at all	Occasionally	Frequently
You were treated with less courtesy or respect than other church members.	62 85%	10 14%	1 1%
You did not feel supported.	61 84%	10 14%	2 3%
You received feedback on how you speak, dress, or interact with people.	62 85%	10 14%	1 1%
People acted as if they thought you were not smart.	67 92%	6 8%	0 0%
People acted as if they were afraid of you.	70 96%	3 4%	0 0%
People acted as if they thought you were dishonest.	72 99%	1 1%	0 0%
People acted as if you were not as good as they were.	67 92%	6 8%	0 0%
People did not have knowledge about or were not curious about your culture and context.	53 73%	18 25%	2 3%
You were called names or insulted.	72 99%	1 1%	0 0%
You were intimidated, harassed, or suppressed.	72 99%	1 1%	0 0%
People acted as if you knew less about finances.	64 88%	9 12%	0 0%
People assumed you know less about Presbyterian tradition and liturgy.	62 85%	11 15%	0 0%

22.) What do you think was the MAIN REASON for this/these experience (s)?

a.	Your ancestry or national origin or ethnicity (e.g., being Latino/a/x)	2	3%
b.	Your gender or sex	8	11%
c.	Your race	6	8%
d.	Your age	7	10%
e.	Your sexual orientation	1	1%
f.	Your socioeconomic class	2	3%
g.	Your level of education	4	5%
h.	Your physical or mental disability	0	0%
i.	Don't know	16	22%
j.	Blanks	7	10%
k.	other	26	36%

23.) Please check ANY OTHER FACTORS that you believe may have contributed to this/these experience(s):

a.	Your ancestry or national origin or ethnicity (e.g., being Latino/a/x)	6	8%
b.	Your gender or sex	10	14%
c.	Your race	10	14%
d.	Your age	18	25%
e.	Your sexual orientation	1	1%
f.	Your socioeconomic class	11	15%
g.	Your level of education	11	15%
h.	Your physical or mental disability	0	0%
i.	Don't know	11	15%
j.	Blanks	18	25%

24.) To what extent have you OBSERVED the following with fellow parishioners at Westminster?

	Not at all	Occasionally	Frequently
A Person of Color being treated with less courtesy or respect than other people.	64 88%	9 12%	0 0%
A Person of Color receiving less support than other people in a similar role.	66 90%	7 10%	0 0%
A Person of Color receiving feedback on how they speak, dress, or interact with people.	67 92%	6 8%	0 0%
People acting as if they think a Person of Color is not smart.	68 93%	5 7%	0 0%
People acting as if they are afraid of a Person of Color.	64 88%	9 12%	0 0%
People acting as if they think a Person of Color is dishonest.	70 96%	3 4%	0 0%
People not having knowledge about or not being curious about a Person of Color's different culture and context.	47 64%	23 32%	3 4%
A Person of Color being called names or insulted.	72 99%	1 1%	0 0%
A Person of Color being intimidated, harassed, or suppressed.	72 99%	1 1%	0 0%
People acting as if a Person of Color knows less about finances.	70 96%	3 4%	0 0%
People assuming a Person of Color knew less about Presbyterian tradition and/or liturgy	66 90%	7 10%	0 0%

25.) What do you think was the MAIN REASON for this/these observation(s)?

a.	Their ancestry or national origin or ethnicity (e.g., being Latino/a/x)	3	4%
b.	Their race	11	15%
c.	Their age	1	1%
d.	Their gender or sex	0	0%
e.	Their sexual orientation	0	0%
f.	Their socioeconomic class	1	1%
g.	Their level of education	1	1%
h.	Their physical or mental disability	1	1%
i.	Don't know	21	29%
j.	Blank	11	15%
k.	other	23	32%

26.) Please check ANY OTHER FACTORS that you believe may have contributed to this/these observation(s):

A.	Their ancestry or national origin or ethnicity (e.g., being Latino/a/x)	6	8%
B.	Their race	5	7%
C.	Their age	11	15%
D.	Their gender or sex	3	4%
E.	Their sexual orientation	3	4%
F.	Their socioeconomic class	5	7%
G.	Their level of education	5	7%
H.	Their physical or mental disability	1	1%
I.	Don't know	20	27%
J.	blank	24	33%
K.	other	10	14%

28.) How comfortable are you talking about race or racism with parishioners at Westminster?

1- extremely uncomfortable, 2- uncomfortable, 3- neutral, 4-comfortable, 5- extremely comfortable

1	2	3	4	5
2 3%	6 8%	16 22%	31 42%	18 25%

29.) If or when you have brought up issues of race or racism, either experienced or witnessed, how were they received by colleagues and peers at Westminster?

Pick all that describe your experience and if none quite fit, please explain in 'other'.

A.	People were defensive and/or offended	6	8%
B.	People didn't know what I was talking about or ignored my concerns	9	12%
C.	People listened but no tangible next steps happened or adequate response given	14	19%
D.	People were genuinely interested and made efforts to right behavior and/or mend a rupture	12	16%

E. My concerns were validated, and active steps were taken
    to address root causes   6   8%
F. I haven't ever brought up such issues or concerns   34   47%
G. other   10   14%

33.) Does racial inequity, racism, and/or white dominant culture affect you personally?
A. Yes   51   70%
B. No   8   11%
C. Maybe   9   12%
D. Not Sure/don't know   5   7%

34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44) These questions asked for narrative responses and the answers are not included here to protect respondents confidentiality.

35.) Culture at Westminster

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure/don't know
Westminster values the collective accomplishment more than the individual accomplishment.	1 1%	2 3%	27 37%	23 32%	7 10%	13 18%
Conflict is considered a healthy part of Westminster's culture.	3 4%	29 40%	7 10%	26 36%	5 7%	3 4%
One of Westminster's message is: "there are different ways to be in the world.".	1 1%	5 7%	9 12%	35 48%	17 23%	6 8%
Westminster's culture allows for different ways for people to respond, including high emotional responses.	4 5%	18 25%	13 18%	24 33%	11 15%	3 4%
Westminster provides flexibility regarding dress and appearance and supports individual styles and differences.	2 3%	0 0%	6 8%	40 55%	18 25%	7 10%

37.) Westminster's hiring, electing, recruiting, and promotion process:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure/don't know
There is a pattern of people being promoted in the organization who are racially diverse.	1 1%	11 15%	21 29%	16 22%	5 7%	19 26%
Promotions and opportunities for advancement are given and provided based on many factors: organizational needs, people's performance, personal goals, as well as diversity and equity issues.	0 0%	1 1%	12 16%	33 45%	13 18%	14 19%
Racial diversity and equity are explicit goals for hiring employees and recruiting volunteers. There is a checks-and-balances process to assess what personal filters are being used-- such as, how one defines a "good" candidate.	3 4%	4 5%	15 21%	18 25%	8 11%	25 34%
Racial diversity and equity are explicit goals in hiring vendors or contractors. Due diligence is employed in checking on vendors' internal policies in regards to equity.	1 1%	5 7%	14 19%	5 7%	2 3%	46 63%
The hiring team or individual is informed about how to create a	1 1%	4 5%	17 23%	7 10%	6 8%	38 52%

process (from job announcement to interview) which supports Westminster's diversity, inclusion, and equity values.						
People on search committees have training in implicit bias and racial equity.	6 8%	4 5%	12 16%	9 12%	3 4%	39 53%

39.) Westminster's decision-making process:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure/don't know
People directly impacted by decisions are included in the decision-making process and/or review of a proposed decision prior to it being finalized.	0 0%	9 12%	7 10%	33 45%	12 16%	12 16%
The decisions that end up being adopted are pretty much the same as the ones developed during the decision making process.	0 0%	2 3%	11 15%	38 52%	5 7%	17 23%
Policies are applied consistently, equitably, and transparently.	0 0%	3 4%	7 10%	37 51%	13 18%	13 18%
People with the most direct life experience and/or most affected the issue being considered are the ones who drive the decision-making discussion most of the time.	1 1%	13 18%	14 19%	20 27%	6 8%	19 26%

41.) Westminster's distribution of information and resources

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure/don't know
Efforts are made to ensure information is shared consistently throughout the organization in a in a timely manner.	0 0%	3 4%	5 7%	27 37%	36 49%	2 3%
Westminster's budget includes sufficient resources to implement the goals around racial equity within Westminster.	1 1%	5 7%	6 8%	29 40%	16 22%	16 22%
Resources for staff are distributed equitably and transparently. (e.g., professional development, tools to do work, etc…)	1 1%	1 1%	7 10%	21 29%	22 30%	21 29%

43.) Westminster's process of measuring general progress

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure/don't know
When goals are not met, an assessment determines the reason why--individual and systemic--and a response to ensure that resources and support to reach goals are provided, or the goals are modified, if warranted.	0 0%	3 4%	11 15%	21 29%	7 10%	31 42%
Westminster's assumes mistakes are part of life, and opportunities are given for the individual and the community to learn and make changes as needed.	0 0%	1 1%	7 10%	34 47%	20 27%	11 15%
The organization takes responsibility for mistakes, and works to make amends with the individuals and/or communities most affected by those mistakes.	0 0%	1 1%	9 12%	35 48%	15 21%	13 18%
Progress is assessed by using many types of data including anecdotal information instead of a few key metrics.	1 1%	3 4%	9 12%	24 33%	15 21%	21 29%
Racial equity goals are part of performance evaluations for most people.	4 5%	8 11%	10 14%	6 8%	2 3%	43 59%

45.) Faith Formation

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not sure/don't know
I clearly understand how racial equity and justice fit into God's mission and the church life.	0 0%	1 1%	3 4%	30 41%	39 53%	0 0%
There is a diversity and range of songs, prayers, and faith formation activities that are offered at Westminster aiding in racial healing and racial equity for those present.	2 3%	10 14%	15 21%	32 44%	14 19%	0 0%
Westminster actively engages in addressing the historical realities of racial injustice as they show up in the theology, liturgy, and in the church itself.	1 1%	5 7%	7 10%	36 49%	23 32%	1 1%

Addendum F: **Glossary of Terms**

This list of terms has been compiled as an attempt to create a common language of racial justice. All definitions come from Racial Equity Tools unless otherwise noted. [35]

Anti-racism

Anti-racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

BIPOC[36]

BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. It is an acronym which seeks to highlight the ways in which racism targeting Black and Indigenous peoples has been foundational to the construction of white supremacy in the United States.

Dysconscious Racism[37]

Dysconscious racism is generally defined as the unquestioned acceptance of culturally dominant norms and privileges. These range from the historical determinism of slavery to racially exploitive standards inherent in American society.

Episodic Racism

Episodic racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Episodic racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what they are doing.

LGBTQ+[38]

An umbrella acronym, commonly including people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and other identities beyond the cisgender, heterosexual normative majorities.

People of Color

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[35] https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#

[36] Written by the authors of this report.

[37] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131725.2018.1505015?journalCode=utef20

[38] Written by the authors of this report.

Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-white racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term "People of Color" since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not white, to address racial inequities. While People of Color can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., "non-white"), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

Race
Race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact. Race designations have changed over time. Some groups that are considered "white" in the United States today were considered "non-white" in previous eras, in U.S. Census data and in mass media and popular culture (for example, Irish, Italian, and white Jewish people). The way in which racial categorizations are enforced (the shape of racism) has also changed over time. For example, the racial designation of Asian American and Pacific Islander changed four times in the 19th century. That is, they were defined at times as white and at other times as not white.

Racism
Racism is racial prejudice combined with social and institutional power. Racism is a system of advantage and oppression based on race. Racism is different from solely racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

Systemic/Structural Racism
The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics–historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal–that routinely advantage white people while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for People of Color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of white domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism–all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

Whiteness

Whiteness is thus conceptualized as a constellation of processes and practices rather than as a discrete entity (i.e. skin color alone). Whiteness is dynamic, relational, and operating at all times and on myriad levels. These processes and practices include basic rights, values, beliefs, perspectives, and experiences purported to be commonly shared by all but which are actually only consistently afforded to white people.

White Dominating Culture[39]

A rephrasing of the term 'white supremacy culture' which seeks to emphasize the active effects of domination that the system has on People of Color.

White Supremacy

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and "undeserving." Drawing from critical race theory, the term "white supremacy" also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

White Supremacy Culture

White supremacy culture refers to the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States. These standards may be seen as mainstream, dominant cultural practices; they have evolved from the United States' history of white supremacy. Because it is so normalized it can be hard to see, which only adds to its powerful hold. In many ways, it is indistinguishable from what we might call U.S. culture or norms – a focus on individuals over groups, for example, or an emphasis on the written word as a form of professional communication. But it operates in even more subtle ways, by actually defining what "normal" is – and likewise, what "professional," "effective," or even "good" is. In turn, white

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[39] Written by the authors.

culture also defines what is not good, "at risk," or "unsustainable." White culture values some ways – ways that are more familiar and come more naturally to those from a white, western tradition – of thinking, behaving, deciding, and knowing, while devaluing or rendering invisible other ways.