

**African-American Members of the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Survey Results**

Scott C. Williamson
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

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Research Services

A Ministry of the General Assembly Council
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202

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Abstract

This essay evaluates the theological beliefs, religious activities and personal history of African-American members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).¹ Of the 1,900 questionnaires disseminated, survey responses of 1,084 African-American members² were compared to those of white PCUSA members, Hispanic and Korean members. The respondents were asked a total of 67 questions in four areas: congregation, religious background, faith and belief, and personal history. The data obtained indicate that African-American members are largely female, middle-aged, well-educated, and urban. They are overwhelmingly Democrat, theologically moderate, and very supportive of social action groups and ministries. They are less orthodox than Hispanic and Korean members on subjects such as the Afterlife, the Second Coming of Jesus, and the Virgin Birth, but they are more orthodox than White members on the latter two subjects. They are likely to agree that the great religions of the world are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth. They are also likely to agree, however, that only followers of Jesus Christ can be saved. Other findings include that African-American members have a deep commitment to taking care of those who are sick or needy and providing aid to people who are less fortunate.

Introduction

Sampling data reveals patterns. They do not render an identical image or perfect representation of the subject under study. They do, however, yield valuable information that can help a reader to see the subject more clearly. This essay endeavors to summarize the results of the data obtained from African-American respondents in the hope of illuminating general patterns of belief and behavior in their collective experience as members of the PCUSA. In other words, this essay will provide what Keith Wulff has called a “reality check” on African American beliefs about the church and the life of faith.

A demographic profile of African-American members will help to set the stage for the findings that follow: African Americans are 2.7% of the PCUSA; 70% are female; their median age is 57 years, which is two years older than the median age for all members; 34% are 65 years of age or older; 60% are currently married, compared to 77% of White members; and 24% have experienced divorce, compared to 18% of White members.³

Results

Involvement in The Congregation

The most recent survey of racial-ethnic members of the PCUSA begins with ten questions that elicit information about the respondents and their congregations. These questions attend to the size of the congregation, the number of years that the respondents have been members of their current congregation, and the degree to which they participate in both church activities and community activities outside of church.

In response to the request for the approximate number of members in their congregation, 21% of African Americans report that they belong to congregations of 50-99 members (Q-6, note that non-responses of 10% or more were recorded for this question). This was the most common response. Findings are similar for both Hispanics and Koreans. Further, 27% of African Americans report that they live 1 mile or less from their

¹ The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be referred to hereafter as the PCUSA.

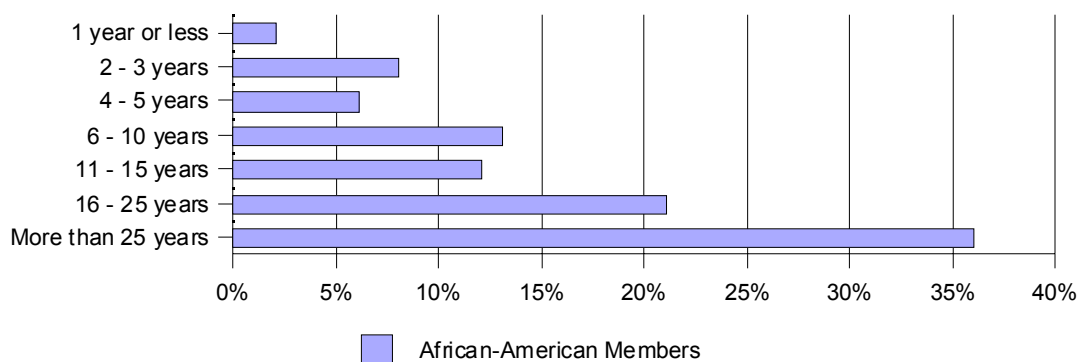
² The 1,084 questionnaires returned by African-American members is equal to a response rate of 57%.

³ Demographic data come from a paper entitled, *Race-Ethnicity and Religious Belief in the Protestant Mainline: Comparing the Faiths of Black, Korean, Hispanic and White Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, by John P. Marcum, Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

congregation, and 83% live within 10 miles. Hispanics post virtually identical numbers. Koreans generally travel farther to church than either African Americans or Hispanics. In comparison, only 7% of Koreans live within 1 mile of their congregation, 56% within 10 miles, and 44% travel over ten miles.

The findings also reveal that, on average, African Americans have been members of their current congregations for 19 years, which is five years longer than the average length of membership for all members. A third of African Americans (36%) have belonged to their current congregation for more than 25 years, and roughly 8 out of 10 have been members of their current congregation for at least 6 years. In comparison, both Hispanics and Koreans report a significantly higher percentage of respondents who have been members of their current congregation for five years or less (Q-1).

Figure 1
Length of Membership in Current Congregation



When questioned about Sunday worship service attendance, 41% of African Americans report that they attend “nearly every week.” This was the most common response. The second most common response was “every week,” and 34% of African Americans selected this category. Conversely, a quarter of Black respondents report that they attend Sunday worship services with their congregation 2-3 times a month, or less often. In comparison, both Hispanics and Koreans reveal more frequent attendance of their congregation’s Sunday worship services (Q-3).

When asked to indicate the reasons why they may have missed attending worship in the last year, African Americans cite vacation and illness most frequently. These reasons figured prominently for Hispanics and Koreans as well. The third most common response for African Americans was “I just didn’t feel like going (Q-5).” They selected this response more frequently than their Hispanic and Korean counterparts.

As for positions held in the church, African Americans cite the following three positions most frequently: member of congregational committee or task force; ordained elder currently serving on session; and choir member. The least frequent response, far and away, was organist or choir director. Only 4% of respondents report that they serve the church in this capacity. This figure is consistent with those reported by Hispanics and Koreans as well (Q-4).

Several questions asked the respondents to estimate the number of hours they spent during the last month involved in church and community activities. Approximately one-quarter of African Americans report that in the last month they spent 3-5 hours attending programs or events at their church besides worship. An alternate 38% spent fewer than three hours attending church programs in the last month, and another 36% spent more than five hours attending church programs in the last month. Hispanics and Koreans were more likely than African Americans to have spent more than twenty hours in the last month attending church programs (Q-7).

In addition to hours spent attending programs, nearly half of African-American respondents spent from 1-5 hours giving volunteer time at church (e.g., teaching, leading, serving on a committee, etc.); 55% spent from 1-10 hours in volunteer community service apart from church programs. They were more likely than either Hispanics or Koreans to have helped the less fortunate or to have done volunteer community work in the past month.

Finally, when asked to compare rates of participation in the last month with rates from two years ago, approximately three-quarters of African Americans reported that they participated in church activities about the same amount or more in the last month than they did two years ago. Further, most expect to be part of their current congregation five years from now. Of the sixty respondents who indicated that it is “not very likely” or “not at all likely” that they will be a part of their current congregation five years from now, the most important factors given for their likelihood of leaving are as follows: “moving away from the area/community”; “the worship services often do not satisfy spiritual needs”; and “too much conflict in the congregation.”

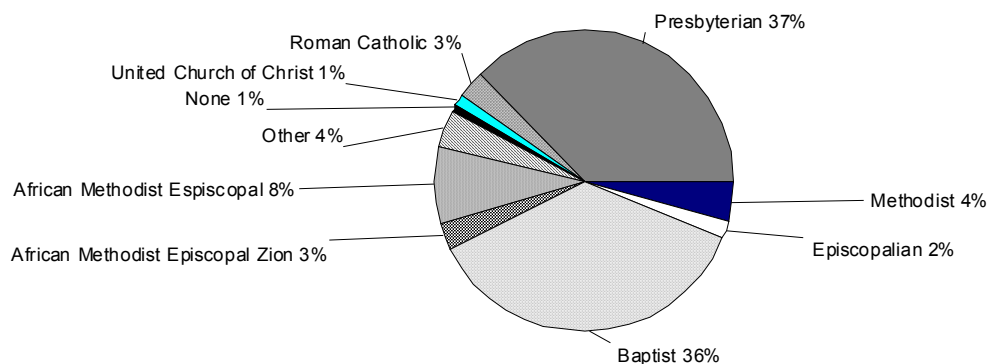
Summary. Responses to this section of the questionnaire reveal that African-American members are long-standing members. Over half have been members of their current congregation for sixteen years or more, and on average, they have been members of their current congregation for 19 years. They are also stable in their membership. That is to say, they participate in church activities about as much (if not more) than they did two years ago, and three-quarters of them expect to be members of their current congregation five years from now. Three-quarters of African-American members attend Sunday worship services either every week or nearly every week, and they spend moderate amounts of time, on a monthly basis, attending church programs, participating in church programs, and doing volunteer work. They hold a variety of positions in the church, with the notable exception of organist or choir director. While 29% of African-American members report that they belong to the church choir, only 4% report that they serve as organist or choir director.

Religious Background

Questions 11 through 16 asked respondents to indicate their previous religious affiliation(s), as well as the religious affiliation(s) of their parents. Approximately six out of every ten African-American respondents report that they have held membership in a religious group other than Presbyterian (Q-11). Of these respondents, 61% belonged to a Baptist religious group earlier in life. This was the most common answer, followed by African Methodist Episcopal, which was selected by 14%.

When asked specifically about their childhood, 37% of African-Americans report that they were raised Presbyterian. Of those who were not raised Presbyterian, 36% were raised Baptist, and 8% were raised African Methodist Episcopal.

Figure 2
Religious Background of African-American Presbyterians



African-American members were also asked to indicate how often their parents attended religious services (Q-14, note that a non-response rate of 10% or more was recorded for this question.) Nearly half report that during their teenage years, their fathers attended religious services either every week or nearly every week. Nine percent indicate that their fathers never attended religious services. As for mothers, 69% of African Americans report that their mothers attended religious services every week or nearly every week. Only 3% report that their mothers never attended religious services. The corresponding figures for Hispanics and Koreans reveal similar frequency rates of attendance to those of African-American parents, but higher rates of non-attendance. For example, 26% of Hispanics and 52% of Koreans report that during their teenage years, their fathers never attended religious services.

Finally, two pieces of information complete what is known about the religious background of African-American members. First, 44% indicate that they have been members of the PCUSA for more than 25 years (Q-12, note that a non-response rate of 10% or more was recorded for this question.) On average, they have belonged to the PCUSA for 24 years. Only 12% of African-Americans have been Presbyterian for five years or less. In comparison, smaller percentages of Hispanics and Koreans have been members of the PCUSA for more than 25 years. Second, nearly one quarter of African Americans were raised in the congregation to which they currently belong (Q-16). This number is all the more impressive given that only 37% were raised in the PCUSA.

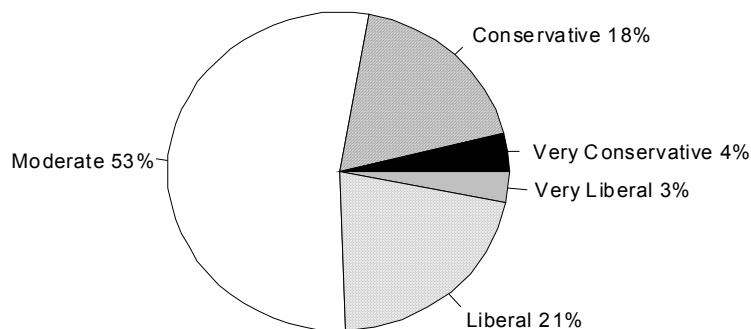
Summary. The findings reviewed in this section reveal several significant insights about the religious roots of African-American members. First and foremost, their religious roots run deep. It is likely that African-American members were raised in a religious group by parents who frequently attended Sunday worship services. Second, their roots have likely undergone graftage. A preponderant number of African-American members (approximately 62%) were not raised Presbyterian. While 37% of African-Americans report that they were raised Presbyterian, 36% claim that they were raised Baptist, and approximately 25% were raised in some other religious group(s). Third, their roots are strong. Of those members who were raised Presbyterian, approximately one-quarter (24%) still belong to their childhood congregation. Finally, with an average membership of 19 years in their current congregation, African-Americans have provided roots for the PCUSA.

Faith and Belief

Questions 17- 27 explore a broad range of theological topics. These topics can be grouped under the following headings: theological stance; views of the Bible; the Afterlife and other core tenets; the uniqueness of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ; the relative authority of the church and the individual; and the qualities of a good Christian life.

Theological Stance. When asked to identify their current standing on theological issues, more than half of African-American respondents (53%) identified themselves as “moderate.” This was their most common response. An alternate 21% identified themselves as “liberal,” and 18% selected “conservative” to describe their theological stance (Q-17). In comparison, Hispanic and Korean members were more likely than African Americans to identify themselves as being either conservative or very conservative. 40% of Hispanics and 44% of Koreans chose one of these two categories to describe their theological stance, as compared to 22% of African-Americans.

Figure 3
Where Do You Stand on Theological Issues?



Receptivity to the term “born-again” Christian can also indicate one’s theological stand. When asked if they consider themselves a born-again Christian, 47% of African-Americans answered affirmatively and 31% answered negatively. An alternate 22% indicated that they were “not sure.” In comparison to Hispanics and Koreans, African Americans were more likely to answer either “no” or “not sure.” In comparison to White members, African Americans were more likely to answer either “yes” or “not sure.” In other words, African-Americans were more likely than Whites and less likely than either Hispanics or Koreans to consider themselves born-again. They were also most likely to express uncertainty.

Views of the Bible. Question 19 presented a range of five categories that described the authority of scripture from an important but irrelevant piece of literature to the inspired and inerrant Word of God that is authoritative for secular matters as well as matters of faith. 44% of African Americans responded: “It is the Word of God and its stories and teachings provide a powerful motivation as we work toward God’s reign in the world.” This moderate position was the most common for African Americans, Hispanics, Koreans, and Whites. In comparison to Hispanics and Koreans, African Americans were less likely to hold that (a) the Bible is authoritative in secular matters. They were also more likely than either Hispanics or Koreans to hold that (b) the Bible is a “useful guide” for moral and religious instruction. Yet in comparison to Whites, African Americans were more likely to hold (a) and less likely to hold (b). Stated differently, African Americans tend to share the moderately authoritative view of the Bible held by all members. They are more likely than Whites but less likely than either Hispanics or Koreans to hold a highly authoritative view of the Bible. They are, however, more likely than either Hispanics or Koreans and less likely than Whites to hold that the Bible is a useful moral and religious guide for individual Christians.

The Afterlife and Other Core Tenets. Respondents were asked to evaluate their belief in the Virgin Birth, the Second Coming, the Afterlife, the existence of Satan, heaven and hell. Nine out of every ten African-Americans expressed belief in the Virgin Birth (Q-25l). This percentage is consistent with answers obtained from both Hispanics and Koreans, and is greater than the corresponding percentage for White members. Approximately 85% of African-Americans expressed belief in the Second Coming. In comparison, 95% of Hispanics, 90% of Koreans and 75% of Whites share this view. The data indicate that on the topic of the Second Coming, as with the Virgin Birth, African Americans are likely to be more orthodox than all members, and less orthodox than either Hispanics or Koreans.

This apparent pattern in orthodoxy does not hold for the topic of the Afterlife. While 83% of African-American respondents indicate belief in the Afterlife, only 50% indicate strong belief in the Afterlife. In comparison, 70% of Hispanics, 70% of Koreans and 57% of White members indicate strong belief in life beyond death. African-Americans are less likely than all members to hold a strong belief in life beyond death.

When asked whether the Devil (Satan) really exists, eight out of every ten African Americans expressed belief in the existence of Satan (Q-25k). 14% indicated disagreement or strong disagreement in the existence of Satan. In comparison, African Americans were less likely than either Hispanics or Koreans but more likely than White members to believe in the existence of Satan.

As for belief in heaven and hell, 83% of African Americans believe in heaven and 65% believe in hell. They express considerably more uncertainty about hell. Whereas 13% express uncertainty about heaven, a full quarter express uncertainty about hell. Only 3% of African Americans surveyed believe that there is not a heaven, and 9% believe that there is not a hell. In comparison, on the topic of hell, African Americans are less likely than either Hispanics or Koreans but more likely than Whites to believe in eternal damnation. Interestingly, on the topic of heaven, African Americans are less likely than Hispanics but more likely than either Koreans or Whites to believe in eternal reward (Q-20 and Q-21).

Uniqueness of God’s Revelation in Jesus Christ. Of the 82% of African Americans who agreed with the belief that Jesus Christ is “the only absolute Truth for humankind,” 55% expressed strong agreement. An alternate 5% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the view. Hispanics and Koreans recorded higher percentages of agreement and lower percentages of disagreement (Q-25d). Compared to White members, African-Americans were more likely to agree that Jesus is the only absolute Truth.

Curiously, though 82% of African Americans believe that the only absolute Truth for humankind is in Jesus Christ, 56% hold that “only followers of Jesus Christ can be saved.” A full 20% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the notion that only followers can be saved. Further, 24% voiced uncertainty. African Americans were less likely than either Hispanics or Koreans but more likely than white PCUSA members to believe that only followers of Christ can be saved.

When asked to respond to the view that “all the different religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth,” African Americans were the most likely to express agreement (Q-25b). Only 8% of African Americans strongly disagreed with the view, compared to 24% of Hispanics, 36% of Koreans, and 18% of Whites. African Americans also recorded the highest percentage of uncertainty. Roughly 25% of African Americans, 16% of Hispanics, 14% of Koreans and 18% of Whites said that they were not sure if all the different religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth.

A similar pattern of belief was recorded for another question that required respondents to evaluate their sense of the uniqueness of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. When asked to respond to the view that “all the great religions of the world are equally true and good,” African Americans were less likely than their fellow Presbyterians to disagree (Q-25i), and most likely to express uncertainty. The most common response for African Americans was “not sure,” and 38% of them selected this category. Alternately, 37% expressed disagreement or strong disagreement, and 24% expressed agreement or strong agreement with the position. In sum, roughly six out of every ten African-American respondents either agreed with the position or were at least open to the possibility that all religions are equally good and true.

Finally, African Americans expressed either agreement or strong agreement with the position that “belief in Jesus Christ is only one of many ways to find salvation.” They were comparatively more likely than Hispanics and White members to agree with the position. The highest percentage of agreement was recorded among Koreans. Both African Americans and Koreans were more likely to agree than to disagree with the position. Hispanics were more likely to disagree.

The Relative Authority of the Church and the Individual. Several questions required respondents to evaluate the extent to which they rely on themselves and on the church in arriving at and defending their religious beliefs. For example, Q-25a asked respondents to evaluate the claim that individuals should arrive at their own “religious beliefs independent of any church.” Among African Americans, 48% expressed either agreement or strong agreement with the claim, and 36% expressed either disagreement or strong disagreement. In comparison to other PCUSA members, African American support for the claim is comparable to that of other members, but their opposition to the claim is not as strong.

When asked in a following question to evaluate the claim that individuals should seek out “religious truth for themselves and not conform to any church’s doctrine,” all racial-ethnic groups recorded high percentages of disagreement and strong disagreement. African-Americans were in the mix, with 30% recording either agreement or strong agreement, and 51% recording either disagreement or strong disagreement with the claim. Twenty percent expressed uncertainty.

On the subject of moral authority, 43% of African-Americans expressed either disagreement or strong disagreement with the claim that “the final authority about good and bad is the individual.” An alternate 40% said that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the claim. These numbers disclose that African Americans are evenly divided on the question. Hispanics are also evenly divided, but not so for Koreans and Whites who are far more likely to disagree with the claim. African Americans and Hispanics were more likely than either Koreans or Whites to express strong agreement with the view that the final authority about good and bad is the individual.

Qualities of a Good Christian Life. Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of seven qualities of a good Christian life, including: regular Bible study; prayer and meditation; seeking social justice; taking care of the needy; attending church; seeking to bring others to the faith; and practicing Christian values. The possible responses to each quality ranged from “essential” to “not at all important”. Of the seven qualities given, African Americans selected three as “essential” and four as “very important.”

The qualities that were selected as being essential to a good Christian life include: practicing Christian values in work, home, and school (62%); spending time in prayer and meditation (53%); and reading and studying the Bible regularly (45%, keep in mind that respondents were not asked to rank each of the qualities). In comparison, each of the groups surveyed selected “prayer and meditation,” and “practicing Christian values” as essential qualities of a good Christian life. There was disagreement however, concerning the importance of the other values. Interestingly, none of the groups selected as essential either “actively seeking social and economic justice,” or “taking care of those who are sick or needy.”

African Americans selected four other qualities as being very important to a good Christian life: taking care of the sick and needy (55%); seeking to bring others to faith in Christ (49%); actively seeking social and economic justice (48%); and attending church regularly (48%). African Americans are more likely than all other PCUSA members to believe that actively seeking social justice and taking care of those who are sick or needy are essential to a good Christian life (Q-22). They are less likely than Hispanics and Koreans but more likely than White members to regard attending church regularly and seeking to bring others to faith in Christ as essential to a good Christian life.

Respondents were also asked to judge the personal importance given to their congregation’s activities in the community. The activities include: “supporting social action groups”; “encouraging members to share their faith”; “helping people in need”; “helping members to resist the temptations of the world”; “an active evangelism program”; “and preparing for a world to come”. African Americans rated each activity as being “very important” to them. One activity, “providing aid and services to people in need,” was selected as essential by 46% of African Americans. 48% rated this activity as very important. In sum, 94% of African-American respondents rated this activity as being at least very important if not essential. In comparison, 88% of Hispanics and 84% of Koreans rated this activity as being either very important or essential. African Americans were more likely than either Hispanics or Koreans to rate “providing aid” as an essential activity. They were also less likely than either Hispanics or Koreans to rate “encouraging members to share their faith,” and “an active evangelism program” as essential activities (Q-23).

Summary. The data in this section of the questionnaire indicate several interesting patterns among African-American members of the PCUSA. They are theologically moderate to liberal. On selected tenets such as the Virgin Birth and Second Coming, they are less orthodox than either Hispanics or Koreans, but more orthodox than all members. Nevertheless 9 out of every 10 believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, and 8 out of every 10 believe in the Second Coming, heaven, life beyond death, and the existence of Satan. In contrast to the 83% who believe in heaven, 65% think there is a hell.

African Americans express a moderate amount of uncertainty about the uniqueness of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. When asked if only followers of Jesus Christ can be saved, approximately one out of every four was not sure. In comparison, this number is consistent with the 25% of White members who express uncertainty, but is higher than percentages recorded for Hispanics (12%) and Koreans (15%). In addition, when asked if all religions are equal and true, the most common response for African-Americans was “not sure” (38%). Hispanics, Koreans, and White PCUSA members were more likely than African-Americans to express strong disagreement. Further, more than half of African-American respondents accept that belief in Jesus Christ is only one of many ways to find salvation (Q-25j). It is consistent with the results to suggest that African-American members of the PCUSA are less likely than their fellow Presbyterians to express strong agreement that Christ is the only way to salvation.

If they express moderate uncertainty about the uniqueness of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, African Americans express no such uncertainty about the importance of taking care of the needy, seeking social and economic justice, and practicing Christian values in work, home and school. These qualities and activities receive consistently high ratings among African Americans. The results also indicate that they are not as strongly committed to evangelism and to church attendance as their Hispanic and Korean counterparts.

Finally, African Americans express a balance in the relative authority of the church and the individual. They support arriving at religious beliefs independent of any church. They do not believe, however, that the individual is the final authority in moral matters, nor do they believe that individuals should seek out religious truth for themselves in a refusal of church doctrine.

Personal History

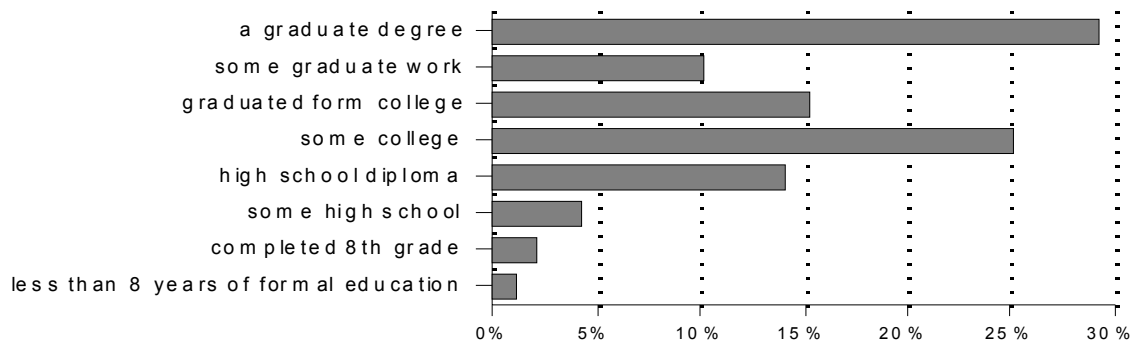
Questions 28 through 65 ask respondents to provide information on a range of personal topics from age and gender to education, employment and ethnicity. Seven of ten African-American members of the PCUSA are female and their median age is 57 years. They are, on average, two years older than White members, seven years older than Hispanic members, and twelve years older than Korean members. Of all African-American members, 24% are under age 45, another 43% are between the ages of 45 and 65, and 34% are 65 years of age or older.

African-American members are urban. Three-quarters (73%) indicated that they live in either a small, medium-size, or large city; 35% live in a large city and 22% live in a medium-size city; 21% live in a suburb.

Interestingly, one in four was born in either North Carolina or South Carolina (Q-52). Approximately 60% were born in eleven southern states, and roughly 14% hail from the three Middle Atlantic states. The New England states have produced the smallest number of African-American members. A meager one percent of respondents report that they were born in New England.

They are highly educated and tend to be married to highly educated spouses. 29% report that they hold a graduate degree. This was the most common response. Only two out of every ten (21%) do not have at least some college in their background. 29% report that their spouses hold a graduate degree. Again, this was the most common response.

**Figure 4
Education**



When asked to indicate their employment status, African-American members report that they are largely employed full time. In addition to the 46% who indicated full time employment, 40% report that they are retired. This was the second most common response. For White members of the PCUSA, 30% report that they are retired.

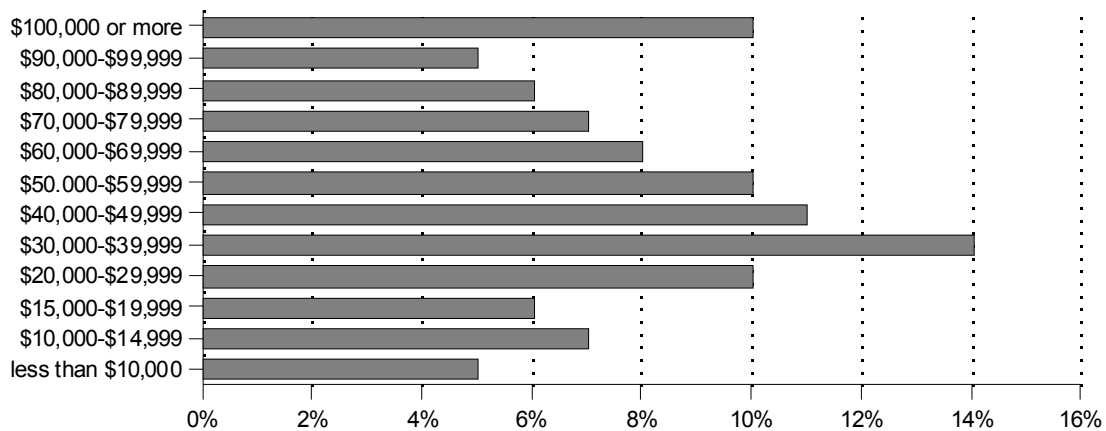
60% of African-American members are currently married. They are less likely to be married than either Hispanics, Koreans, or Whites. In comparison, 72% of Hispanics, 89% of Koreans and 77% of White members are currently married. Further, African-American members are more likely than these groups to have experienced divorce. 24% report that they have been divorced. In comparison, 18% of Whites report divorce.

Approximately one quarter of African-American members live alone (Q-48). 40% have two persons living in their household, and 38% claim that more than two persons live in their household. The data indicate that African Americans are more likely than either Hispanic or Korean members to live alone and to live in two-person households. They are less likely than either Hispanic or Korean members to live in households of three to five persons. When asked to select the choice which best describes all of the people in the household, 28% of African-American members selected, “a married couple, no children in the household.” This was the most common

response. 27% selected the choice, “a married couple, living with one or more children.” Hispanics and Koreans were more likely to live in a household with one or more children.

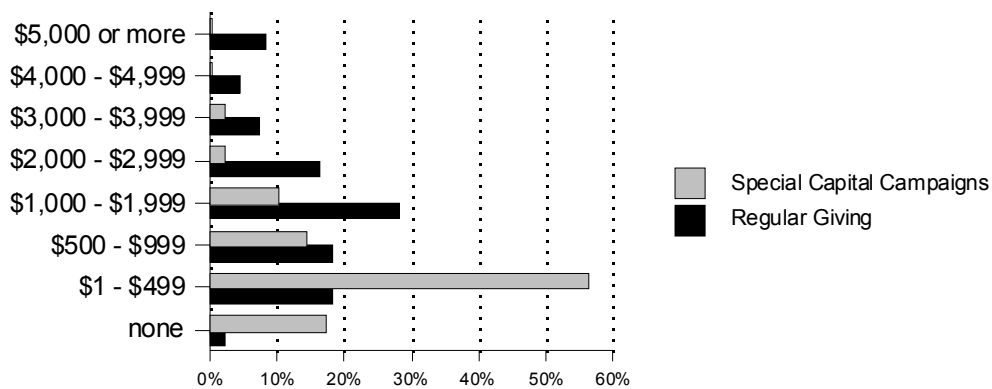
Roughly half of African-American members (45%) report a total family income in the previous year (1996) between \$20,000 and \$60,000. The most common response was \$30,000 to \$39,999, which was selected by 14% of respondents. 60% report a family income of \$60,000 or more and 18% had a total family income last year of less than \$20,000. In comparison, 44% of Whites report annual family incomes of \$60,000 or more. The data indicate that, in comparison to African-American members, a larger percentage of Hispanic members (33%) report less than \$20,000 in family income, and a larger percentage of Korean members (40%) report an annual family income of \$60,000 or more.

Figure 5
Family Income in Previous Year
from all sources, before taxes



Charitable giving was measured according to five indices: regular giving to one’s congregation; special offering to one’s congregation; giving to one’s church for a special capital campaign; giving to religious causes outside the PCUSA; and giving to non-religious causes. In regular giving to their congregation, 28 percent of African Americans gave from \$1,000 to \$1,999. This was the most common response. A combined 36 percent gave gifts in varying amounts totaling less than \$1,000 and a combined 35 percent gave gifts totaling more than \$1,000. Of those members who gave more than \$1000, 8 percent gave \$5000 or more. By way of comparison, 5 percent of Hispanics and 27 percent of Koreans gave \$5000 or more in regular giving.

Figure 6
How Much Did You and Your Family Contribute to Your Congregation Last Year?



In terms of special offerings to their congregation, in response to an appeal for a ministry supported by the congregation, presbytery, or Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 75% of African Americans gave from \$1 to \$249 and 17% gave \$250 or more. Here again, a greater percentage of Korean members gave large amounts to the congregation: 47% of Koreans surveyed gave \$500 or more, as compared to 5% of Hispanics and 9% of African Americans. For special capital campaigns, 56% of African Americans gave from \$1 to \$499. 24% gave from \$500 to \$1,999, and 4% gave \$2000 or more.

70% of African Americans gave \$1 to \$500 to religious causes outside the PCUSA, and 16% gave more. Only 13% reported that they did not give to a religious cause outside the PCUSA during the last year, as compared to 28% of Hispanics and 26% of Koreans. Further, only 5% of African Americans did not contribute to a non-religious charity, community organization, or social cause last year. They were more likely than either Hispanics or Koreans to support these groups and/or causes. Three out of every four African-American members gave from \$1 to \$500. 20% gave more than \$500. In comparison, 5% of Hispanics and 14% of Koreans gave over \$500.

Finally, when asked to give their political party affiliation, better than eight out of every ten African Americans think of themselves as Democrat (Q-56 and to the Presbyterian Panel, 1996-1998). They are joined by 56% of Hispanics, 32% of Koreans and 25% of Whites. Only 3% of African Americans are Republican. In contrast, 55% of white PCUSA members are Republican, as are 27% of Koreans and 25% of Hispanic members. African Americans, then, are most likely of all PCUSA members to be Democrat, and least likely to be Republican.

Summary. The personal history information is illuminating. African-American members, as a whole, tend to be female, slightly older than fellow PCUSA members, urban, and highly educated. Better than half hail from the South, and a full quarter were born in the Carolinas. While most are married, they are more likely than other Presbyterians to live alone and to have experienced divorce. Close to half are employed full time and another forty percent are retired. Financially, they tend to be middle class to upper middle class, and they give moderately of their wealth to the church and other religious agencies and/or causes. They distinguish themselves in giving to non-religious charities, community organizations, and social causes. Lastly, they are overwhelmingly Democrat in a denomination that is largely Republican. In comparison, 25% of White members are Democrat.

Conclusions

The results canvassed here show that African-American PCUSA members are distinguished in numerous ways. They are largely female, and at an average age of 57, are slightly older than the average Presbyterian member. They have long-standing membership in their current congregation. In fact, if an award were given for the average length of membership in one's current congregation, at nineteen years average membership, the prize would go to African-American members. Over half of them have been members of their current congregation for sixteen years, and a full quarter still belong to the congregation of their youth. There is, however, a good deal of Baptist blood flowing in those Presbyterian veins. Most African-American members were not raised Presbyterian. Of those who were not raised Presbyterian, close to half were raised Baptist. Whatever their earliest religious affiliation, most were raised in a religious group or denomination by parents who attended Sunday worship services quite often. Like their parents before them, most African-American members attend Sunday worship services nearly every week. Further, they spend moderate amounts of time each month attending and participating in church programs and events. They also hold a variety of positions in the church, with the notable exceptions of organist and choir director. This is an interesting fact given that approximately thirty percent of African-American members belong to church choirs.

Theologically, African-American PCUSA members describe themselves as moderate, and if not moderate, they tend to fall evenly to the right and to the left. They are less likely than other PCUSA members to be conservative and more likely to be liberal. An overwhelming majority believe in such core tenets as the Virgin Birth, the Second Coming and the Afterlife. They display a good deal of openness, however, to the truth of other religions. That is to say, African-American members are more likely than other members to agree with the conviction that all different religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth. Better than half hold that belief in Jesus Christ is only one of many ways to find salvation. Though they are not exclusivists on the subject of salvation, they are not in question about the centrality of God's revelation in Jesus Christ or the significance of God's Word as

revealed in scripture. Three quarters of African Americans believe that the Bible is the Word of God. This percentage places them well within the mix of responses. On the whole, they are a little more orthodox than White members in their view of the Bible, and less orthodox than either Hispanic or Korean members.

The survey results show a strong commitment among African Americans to seek actively social and economic justice and to take care of those who are sick or needy. This commitment is evident in both the amount of time devoted monthly to volunteer work and in the amount of money given yearly to social causes. In addition to these qualities of a good Christian life, reading the Bible regularly, spending time in prayer and meditation, and practicing Christian values also figure prominently for African-American members.

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