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# **The Gospel of the Kingdom: A Biblical Framework for Understanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

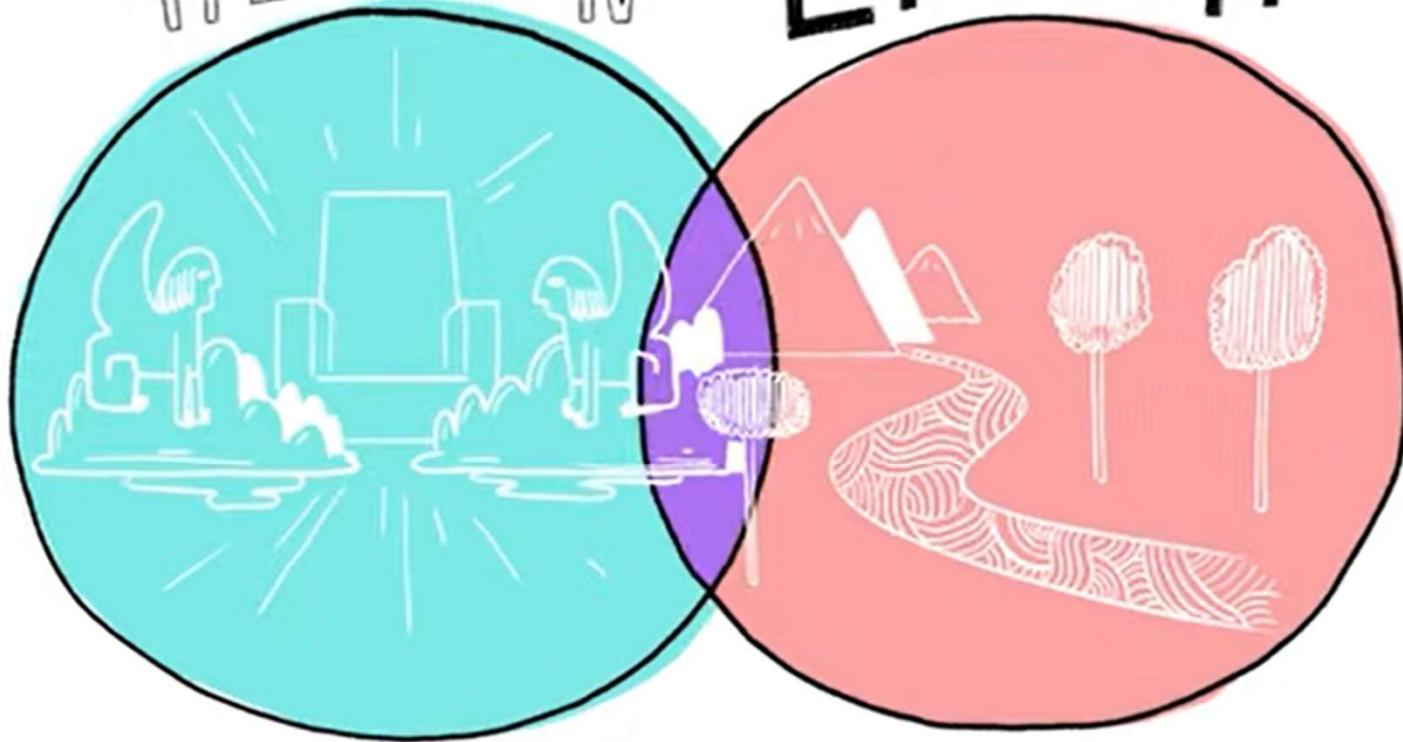
— Sueihn Lee, LCSW, MDiv —

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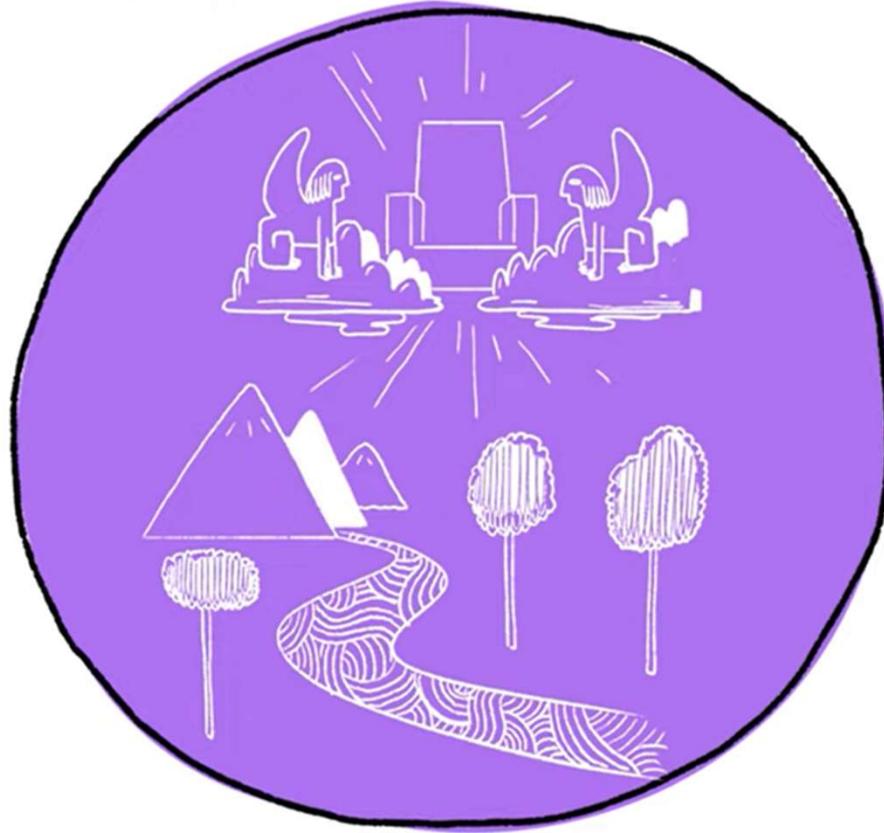
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HEAVEN

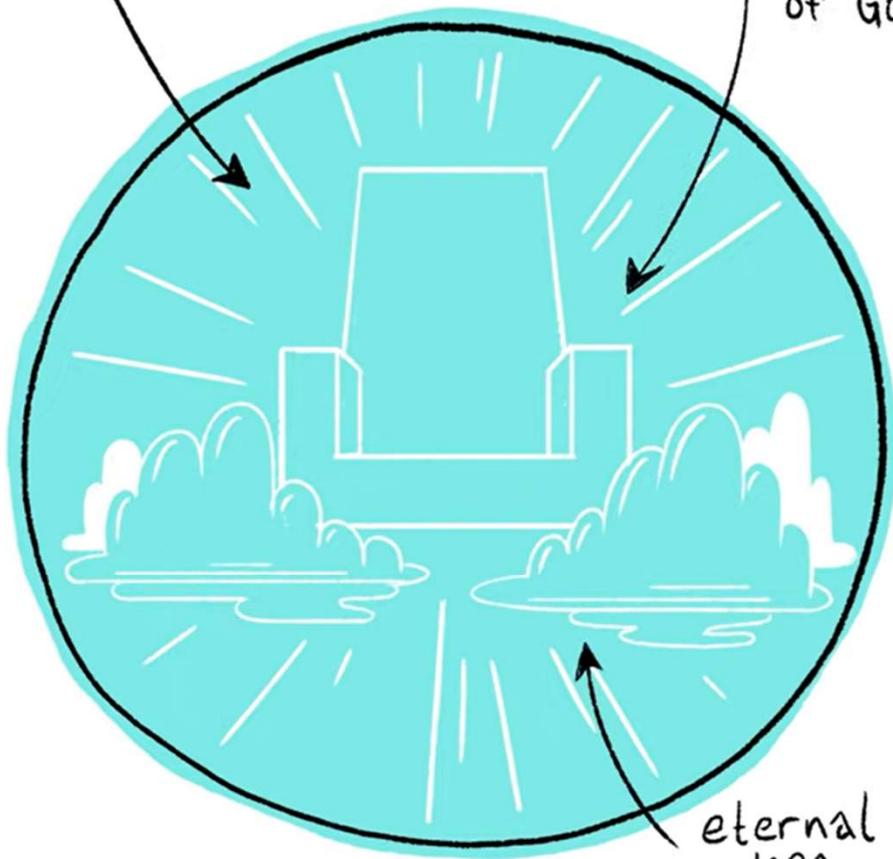
EARTH



# GARDEN *of* EDEN



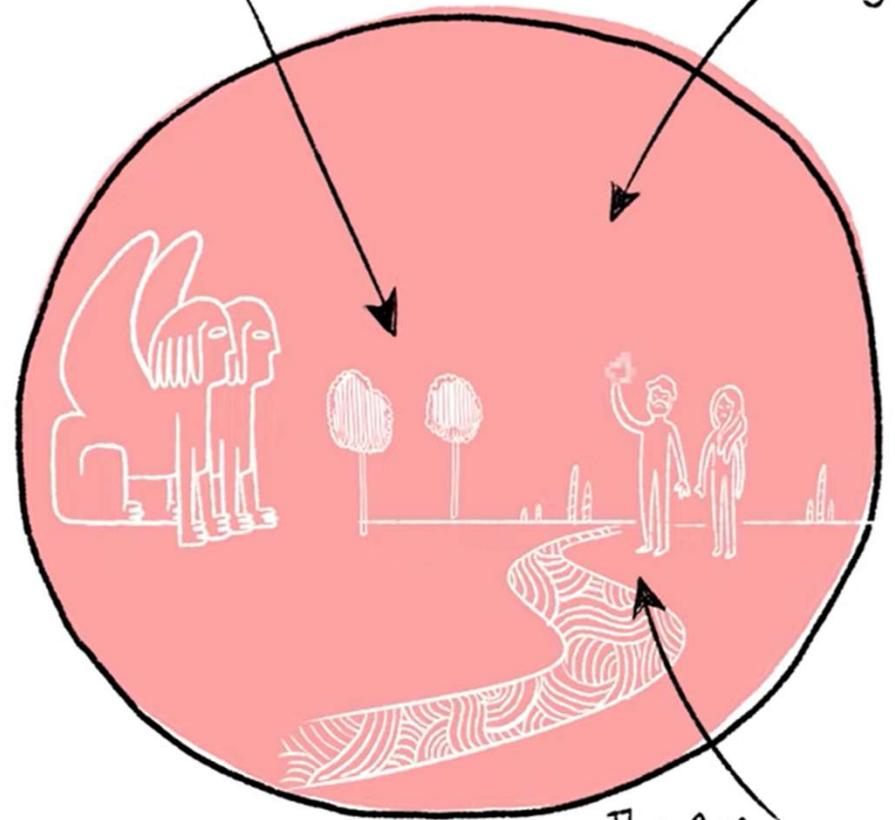
heaven



the Kingdom of God

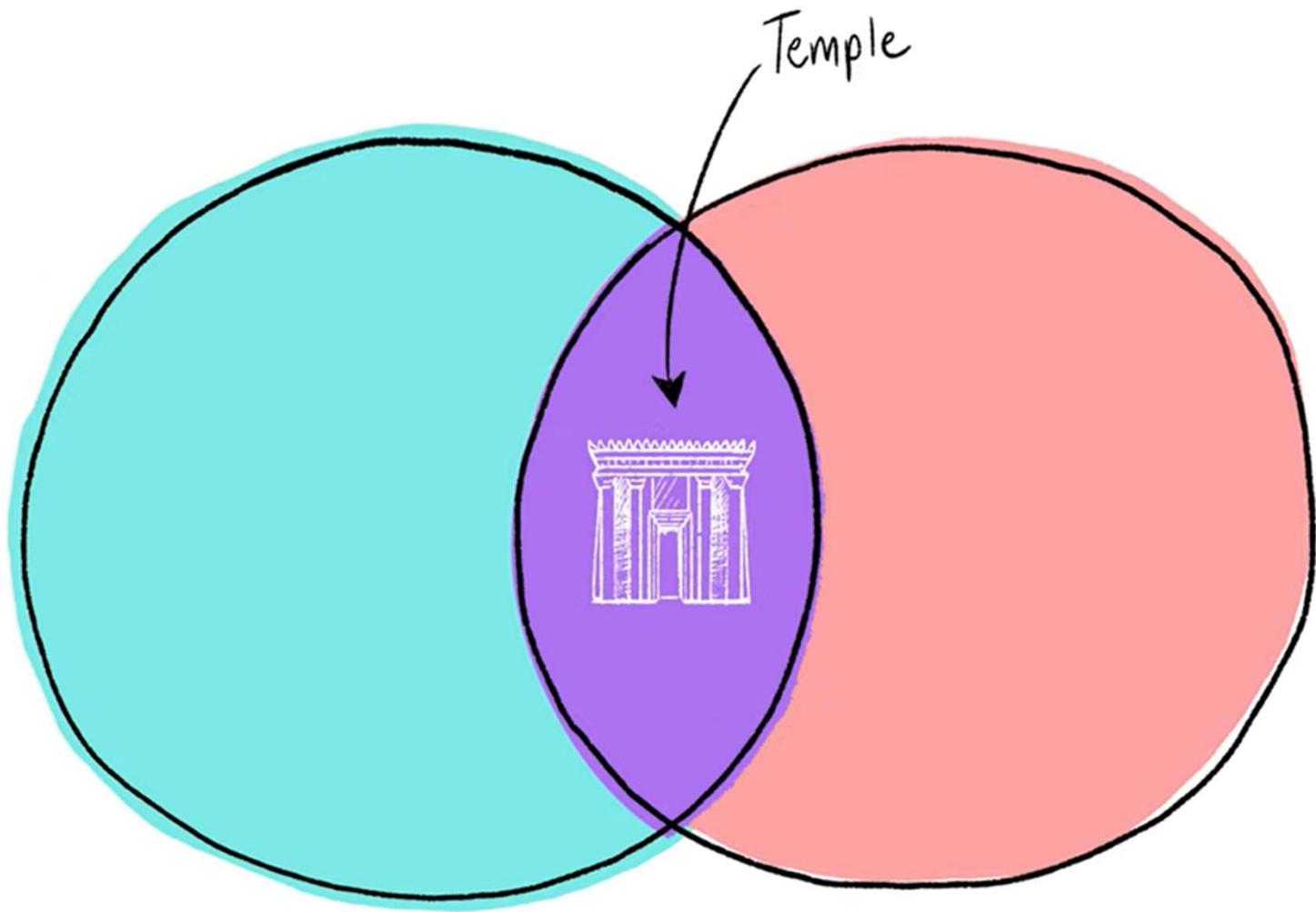
eternal life

The world



Present age

The age of sin & death

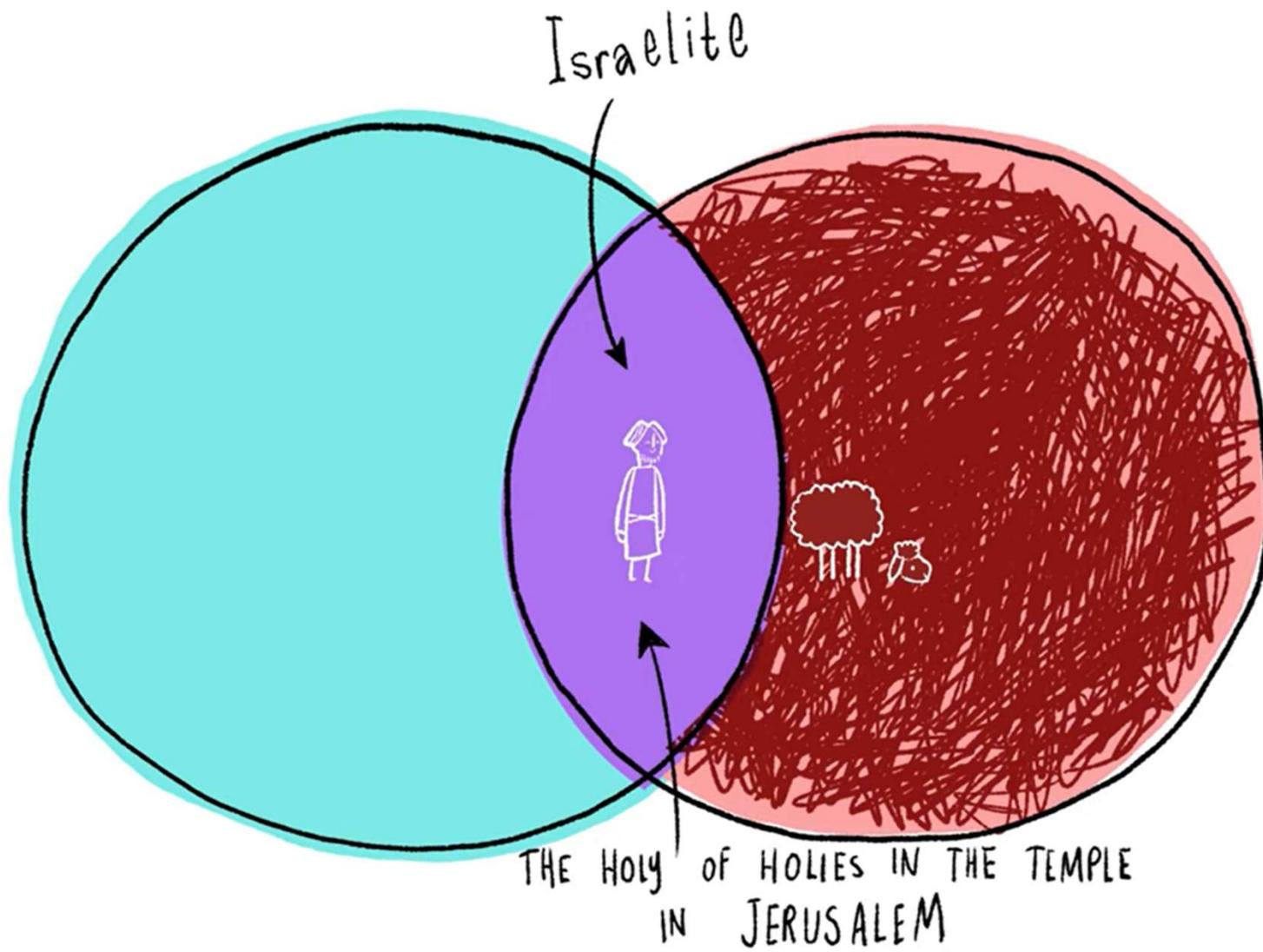


HOLY OF HOLIES

• TABERNACLE •

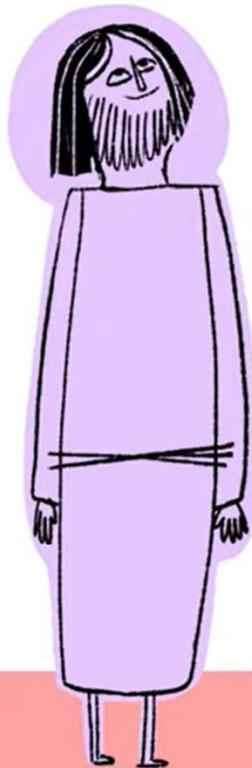
• SOLOMON'S TEMPLE •

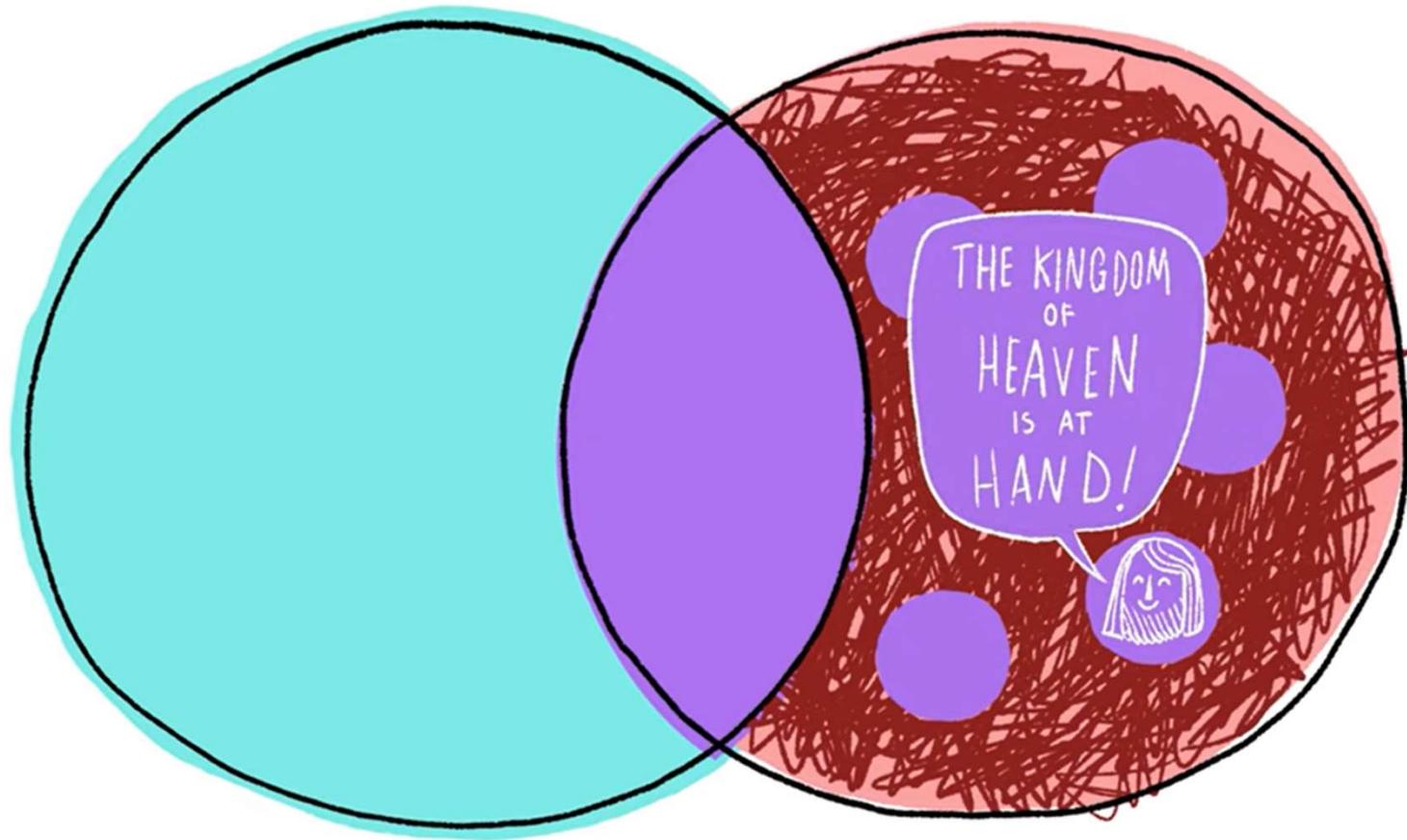




⑨ ... made His dwelling among us.

⑩

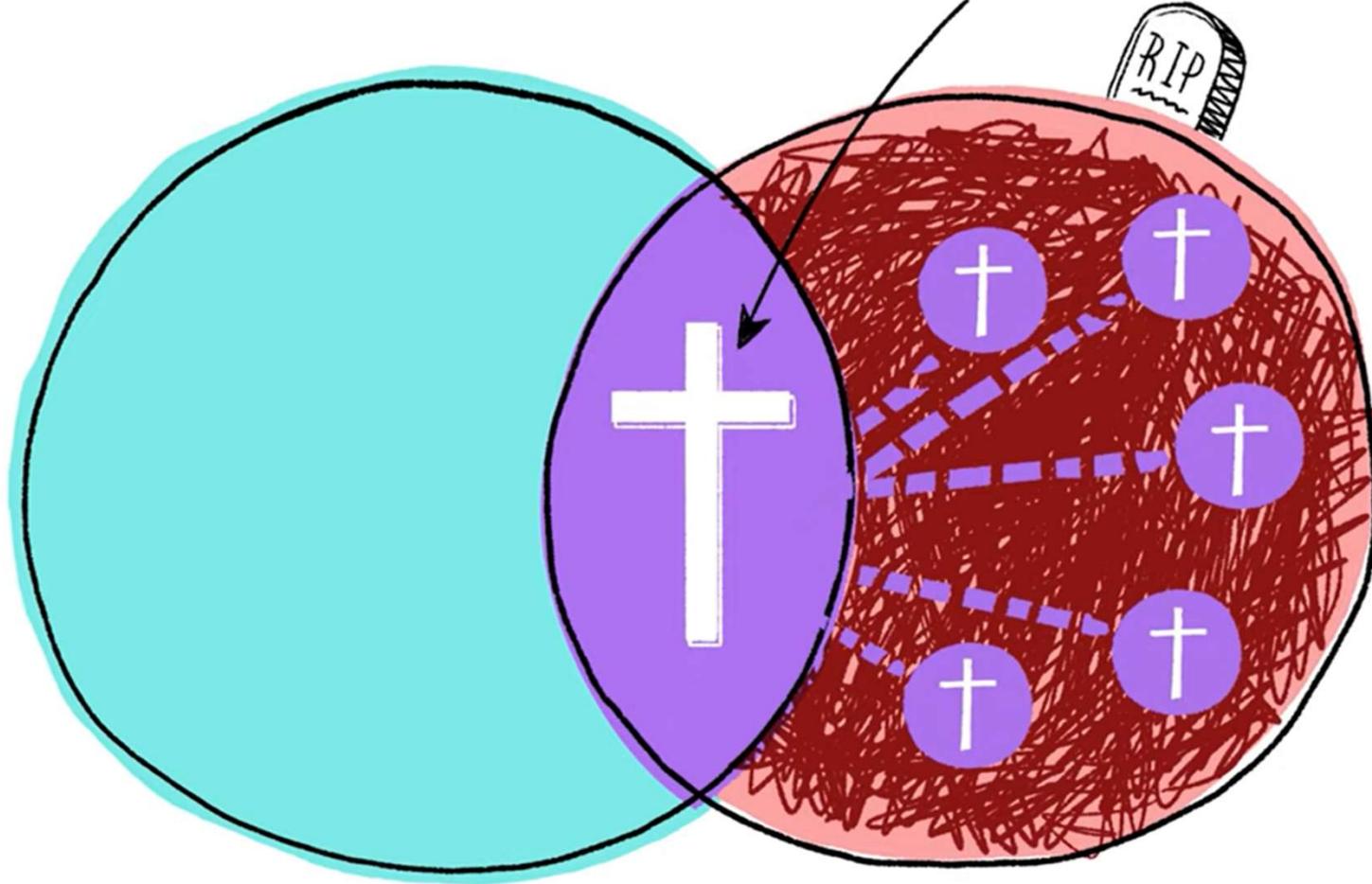




NOT THIS →



THIS IS THE FOCUS



# THE NEW HEAVEN & EARTH



# Heaven & Earth Collide

- God's space and humanity's space was one in the Garden of Eden, until sin entered the world and caused separation.
- To live amongst his people, God created a space (tabernacle/temple) and a practice (animal sacrifice) for humans to be forgiven so that God's space and humanity's space could overlap once again.
- Jesus was God's tabernacle on earth in human form (Col 2:9).
- Jesus was also the ultimate sacrifice (Heb 10:10).
- Jesus will come back to earth. Heaven and earth will overlap again (Revelations 21) - there will be a new Eden, new Jerusalem, new heaven, and a new earth!

(source - [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), NT Wright)

# Heaven Starts Now

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3

- Though the Kingdom won't be here in its fullness until Jesus comes back, heaven starts now since we can get to know Jesus now.
  - As the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) and temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), we now carry the space where heaven and earth collide!
  - We are called to be Christ's ambassadors in this world, ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-20).
  - We will rule with Christ (Rev 3:21, 2 Tim 2:12)
  - We are called to be stewards and servant-leaders (1 Peter 4:10)
-

# Kingdom (βασιλεία)

- royal power, kingship, dominion, rule
  - not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom
  - of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah
  - of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom
- It's an "Upside-Down Kingdom (Donald Kraybill)"
  - The first shall be last, love your enemies, be a servant to all, be like children
  - Inclusion of the socially marginalized - sinners, the ritually unclean, the poor
  - Woe to those who abuse religious, political, and economic power
  - It has economic and social repercussions, not just personal and spiritual

## Shalom ( שְׁלוֹמַי - Peace )

- Wholeness, completeness
- Reconciliation of a broken relationship
- Well-being, health, safety, prosperity
- Restitution, making things right again

“God created all things to be in a beautiful, harmonious, interdependent, knitted, webbed relationship to one another. Just as rightly related physical elements form a cosmos or a tapestry, so rightly related human beings form a community. This interwovenness is what the Bible calls shalom, or harmonious peace.... [Shalom] means complete reconciliation, a state of the fullest flourishing in every dimension – physical, emotional, social, and spiritual – because all relationships are right, perfect, and filled with joy.”

- Tim Keller, *Generous Justice*

## Mishpat ( מִשְׁפָּט - Justice )

- Not just laws, punishment and judgment, but also protecting rights, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized in society, without showing partiality or prejudice.
- Laws of Moses:
  - Do not curse the deaf or put stumbling block in front of the blind (Lev 19:14)
  - Do not mistreat the foreigner (Lev 19:33)
  - Do not reap your field completely, leave the edges for widows, orphans, and foreigners to glean (Deut 24:19)
  - Do not take advantage of workers; pay them their wages immediately (Deut 24:14-15)
  - Do not steal, lie, defraud, cheat, endanger, hate, seek revenge (Lev 19)
  - Do not sexually exploit your daughter (Lev 19:29)
  - Respect the elderly (Lev 19:32)

## Tzedakah ( צְדָקָה - Righteousness )

- Not about personal morality, but right relationship with others
- Also used to refer to charity, because righteousness is about taking care of one another



## Dikaiosune (Δικαιοσύνη) - Righteousness

- Justice, impartiality, fairness
- Involves both personal character and action

“For I tell you that unless your *righteousness* surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:20)

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” (Matt 23:23)

## Agape (ἀγάπη) - Love

- The type of love God has for us, and how we are to love one another (1 John 3:16)
  - Unconditional love - not emotions, but choice and action (1 John 3:17)
  - Self-sacrifice, to the point of death (John 15:13, Romans 5:8)
  - Striving for another's highest good (Galatians 5:13)
  - But not just action - the heart matters also
- "If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing." (1 Cor 13:3)

# Characteristics of the Kingdom

- Jesus is Lord of every single area of life, which leads to shalom
  - Right relationship with God and others
  - Recognition that we are all interconnected
  - Radical love and generosity; abundance for all
  - No hoarding of power or resources
  - No discrimination or prejudices
  - Jubilee - freedom from enslavement, forgiveness of debt, radical rest, empowering others with resources so that they can thrive (Deut 15:13-14)
  - When we self-sacrifice to care for one another, somehow there is more abundance to go around
-

# The Problem of Sin

- Sin is what separates, divides, and compartmentalizes.
- Every sin is personal and social
- Since institutions are made up of sinful individuals, sin will thus infect wider societal structures, like yeast leavening the whole batch of dough (1 Cor 5:6-8)
- There is also spiritual warfare at work in the world (Ephesians 6:12)
- Often hard to notice because corporate sin can be normalized and internalized

“When the Bible speaks of ‘this present evil age’ and ‘this present darkness’ and ‘this world,’ it is reminding us that the systems and structures of the world are permeated with sin... The point is not that institutional policies, rules, regulations, procedures, and more can feel pride, greed, fear, and lust. The point is that they reflect, embody, preserve, and advance them. They institutionalize the mindset of the proud, greedy, fearful, lustful people who create them.” - John Piper

# Historical Sins in the US

- Though God said that we do not bear responsibility for the sins of our ancestors (Ezek 18:20), we still may bear the consequences of them (Deut 5:9), especially if we continue in them (Lev 26:39)
- These are just a few examples of historical sins that have left lingering effects on our society today, as evidenced by ongoing disparities in these communities:
  - The massacre, ethnocide, and displacement of Native American tribes
  - Enslavement of African peoples, Jim Crow laws, segregation
  - Exclusion of women in the right to vote, own property, open bank accounts, and participate in certain professions.
  - Exploitation of laborers in Appalachia (and throughout the US) and land-grabbing by corporations

# Societal Sin

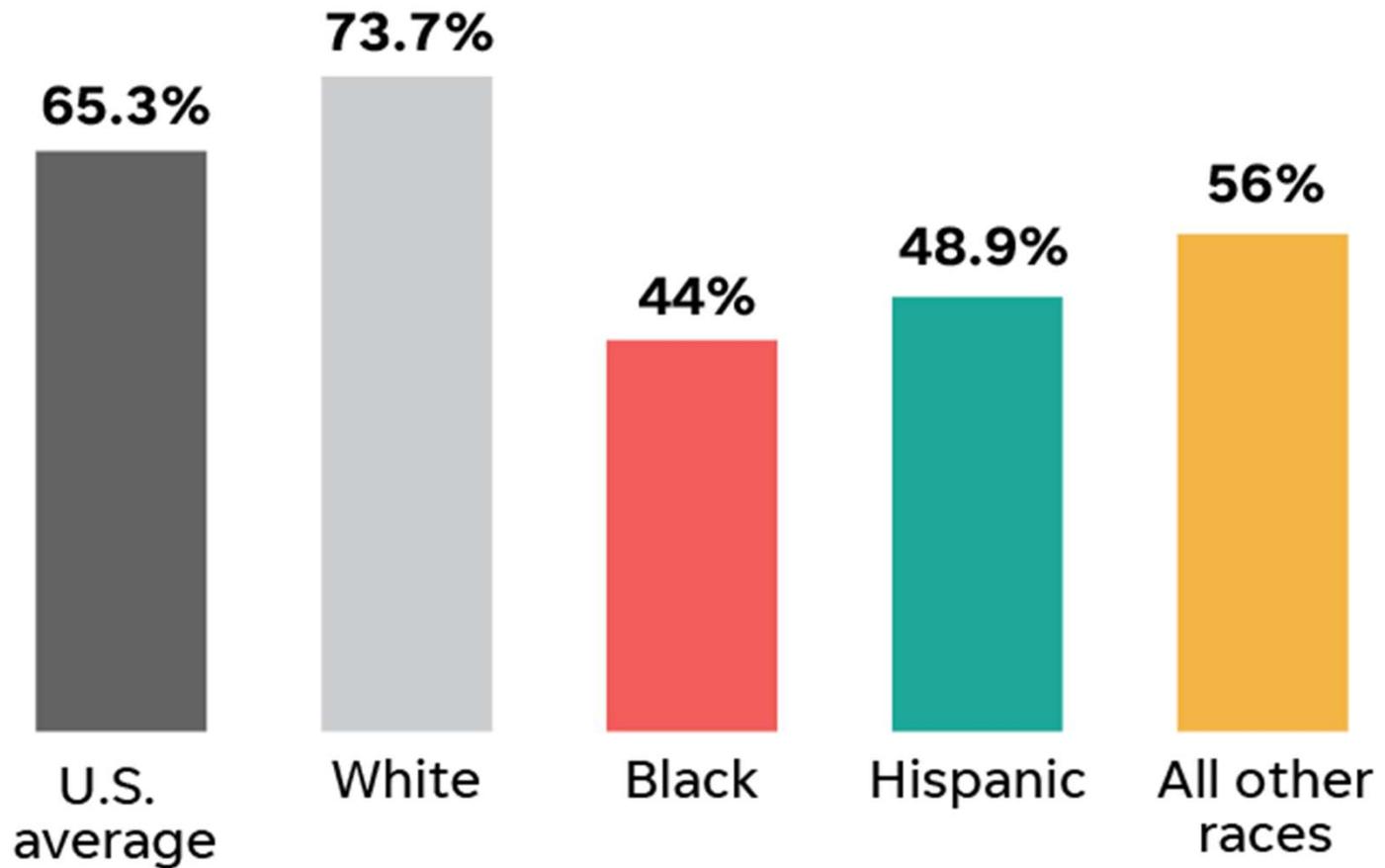
Though laws have been passed to ban discrimination, many disparities still exist in various facets of life, based on (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background and disabilities. These disparities can be traced to historical sins, and are perpetuated by ongoing societal sin.

- Education
  - Housing
  - Criminal Justice System
  - Employment
  - Wealth
  - Healthcare
-

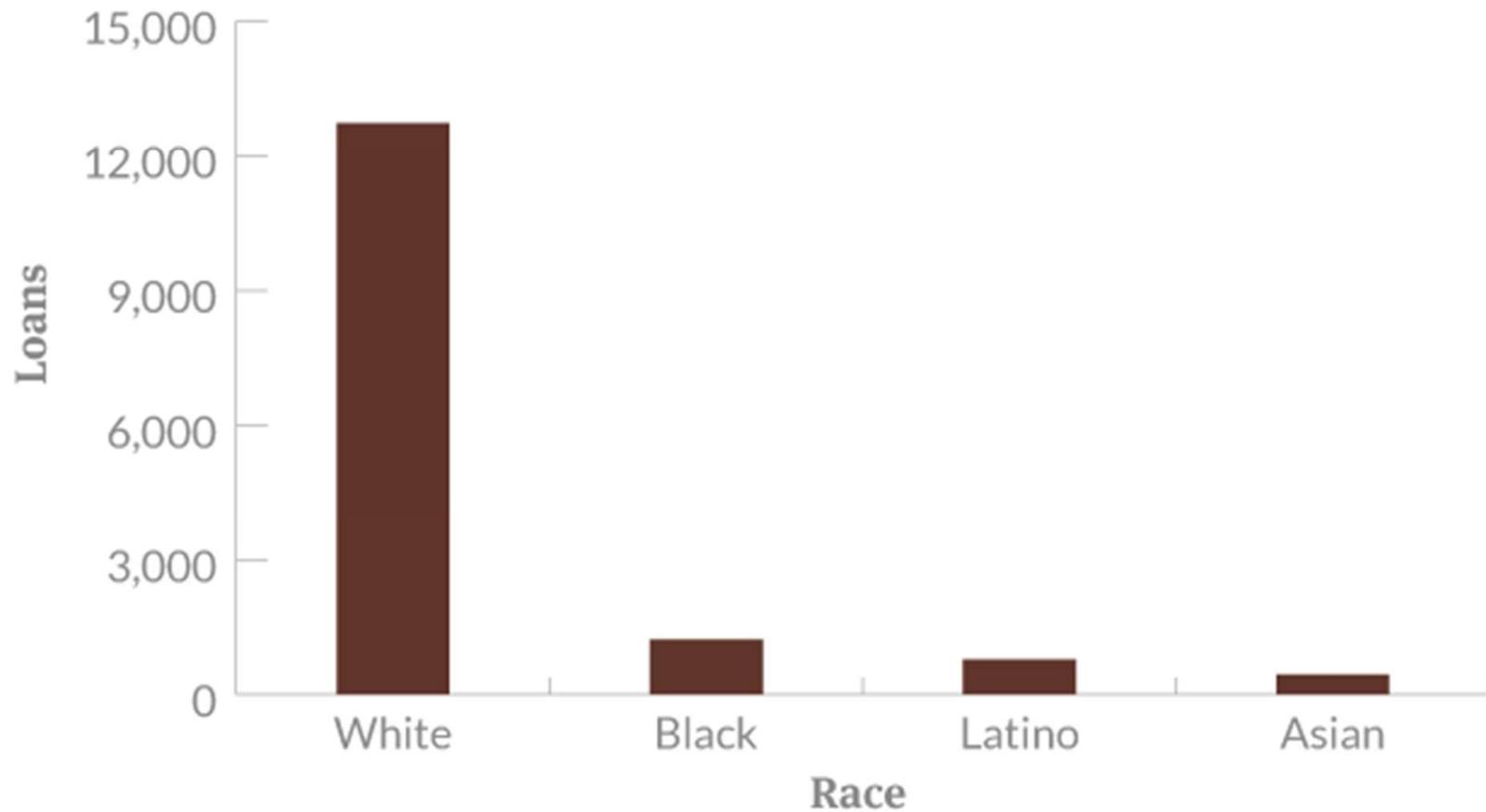
# Housing Disparities

- Redlining (denying loans based on maps of neighborhood deemed more likely to default on mortgage, often predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods) was made illegal, but discrimination persists.
  - Predatory loans in low income communities
  - Analysis of 61 metro areas found that Black applicants were turned away for mortgages/loans at significantly higher rates than White in 48 cities; Latinos in 25 cities, Asians in 9 cities, Native Americans in 3 cities (Center for Investigative Reporting, analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act records)
-

## Home Ownership Rate in 2020 (US Census Bureau)



## Conventional home purchase loans in Philadelphia, 2015 and 2016



Source: Reveal analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data

# Education Disparities

- From 1988 to 2016, the share of “intensely segregated” schools in which 90-100% of students are non-white more than tripled (Civil Rights Project, UCLA)
- High-poverty districts of mostly students of color receive \$1600 less per student than the national average. School districts that are predominantly white and poor receive \$140 less. (report from EdBuild)
- Black junior high and high school boys are likely to be seen as troublemakers, and their misbehavior more severe, than white counterparts for exactly the same behavior (research by Psychology Dept at UC Berkeley)
- Suspensions can cause a student to fall behind, which makes it more likely that they will not graduate high school and more likely to become incarcerated (school-to-prison pipeline)

**NATIONALLY**

**we spend about**

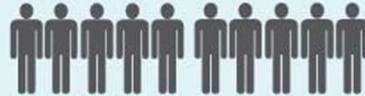
**\$1,000 LESS PER PUPIL**

**on districts serving the most students living in poverty**



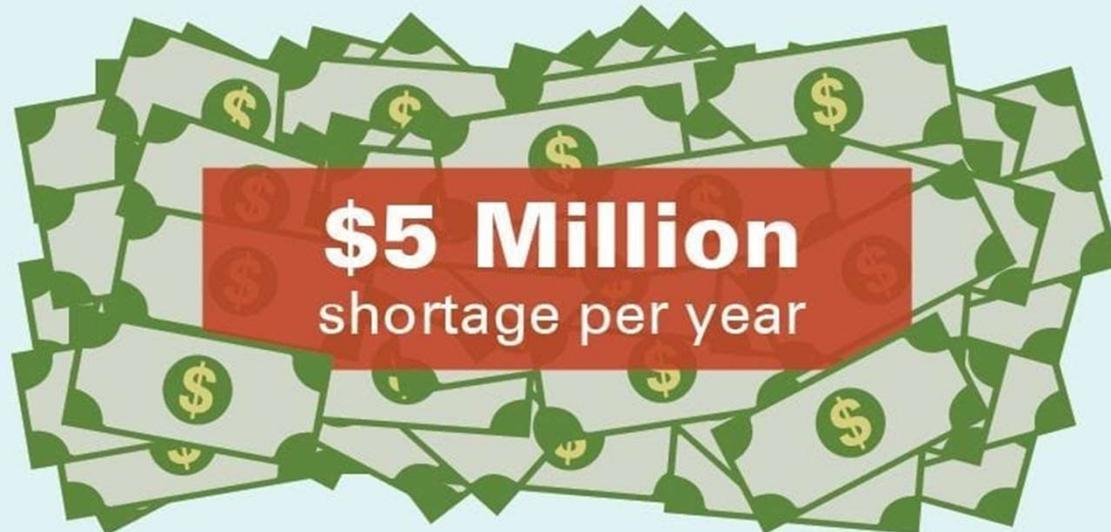
\$1,000

**X**



5,000 students

**=**

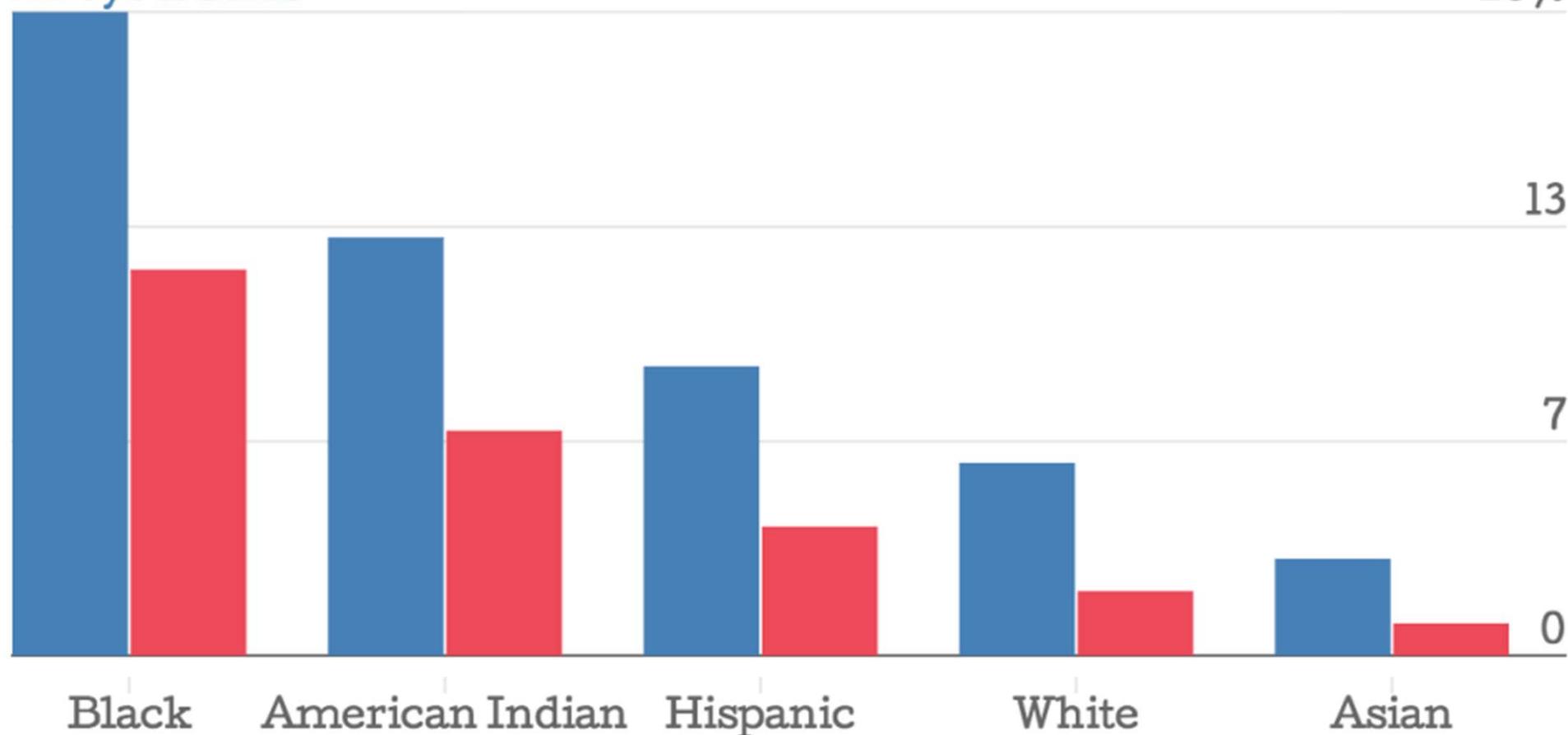


**\$5 Million**  
shortage per year

# Students Receiving Out-of-School Suspensions

■ Boys ■ Girls

20%



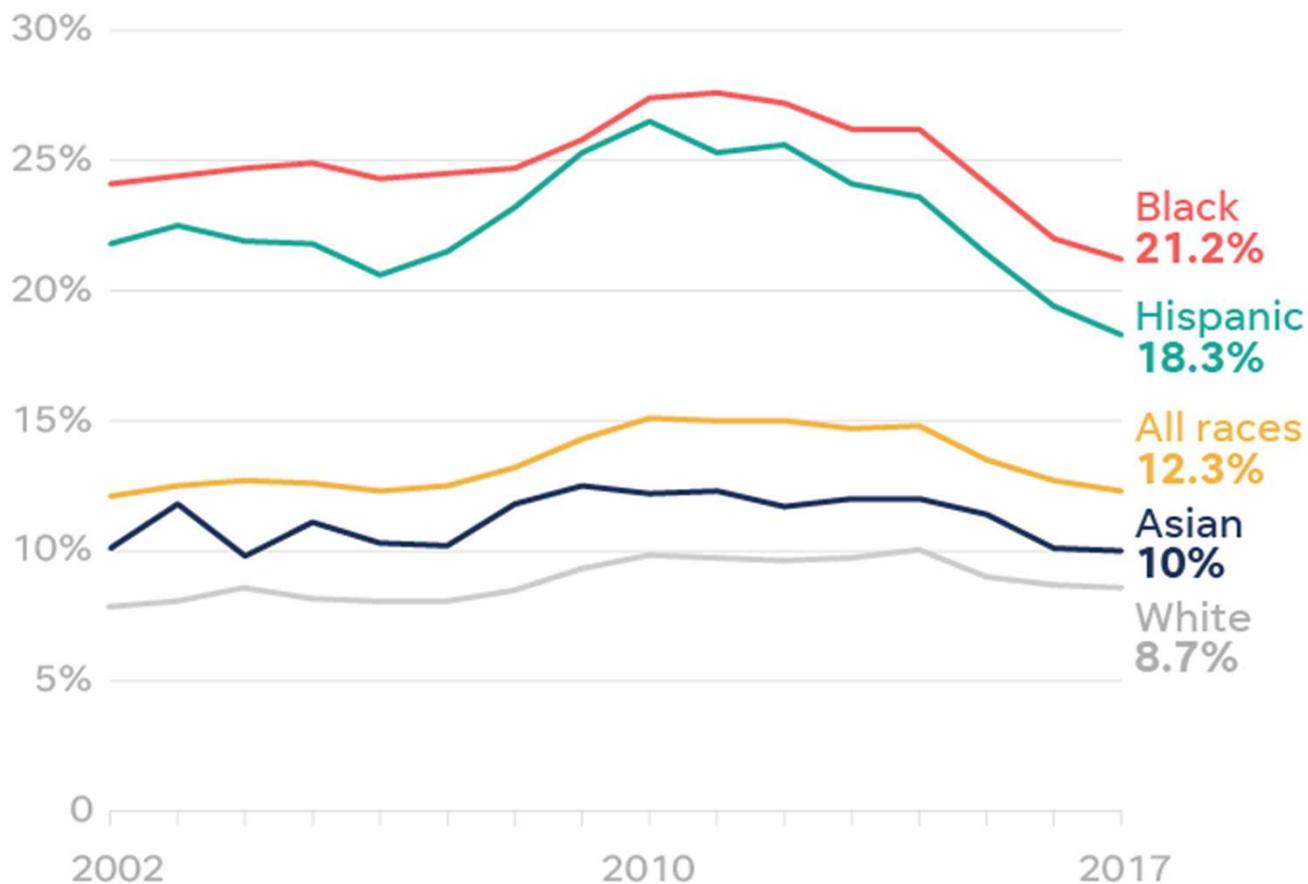
USNews

Lindsey Cook for USN&WR; Source: U.S. Department of Education

# Wealth Disparities

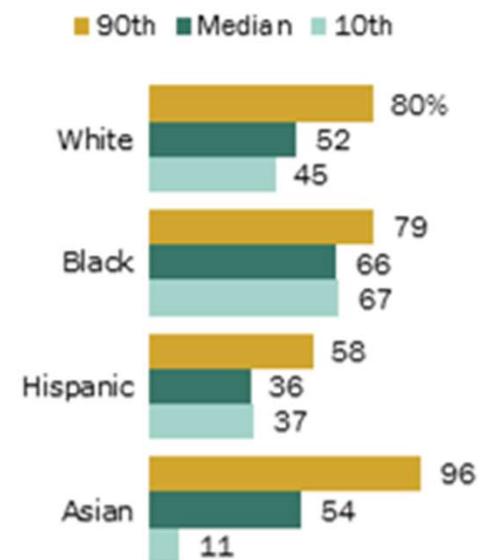
- The wealth gap between America's richest and poorer families more than doubled from 1989 to 2016 (Pew Research Center)
- In 2019, full-time, year-round working women earned 82% of what their male counterparts earn (US Census Bureau)
- In a study using fictitious resumes, if an applicant lives in a wealthier, more educated, or more white neighborhood, the callback rate from prospective employers rises, regardless of race. (National Bureau of Economic Research)
- The same study showed that an applicant with a white-sounding name yielded as many more callbacks as an additional 8 years of experience.
- Black workers earn less than white workers even when they have the same level of education (Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce and JPMorgan Chase & Co)

## Poverty Rate



## Incomes increased most for higher-income Asians, least for lower-income Asians

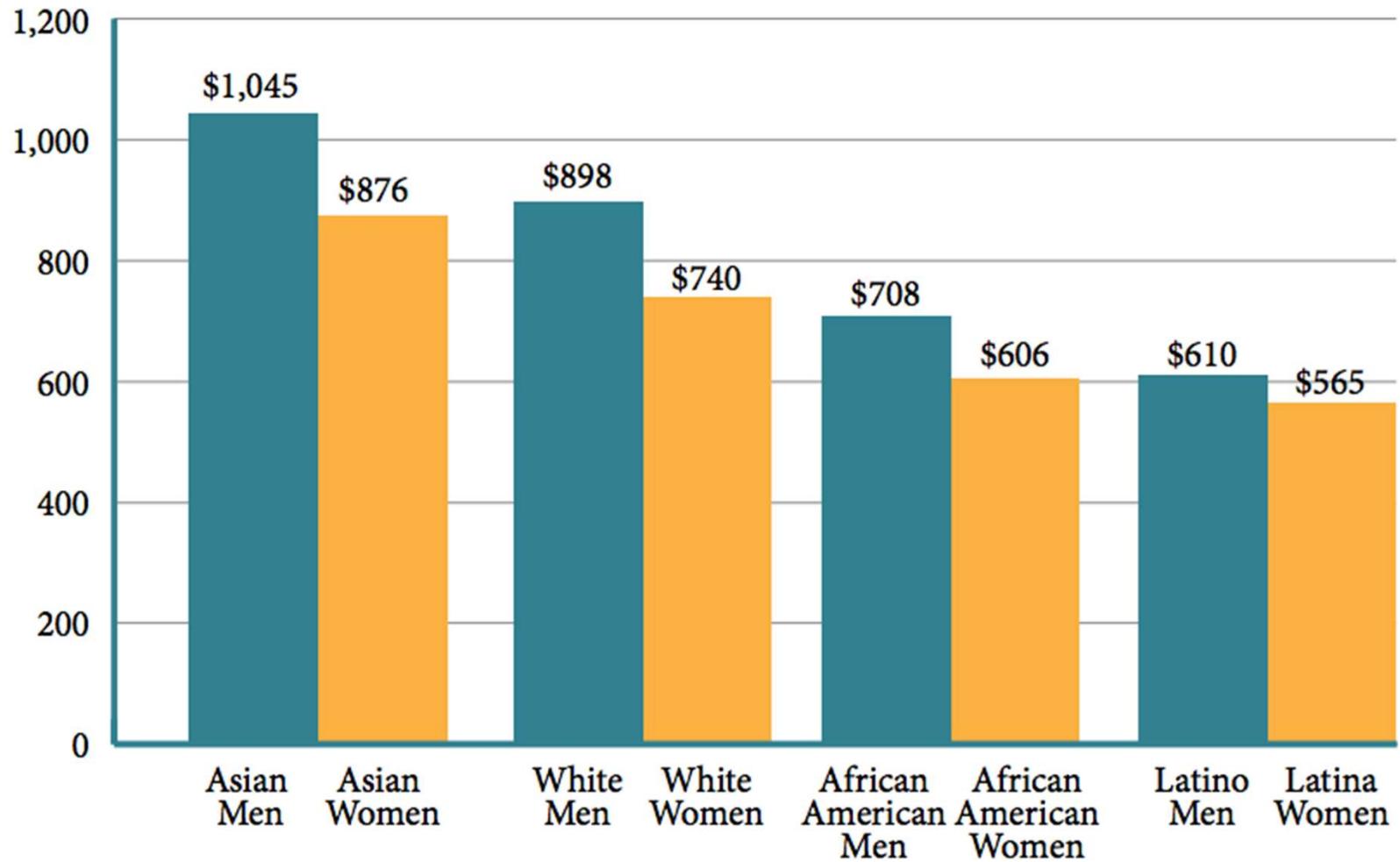
% change in income at selected percentiles, by race and ethnicity, 1970 to 2016



Note: Whites, blacks, and Asians include

**FIGURE 1: Median weekly earnings in the first quarter of 2014 by race and gender**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, (April 2014). Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers, First Quarter 2014. U.S. Department of Labor.

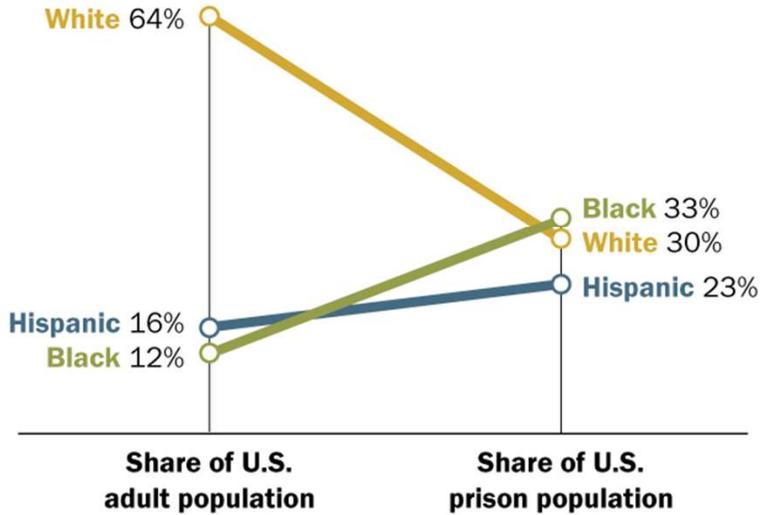


# Criminal Justice Disparities

- The US has the highest incarceration rate in the world - more than 2 million people imprisoned in 2016.
- Black adults are 5.9 times as likely to be incarcerated than white adults, Latinos are 3.1 times as likely (US Bureau of Justice Statistics)
- Black and Latino Americans are more likely than Caucasians to be denied bail, have higher money bond set, and be detained because they cannot pay their bond (NYU Journal of Legislation & Public Policy)
- Black men who commit the same crimes as white men receive federal prison sentences that are, on average nearly 20% longer (United States Sentencing Commission)
- Parole and probation officers are more likely to revoke people of color than white parolees for comparable behavior (Urban Institute)

# Blacks, Hispanics make up larger shares of prisoners than of U.S. population

*U.S. adult population and U.S. prison population by race and Hispanic origin, 2017*



Note: Whites and blacks include those who report being only one race and are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Prison population is defined as inmates sentenced to more than a year in federal or state prison.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

# Health Disparities

- Experiments like Tuskegee (Black men given syphilis without their knowledge), Henrietta Lacks (Black woman whose cancer cells were obtained and studied without her knowledge or consent), Dr. Marion Sims (gynecological studies done on enslaved Black women without anesthesia), Albert Kligman (dermatological studies done on inmates at Holmesburg Prison)
- Racial/ethnic minorities are twice as likely to have chronic diseases, i.e. hypertension, diabetes, asthma (*Biomed Research International*)
- Black Americans have higher death rates than all other racial/ethnic groups for many cancer types; Latinos and Native Americans have higher rate of certain cancer types; poverty and education levels regardless of race also affect cancer outcomes (National Cancer Institute)
- Implicit bias in doctors based on patients' ethnicity, gender, age, disability, socioeconomic status, weight, affecting medications prescribed, referrals to specialists, access to treatment (The Joint Commission)

**The CDC found that** American Indian/Alaska Native and Black women are 2 to 3 times as likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women.

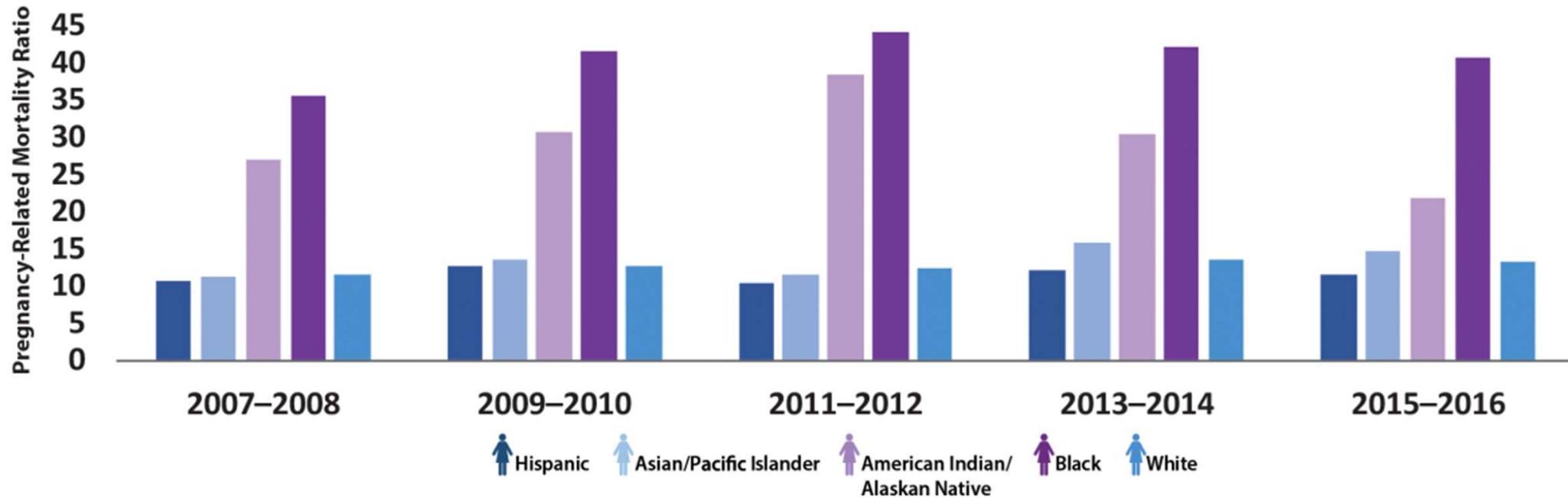
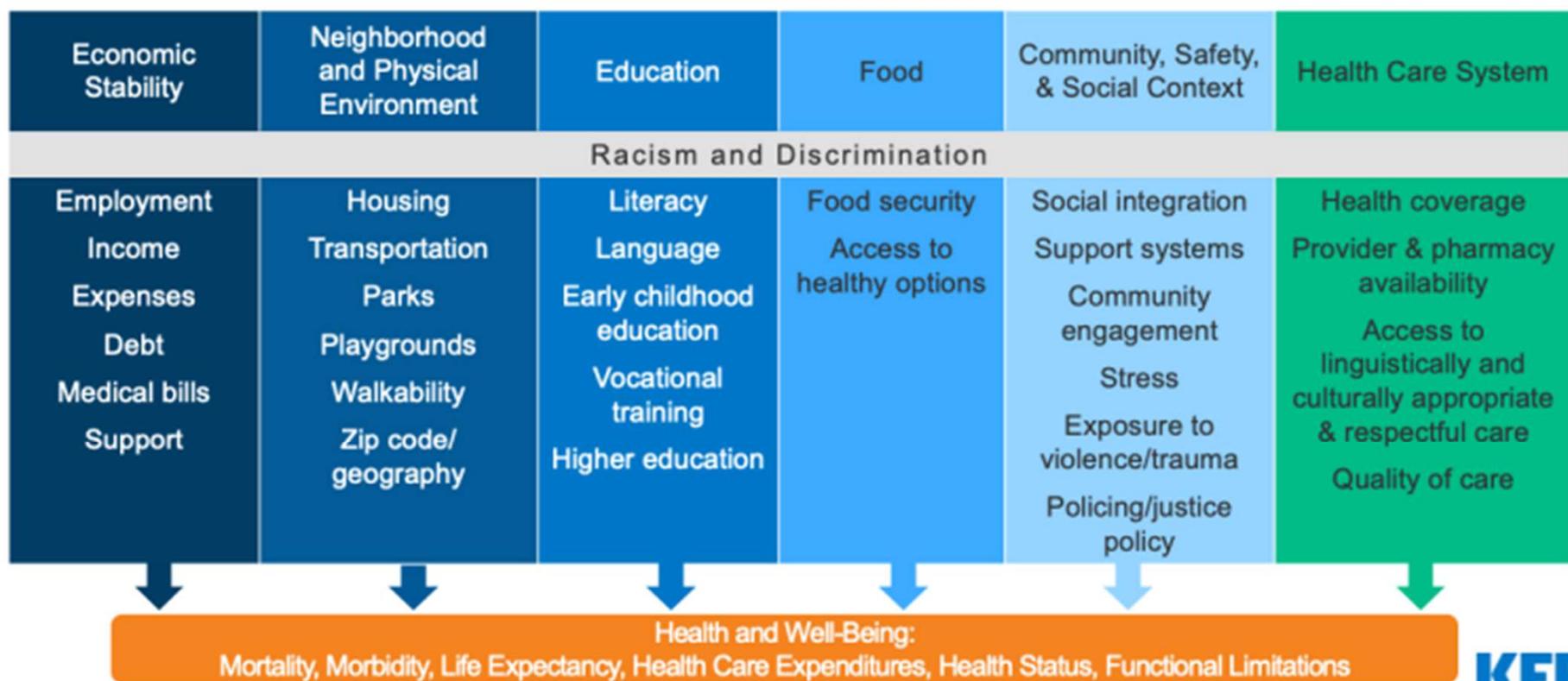


Figure 1

## Health Disparities are Driven by Social and Economic Inequities



# What is DEI?

## ➤ Diversity

- the representation of people from a variety of backgrounds – different races, ethnicities, genders, disabilities, religions, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and more – at all levels in an organization, including the leadership level.

## ➤ Equity

- justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedure, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems.
- allocates additional resources to groups that have been historically disadvantaged so that everyone has the opportunity to achieve the same outcome

## ➤ Inclusion/Belonging

- Everyone is welcome and has a seat at the table
- Everyone has the power to weigh in on important decisions and participate in development opportunities.

(adapted from US Chamber of Commerce website)

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# Repentance

- God's kindness (Rom 2:4) and the Holy Spirit's guidance (John 16:8) lead us to repentance
- The Word of God reveals what's truly in our heart (Heb 4:12)
- Corporate lament and repentance (Dan 9:3-5) and identificational repentance (Neh 1:6) involves grieving corporate sin and repenting on behalf of others.
- Repentance leads to action, like Zacchaeus pledging to give half his possessions to the poor and paying back 4 times the amount he has cheated anyone (Luke 19:8).
- Making things right can be an intentional corporate effort, like when the disciples chose a committee of 7 "known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom" to correct the discrimination that was occurring against Gentile widows being overlooked in food distribution (Acts 6:1-3).

# Changing Systems

[Zelophehad's daughters] came forward and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting and said, "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among Korah's followers, who banded together against the Lord, but he died for his own sin and left no sons. Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."

So Moses brought their case before the Lord, and the Lord said to him, "What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and give their father's inheritance to them.

"Say to the Israelites, 'If a man dies and leaves no son, give his inheritance to his daughter.'"

- Numbers 27:1b-8

# DEI in our Contexts

- What are barriers to diverse representation in our staff and clients?
  - How are decisions made? Who are the persons involved?
  - What are barriers to upward mobility within our organization?
  - Do we compensate staff exploitatively or generously?
  - How can we learn about each other's experiences and cultures?
  - How do our particular biases affect how we view others?
  - What are barriers do our clients face in accessing high-quality services?
  - How are these barriers connected to disparities in other realms and connected to historical/societal sins?
  - What can we do to eliminate barriers and close disparity gaps?
-

## DEI in Action

- Mentoring students in healthcare
  - Professional development of staff - conferences, coaching
  - Scholarships for higher education for staff with financial need
  - Language training for staff so that services are accessible in Spanish
  - Inclusion of patients and community members on the board, as volunteers, as guest speakers for staff devotionals and retreats
  - Provide educational programs, access to healthy food, fitness classes
  - Partnerships with community organizations, such as legal assistance, credit union, social service agencies, local churches
-

## Victory in Christ

“He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Col 2:13-15)

"Fallen humans are natural self-advocates. It flows out of us. Self-exonerating, self-defending. We minimize, we excuse, we explain away.... What if we never needed to advocate for ourselves because another had undertaken to do so? ...No blame shifting or excuses, the way our self-advocacies tend to operate, but perfectly just, pointing to his all-sufficient sacrifice and sufferings on the cross in our place? We would be free...

Do not minimize your sin or excuse it away. Raise no defense. Simply take it to the one who is already at the right hand of the Father, advocating for you on the basis of his own wounds. Let your own unrighteousness, in all your darkness and despair, drive you to Jesus Christ, the righteous, in all his brightness and sufficiency."

(Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*, p 92-94)