

Presbyterian Churches Splitting Over Sexuality

A Louisiana church voted earlier this week to leave the Presbyterian Church USA, making it the most recent to depart over scriptural disputes regarding sexuality.



The First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge, La., voted 425-61 earlier this week to end its 25-year association with the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), reported the Associated Press (AP). The breakaway congregation is the latest church to leave the nation's ninth largest denomination over interpretational disputes regarding Scripture. The next step for the Louisiana church is to request membership with the smaller but more conservative Evangelical Presbyterian Church. "This was a defining moment for us," the Rev. Gerrit Dawson, senior pastor at First Presbyterian, told the AP. "We want to conduct our mission with clarity about the lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Scriptures." In recent years the 2.3 million-member PCUSA has seen a decline in membership. Some conservatives fault the liberal direction the denomination has taken, namely in its avoidance of requiring clergy and lay officers to limit sex to man-woman marriages. Phil Josephson, a Presbyterian Church elder in Kansas City, Mo., told the AP: "We believe that PCUSA has moved away from being the true church and having the same biblical foundation."