

Racial Reconciliation

We have a long way to go in eliminating racial disparities among Christians. It's time for the body of Christ to focus on racial reconciliation.



For a long time one of the most customary clichés about American national life has been that the most segregated moment of any given week is 11 a.m. on Sunday. It is certainly accurate to say that American churchgoers still stick very much with their own kind when gathering for Christian worship. It is also surely true that, historically, white churchgoing habits reflected overall white attitudes toward African Americans.

Those attitudes, if generous, were often patronizing; and if not, they were probably outright racist. In fact, it is one of the historical curiosities of American religious history that the Azusa Street Pentecostal phenomenon of 1906 was widely denounced at the time precisely because, as the Los Angeles newspaper of the day, The Daily Times, put it: “Whites and blacks mix in religious frenzy.” In short, when Pentecost came to North America big-time in the early 20th century, it was striking for its departure from conventional racial separatism.

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