

Racial Segregation in the Church? The Unbiblical Move We Thought We Left Behind

The United States fought a long, painful battle to end racial segregation, recognizing it as a stain on the nation's moral conscience. The Civil Rights Movement, led by Christian figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., sought to unify people across racial lines, in accordance with the biblical teaching that all believers are one in Christ.

So why, in 2025, are we seeing a return to racially segregated gatherings in the church of all places?

Last week, Resurrection Oakland Church, a Presbyterian Church in America congregation in Oakland, California, hosted a "Black Fellowship Dinner" exclusively for black worshippers and their families. As reported by "The Christian Post," the event was part of the church's Black History Month celebration and featured Rev. Dr. Irwyn Ince as speaker. However, the decision to exclude non-black attendees has sparked serious concerns, even among fellow PCA leaders.

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Pastor Ryan Biese of First Presbyterian Church in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, questioned the theological reasoning behind such an event as reported by "The Daily Wire":

"The church is not confined to one nation. The church consists of all those who profess the true religion together with their children. So why is this congregation putting up a dividing wall between black worshipers and every other sort of worshiper?" He also pointed out that Ince, the PCA's Mission to North America coordinator with a salary nearing \$300,000 a

year, was actively participating in this controversial dinner.

The Bible's Stance on Racial Segregation

Scripture is crystal clear—racial division has no place in the body of Christ. Galatians 3:28 states: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” The very foundation of Christianity is unity through the redemptive work of Christ, breaking down barriers that once separated people.

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The PCA itself recognizes this truth. Its 2004 Pastoral Letter on Racism explicitly condemns “social exclusion on the basis of race, ethnicity or economic status” and urges the church to “confront and reject practices that divide rather than unite the body of Christ.” Yet, here we are, with a PCA church hosting an event that, by definition, is exclusionary.

A Dangerous Precedent

ResOak's pastors defended the event as a way to foster connection. Pastor Dave Lee admitted, “It may be jarring for some of you to hear that we're creating an event for black Christians,” but likened it to gender-based ministry groups. Pastor Brent Webster emphasized, “One of our core values here as a church is diversity.” But is this really diversity, or is it veiled division?

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Diversity does not mean separation. True biblical diversity is

found in unity—not in isolated affinity groups that reinforce racial lines. The church should be a beacon of racial reconciliation, demonstrating to the world what true unity looks like. Events that exclude certain races, no matter the intent, send the wrong message.

The U.S. already fought this battle. The church should not be regressing into old patterns of division, especially when Scripture commands us to do otherwise. Racial segregation—no matter how well-intentioned—runs counter to the very essence of Christianity.

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