

KENTUCKY: Gulnare Freewill Baptist church bans interracial couples

Written by David Edwards
Wednesday, 30 November 2011 00:00

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A small church in Pike County, Kentucky has voted to ban interracial couples from most church activities “to promote greater unity among the church body.”

Melvin Thompson, former pastor of Gulnare Freewill Baptist church, proposed the ban after Stella Harville brought her fiancée, Ticha Chikuni, to services in June. Harville, who goes by the name Suzie, played the piano while Chikuni sang.

Before stepping down as pastor in August, Thompson told Harville that her fiancée could not sing at the church again. Harville is white and Chikuni, a native of Zimbabwe, is black.

Last Sunday, church members voted 9-6 in favor of Thompson’s proposed ban. Others attending the church business meeting declined to take a stand on the issue.

“That the Gulnare Freewill Baptist Church does not condone interracial marriage,” the resolution states, according to WKYT.

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“Parties of such marriages will not be received as members, nor will they be used in worship services and other church functions, with the exception being funerals. All are welcome to our public worship services. This recommendation is not intended to judge the salvation of anyone, but is intended to promote greater unity among the church body and the community we serve.”

Harville [told The Kentucky Herald-Leader](#) that the decision is an embarrassment to God, the church and the whole community.

“It sure ain’t Christian,” she explained. “It ain’t nothing but the old devil working.”

Harville and Chikuni plan to marry in July, but they won’t be tying the knot in Pike County.

The U.S. Supreme Court declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional in a 1967 decision. By 2005, Stanford University sociologist Michael Rosenfeld [determined](#) that 7 percent of all marriages in the U.S. were interracial.

[Watch this video](#) from WKYT, broadcast Nov. 29, 2011.

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<http://www.fox.com/story/10112011/11/29/kentucky-campaigners-lead-battle-to-ban-interracial-couples-at-gulnare-freewill-baptist-church>