

The Menlo Park Difference

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It's been a long time since *Mr. Show with Bob and David* has been on HBO, but there are a few sketches that come to mind even now. Especially when I read about the PC(USA) in the news. In particular, "The Fairsley Difference":

One grocery store comes into prominence, and its hometown competitor goes out of business when the new store advertises how they are **different** than the others, because (among other things) their employees are free of active sores and lesions.

That's what it feels like to be a part of the PC(USA) sometimes. Quoting John Ortberg in [this RNS article](#) about why he led his mega Menlo Park church out of the denomination, he writes, "Surprisingly, there are many PC(USA)-ordained pastors who do not believe, for example, in the deity of Christ or in salvation through faith in Christ."

So, after years of bullying the denomination, of backroom meetings where powerful churches drew a line in the sand, telling us that if we voted to allow the ordination of LGBT deacons, elders, and ministers, they would pack up their toys and go home, all of a sudden when they're talking to the media, it's not about gays and lesbians at all? It's about the deity of Christ? And we don't believe in salvation through faith?

In order to join a PC(USA) church, you affirm the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Each week in worship, most Presbyterians affirm a creed, which often includes the deity of Christ and often salvation through faith.

And now, I'm feeling like old Mr. Gibbons, "We have apples! We've always had apples! Your children are safe here! No one is defecating in our aisles!"

In our church polity, we vote on many social issues. We discern the will of God, guided and instructed by the Holy Spirit. It has been the same for generations. If a particular congregation doesn't like how the national church votes, then they have a problem with our polity, not our theology. If a church wants to leave, then so be it.

They can pay for the property (which the PCUSA owns) and hopefully the dismissal will be gracious.

But quit lying about it on the way out. If you leave because you can't handle gays and lesbians in leadership, then be as honest about it with the press as you were with the rest of the denomination. And stop misrepresenting who we are.