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Ala. churches lead opposition to immigration law

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The Associated Press reports:

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) -- For some believers and church leaders, opposing Alabama's toughest-in-the-nation law against illegal immigration is a chance for Bible Belt redemption.

During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, many state churches didn't join the fight to end Jim Crow laws and racial segregation. Some cross-burning Ku Klux Klan members took off their hoods and sat in the pews with everyone else on Sunday mornings, and relatively few white congregations actively opposed segregation. Some black churches were hesitant to get involved for fear of white backlash.

Now that Alabama has passed what's widely considered the nation's most restrictive state law against illegal immigration, mainstream churches, faith-based organizations and individual members are leading opposition to the act. Some see their involvement as a way to avoid repeating mistakes of the past.

"I think what happened in the '60s may be a stimulus for the action that you have seen many of the churches taking on this," said Chriss H. Doss, an attorney and ordained Southern Baptist minister.

Matt Lacey, pastor of a United Methodist church once attended by Birmingham's infamous segregationist police commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor, said there are all sorts of reasons Alabama Christians are opposed to the law. Making amends for the past inaction of religious groups is among them, he said.

Read the full story here.

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