

Disciples pastor leaves Washington pulpit: Alvin O. Jackson of National City Christian Church

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The former moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has announced his plans to resign from a prominent Washington pulpit. Alvin O. Jackson, 54, told his congregation he would resign as senior pastor of National City Christian Church as of November 30.

In 1998, Jackson came to Washington from Memphis to become the first African-American pastor of the mostly white church that had been frequented by presidents and other powerful Washingtonians over the years. His goal was to make the congregation more multicultural.

"While not impossible, it is particularly difficult for a congregation with a long history to move beyond its past to embrace the future of a truly inclusive church," Jackson wrote in the letter. "I remain committed to that vision, but for now, it is a vision that eludes us at National City."

At the time he came to the church, the congregation was about 85 percent white. African-Americans and Hispanics now represent more than 30 percent of the congregation, said Melinda Mains, a spokeswoman for Jackson.

She said his departure did not have anything to do with his admission last year that he had used other ministers' sermons without giving them credit. Jackson took a leave of absence from his ministerial duties shortly after apologizing to his congregation last fall. *-Religion News Service*