

Blackface Boxing Match Hosted By Pastor Jeff Fugate At National Young Fundamentalist Conference Is Offensive

Southern Baptist pastor under fire after church staffer dons blackface for boxing skit during 'fundamentalists conference' pleads ignorance

- **The boxing match was intended to be a humorous skit during the national Young Fundamentalists Conference held this week in Lexington, Kentucky**
- **Pastor's assistant Joe Pickens donned the blackface while playing Mr T**
- **Pastor Jeff Fugate repeatedly apologized, tried to distance himself from the whole ordeal and claimed ignorance**

By [Ryan Gorman](#)

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The head of a Kentucky church is pleading 'ignorance' over a 'blackface boxing match' skit held during a religious conference this week.

Pastor Jeff Fugate, 49, of Lexington, oversaw the National Young Fundamentalists Conference at his [Clay Mills Road Baptist Church](#), but swore to MailOnline he was unaware of the Friday skit's contents while profusely apologizing for offending anyone.

Fugate said Pastor's assistant Joe Pickens donned the blackface to play Mr T, a black teen

'If we did something to offend someone, it was out of ignorance and I apologize,' Fugate said in one of more than a dozen apologies during his roughly 10 minute conversation with this reporter.

The pastor said that Pickens plays the villain in skits every year and that the skits have never cleared through him before, this year was no different.

‘I apologize if I offended someone, I don’t even know as a pastor what those skits will be,’ he insisted.

The skit, first made public by [Christian Nightmares](#), involved a blackfaced Pickens fighting a man acting as Curly from the ‘Three Stooges,’ Curly won in the end after a crushing uppercut caused the stunt double to backflip unconscious onto the mat.



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Let's get ready to rumble!: Pickens (right) squared off as Mr T against another church staffer playing the part of



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Sparring: The fight lasted three rounds during which the two combatants traded jabs until a stunt double tagged in for Pickens

Curly' was hoisted into the arm raising his arms in triumph as the churchgoers cheered him on, he was then awarded a championship belt and cheered out of the room.

When asked how a white man wearing blackface in the South could not raise any red flags, he pleaded ignorance.

'I am so sorry that I have offended anyone by doing something that would be ignorant,' Fugate pleaded. 'It was innocent, I promise you.'

Head of the church for 23 years, Fugate then tried to distance himself a bit from the whole ordeal by trying to explain Pickens' inexperience.

'[Pickens] just graduated last year from our bible college,' said Fugate. 'That guy is just a young assistant, he is not even a pastor... he's just an assistant.'

An email message to Pickens was not immediately returned. His pastor claimed the assistant was visiting sick children, but said he would have him return the message as soon as possible.



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Dragged off: The stunt double, pictured here being pulled out of the ring, was 'knocked unconscious' by 'Curly' to end the fight



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The champion: 'Curly' raises his arms in triumph as he accepts the championship belt

The only public comment from Pickens came in the form of a tweet captioning a head shot of him in blackface, boxing gloves and a robe.

'#NYFC 2014 fool! It's about to go down! Who thinks they can contend with the champ?'

His twitter feed has since been made private, but reaction was swift and harsh.

'There are no words. Oh wait... there's one. He actually used it himself, 'fool.' Racist also works,' tweeted @RevDaniel.

'I just don't understand a PASTOR of all people not understanding the wrongness of this,' @Rev Daniel wrote in a second tweet.



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Where it happened: The conference took place this week at Clays Mills Road Baptist Church, in Lexington, Kentucky

'How far under a rock do you have to live under to think this is okay?' Asked Mark Archibald.

Others said they were 'speechless' and 'shocked,' another tweeted him directly to ask 'are you insane?'

Fugate insisted a sizeable portion of his church is black, and that he has 'absolutely zero racism in [his] heart towards black people.'

'I don't know what to say, I didn't mean to offend anyone... I never had any thought of it until I got a couple of twitter messages,' he continued.

When asked if future skits will be cleared through him before being performed, he replied 'you bet.'



Joseph G Pickens
@josephgpickens



#NYFC 2014 fool! It's about to go down! Who thinks they can #contend with the champ???



© Twitter

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What was he thinking?: Pastor's assistant Joseph Pickens wore blackface during a boxing skit Friday at a Baptist conference held in Kentucky

The *National Young Fundamentalist Conference* will be held March 5-7 at the Clays Mill Road Baptist Church in Lexington, KY. Services will begin according to the following schedule:

March 5, Wednesday night	7:00PM
March 6, Thursday morning	9:00AM
Thursday evening	7:00PM
March 7, Friday morning	9:00AM

Registration:

Registered attendees will receive a CD, T-shirt, 3 meals (Wednesday evening after the service, Thursday lunch and dinner), Thursday afternoon activities and all of the services. Registration will be held at the following times:

March 5, 4:00PM – 7:00PM Clays Mill Road Baptist Church
The registration table at the church will also be open 45
minutes before each of the other services.

Speakers:

Dr. Jeff Fugate, Dr. James Jorgensen, Dr. Justin Cooper, Bro.
William Davis, Dr. Daryl Whitehouse, and Bro. Derek
Young.