



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

GRADYE PARSONS
STATED CLERK

June 27, 2013

The Reverend Dr. Jeffrey J. Jeremiah, Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567
Livonia, Michigan 48152-7912

Dear Jeff,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am writing to you in my role as Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] to object to the practice of Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) presbyteries receiving congregations of the PC(USA) that have not been dismissed by their PC(USA) presbytery of membership. Your response to my earlier email, raising this issue, suggested that the EPC was taking this action by claiming that these congregations are being received from “independency.” Such action is contrary to our polity and, I believe, your own polity as well.

The congregation’s presbytery of membership has the responsibility to coordinate, guide, encourage, support and, resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community. If a session or congregation expresses a desire to be dismissed from the PC(USA), the presbytery, in light of its mission, has the responsibility to counsel and consult with the session and congregation, and to ultimately determine whether a congregation should be dismissed to another denomination. Any decision to dismiss or dissolve a congregation resides, solely, with the presbytery.

A Presbyterian congregation, as I am sure you are aware, cannot dismiss, dissolve, disaffiliate, or transfer itself by its own action. Any vote taken by a PC(USA) congregation or session in no way removes the congregation from the jurisdiction of the PC(USA). Neither the congregation nor the session has the authority to make the congregation “independent” as the congregation or the EPC may suggest. We do not recognize the actions of the congregation and/or the EPC as releasing a PC(USA) congregation from the requirements and obligations of our *Book of Order*. If the EPC takes action to receive a non-dismissed PC(USA) congregation, such action is not recognized by us as a dismissal and the presbytery of membership will continue to fulfill its responsibility through its related processes, ecclesial and/or secular, through to completion.

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I ask that the EPC respect the polity and processes of the PC(USA). At such a time as a presbytery determines that a congregation is to be dismissed to the EPC, the presbytery will notify you.

As we have been sent into the world by our Lord, Jesus Christ, I pray that our denominations can offer a faithful witness to the world of a church for building up the body of Christ and not for tearing down.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gradye Parsons".

Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Cc:

Jerry Pillay, President and the Executive Committee, World Communion of Reformed Churches
The Reverend Dr. Setri Nyomi, General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches
General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, PC(USA)
PC(USA) Presbytery and Synod Stated Clerks and Executives