



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 29, 2007

The Reverend Jeffery Jeremiah  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
17197 N. Laurel Park Dr., Suite 567  
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear Jeff:

Greetings in the name of our Lord.

I still look forward to an opportunity for us to meet face to face, but even prior to that time I need to seek clarification from you about several issues related to EPC's proposed "transitional presbytery" and how that might relate to our churches seeking to be dismissed to the EPC through that presbytery. I obviously wish we were not dealing with these issues of division, but since we are, I hope we can do it in ways that do not damage the relationships between the PCUSA and the EPC.

After your December 20, 2007 letter appeared on the EPC's Web site our offices began to get inquiries as to the protocol of our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presbyteries transferring congregations to your proposed "transitional presbyteries." As I am sure you recall our polity limits our presbyteries to dismissing member congregations to ecclesiastical bodies "whose organization is conformed to the doctrines and order of this Church." We have always considered the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and its geographical presbyteries to fall into that definition.

We are being asked by our presbyteries to give them advice as to the polity propriety of transferring PCUSA congregations and pastors into a transitional "Presbytery." Given the church case law made in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. at the creation of the Presbyterian Church in America, there are a number of unanswered questions in the current context. Therefore I am hopeful that you can provide me with some clarity as to EPC's understanding of a "transitional presbytery."

When will the transitional presbytery be created?

What will be the relationship of a transitional presbytery to the EPC?

Will it be treated as a member presbytery? (power to ordain, receive, and discipline ministers, create new congregations, assess apportionments, release congregations).

The Reverend Jeffrey Jeremiah

January 29, 2007

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Will current EPC presbyteries be able to transfer congregations into a transitional presbytery?

What Office would act to receive congregations into transitional presbyteries?

Will congregations simultaneously be members of a geographical EPC presbytery and a transitional presbytery?

Will there be separate admission standards, or will the transitional presbytery accept the examination of the transferring presbyteries?

I am hopeful that you can give my offices some clarity that we may provide advice to our presbyteries in responding to requests to dismiss congregations and ministers to a transitional presbytery.

Cordially yours,



Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

March 28, 2007

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

Dear Jeff:

Thank you for your recent letter providing additional information about the proposal to create a Transitional Presbytery in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. I do understand that this proposal will be subject to further development, and I will appreciate receiving a copy of the finalized, or penultimate, version once you deem it to be appropriate. It will be helpful to both of us to be very clear about the nature of the presbytery to which some of our churches may be seeking to be dismissed, and our Advisory Committee on the Constitution will need this as they propose to our Assembly how to respond to questions of constitutional interpretation that are already pending on this matter.

I appreciate your commitment to maintain good relations between our two denominations and not to actively encourage churches within the PCUSA to withdraw to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. However, I am having a difficult time explaining this to many of our members when you and your moderator actively participate in events planned by those whose stated purpose is to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

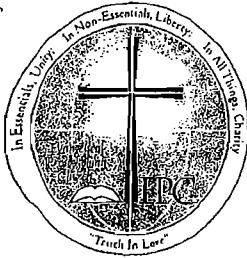
For the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) there is not a detailed process in our *Constitution* for the dismissal of congregations to another denomination. What is clear is that that action can only be taken by one of our presbyteries and that such a dismissal must be to another Reformed body of similar organization and doctrine. I am enclosing for your information a document entitled, "Dealing Pastorally with Troubled Churches," which makes suggestions to our presbyteries in dealing with these matters.

May God's richest blessings be with you during this season of Lent and may you find special joy in the Resurrection this Easter Sunday!

Cordially yours,

Clifton Kirkpatrick.  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
CK/cb

enclosure



# Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MAR 12 2007

STATED CLERK

March 8, 2007

Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
100 Witherspoon Street  
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Clifton,

I read with interest your interview that appeared in the Christian Post. Congratulations on the recent arrival of your newest grandchild!

As I respond to your letter of January 29, I'm afraid that I'm not able to answer all of your questions at this time. This is because the Transitional Presbytery proposal is still "in process." After the Committee on Administration approved the proposal and the Permanent Judicial Commission ruled that it was constitutional, we sent it to our presbyteries for their suggestions/questions during the January-February meeting cycle. Having received really good input, we're now engaged in a further development/refinement of the proposal. After Easter, the Committee on Administration will approve the finalized version of the proposal and it will then be reviewed by our Permanent Judicial Commission. I am confident that I can answer your questions after that review.

The questions I can answer: If the Transitional Presbytery proposal is approved,


1. The Transitional Presbytery will be created by an Act of the General Assembly at our June, 2007 meeting
2. The Commission that oversees the Transitional Presbytery will receive congregations and ministers into the Transitional Presbytery.
3. The Transitional Presbytery will accept the examination of the transferring presbyteries, with two additional requirements: 1) affirmation of the "Essentials of the Faith" without reservation, 2) affirmation that the Westminster Confession of Faith is the sole confessional standard.

Let me re-iterate that the Transitional Presbytery proposal is the EPC response to churches that have approached us about the possibility of affiliating with the EPC. While this proposal is an exception to our past practice, we are working within the boundaries of our constitutional "norm," as stated in our Book of Government. We do not solicit, recruit or initiate contact with

churches outside our denomination about affiliation. Although I have yet to see it in print, in all of my interviews I have made clear my goal to maintain cordial relations with you and the PCUSA.

Our desire is to enable a reception of churches that is amicable and honors our Lord. I know you are seeking a dismissal of churches that is the same. I'd like to dialogue with you about these unanswered questions you have to ensure we have the best opportunity to meet our goals, which I believe will glorify Christ and advance His kingdom work in this first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In preparation for that conversation, it would be most helpful to me if I knew the details of the process of dismissal you are directing from your office.

Sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey Jeremiah". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah  
Stated Clerk



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

May 23, 2007

Dr. Jeffrey J. Jeremiah, Stated Clerk  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567  
Livonia MI 48152

Dear Dr. Jeremiah:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior!

The Presbytery of Indian Nations received the Reverend Mateen A. Elass as minister member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). When a minister from another denomination seeks membership in one of our presbyteries we require a letter of good standing and removal from the rolls of the sending church. Reverend Elass took a call in the year 2000 as pastor of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church (EPC) in Illinois. His process to become a minister member of the Presbytery of Indian Nations is subject to his transfer from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

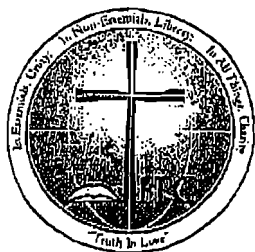
I'm cordially requesting, on behalf of the Presbytery of Indian Nations, a letter that attest that the Reverend Mateen A. Elass is a minister in good standing, and will be removed from the roles of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

May God richly bless you and the witness of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Cordially yours,

Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Cc: Jack Huntress, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Indian Nations



# Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

October 23, 2007

Arthur M. Martin, Jr. MD  
Presbytery of Mississippi  
710 South 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite A  
Hattiesburg, MS 39402

Dear Dr. Martin,

Thank you for your letter of September 24, which was received by my office, directed to our Committee on Administration and discussed on October 15.

You are correct in noting that we relate to one another through our memberships in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). However, we have never understood that this relationship means that our reception of churches into the EPC is conditioned upon any dispute a church might have with the denomination from which it has departed. The EPC does not recruit, solicit, seek out or initiate contact with any church outside our denomination. We take calls and offer help to churches that first seek us out, which is what Grace Chapel did. The National Transition Presbytery received their application for membership, found it in good order, and received the church and its pastor into the Presbytery. Having reviewed this process, the Committee on Administration does not believe that we have made an error in taking this action: Grace Chapel EPC is a member in good standing in the EPC.

While we are pleased to provide you this response, it is not our practice to have our General Assembly respond to enquiries from presbyteries of other denominations. Any further correspondence about Grace Chapel EPC should be directed to John Adamson, chair of the National Transition Presbytery.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah  
Executive Pastor/Stated Clerk

C: Mr. John Adamson  
[adamson.j@comcast.net](mailto:adamson.j@comcast.net)

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive  
Suite 567  
Livonia, MI 48152

Re" October 23, 2007 to Arthur Martin

Dear Dr. Jeremiah:

I am troubled by the second paragraph of that letter where you represent that: "The EPC does not recruit, solicit, seek out or initiate contact with any church outside our denomination."

I do not believe this to be an accurate statement. At the New Wineskin's gatherings in Tulsa and in Orlando, your GA Moderator and other GA level officers were present and doing exactly such solicitation. I am in possession of a very slick folder entitled "Information for Inquiring Congregations" which actually questions the actions of our 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Birmingham. That folder contains CD's with forms and applications for admission.

Finally, the EPC's 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly took action to create a New Wineskins Transitional Presbytery to receive PCUSA congregations into the EPC. These are not actions consistent with your statement.

I have several times requested that you and I sit down and discuss this situation and reiterate that request today. This situation is destruction to US based members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

I hope to hear a substantive response.

Cordially,

Clifton Kirkpatrick





PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

November 30, 2007

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567  
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear Jeff:

May this Advent Season be a time of hope and renewal for you!

As you know, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its related authoritative interpretations make provision for PC(USA) presbyteries to dismiss congregations to another Reformed body of similar doctrine and organization. A number of congregations have been transferred in accord with our Constitution to presbyteries of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) in the past year. However, in recent months the Office of the General Assembly has received complaints from our presbyteries concerning the reception of congregations and ministers by the EPC prior to Constitutional release by PC(USA) presbyteries. We have also received information that Evangelical Presbyterian Church representatives have been actively recruiting, seeking, and initiating contact with PC(USA) congregations to encourage their leaving this denomination.

Both practices are contrary to the principles and expectations of our respective *Books of Order*.

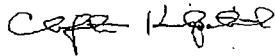
I am writing to request that your office advise your presbyteries – including the transitional presbytery – they should abide by the processes in our *Books of Order*.

If this pattern continues unabated, I expect one or more of our presbyteries will overture the 218th General Assembly of the PC(USA) next summer, requesting that the assembly examine the basis of the PC(USA)'s relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Such examination might well result in the 218th General Assembly taking action that would adversely affect the relationship between our two communions and the possibility of being able to transfer congregations between our presbyteries in the future. You may be aware that just over thirty years ago, the 199th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America considered just such an action.

Dr. Jeffrey Jeremiah  
November 30, 2007  
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I also reiterate my invitation to you to come to Louisville that we might discuss how to resolve this current situation in the spirit of Christ and of our common commitment to fellowship with one another in the Reformed community.

Cordially,



Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



cc: Mark, Gradye, Jill, Loyda, Sharon  
Marcia, Doska

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 3, 2008

The Reverend Jeffrey Jeremiah, Stated Clerk  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
17197 N. Laurel Park Drive, Suite 567  
Livonia, MI 48152

Dear Jeff:

As we begin a new year, I wish you God's blessings on your ministry.

I am in receipt of your December 18 response to my letter, for which I am grateful. However, I continue to be concerned about the dynamics between our two denominations.

You note that you received my letter on November 30, 2007. In the two weeks that followed the receipt of my letter, I received strong expressions of concern from two of our presbyteries about your "presenting" the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to PC(USA) congregations in Florida and Kansas, both of which also had an abundance of interpretive material that had obviously been provided to encourage them to seek transfer to the EPC. That kind of activity, exacerbated by EPC presbyteries "receiving" congregations that have not been dismissed by PC(USA) presbyteries is simply creating a climate of distrust that is helpful to neither of our denominations.

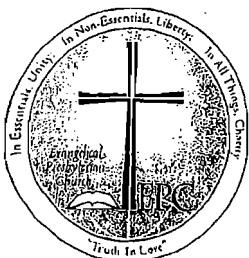
My concern was heightened dramatically when my office received a draft overture asking the 218th General Assembly (2008) to withdraw "in correspondence" rights and privileges from the EPC. I do not know whether such an overture would pass the General Assembly, but it is the first time in my service the prospect has ever been seriously raised as a possibility. The impact of such an overture, if passed, would be that our presbyteries would be prohibited from being able to dismiss congregations to the EPC, and that would not be good for either of us.

Jeff, we have been down this road before in the relationship between our two denominations, and we need to learn from those experiences. Following the reunion of the PC(USA), we moved to a period of better relations between our two denominations. I still remember fondly your predecessor, Ed Davis, joining us as a very helpful ecumenical delegate to our General Assembly in Charlotte. While there will undoubtedly be tensions between some of our churches, I hope we can find a path to deal with one another as entities that respect the integrity of each other's order and ministry.

I do believe there is value in our meeting together, but even if that does not happen, I hope that we would at least be able to "speak the truth in love" to one another and to respect each other's governing bodies as fellow members of the body of Christ. To let these circumstances continue to escalate is not likely to advance the mission of either of our denominations.

Cordially yours,

Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**RECEIVED**

DEC 27 2007

**STATED CLERK**

December 18, 2007

Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
100 Witherspoon Street  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396

Dear Clifton,

While Ms. Brooks emailed me your November 30 letter, I was not able to review it until Tuesday, December 11. The contents and tone of your letter require a response.

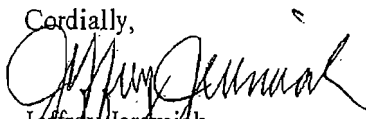
You allege that "EPC representatives have been actively recruiting, seeking, and initiating contacts with PC(USA) congregations to encourage their leaving this denomination." In the EPC, we do not solicit, initiate contact or recruit churches and leaders outside our denomination. We do respond to enquiries and accept invitations from the elected leadership of local churches to answer questions about, and present the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to them. I would appreciate substantiation of this allegation so that we can adequately respond to it. If no substantiation is forthcoming, a retraction is expected.

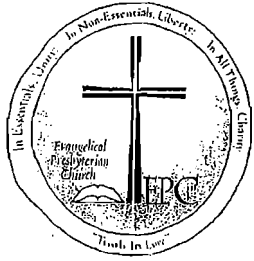
You also state that we are receiving congregations prior to "constitutional release" by their PCUSA presbytery. We have received churches and ministers pending their dismissal from the PCUSA, in part because past history tells us that some PCUSA presbyteries will not dismiss until after we've taken action to show that the way is clear for the minister and/or congregation to be received.

Your letter gives the impression that it is actions of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church that are causing churches to depart the PCUSA. This is simply not true. Again, we are simply responding to leaders and congregations who are finding it increasingly difficult to remain in the PCUSA.

It would be helpful to me if you could respond to these issues of concern before I consider meeting with you. Much has happened since I offered to meet with you in Seattle over Thanksgiving weekend of 2007. I hope these concerns can be addressed and resolved.

Cordially,

  
Jeffrey Jeremiah  
Executive Pastor / Stated Clerk



# Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 31, 2008

Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
100 Witherspoon Street  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396

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FEB 4 - 2008

STATE CLERK

Dear Clifton,

I am in receipt of your letter of January 3, which I received in the office on January 10. I was disappointed to find that incorrect information about the ministry of the EPC is being used in a way that can only produce dissension and potential division in the relationship between the EPC and the PCUSA.

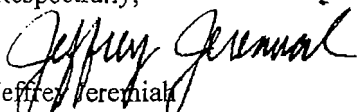
In response to my request for evidence that EPC leaders are soliciting, initiating contact and recruiting PCUSA churches in an effort to bring them into the EPC, you cited complaints by two presbyteries about my activities since November 30. My involvement at Covenant - Ft. Myers, FL is consistent with that of EPC leaders in the past year. At the invitation of the elected spiritual leadership of the church, we come to congregational information meetings that are open to the public to present and answer questions about the EPC. Any materials that are made available to the congregation are created and produced by the leadership of the host church, not by the EPC. The EPC produces no materials about the PCUSA. You state that a presbytery in Kansas complained of my activities presenting the EPC to PCUSA churches there. I have never been to a PCUSA church in Kansas.

I assumed that our correspondence would not only be open and honest, but also respectful of each other. I was further disappointed to learn on December 17 and 18 that your November 30 letter addressed to the EPC was distributed by your office to presbytery leadership across the PCUSA, and even to local PCUSA churches. It is difficult to see how distribution of a letter addressed to my office, given that it contains inaccurate information, can have anything but a negative impact on the relationship between the PCUSA and the EPC.

To insist that our activities are causing churches to depart the PCUSA is simply not true. We do not solicit, initiate contact or recruit churches to come into the EPC. We do respond to enquiries and invitations from hurting and struggling congregations.

In light of these realities, I do not believe that continued correspondence would be beneficial. When we are presented with accurate information and our correspondence is treated fairly and respectfully, we will willingly seek to engage the PCUSA in a way that we hope will mitigate distrust between our denominations.

Respectfully,

  
Jeffrey Jeremiah  
Executive Pastor / Stated Clerk