

## Why we are Continuing Faithful, fruitful ministry in the PCUSA where God has placed us

*The PCUSA is NOT apostate or heretical. It's Confessional, creedal foundation is orthodox....*

*The call of the Christian, of congregations is to contend for the faith. This includes within as well as outside the church. (Old Testament prophets, to the churches in Revelation 2 & 3*

*“You stand before one of two options. You can either leave or you can continue the battle, (like a Marine at his post) but you can never be free from the battle until the day you die and become part of the church that is called the Church Triumphant. Right now you are part of what is called the Church Militant. The word militant means exactly **that - we are in a combat.** Life is difficult. You will never find a place— if you are a practicing, witnessing, Christian— where the current today is going **with you in the Western world.** It's not going to happen. You've got one of two choices, to either seek that greener pasture in which you'll then have to seek greener pasture and greener pasture and sooner or later you will cease being a Christian. Or to decide: look, this is a good hill on which to die”.*

Rev. Dr. James Edwards, Bruner-Welch Professor Theology, Whitworth University, Spokane, WA

“There is no perfect church, in the Old Testament, the New Testament, the American church today. I am Presbyterian [believe in sovereignty of God] I am here. I took vows and am keeping them. There are no conditions on these vows. Schism is the chief sin and nothing good comes of it – damage to relationships, pain, separation, disillusionment. Only self-righteousness. And Christ was not too kind to those people!”

Rev. Dr. Eugene Peterson, Presbyterian Pastor, former Professor, writer of *The Message* translation of the Bible

We need to remember that the Christian church itself is a mission field. The turbulent line of history goes through the church and therefore we should not be surprised, nor should we become disoriented, by the fact that every cultural wind and advocacy of society as a whole is a challenging reality in the daily life of the Christian church. Our tasks are to stay faithful to the Biblical witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, to listen to all who bring their concerns and hurts with them, to share the hope in Christ that is greater than we are and is by God's grace able to integrate the parts of our lives that sometimes seem to us to be fragments. Jesus is the Redeemer who heals brokenness and who draws us together in his forever family. This is the central fact that makes all the difference.

Someone asked me just this summer, “Do you ever think about leaving the Presbyterian Church when your General Assembly passes resolutions that you feel are wrong headed?” I answered, “No,” because the secret of the future health of our national church is not found in a two-week meeting..., but in each local congregation. As long as the Gospel can be preached in a local church then the whole church can be renewed; and, since the Gospel can be affirmed in the local church, then why should I leave this windy place for another windy place? I want to stay and watch what happens when lives are changed by Christ's love. I cannot think of a better place for this to happen.”

Rev. Dr. Earl Palmer, Former Sr. Pastor University Presbyterian Church, Seattle, WA  
Interim Preaching Pastor, National Presbyterian Church; Excerpted from *Presbyterian Outlook*, 11-17-08 “The Church in a Windy Place”

“I (and our congregation) am not in favor of leaving right now. Enormous time, effort money, energy are required and yet result in collateral damage to the church, its mission and witness. We do not see a better place to go. The reality in the EPC for women, especially especially as elders and pastors. But

we ARE excited and energized with many in the PCUSA to focus on being a missional church, in the movement of Presbyterian Global Fellowship.” [www.presbyterianglobalfellowship.org](http://www.presbyterianglobalfellowship.org)

Rev. Mike McClenahan, Sr. Pastor, Solona Beach Presbyterian Church,  
(Close to verbatim comments from San Diego presbytery discussion)

First, when you look at the churches in Revelation their issues very closely resemble the issues in the PCUSA - Anti-nomianism-- the Nicolaitans, Jezebel in the church, The preaching of Balem. What did the Lord of the church say to the churches? Not leave these evil, doctrinally wrong people. No, the Lord of the church said to the churches things like. Return to your first love. *Do the things you used to do, before, when you were on fire with me, Become hot or cold but do not remain lukewarm. Strengthen the things that remain.*

I have found that when our local church here in Downingtown, PA has: returned to Jesus Christ caught the fire of the Holy Spirit, has become hot for the Lord is strengthening our roots in Jesus Christ and allowing the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit

As a result we are growing with more than 70 new folks, people are coming to Christ.

Life long Presbyterians are making the 18 inch migration from their heads to their hearts and committing their lives to Jesus Christ and inviting him into their hearts.

Jesus is so alive in the church the denomination is not even an issue. We are connected to 53 other churches in the Donegal Presbytery and intentional about those connections. We are therefore having a very positive effect on the whole Presbytery.

, concerning leaving the PCUSA and going to the EPC. These are my discoveries when I did a thorough investigation into the denomination. The largest Presbytery in the denomination, the Presbytery of the South, and another do not allow the ordination of women to office of Teaching elder/pastor-. I was a personal friend of the three men who began the EPC and in fact had pizza with them in Detroit when they left the GA and began the EPC. They did it so that there would be an alternative to the PCA (who do not ordain women to any office) and that the EPC would make ordination of women a "non-essential". The denomination says it believes in women's ordination (I do with all my biblical heart) but they are not living that out and now some are considering NON ordination of women teaching elders as an Essential. At last count there were only 2 - women ordained in the EPC installed in a congregation and most of them were ministers to children.

Therefore, to leave the PCUSA and go into the EPC puts our ordained sisters in an ecclesiastical limbo and thwarts those called to the ministry. I can't do that.

I would be glad to talk personally with any in a church struggling with leaving. I was a part of a congregation that divided over this. The people that left (500) split again six months later. Meanwhile the people who remained (1400) re-established our foundation in Jesus Christ, and are thriving today. Dr. C. Patrick Hartsock, Central Presbyterian Church, Downingtown, PA

*“The church cannot be without evil people. Those fanatics who don’t want to tolerate any weeds end up with no wheat either.” WA 38,56033[1538] cited in Dale Bruner’s Matthew commentary*

*Martin Luther*

St. Augustine taught *spiritual* separation of forbearance not *physical* separation of schism/departure for a ‘purer’ group (later referred to as a sect by Reformers)

“There are within the church both good and bad, as I often express it, wheat and chaff. Let no one leave the floor before the time, let him bear with the chaff in the time of threshing, let him bear with it in the floor. For in the barn he will have none of it to bear with....There will then be a bodily separation too, which a spiritual separation now precedes. In heart be always separated from the bad, in body be united with them for a time, only with caution.”

St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in 300’s A.D. Aug., Serm 38[88]:19:385cf 21f:386, 25388: