

6. Other comments about the denominational discernment process or decision?

I think that many of the members and churches the PCUSA has lost is due to the radical and worldly changes to the Book of Order. At the present rate the PCUSA will not exist as a viable long-standing denomination. / Since the 1983 merge, PCUSA has failed to be a denomination who shows any strength through growth and desirability to join. It has existed off prior success of past endeavors.

I've been praying for sometime for an outpouring of the Spirit on CHPC and I think it is coming through the discernment process. No matter what happens I think CHPC will be a stronger body of the church universal. I sense a unity in our body that hasn't been there for a long while.

We need to stand up for what is right – fully knowing that we cannot be “holier than thou.”

Concern and hope: Leaders – Encourage others 1) to seek God's will and not theirs
2) Listen to others 3) Encourage grace, truth and love no matter what course is taken – spirit of unity

I am concerned that whatever denomination we affiliate with be motivated to pursue the following: True racial blending – churches that reflect all tribes, tongues, nations; Relevant, courageous conversation regarding homosexuality and the church's response – how to love, talk, support, stand firm, etc.; Innovative, bold ministry

Pastor Drew is cool. Well maybe not “cool,” but I am really glad he is leading us through this process. I think I believe the same about all the leaders at CHPC.

The Denominational Affiliation matters: Hiring Senior Pastor positions; Reputation; Christians choosing church affiliation; Perhaps some Resource issues

The church/ congregation needs to understand all implications of breaking with PCUSA (pensions for retired missionaries, ownership of church property and financial ramifications of property ownership)

Has God removed our call to the PCUSA to be salt, light and work for renewal? Is God calling us to refine our focus to spreading of salt, light and gospel sharing in our neighborhoods, workplaces and homes?

Is it more or less a foregone conclusion that we will be leaving PCUSA?

Main Concern – High standard by which a congregation can be dismissed. 50% of Active Members voting 2/3 in the affirmative. Of those voting at least 90% in the affirmative And As little as 25 members dissenting CHPC is called to pay. Example 25% of 1.2 Million!!

This has been an incredibly open and thorough process. Special “Thank Yous” to y’all – the 8 members of the Discernment Team, the Session and CHPC leadership. May God’s hand continue to be upon us throughout.

If we leave the PCUSA I pray we can leave as one united body – I don’t think we can weather another split.

I cry for us. What would salt do?

What structural component of another Denomination will maintain our Biblical/Theological beliefs as contrasted by the PCUSA changes that take our time & resources to unsuccessfully maintain our beliefs?

After 19 years at CHPC I think we may be addicted to pursuing radical changes from the MAT process, to the staff and property restructuring, to this and others in-between. I think some of it has to do with our intellectual drive to find the right answers. And while there were good things that happened as part of those pursuits, I wonder if we need to focus less on macro scaled change and more time and intention on the small life changes that we don’t do once and move on from, but that are integrated into our very DNA.

If we want to connect in Jesus no matter our differences, then we have listen to those we know and those we don’t more. And sometimes those differences will make us uncomfortable, will cause us doubt and will strain relationships. Those differences will humble us to know that even though it seems impossible God loves all.

If we strive to serve the world like Jesus no matter the cost, we know it will cost us time, resources, energy, sacrifice. It will look different that it does now. We will be challenged and need teachable hearts. We will need to work with other congregations and organizations who are better at certain things than we are.

If we celebrate God no matter our circumstances, then worship will change because the focus will be of honoring the attribute of God. It will change the words in our songs from those that are focused on us to words centered on Jesus. It will change our attitudes from those of consumers, chatting through boring parts and griping about a guitar being out of tune to one of awe and love and humility filled people expectant of God’s presence and voice. It will ebb and flow from raucous full body shouts of joy, to barely audible whispers of adoration.

None these things will happen overnight, none of them hinge on our denominational affiliation, none of them are easy. I do still whole-heartedly feel that prayer to be a true call of God. My question now is how do I live it out and how does CHPC live it out.

Thank you for your service to CHPC. As more and more evangelicals depart for the EPC and ECO, the PCUSA leaders are becoming more bold — ignoring the Constitution (both the Confessions and the Book of Order) and getting away with it — and becoming more vindictive toward those who are leaving. We need to be praying for other evangelical who cannot leave the denomination as well as for churches like ours in the discernment process.

We believe CHPC needs to leave PCUSA. The big issue is where we go from here.

The reasons I've heard for leaving the PCUSA do not seem remotely important compared to the work we are doing now. The focus we are giving on SOME of PCUSA leaders' beliefs is hurting the core of our Church's mission. Leaving the PCUSA because we don't like every decision they make, looks to me, like a child running away because she didn't get her way. (though I admire the calm, reflective way the D-Team has conducted matters). If we want to grow as a community (and country for that matter), we need learn to respect the leaders we prayerfully elected and God ordained, pray for them, and work to change the things we don't like. We are lucky as a denomination to be able to speak how we feel, vote about decisions, and be directly involved in those decisions. Its a beautiful thing and very rare. This system falls apart when we reject all decisions the leaders make. What is to stop every church from splitting off one by one until everyone is just alone with God and their Bibles and their own Personally Important and Absolutely Correct opinions. Is that Christ-like thinking? I think such a large body of believers is what keeps us all humble and makes it easier for God's Spirit to work. If we are missing body parts, we do not work efficiently. Do we think God Cannot change what he doesn't like? Do we think that in a huge body of Christians praying in Earnest, isn't good enough to make the right decisions for a time? Do we not believe God cannot work in such an environment? I am NOT disgusted by what is happening at the PCUSA, even though I may disagree with some their decisions. Its a process; a story of growth, of Pain and Redemption. It is as beautifully Human as David's reign of failing and rebuilding. It is, itself a Psalm, full of heartbreaking, mistakes, grace, and humility. I love the story God is writing. Its perfect because He is perfect. Whatever WE do; ugly or beautiful will be MADE into something MAGNIFICENT because that is God's character. I DON'T believe CHPC is behaving in a disgusting way either. But something about the content of the discernment gives me a truly, uneasy, bad feeling in my stomach that I cannot pray away; the kind that only occurs when something is very wrong. I don't remember a time when I felt this way that the Holy Spirit wasn't trying to tell me something. Pray that above all, that THIS Body will choose the Will of God, but I feeling strongly that leaving the PCUSA is not God's will at this time. Thank you for the time and energy and prayer that you, The D-team, are giving to this matter. I know it isn't easy. And thank you for asking my opinion.

I'm saddened. This has been coming on for many years and I don't foresee PCUSA changing back in any short amount of time. If I leave CHPC, I will leave the Presbyterian faith.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts surrounding the Discernment process. I want to thank the D-Team for their hard work, and I pray for the members of the D-Team and the church as a whole that we follow God's will.

"Christ never spoke about homosexuality. It also seems clear that the church and discernment team has already taken a position. Therefore, why call it a discernment

team? Why not re-name it for what it is, like Directional Leadership Team or something like that?"

Thanks for your devotion to task.

I think this whole process has taken energy, time and passion from true ministry

Regarding the theological issue of Doctrine of Sin, I need further understanding of "self affirming, avowed homosexuality" as a sin. For example, are we distinguishing between individuals who experience same-sex attraction but who remain celibate and those who are actively engaged in the homosexual lifestyle?

Throughout this recent discernment process, I have been wondering why God lead us to stay 17 years ago versus perhaps leading us to go now. I'm not sure of all the answers, but I believe one reason is that our congregation would have had to leave our church home in College Hill then, and now circumstances have changed so that we could stay. The only answer that makes sense to me is that God wants our church to serve in this particular area of His kingdom.

I hope I am not coming off as holier-than-thou and Pharisaic to our PCUSA representatives on the discernment team. I appreciate the Cincinnati Presbytery's willingness to walk with us through this Gracious Dismissal Process. Thank you for the time you've taken out of your schedule to do this for us. I hope to speak with you in person at the forum on Feb. 17.

I was born into a PCUSA family. I have wonderful memories of sitting in the pews and Sunday school classes of Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church in the late fifties and sixties. There I encountered the majesty of our holy, awesome God. There I learned that our Lord is a loving and merciful God, but that He does not compromise his holiness, and that we as sinners were under His wrath. But in His mercy and according to His plan from all eternity He sent his Son to live and die for us; and that if we would believe this, repent, and ask Him into our lives as Lord, we would be lovingly and graciously accepted as His sons and daughters. As a teenager I went to our Presbytery's week long youth conferences held in Oxford, Ohio. I was also called to faithfulness there. I want to be in the Presbyterian wing of God's house, but in the last 45 years I have watched in dismay as many - and now a majority - in our denomination have turned from the historically orthodox faith to a sychrenistic mixture of humanism, liberalism, elements of Christianity, and the rest. Its time for us to depart and thus help protect the members of our congregation from these unscriptural ideas.

I think if CHPC stays with PCUSA we are compromising our beliefs. We stayed in the past to be "salt and light", but that was not effective to bring about change or stop the changes being made.

There have been many, many changes in College Hill over the years, but always it remained "the church" in College Hill. So, that is what we are to be about right now -

staying “the church” in College Hill, and serving our community in love, nurture, inclusive spirit and loving arms – and following exactly the teachings of our Lord Jesus and the ultimate authority of the Bible. Time, people and places all change, but Our Lord and Our God and Our Bible, never change – they are the ONE constant in our lives. We must follow the Lord, and serve our fellow men and women in College Hill – we need to remain “the church in College Hill” – Presbyterian or NOT.

I appreciate the efforts of the team. We have been on this road for a long time. I do think the time has come to part with the PCUSA. We would be better to associate with a central church organization that helped us spiritually, more than it challenged us. Like with kids, we want our kids to be around other kids that are a good influence on them. Also, how much of the mission of Christ and His Holy Spirit have we missed out on, because we were focused on the ""issues"" with the PCUSA?

That said, I will trust in the judgment of my pastor and Session, whom I look to for discernment in this issue.

PCUSA does not enthusiastically proclaim the deity of Christ and the authority of the Word of God. General Assembly seems more like a liberal political convention than a meeting of Christians. Their social agenda is frightening, endorsement of abortion, even partial birth abortion, which Congress was smart enough to outlaw, continued condemnation of Israel, allowing active homosexuals to be ordained, and only a matter of time will endorse homosexual marriage. They continue to allow worship of wisdom (Sophia). Wisdom is to be sought after, but not worshipped. God alone is to be worshipped. And they are reluctant to say Christ alone is the way to restoration of our relationship with God.

If you know rednecks - you know when a redneck says "Looky over here"....or "I seen this on TV....but I think I can do it....", a wise man knows either to run, or to grab a camera....because this is going to America's funniest home video's. The "non redneck" version of that is...."We are smarter....". When you hear non rednecks professing to be smarter....run. And this - is the meat of the matter we find ourselves in. There are a number of people in PCUSA, who have become "too smart for the Bible". It's been a long time coming, but here we are. Is the Bible the word of God, or a book of good suggestions. Is all that magical miracle stuff in the Bible hooey, or is it real? Forget the homosexual nonsensical distraction, how true is the Bible?

Do you believe the virgin birth....or was it a metaphor? Did Sampson really kill all of those men with the jaw bone of an ass, or is it just a story.

People like to pick fights with the big stuff, but the truth is, there is always more to it. The smart people know that all that mystic stuff is just stories to help people. Me? I am dumb. I was lead to God. I was taught in the Spirit, and in spite of me, that spirit has sustained me, nurtured me, and carried me kicking and screaming. No...I am dumb for Christ and I don't want to play with a team that thinks at it's core this book is a good guide.

And I am fairly comfortable being dumb for Christ....because half my life is behind me, and the one thing I have learned, is the really smart people...always get the egg on the face. I think God might have said that somewhere in one of his "suggestions."

Count me on the side of the Bible is our authority.

Moving CHPC into the ECO feels like a foregone conclusion. (an end or result regarded as inevitable or a conclusion formed in advance of argument or consideration). Would this be considered an accurate statement? Why or why not?

It's been difficult to see what has happened to the denomination over these years. At times I hoped there would be a change of heart in the denomination. Unfortunately the culture seems to be influencing those in the decision making process or those who have Scriptural conviction have left the church.

I was asked recently how do you discern the will of God, most likely stemming from the sermon series. I would love to know for every area of my life. But as I seek the will of God for my life, I know God also gives us His Word. This is the best way for God to speak to us. As the heart can deceive we know God Word is always truth. So taking away and/or adding to the Bible only leads us further from God. Picking and choosing what we like about the Bible leads us down a path of continual redefinition which is more likely to define ourselves against the world rather than the Word of God.

The church is supposed to look different from the world. Inclusion doesn't mean we change who we are allowing others to sin. Recall when we had the issue of drug deals going on in our restrooms. We chose to close the building to uninvited visitors so that we would not be a place where people can destroy their lives on our property. As a church - or a denomination - we should not provide a place for people to sin. God is very clear on his plan for marriage and family. Anatomy is very clear on God's plan for family. Regardless of what the culture or politicians declares. We can love people in sin but let's support them on a path to wholeness and restoration in Christ. Loving people in sin means we do what we can to rescue them from a life that leads to destruction no matter what the sin is. We all are being loved in our sin, and we very often need someone to help us, surround us, and pray for us in our sin. Loving people in sin doesn't mean we ignore God's commands.

On the manner of social justice in the church, it's absolutely evident in the Bible commands us to help those who are poor. However it's the transformation power of the Holy Spirit that changes us. I noticed when I went to the discussion on PCUSA provided grants last summer, by far the number of those grants awarded had nothing to do with anything spiritual. It reminds me of the Scripture that states how in the later times (2 Tim 3:5) there will those who give the appearance of God but lack the power of the Holy Spirit. God's transformation work is done by God, through the Holy Spirit in us. We can certainly name instances where not yet Christians are used in ministry. I had a neighbor who would give me clothes to give to my Sunday School kids in need. I feel as if this term social justice is exploited in the church for a political agenda. We all use Scripture to our advantage but the political leaning of the social justice movement refuses to measure both sides by equal measure. There is always the oppressed and the

oppressor in social justice. This ends up dividing and putting blame on a group or person rather than the enemy who's plan it is to steal, kill, and destroy. God is looking to us to do the work of the Kingdom of God that transforms them from here on out to eternity. This is not done through political lobby or a dependence on what legislature can pass.

I pray for the discernment team and their families. I know there are forces that want to thwart what is being done because as I read the "How we got here" brochure, it's evident that decades of deception and lies are being revealed. Separation from the PCUSA is a very serious issue. As I read Ephesians 4 where Paul tells us to make every effort to keep unity in the body. However I'm ready to break free from this denomination and move on to the work of God without the bonds of activism and Scriptural deconstruction.

Thank you for all your prayer, contemplation, and study to God's plan for CHPC. God is alive and ready to work in His people.

Let's move on

As I understand if we leave PCUSA then we have to join another Presbyterian body in order to keep worshipping in this facility. If this is true, what are our options, and what are their pro and cons?

Looking back I believe CHPC should have left the denomination PCUSA 25 years ago. We have been experiencing a SLOW DEATH since 1995

No comment!

Great work and communication

May God give you wisdom. May the Holy Spirit guide you and may you have peace.

I read the letter from the Discernment Team, and was offended by one section. In the letter there was a statement to the effect of "CHPC believes...." Perhaps the Team believes, or the individual writing the letter believes, but not all of CHPC believed what was written. Perhaps if the individual writing for the Team had even said 'most of CHPC believes...', I would have felt differently about the letter. That's one reason I'm not sure I belong at CHPC anymore.

I do not believe that our governing authority should be our mission field. I believe the changes in theology at PCUSA allow their flocks to follow sinful and deadly paths. Do we not have to take ownership over our continuing relationship with them? Whether we like it or not, by remaining a part of their body, we support them.