

Questions from CPC's Town Hall Meeting

**Why is CPC's Session holding these Town Hall meetings?** To start a conversation with our CPC family that provides awareness and information on our denomination's (Presbyterian Church, USA) upcoming biennial General Assembly (GA) meeting, and the possible passage of a motion that will redefine marriage.

**What is the motion to redefine marriage?** There are a number of motions in support of redefining marriage that will be raised during the GA, but the specific language of the final motion is not known at this time. However, if recent history serves as a guide, it is believed that a motion that redefines marriage as a union between two people will be raised and passed.

**What are the potential outcomes from the GA meeting and the passage of a motion that redefines marriage?** There are three potential outcomes of this motion passing;

- a.) The passage of an Authoritative Interpretation (AI) by the delegates to the GA that would go into effect immediately.
- b.) Passage of a constitutional amendment to the Book of Order, which would require subsequent approval by a simple majority of the Presbyteries. This process can take up to one year.
- c.) Passage of both an AI, and constitutional amendment to the Book of Order. This would allow the motion to take effect immediately, as the amendment process proceeds and is voted on by local Presbyteries.

Note: An AI does not carry as much weight as a constitutional amendment, given that it can be approved during any GA by delegates, as opposed to passage of an amendment that requires a majority of all Presbyteries.

**If a motion that redefines marriage between two people is passed, will it be binding and if so, how will it be enforced?** We do not know how passage of a motion redefining marriage would be enforced throughout the PC USA. There has been recent precedence allowing for a "local option", where churches have been given the leeway to choose their own course of action on the matter of ordination of practicing homosexuals.

**Could The Session of CPC, or our members be compelled or forced to change what we believe or teach as a church?** Whether or not such a motion is binding, and if so what mechanism is utilized to enforce the motion is not known at this time. This said the leaders of CPC remain committed to the authority of the Holy Bible, as God's word to His people and to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

**Is there a process in place that would allow CPC to separate from the denomination?** The National Capital Presbytery (NCP) has approved a process that would allow churches, under very strict circumstances and guidelines, to seek separation from the denomination under the Gracious Dismissal Policy. Evoking the

Gracious Dismissal Policy requires clear communication, gracious witness, openness, transparency, and mutual respect among all parties involved.

**What is Session's stance on this matter?** Session remains wholeheartedly committed to Scripture, and to being joyful disciples and witnesses to members of our CPC family and the world. We have been focusing our hearts on Jesus' teachings, and particularly on how He approached all sinners with an equal measure of Truth and Grace. We are being very prayerful, deliberate and thoughtful in our approach to this matter. This is out of the utmost love and devotion to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, and in recognition of His redeeming love and grace that saves each of us from our own sins. Session also provides additional information on this matter from a theological perspective, as well as background on our denomination's recent history and polity on this matter, please refer to the below website.

(<http://centrevillepres.com/resources/presbytery-matters/>)

**What can we do?** At this point the GA will take place from 14-21 June 2014, and we are taking a wait and see attitude. We ask for your prayers for our church leaders, and denomination. We will be prepared to respond to the outcome of the GA once more information is made available.

**Resources?** For resources on this matter we note that CPC has provided background "White Papers" on Polity, History, and Biblical definition of marriage which were sent out to the congregation during the first week of April and can be found on (<http://centrevillepres.com/resources/presbytery-matters/>). We also are hosting Town Hall Meetings in early May, Pastor Rob is conducting a sermon series on marriage (on CPC Website), and there is a Spring Growth Group on this issue. We will provide additional updates as they are made available. For information from PC USA and the National Capital Presbytery you can look at the below links.

<https://www.pcusa.org/events/24273/221st-general-assembly-2014/>

<http://www.thepresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/civil-union-christian-marriage2010.pdf>

<http://www.thepresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Marriage-9-26-13.pdf>

<http://thepresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/10-A-press-release.pdf>

<http://www.thepresbytery.org>

In addition here is the link to the Fellowship of Presbyterians of which CPC is a member. <http://www.fellowship-pres.org/>

