



presbyterians for renewal

The Reshaping Conversation

October 2008

Criteria for a Faithful Realignment

1. Freedom to establish and maintain a distinct theological and moral identity while remaining within the PC(USA)
2. Freedom to maintain biblically faithful standards for ordination and service
3. New understandings of our connectional nature
 - a. The basis of denominational unity
 - b. distinction necessary to address issues of conscience and integrity (e.g. currently “the act of one governing body is the act of the whole [denomination]”)
4. Freedom to form ecumenical partnerships
5. Continued access to and participation in the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Foundation
6. Relationship to the General Assembly and an established PJC process ensuring these freedoms cannot be altered from outside the realignment
7. Healthy engagement and positive relationships between those within and those outside the realignment

Criteria for Transition into Realignment

1. Avoid provoking unnecessary turmoil in congregations
2. Presbyteries would be expected to grant transfer requests of congregations with their property
3. Given the difference in ordination standards assumed as part of the realignment, procedure for pastors wishing to move to or from the realignment will need to be addressed

Positive Benefits of Realignment

1. Realignment within the PC(USA) offers evangelicals opportunity to:
 - a. demonstrate Christian forbearance and be a continuing witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ in the PC(USA)
 - b. maintain a form of ecclesial unity with the PC(USA) while still maintaining personal integrity as congregations and as individuals
 - c. support evangelicals in mixed congregations
 - d. provide congregations and individuals ecclesiastical identity that is distinct from those within the PC(USA) whose actions and decisions run contrary to orthodox Christian belief and practice demonstrate a distinctive, vibrant, and contagious evangelical faith, serving as Christ’s ambassadors both from within and for the PC(USA). This is both an opportunity and a challenge to create distinctive communities who are a source of renewal, and would parallel the original function of many religious orders throughout the history of Christianity
2. Realignment within the PC(USA) offers the whole denomination opportunity to:
 - a. move beyond the GA/presbytery debates on ordination standards
 - b. redirect resources, energy, and attention heretofore devoted to ordination debates to mission and ministry
 - c. create a context in which debate over controversial issues could be constructive over the long-term