

Why Hudson Church Left

Given the public interest in our church's recent decision to leave the Presbyterian Church (USA) lately, perhaps more explanation is needed. These reasons justify our decision:

- ◆ First, the church is shrinking. It lost 65,000 people last year. Our own Eastminster Presbytery has dropped from 60,000 to 11,800 people over 20 years. There simply will be no denomination to leave to our children.
- ◆ Second, world missions are no longer central to the Presbyterian identity. This troubles us. No better statistic can validate this fact than that the last 20 years have seen cuts from 2,100 foreign missionaries to just 253 today.
- ◆ Third, theological identity has been lost. For more than 50 years, the U.S. Presbyterian Church has been unable to delineate the essential tenets of the reformed faith. This is illustrated by the 2001 General Assembly actually having *debated* the lordship of Jesus (a doctrine we enthusiastically believe), thus moving further from an understanding of Scripture's infallibility.
- ◆ Fourth, Presbyterians worldwide are cutting off relationships with the American church. Presbyteries of East Africa and Brazil, for instance, refuse U.S. Presbyterian money because they perceive the same free fall as we do.
- ◆ Fifth, this summer the General Assembly passed a document that allows candidates for ordination to "scruple," or waive, the fidelity/chastity clause in their ordination vows. We simply cannot accept the suggestion that sexual integrity is an option for leaders. Incredibly, Eastminster Presbytery moved to remove our pastor and elders, hearing of our discomfort, before we even took the vote to leave.
- ◆ Finally, and most important, the true Body of Christ knows no denominational boundaries.

Thus, our decision to leave a mere human organization in no way suggests we are snubbing our brothers and sisters in the faith, but rather joining hands with believers around the world who take a similar stand for Christ.

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