

## Swimming Against Presbyterian Current

As a member of the Hudson Presbyterian Church, I, too, sighed every time the Presbyterian Church (USA) received bad press. The question I would ask Terry A. Speelman (“Bum rap for Presbyterians,” Voice of the People, Dec. 1) and other loyal Presbyterians is, “Why the bad press?”

It is not the media’s fault they reported every blunder committed by the once proud but now struggling denomination. If your leaders meet with and praise Hezbollah (and are then forced to denounce the meeting due to public outcry), vote to disinvest from companies doing business with Israel and choose the Palestinian’s side in the Middle East conflict (and are then forced to reverse themselves due to public outcry), allow your publishing corporation to publish a book accusing the U.S. government of conspiracy in 9/11, and accept a study paper that allows for renaming the Trinity in certain situations, you’re going to be ridiculed, and rightly so.

The U.S. Presbyterian Church is rapidly shrinking, losing nearly half its membership since the mid-1960s. The Eastminster Presbytery, of which the Hudson church once was part, is shrinking even more, from 65,000 to 11,000 members. These numbers do not suggest a bright future.

I found the irony rich, indeed, that Speelman’s letter defending the Presbyterian Church and attacking the Hudson church was published next to Chip Bok’s cartoon showing the pope outside an empty Turkish church and a Turkish official (with an European Union application in hand) saying: “Very European. It’s empty.”

Swimming against the present Presbyterian current, our church in Hudson has been growing. I believe it is growing because we confidently (not arrogantly) proclaim our faith in Christ, believe the truth of the Scriptures and are mission-oriented.

The vote to disaffiliate was a difficult one. There was no joy in it. The decline of the mainline churches is a tragedy. But it is a self-inflicted wound and will not stop if the mainline churches continue down their current paths. At Hudson, we will continue to be a vibrant, growing, caring, Christ-centered church.

I sincerely hope for nothing but the best for our former denominational brethren at the U.S. Presbyterian Church and Eastminster Presbytery.

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