

AD HOC TASK FORCE ON GENDER AND PASTORAL ORDINATION

The Motion:

The Mid-America Presbytery overture the EPC General Assembly of 2009 for a non-geographic division creating two affinity Presbyteries: one which will ordain only men to the office of pastor and the other free to ordain both men and women to the office of pastor. These two newly created presbyteries would exist for an initial term of five years and thereupon to be reassessed. Each EPC church within the current Mid-America Presbytery would then choose which affinity presbytery to join. Other churches wanting to join EPC whether from the Transitional presbyteries or elsewhere will choose which of these affinity presbyteries will become their governing body.

Note 1: Both affinity presbyteries will commit to sustaining the viability of each presbytery. That viability would mean meeting together at least once a year, sharing developmental resources (speakers, church growth topics), maintaining each presbyteries' financial viability, and sharing CDR committee responsibilities.

Note 2: On, January 20th, 20 complementarian pastors met to discuss the vote on affinity presbyteries. All favored the general concept of an affinity presbytery proposal. We agreed in principle to maintain relationships between the two affinity presbyteries by many means, formal and informal. These pastors were willing to ask their Sessions to help make both presbyteries financially viable.

Grounds:

EPC document "Position Paper on the Ordination of Women" (Adopted by the 4th General Assembly in June 1984) declares that ordination of women is a "non-essential", and that local churches may make their own choices regarding gender and elders. Yet Presbyteries are charged with the responsibility to ordain biblically qualified people to the office of pastor. Wise Christian leaders of good conscience hold differing understandings of what the Bible permits regarding gender and pastoral ordination. Some feel that they cannot in good conscience allow pastoral ordination of both genders in a presbytery for which they personally hold judicial responsibility.

Mid-America Presbytery created a task force to study this issue. The task force wrote biblically-based papers ably presenting each side of this questions and then wrote response papers to one another. Our discussions were carried out prayerfully and with mutual love and respect—but we were not able to agree. We want to honor the conscience of one another and continue to serve God in the same denomination. Therefore we respectfully petition the General Assembly to allow a friendly division of our presbytery based on the ordination preference of each local church within our boundaries.