

February 14, 2007

Dear Church Family,

I have just returned from two weeks in Africa and a week of vacation. I feel refreshed and look forward to being with you again in worship and in the study of God's Word. Thank you for the gracious provision you make to enable me to give something away to those in Africa who truly need the humble lessons in God's truth that I am able to bring them. Normally in a letter like this, written at a time like this, I would cover in some detail what God was doing in Africa while I was there and is still doing. But I know that you received a very thorough and excellent report from Elder Tom Harrison this past Sunday, which you can access online at [www.cepc.org](http://www.cepc.org). There you can read more about our experience. (This link should be active early next week.)

I will mention one example that I think serves to show the impact of our time in Africa. I sat at a dinner table one evening with several of my Kenyan brothers. One of them had attended a similar workshop I had held in Nairobi 18 months ago. He said, "John, I have used your teaching on the attributes of God to explain more fully to my own people about the God of the Bible: that He is always present, that He is all powerful, and that He knows everything that happens. That teaching is transforming my church. As the people come to understand more and more of who God is, they go to the witch-doctor less and less!" Now that is what I call fruit for one's labor! Praise the Lord!

There is something else I want to write you about today, though. As you know, we are a member congregation of the denomination known as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. I do not talk too often (some might say not often enough) about our denomination. The reason for this is simple. Apart from ongoing ecclesiastical business, there is usually not that much to talk about. But suddenly there is a great deal to talk about with respect to the EPC, and I want you to know about it. Our little denomination which consists of approximately 200 churches nationally with approximately 70,000 members has become a center of attention from literally hundreds of churches around the country seeking a fresh alternative to the problems they are facing in their present denomination.

I am speaking, of course, of the PCUSA, which is the traditional, mainline Presbyterian denomination in the United States. It currently has over 2 million members. This past summer, during its annual General Assembly, the PCUSA approved two measures which have had quite an impact upon evangelical pastors and churches remaining in that body. The first measure was a decision to allow individual presbyteries (regional groups of churches) to decide whether or not to ordain practicing homosexuals to the ministry. The second was a decision to allow the use of alternative threesomes of names when referring

February 14, 2007

Page 2

to the Triune God of the Bible. Thus, a church or pastor rather than, e.g., concluding prayer, “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” might legitimately conclude morning prayer, “in the name of Mother, Child, and Womb” or “Rock, Redeemer, and Friend,” to cite two suggestions for alternatives offered by the PCUSA itself. I am sure that no further elucidation is needed for members of this body to understand the far-reaching, anti-scriptural realities inherent in these two actions that were approved by the majority of delegates to last summer’s PCUSA General Assembly.

As a result there has been quite a bit of interest in our EPC. Personally, I thank God for this. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church was established in 1981 by a group of God-fearing men who had already seen more than enough of theological and cultural compromise in the Presbyterian Church and who desired to create a body of Presbyterian Churches that would be true to God’s Word and work together cooperatively in a genuine spirit of love and acceptance. The founders of the EPC sought both cleansing from doctrinal impurity that had already plagued the national body for many decades and peace from the incessant political and ecclesiastical infighting that they felt increasingly characterized the mainline body. They saw themselves as an open door to many other evangelical pastors and churches that they hoped would follow their lead.

It may be that such a ground swell of interest is upon us at the present moment. Only the Lord knows for sure. However, I want to enlist your earnest prayers about these matters. So that you may be reasonably informed, we are establishing a link on our website at [www.cepc.org](http://www.cepc.org), where you will find much more information about these matters. As new information becomes available we will post updates for us all there as well. (This link should be active by the time you receive this letter.)

As it is appropriate I would ask that prayer be offered in your small group fellowships, Bible studies and Sunday school classes. Initially, please pray for wisdom for our denominational leaders as they consider how to respond to the literally hundreds of churches now inquiring about the EPC. Secondly, please pray for Presbyterian evangelicals everywhere that they will stand courageously for their biblical convictions. Third, please pray for the EPC’s annual General Assembly which will meet this coming June, that the decisions that are made there will truly glorify our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Again, thank you for making it possible for me to extend the truths we know and love to about 95 pastors in Western Kenya. They, in turn, lead and impact over 10,000 Kenyan Christians. May God be glorified in all his church.

Warmest Regards,

John Crimmins, Pastor