

Policy for Schismatic Churches: Churches who express a desire to leave the PC(USA)

Historic Principles

1. Particular churches exist by virtue of the powers delegated to presbyteries. Presbyteries have the responsibility and power to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members [G-3.0301c; G-3.0303b]
2. Membership in a particular church is voluntary. Members unite with those churches according to their preferences and may withdraw at their discretion. [G-1.0402]
3. All property held by or for a particular church is held in trust for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (USA) [G-4.0203]. While members of a particular church may leave the Presbyterian Church (USA) at any time, that church retains all assets.

Should a particular church seek to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Committee on Ministry should be notified immediately. The Committee on Ministry shall counsel with the Session of the church to seek reconciliation, and to dissuade it from the proposed withdrawal. The Committee on Ministry may, in consultation with the Stated Clerk and the General Presbyter, request Presbytery to form an Administrative Commission. The Administrative Commission shall consult with that congregation and its Session, advising it of the provisions of the Book of Order, presenting options for the resolution of the conflict. If an Administrative Commission is not formed, the responsibility devolves to the Committee on Ministry to provide opportunity for all members of the congregation to be heard. Should that church continue to pursue such a course, even after being advised of the constitutional and historic principles of the church, these procedures shall be followed:

A congregational meeting [G-1.0502] shall be called to present the issue for a vote by written ballot. Should the vote reveal the presence of the true church within the Presbyterian Church (USA) [G-4.0207], those wishing to leave the Presbyterian Church (USA) may be granted certificates of dismissal, and the true church shall remain responsible for the church government and all assets of the congregation.

If there is no true church the property shall ordinarily be sold and the assets retained by Presbytery.

*Adopted May 2003
Revised February 2012*