



Chapel Place Presbyterian Church

8 Chapel Place, Markham, Ontario L3R 9C4

Arabic: www.cppc.ca, English: www.chapelplace.ca

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Nagi Said

Associate Minister: Rev. Freddie Saleh Hanna

Clerk of Session: Wadie Rezk

Saturday, April 17, 2021

To The Venerable 146 General Assembly, c/o Clerks of Assembly:

As an ethnic Arabic speaking congregation, with deep roots in the Presbyterian church in the Middle East, and history exceeding 50 years in the GTA (40 of which as members in PCC), we concur strongly and support the serious and genuine concerns expressed by our dear sisters and brothers in Christ within the Eastern and Western Han-Ca Presbyteries in their recent *Petition addressed to the Venerable 146th General Assembly "re. Racism and Marginalization"*.

We feel their petition describes our current perception of the strong trend within the PCC, and our sense of alienation within the denomination.

The issue of Human Sexuality is but one among several others, that we have witnessed through the different courts and publications of PCC, which have become accepted as the norm within the PCC but different from our Presbyterian heritage of faith.

We have expressed in numerous times our Biblical perspective of human sexuality, which we strongly hold to, and have long been established throughout Church history and is in line with the majority of the Church world-wide. We realize that western culture is moving strongly in a different direction. We understand that a sizeable number within the PCC are aligning with such direction whether out of conviction or to maintain a politically correct position in Canada. Yet, we as carriers of a different view, feel we have been marginalized, and no serious consideration has been taken to allow adequate and respectable space for such variation, nor a will to provide space to accommodate such variation. This grieves us greatly and leaves us but to wonder if respectable room remains for us within the "Presbyterian Church in Canada", or will we be better off aligned with a different group of fellow believers with like minded beliefs, values and dedication to adhere to our orthodox beliefs, a matter that would also preserve our ministry and witness amongst the Middle Eastern community in Canada, and beyond.

Here are some points to note:

- The lack of serious response and action to our clearly expressed concerns leave us with deep sense of frustration. It confirms the feeling that we hold as being marginalized and ignored. A recent example (amongst several) has been the decision to defer receiving and consideration of the long awaited Gracious Dismissal proposal until the remits are dealt with at the coming GA.
- Because we have not given up on our beliefs, which are well recognized by the majority of the wider global Church, in favour of the politically correct practices of the day within the current Western culture, we feel our views are considered by our National Church to be outdated and can not be seriously accommodated.

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- We have expressed very clearly our concern of losing our calling and witness within our Middle Eastern communities in the GTA and worldwide: a matter that is very pivotal to our ministry and existence. However, we do not sense any serious attempt by the denomination and many of its members to seriously consider creating a space within the denomination to address such concerns. This leaves us to question if there is a future for us along with like minded congregations within the PCC.
- Similarly, we share the same concern, not only because of the specific nature of the recommendations for doctrinal changes, but more so due to the manner those who seek change have been aggressively attempting to pursue such changes, and what this direction of change is shaping the future of the denomination which is moving contrary to our theological beliefs and practices of ministry, as provided in our subordinate standards and scriptures.
- It greatly grieves us to witness loud voices and strong tides within the denomination pushing for changes that are driven mainly by the "politically correct culture" and agenda of the day, assuming authority over our Subordinate Standards and Scriptures. We have expressed such concerns and raised alarms, but again with no serious response that would indicate to us that our voices can be heard and considered.
- We believe the denomination will be well advised to seriously accommodate and give credence to the plea of the multiple and vibrant ethnic expressions that it has been blessed with within its bounds. They certainly enrich the existence, life, and ministry of the denomination. The risk of losing them will indeed be detriment to the future PCC.

Finally, we reiterate in agreement the plea articulated in the above referenced *petition* to "implore the larger PCC to take notice of our current plight of marginalization in our denomination, and provide a safeguarded place for us here, for we believe that we too are created in God's image and have a specific mandate from God to live out our gospel calling in this nation, which is in complete accord to our denomination's subordinate standards. And therefore advise that the dominant culture in our denomination tread carefully as it attempts to dictate what should be considered to be authentic, faithful Christianity, not only in our own denomination, but also to the wider, global church, with which it is at odds".

In Christ,

Session (Ministers and Elders) of Chapel Place Presbyterian Church, Markham