

On May 31, 2011, the Presbytery of San Diego invited pastors, elders, and members to attend an evening Presbytery Conversation, to discuss how to respond to requests we are receiving from churches who want to transfer into our presbytery. Below are the questions that we discussed around tables and the responses that were turned in:

***What do you think would be the benefits of having churches transfer into our Presbytery?***

- Ministries can be enhanced because of common, shared values (3)
- Forming relationships (2)
- Diversity- ministry ideas from different environments (3)
- New ideas, energy, visions- (7)
- May help churches to stay in the PC(USA) (5)
- Less geographically bound (5)
- Solidarity in numbers; like-minded have a clearer voice (4)
- Makes a statement about unifying the more traditional direction in the GA
- Economic and political/theological economies of scale
- More per capita money (7)
- Benevolence funding
- Military connection with Hawaii (3)
- Expand missional opportunities
- Help us re-think role of presbyteries- does geography define?
- Provide a healthy home for good congregations (2)
- Provides opportunity for leadership within PC(USA)
- More autonomy for presbyteries
- Will make our relationships for intentional (2)
- Will encourage thinking about how to use meeting time well
- Launch the growth within the denomination of missional growth
- Avoid loss!
- Allow us to share & hold strong the rich heritage
- ATM card concept- Credit good
- Hospitality- Help towards health
- Encouraging to our presbytery that others want to join
- Support for churches that are in dysfunctional/hostile gridlocked presbyteries
- Able to stay part of the whole, yet focus in missional
- Modern technology allows non-geographic associations
- Connecting the body is not geographic, but organic (2)
- Harmony (3)
- Greater age diversity potential
- It would demonstrate that even in those presbyteries who voted for 10A, there are a number of churches who still want to stay with the current Book of Order

***What concerns/hesitations do you have about churches transferring into our presbytery?***

- Could end up with all conservative and all liberal presbyteries.
- Leave some presbyteries without resources because of those left behind
- Need a process that is caring “supportive”, sees the long-term implications
- Presbytery staffing model
- How does a church in Hawaii actually become involved here so far away (3)
- How to meet as a presbytery, as committees, etc. (8)
- Might reduce diversity in presbyteries (ethical, theological, etc)
- Do we have the infrastructure top become larger?

- Might bring more pressure to leave the PC(USA) from new churches
- Diversity as opposed to all thinking alike
- Oversight of candidates
- Do they change when they don't like what's going on? Are they just testing the waters? (2)
- How to distribute per capita dollars
- Expenses, travel costs (7)
- "Like-minded"= "Harmony"- Would dissenting opinions be heard? Is the goal a Presbytery with only one philosophy?
- Divide and conquer
- Would a transfer in actually become a step in leaving entirely?
- Property issues (4)
- 30% of congregations in 8A are liberal
- Caution that conservative churches leave their presbyteries, betraying their fellow conservatives who are left are that much more isolated and in the minority
- Our culture is not about being radical or revolutionary we have just tried to be practical. But radicals would be drawn to us.
- Is the perception of the SD Presbytery correct? Radical?
- Presbytery identity will likely become more ideological
- He grass is always greener in another presbytery
- Danger of having the presbytery become an association of Pastors, with less Elder involvement (2)
- Change of schedule and format of presbytery meetings
- Concern more churches would pressure us to leave the denomination (2)
- Human resources-Administrative - Presbytery staff too small (3)
- Criteria for screening the churches coming in is crucial
- Concern of using presbytery funds to go to churches
- How to keep good healthy connections for problem solving- (Admin comms, PJC's) (2)
- The more we become alike, the less like the diversity for the body of Christ we become, but is there a limit to this? What is the right balance?
- Would the presbytery still be able to focus on local issues?
- We have a global presence. Conservative theology. What does it mean for our more liberal churches?
- How are funds from presbytery used with geographically diverse congregations?
- Are these churches future focused?
- Partnering with presbyteries who are losing churches (2)
- What is the motive of the churches wanting to transfer? Theological or sociological? (2)
- Creates demands on Presbytery to be responsible (2)
- Decreases diversity

***What other information would you like to know? What other questions do you have?***

- What, specifically, is the incoming congregation's reason to move? (7)
- What is our discernment process to determine who to receive? (4)
- What will presbytery meeting be like? Cost of travel? Format? (3)
- Would they support our mission? (3)
- What problems does the church bring?
- Does it serve the whole church? (National) (2)
- How are the congregations viewed in their presbyteries?
- Do they support the denomination?
- What impact would a transfer have on their current presbytery?
- Will there be opposition and what form will that take?
- What legal challenges will there be?
- What is required of us if we have churches in other parts of the country?
- Financial status of entering church? (2)

- What would be the expectations of all member congregations?
- Are there any churches in SD Presbytery that might want to leave?
- What baggage would they be bringing?
- Are they all PC(USA) churches?
- What would this impact churches in this presbytery?
- Info on other churches in Hawaii?
- Financial implications for this Presbytery (Synod pays for Honolulu's participation in Pacific Presbytery)
- Why do they not feel welcomed in their presbytery?
- How do we help smaller churches connect? Money, hospitality, etc?
- How are there churches experiencing missional change/transformation? (2)
- What is their financial model?
- Issue of either geographic or theological/philosophical- can there be a means for it to be "both/and"
- Can a church in Mexico join? How far does non-geographic go?
- Realignment decreases polarity within
- Members outside USA or California
- Covenant clarity and reviewed
- Is this the next step while waiting
- Why did the churches who want to transfer feel they can transfer without an invitation? Are they pressuring/forcing themselves into our midst?
- Have we really researched out view- recent conversations with alternate belief groups to listen and discuss. More internal talks on member views. We need to know each other first, before inviting others

***Which of the four options for experiments going forward appeals to you right now:***

- 1. Remain a local, geographic presbytery***
- 2. Become a regional presbytery***
- 3. Become a national presbytery***
- 4. Become a new reformed entity***

- #1 (15)
- #2 (19)
- #3 (7)
- #4 (4)
- The most attractive option is the one with the least change. However, #2 is probably a reality and would eventually lead to #3 and then #4
- I see regional as another form of national. And national is a step towards becoming a new entity- which could be a good thing. This is a stepped process- geographic will lead to regional to national to reformed entity.
- These are steps of a process or progression
- Church changes- God doesn't
- Needs a lot more study