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Joe Wenger, District Superintendent
North Central District
3301 Benham Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46517

April 1, 2021

Dear Joe and North Central District leadership,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ from Keller Park Church. We write on behalf of our congregation's members, who at a members' meeting last night unanimously voted to disassociate from the Missionary Church, Inc. This decision followed a six-month formal discernment process led by an exploratory committee on denominational alignment commissioned by our church board.

Our decision to disassociate was made in response to the denomination's recent changes to the Articles of Faith and Practice in ways that our members could no longer affirm in good conscience. It was not made lightly but only after our pastors repeatedly expressed concerns about these changes in personal conversations and written correspondence with denominational leadership and in public comments at district and denominational conferences.

Of particular concern to our members are (1) that ministry roles are determined not by gender but by the gifts of the Spirit, which are distributed irrespective of gender; (2) that Christian ethics (for example, with respect to war or immigration) are determined not by what governing authorities authorize but by the Christian community and Christian conscience; and (3) that God has particular concern for the well-being of the oppressed, including victim-survivors of intimate-partner violence to whom we would counsel divorce to remove themselves from such violence. After consulting with members of the Constitution Committee and district leaders, including a February 4 meeting between the district superintendent and our members, it is our understanding that our biblically informed convictions on these matters put us at odds with the denomination's Constitution. Since the MC Constitution describes the duty of its pastors to include "personal commitment without reservation to each of the Articles of Faith and Practice" and the duty of its churches to "be fully informed of and in agreement with the Missionary Church Articles of Faith and Practice," our members have acknowledged that we are no longer able to simultaneously discharge our duty faithfully to the denomination and our consciences.

We regret that our conscientious decision to disassociate from the denomination entails disassociation from the North Central District, with whom we have had a warm relationship and mutually beneficial ministry partnership for many years. In particular, we recognize and appreciate the ways the district office and district churches supported our church after a destructive flood in 2018, provided grants to support our ministries in the community, and supported our food distribution ministry during the pandemic. Likewise, we value the opportunities we were given to support our sibling NCD churches in their times of need.

Our desire is to disassociate in a way that is honoring to Christ and to our bonds within the body of Christ, which run deeper and hold firmer than any denominational affiliation. We therefore propose making our disassociation effective at or before the spring 2022 NCD conference in order to provide both parties adequate time to properly honor our commitments to one another and work out the logistics of disassociation together with thoughtfulness and care.

We were encouraged by a meeting our pastors had on March 9 with the current and incoming district superintendent, who each affirmed the importance of our church's ministry in the Keller Park Neighborhood and expressed their desire and commitment to see our ministry in the neighborhood continue to thrive regardless of the decision of our members regarding affiliation with the denomination. In light of our shared desire to disassociate in a mutually affirming and amicable way, we make the following commitments:

- (1) Keller Park Church will continue to contribute to the district financially according to our 2021 assessment until disassociation with the denomination is finalized.
- (2) Our pastors will continue to participate in regional, district, and denominational conferences, discharging their duties as pastors and delegates, until disassociation with the denomination is finalized.
- (3) Pastor David and Andrea will continue to sponsor the child of our fellow NCD pastor during the process of disassociation and after it is completed.
- (4) Keller Park Church will pay any city, county, state, or federal fees associated with transfer of deeds from the district to the church as well as any fees associated with legal name change, transfer of pastoral licenses, and the like.
- (5) Keller Park Church will continue to pray for the NCD, its leaders, its churches, and its members and will seek to maintain warm and amicable personal and professional relationships for many years to come.

Please feel free to share this letter with all relevant parties. We welcome your response and your counsel on the most appropriate immediate course of action.

Grace and peace,



Carrie Badertscher
Community Pastor



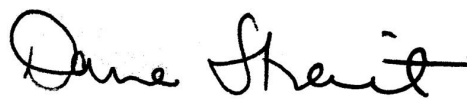
David Cramer
Teaching Pastor



Joel Boehner
Board Chair



Chad Campbell
Exploratory Committee Co-chair



Dana Strait
Exploratory Committee Co-chair