

Colleagues,

Some of our local churches in the United States have received a solicitation in the mail from a church named "Iglesia Metodista Puerta del Cielo" in Patillas, Puerto Rico. Understandably, some of these churches have concerns this solicitation may be a "scam."

We have been able to verify that there is, indeed, a church named Iglesia Metodista Puerta del Cielo in Patillas, Puerto Rico, and that this church is under the auspices of the Methodist Church in Puerto Rico (a/k/a "Iglesia Metodista de Puerto Rico"). Historically, the Methodist Church in Puerto Rico (MCPR) was a part of the Northeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church (UMC) in the United States, and its individual churches were listed in the General Minutes prior to 2000. However, approximately 8 years ago, the MCPR formally separated from the UMC, but remains an affiliated autonomous church in covenantal relationship with the UMC.

As you know, church wide appeals by local churches and other Church-related organizations in the U.S. are subject to the approval process set forth in ¶818 of the *Book of Discipline*. However, we do not know the extent of the solicitation in the U.S. by the local church in Puerto Rico. Moreover, the MCPR has their own Discipline, which may or may not contain provisions similar to ¶818 of our Discipline.

In summary, while the solicitation by the local church in Puerto Rico is quite unorthodox for us in the U.S., it is from an actual local church connected with the MCPR, which in turn, is an affiliated autonomous church with the UMC. For this reason, we would not refer to this solicitation as a "scam." But it is for each local church to decide for itself whether to provide financial assistance to Iglesia Metodista Puerta del Cielo.

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

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