

A COVENANT AGREEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE KOREAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN JAPAN AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Worldwide Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve “A Covenant Agreement of Partnership Between the Korean Christian Church in Japan and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” which is stated as follows:

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Between
The Korean Christian Church in Japan and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

Preamble

The Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) give thanks to God for the traditions from which they sprang. Since 1973 our two churches have developed meaningful Christian ties and encounters through the Japan–North American Commission on Cooperative Mission (JNAC). Through our fellowship we have encouraged each other in our mission work in Japan and shared a common vision and call to the fulfillment of God’s love in the world. KCCJ, especially, recognizes PC(USA)’s concern and advocate support of KCCJ’s struggle for the human rights of Koreans in Japan.

Our two churches now affirm a new deeper relation of partnership in mission based upon our common belief that Jesus Christ is the Lord. As partners in Christ we pledge ourselves to work together to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ so that God’s power of salvation will be manifested to all nations. We affirm the unity of the Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and will work together to demonstrate in the world God’s justice, peace, love and reconciliation. To do so, we agree to exchange information to enable us to understand each other’s context and to fulfill our commitment of mutual mission and solidarity.

Partnership:

We will promote mission partner relationships and the sharing of people so as to provide opportunities for participation in the lives and ministries of our respective churches.

Consultation:

A consultation may be held as needed to study new developments in each context for mission and to explore together matters of theology, mission policy and development.

Communication:

All communication in carrying out the partner relationship shall take place between the office of the General Assembly of the Korea Christian Church in Japan and

the Worldwide Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Review and Evaluation:

We agree to review and evaluate this partner relationship periodically, trusting God will lead us into a deeper mutual understanding and relationship in mission.

(Date)

Moderator
Korean Christian Church in Japan

Moderator
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

General Secretary
Korean Christian Church in Japan

Director
Worldwide Ministries Division
General Assembly Council

BACKGROUND

(1) History of Koreans in Japan

The history of Koreans in Japan is linked to the Japanese colonization of the Korean Peninsula. In 1910, when Japan annexed Korea, there were approximately 700 Koreans in Japan, most of whom were students. By 1945, when the Allied Powers defeated Japan, there were approximately 2.3 million Koreans in Japan. Some of them came to Japan for survival because of the dispossession of their lands by the Japanese Government. Some were forcibly conscripted and brought to Japan to work in mines and factories, and to serve in the Japanese military.

Soon after the war, 1.7 million people returned to Korea. About 600,000 Koreans remained in Japan due to the outbreak of the Korean War between 1950 and 1953 and other reasons.

From the beginning, Koreans have been discriminated against by the Japanese society and government. One of the outcomes of this is the usage of Japanese names by Koreans in Japan. Over 90 percent of Koreans in Japan use Japanese names to hide their ethnic background.

According to the statistics in 2002, there are currently about 625,000 Koreans in Japan (Japanese nationality is determined by the bloodline, not by the place of birth). Out of these, about 522,000 are those who were in Japan before 1945 and their descendants. Together with those who are naturalized Japanese and those who have Korean and Japanese parents, those whose roots can be traced to Korea include over 1 million people in Japan.

(2) History of Korean Christian Church in Japan

KCCJ traces its history to 1908, when Korean students began worshipping together in the Tokyo area. In 1912, Korean Presbyterian and Methodist churches combined their

efforts to work together for mission among Koreans in Japan. The ecumenical character of the KCCJ today reflects this early history. From 1927 the Presbyterian Church in Canada started to support this mission work.

During the wartime, KCCJ was forced to join the United Church of Christ in Japan. But in 1945 it became an independent denomination again.

In 1968 KCCJ observed its 60th anniversary under the motto “Forward, Following Jesus Christ into the World.” From that time onward it began to incorporate “human rights and other social issues” activities in its mission engagements.

Since its establishment, KCCJ has grown to encompass approximately 100 churches and preaching points with 7,000 members located in five districts throughout Japan. Today KCCJ continues its mission work toward its 100th anniversary, and commits itself to establish peace and justice for all God’s creatures and people in Japan, Asia and the world.

(3) Relationship with the PC(USA)

Both the Northern and Southern streams of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have had informal relations with KCCJ by sharing program funds and sending representatives to mission consultations hosted by KCCJ.

When the United Church of Christ in Japan and its traditionally related North American churches entered into the Japan–North American Commission on Cooperative Mission (JNAC) in 1973, KCCJ was invited to be a member.

The PC(USA) has been sharing with KCCJ both with mission personnel and program grants since the 1970s. Recently Gail Beran was assigned to KCCJ as Assistant to the General Secretary for ecumenical relations and education. She has returned home for further study and marriage. Since her resignation Sarah McAliley Oba is being assigned to KCCJ to resume the ecumenical relations and education work.

KCCJ is a member of NCCJ, WCC, WARC, and the Christian Conference of Asia. It is the ethnic-minority church where many Koreans in Japan gather together for worship and witness. It is a small denomination, but one with a great heart for witness and service in Japan. It is the PC(USA)’s valued partner church in Japan.