

***Principles, Policies, and Procedures for
the Orderly Exchange of
Ordained Ministers of the Word and Sacrament***

**Under Covenant Agreement Between
the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad and
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**



**Prepared by Joint Implementation Committee of KPCA and PC(USA)
Approved by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations**

**COVENANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
AND
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

Ephesians 4:1–6 (NRSV)

I. History of Relationship

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] and the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (KPCA) are denominations with common roots and commitments in the Reformed tradition. The emotional ties are the legacy of their mission history. Protestant Christianity in Korea began through the sending of U.S. Presbyterian missionaries to Korea in 1885. Over the past century, Presbyterians in Korea have demonstrated phenomenal growth despite their difficult experiences of suffering. They have become genuine partners in mission and ecumenical engagement not only in Korea and Asia, but also throughout the world.

In the middle of the 1960s, the U.S. immigration law changed, opening the doors for many Koreans to immigrate to the United States. This started a new page in the history of Korean Presbyterians. Unfortunately, the PC(USA) was unprepared to welcome and accept the large number of Korean Presbyterians into its life. While some Koreans joined the PC(USA), some felt the need to establish an independent Korean Presbyterian Church in the United States. Each of these organized groupings of Korean American Presbyterian churches has contributed to the growth and development of the Presbyterian witness in the United States through its unique gifts and calling.

After many years of informal cooperation between leadership of the two churches, the 204th General Assembly (1992) of the PC(USA) and the 17th General Assembly (1992) of the KPCA authorized the establishment of the Joint Committee on Presbyterian Cooperation Between the PC(USA) and the KPCA. Over the past thirty years, the joint committee has focused its work in the areas of ministries and education, global mission, peace, justice, reconciliation, and church polity. Of particular note is the opportunity that Korean Americans born and raised in the United States present for our churches to move from immigrant-focused ministries to ministries directed toward future generations. The work of the joint committee has been important in shaping the relationship between the PC(USA) and the KPCA. The joint committee believes that God is calling us to move to a deeper relationship between the KPCA and the PC(USA) and to request our General Assemblies to declare covenant relationship between the two churches. Covenant relationship establishes a formal mutual commitment in our ecclesial and missional life together. The nature of covenant relationship is a call to mutuality based upon core theological principles.

II. Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation

A. As churches within the Reformed tradition, each holding membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, we recognize each other as churches in which the gospel is preached, sacraments are rightly administered according to the Word of God, and the mission of Jesus Christ is lived out.

B. Baptism marks us as belonging to Christ and Christ's church. According to Scripture, there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). To that end, we recognize the baptism of each of our churches and welcome one another's members as brothers and sisters in Christ. We recognize that it is Christ that has showed us the way of self sacrificing love and given to us the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to remember this love and to be fed with the bread of life and the cup of salvation. We encourage the sharing in the Lord's Supper together in all arenas of the church.

C. Christ has entrusted the ministry of the gospel to all of his disciples, calling us to follow him in the way of love, righteousness, peace, and justice. Ordination is the act by which men and women are set aside for particular ministries of the Church. We identify and name these ministries as deacon, elder, and minister of the Word and Sacrament. We recognize that the calling and setting aside of persons for service in the church and the world is for the sake of the mission of Christ. We recognize the authenticity of one another's ordination of ministers, elders, and deacons.

D. The church lives to fulfill the mission of God in the world. The church does not live for its own sake, but seeks to witness to the saving work of Jesus Christ, the transformative power of the gospel, justice and reconciliation in all areas of its life and witness. God's gift of unity strengthens the witness of the church. While divisions within the church cannot destroy the mission of the church, they do serve as distractions to the message and the mission of the church. We recognize that the mission of our churches is strengthened by commitment to work cooperatively in the areas of congregational support, resource and leadership development, national and global mission.

III. Covenant Commitments

A. We covenant to support one another through prayer, dialogue, and continued cooperative work. Through mutual affirmation and admonition, we covenant to an honest relationship in which our joys are celebrated, our trials are shared, and disagreements are addressed with the goal of strengthening this covenant. We will seek to affirm the witness of our churches and when necessary speak loving words of correction for the edification of the body of Christ.

B. While we recognize each other's ministries as authentic, we covenant to develop a process of orderly exchange of ministers. This provision will be governed by the principle that the presbyteries decide who shall be members and approve calls for service in churches. This process will allow for ministers to share in the ministry of each other's churches, identify processes for transferring ministers, and the procedures for ministers to be dually affiliated. This process will only apply to ministers who are in good standing and include processes for discipline in accordance with our individual polities.

C. We recognize that we are one family and our congregations have common roots. Many Koreans within the PC(USA) and in the KPCA have shared roots in Korea. We covenant to develop a process of orderly transfer of congregations. This process will encourage, where feasible, congregations to share together in ministry and to be dually affiliated. We covenant to develop a process that seeks to strengthen the witness of our churches and not to contribute to divisions within the body of Christ. This process will be developed in a way that respects our individual polities.

D. We recognize that there is much we share in mission together. We covenant to continue to work together in the following areas of mission and pray that other areas may also emerge— curriculum development; second generation and youth and young adult ministry; congregational support and leadership development; women's leadership and resource development; global mission and justice and reconciliation in the world.

IV. Enabling Acts

A. This covenant will be forwarded to our General Assemblies through the appropriate channels in each of our churches for action by 2008. Ecumenical Statement Approved by the PC(USA) 218th General Assembly (2008) and the KPCA 33rd General Assembly in 2008.

B. Our assemblies will be asked to enter into covenant relationship, make the necessary constitutional amendments to enable this covenant, and to forward it to presbyteries for ratification. Approved by majority vote of PC(USA) and KPCA presbyteries, effective June 28, 2009.

C. Upon the ratification by presbyteries, covenant relationship will be established and a service of worship celebrating and formally entering into covenant relationship will be held by 2010.

D. A covenant implementation committee will be established to shape and support the covenanting process and to make recommendations that enable us to live fully into this covenant.

V. Prayer for the Future

We offer thanksgiving to you O God, Creator of the Universe, Lord of all peoples. You sent the gospel to Korea through the work of Presbyterian missionaries. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you have nurtured the faith of Koreans in the midst of difficult sufferings and we witnessed the growth of the church in Korea and amongst Korean Presbyterians in the United States. We recognize that while there has been a separation because of human limitations, you have continued to work in and through each of our churches. You have taken our differences in culture, custom, and language and made us one family in Christ. We are grateful that you are bringing us to this time of deeper relationship and seek your guidance and blessing as we make this covenant between the Korean Presbyterian Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for now and generations to come. Amen

"Now to him who by the power at work at within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."
(Eph. 3: 20-21 (NRSV))

The following document is the result of collaborative work done by the denominations participating in the *Covenant Agreement*. It is intended both for those interested in serving in a congregation of a covenant partner denomination as well as judicatory leaders seeking guidance in the implementation of such service.

The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Background and Affirmations

Through adoption of the *Covenant Agreement*, the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad (KPCA) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)], entered into a covenant relationship. Among other things, this agreement means that **the denominations recognize each other's ministries as authentic** and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

Orderly exchange (provisions for availability) of ordained ministers is for the sake of participation by both denominations in the mission of God, and can be an important sign of our unity in Christ. This particular provision **seeks to allow and encourage the more effective use and deployment of ordained leaders in order to enhance our shared ministry and mission**. It encourages those in our denominations who are responsible for the deployment of ordained ministers to draw on the available ministers of the other denomination to meet mission needs.

Ordained ministers in one denomination may be invited or may express their desire to serve in the other denomination; **they do not have a right to serve in the other denomination**. The orderly exchange of ordained ministers is understood to be **at the invitation of the receiving denomination and subject to that denomination's polity and procedures**.

Orderly exchange is extended service in ministries in the covenant partner denomination while membership remains constant in a minister's own denomination. The policies and procedures described here are developed by the two denominations for orderly exchange.

The transfer of ministerial membership is a permanent movement of membership from one denomination to another. A minister seeking to transfer membership must meet the requirements of the denomination to which he or she seeks to belong.

Under orderly exchange, the existing polity of each denomination continues to be respected. It is important, however, that provisions parallel each other as much as possible and that each denomination be familiar with and conversant about the provisions of the other. The denominations will need to nurture both national and regional relationships in order to enhance the orderly exchange of ministers and to find ways to celebrate visibly our covenant.

Principles of Agreement

Seeking to promote greater understanding between the covenant partners, representatives of the two denominations offer the following principles to guide implementation efforts.

1. An ordained minister of one partner denomination **may be eligible to engage in extended service in any position open to a minister in the other covenant denomination**, except as noted otherwise in the polity of either denomination.
2. Orderly exchange involves an “inviting” presbytery and a “sending presbytery.” It is very important that both presbyteries be involved from the beginning of the orderly exchange process to assess the suitability of a minister for particular service and to establish a relationship of accountability and support that will foster effective ministry for Christ.
3. In evaluating the suitability of ordained ministers for service, **sending presbyteries will do so in accordance with the stated intentions in the Covenant and the mission needs of the inviting presbytery.**
4. **Inviting presbyteries shall approve service only in consultation with, and with the concurrence of, the sending presbytery.** When granting concurrence for an ordained minister to serve in the partner denomination, the sending presbytery will do so in accordance with the stated intentions in the Covenant.
5. It is important to the faithful and orderly exchange of ordained ministers between the denominations that one who would serve in a congregation of another denomination first be formed and educated for ministry in one’s own denomination, and have experience in serving in that denomination’s ordained ministry. Such experience and grounding in one’s own denomination are seen to be essential prior to serving in a setting of another denomination; **therefore, such service is not intended for a first call.**
6. To be eligible to serve in the partner denomination, an ordained **minister will demonstrate to the inviting presbytery knowledge of and an appreciation for the history, polity, practices of ministry, and discipline of that denomination.**
7. **Placement, supervision, and evaluation procedures of the inviting presbytery shall be observed.** All parties will respect the authority of the inviting presbytery and its responsibility for the ministry of its congregations.
8. **The minister remains accountable to the sending presbytery for continuation of ministerial status.** All parties will respect the authority of the sending presbytery and its responsibility for the ministry of its minister members.
9. Responsibility for pastoral care of ordained ministers is shared by the inviting and sending presbyteries.
10. In a disciplinary review or judicial process, the ordained minister remains under the jurisdiction of the sending presbytery, but the inviting presbytery may be asked to participate as appropriate.

11. Each denomination will develop a provision whereby an ordained minister may be granted full participation in the inviting presbytery, which may include privilege of voice and vote. If service is in a local congregation, this would include moderating the session. We encourage presbyteries to grant such privileges in order to enhance the ministry.
12. An ordained minister serving the partner denomination will continue to participate in the pension and benefits program of their denomination of membership.

For those who seek to serve, there are four basic steps to follow:

1. Read the “Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament” carefully.
2. Contact your presbytery for authorization to make yourself available for service under the process.
3. After you have been authorized by your presbytery for service under orderly exchange and presbytery-to-presbytery contact has been made, contact a leader of the partner presbytery in the region you wish to serve and follow that denomination’s procedure.
4. Contact a congregation directly only after being directed to by the appropriate person from that congregation’s presbytery. That contact may include a PC(USA) Personal Information Form or resume. (Sample PIF and Stated Clerk attestation form to be attached.)

As the “Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of the Word and Sacrament” makes clear, **the process is for the sake of the mission of God**. It is not for the convenience of those who may wish to serve in another denomination. It is always to be understood to be at the *invitation* of the inviting denomination.

THE PROCESS OF DENOMINATIONAL TRANSFER

The purpose of the covenant agreement is not to encourage ministers to transfer their membership from one partner to another, but rather to share leadership for a time of service in order to strengthen the ministry of Christ. That process is one of lending and borrowing leadership.

However, we recognize that some ministers will seek to transfer membership and presbyteries will need information in order to guide that process in a way that respects the integrity of each denomination and the partnership of our covenant. For that reason, information about transfer procedures is given here.

When a minister seeks to transfer from one denomination to another, a written letter of standing will be provided by the sending presbytery to the receiving presbytery. When such a letter is not provided, the transfer will not occur. Additional consultation may occur between the sending and receiving presbyteries.

Transfer of a KPCA minister into the PC(USA)

Ministers of the KPCA will have to meet the requirements of the PC(USA) *Book of Order*, Form of Government, G-2.0505. Essentially these requirements will be the same as those for ministers of other denominations, but the process does allow for an exception to the examination requirements if the minister has been ordained more than five years.

Transfer of a minister member of the PC(USA) to the KPCA

A minister may request transfer of ministerial membership to the KPCA under the PC(USA) *Book of Order*, Form of Government, provisions of G-2.0505. Such a minister will remain on the rolls and under the authority of his/her presbytery until notice is received from the receiving presbytery that the minister has been enrolled. A minister may not be transferred if any disciplinary matter is pending.

Transfer of PC(USA) ministers into the KPCA

Ministers of the PC(USA) will have to meet the requirements of the KPCA Constitution Chapter 5, Article 29, on "Calling of a Pastor of Other Denominations." These requirements are essentially the same as those for ministers of other denominations.

Transfer of a minister member of the KPCA to the PC(USA)

A minister may request transfer of ministerial membership to the PC(USA) under the KPCA Constitution, Chapter 5, Article 32, on "Transferring of Pastors." Such a minister will remain on the rolls and under the authority of his/her presbytery until notice is received from the receiving presbytery that the minister has been enrolled. A minister may not be transferred if any disciplinary matter is pending.