

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
ABOUT  
COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH  
THE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (KPCA)  
AND  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) (PCUSA)**

**1. What is “covenant relationship?”**

Covenant relationship is rooted in shared theological beliefs we hold about the church and how God works through the church in mission. It is a shared commitment to live in ways that respect our differences and build upon our commonalities for the sake of faithfully fulfilling our call to mission and to visibly give witness to the unity we have in Christ.

**2. How is this different from other ecumenical relationships?**

Covenant relationship is a relationship defined by mutuality. It is an ecclesial relationship between the highest levels of our churches. Currently, the Book of Order defines our ecumenical relationships as churches with which the General Assembly is “in correspondence” (G-15.0201b) and churches with which the General Assembly is “in full communion.”(G-15-0201a) Churches with which we are in correspondence is a very broad category and is a unilateral designation. (We determine who fits this category, without reciprocity or mutuality) Covenant relationship has all the elements of a “Full Communion” relationship.

**3. Is this the same as church union or merger?**

No, in covenant relationship, each church maintains its own autonomy and individual polity. However, in covenant relationship we seek to open possibilities for greater witness and mission together.

**4. Does this mean that ministers automatically become members of each others presbyteries?**

No, once we agree upon covenant agreement, representatives from our denominations will need to develop a process of orderly exchange of pastors. It is expected that for the PC(USA), the requirements in G-11.0404 will still need to be met by KPCA ministers and that each presbytery will retain the responsibility of examining for membership a KPCA minister seeking to serve within the presbytery.

**5. What about elders and commissioned lay pastors?**

This covenant agreement plans for the development of an orderly exchange process for ministers of the Word and Sacrament. At this time, commissioned lay pastors would not be included in the orderly exchange process.

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**6. What does it mean that churches can be dually affiliated?**

For a variety of reasons, churches within the PCUSA and the KPCA seek to transfer between the two denominations. For the sake of mission, a congregation might seek to relate to presbyteries of both the PC(USA) and the KPCA. For the PC(USA), this would be similar to a union church as defined in G-16.0101 and processes to provide for dual affiliation would be developed by representatives of both the PC(USA) and the KPCA.

**7. What is the role of presbyteries in developing and implementing these processes for orderly exchange of ministers and congregations?**

First, if the covenant agreement is approved by the General Assembly, it would be sent to the presbyteries for ratification. It is expected that each presbytery would study the covenant and consider the possibilities that it offers for strengthened ministry and mission. Secondly, as with the Formula of Agreement, presbyteries would be consulted and invited to share their needs and suggestions for the development of a process for orderly exchange of ministers and congregations. The processes for orderly exchange will be reported to our General Assemblies.

**8. When will Covenant Relationship be established?**

General Assemblies of both the PC(USA) and the KPCA must approve the covenant agreement and forward it to their presbyteries for ratification. Upon 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.

**9. How will this impact our other ecumenical relationships and partnerships?**

This is a covenant relationship between the PC(USA) and the KPCA. It is binding only on our two churches. While it does not change any of our other ecumenical agreements or partnerships, we pray that it becomes a constructive model for two churches of the Reformed tradition in the United States living and ministering together for the glory of God.

**10. What can I do to help make this Covenant Relationship meaningful?**

First, take time to read the covenant and study the areas of mutual recognition and reconciliation. In light of these agreements, study the covenant commitments. If there are KPCA congregations within the geographical bounds of your presbytery, reach out to meet the pastors and members of these congregations and learn how God is working through them. Begin to hold this covenant relationship in prayer, both personally and in the corporate prayer life of your congregation and presbytery. Share ideas for ways that we might faithfully honor this covenant with the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations.