

A Statement of Current and Previous Presidents of National Association of Korean United Methodist Churches/National Caucus Regarding the Recent Homosexuality Issue in the UMC

“If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.
If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”

- Mark 3:24-25

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Prince of peace and the One who always leads us into unity and to the light of truth in times of conflict and difficulty in community through the Scriptures and discernment of wisdom.

We, the current and three previous presidents who have served as representatives of the National Association of Korean United Methodist Churches/National Caucus would like to express serious concerns regarding the recent developments surrounding the issue of homosexuality in the denomination as outline below:

- A formal announcement and officiating the wedding of two homosexual individuals by Bishop Melvin Talbert(retired), which is prohibited by the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church.
- Openly expressing concerns about Bishop Talbert’s action and requesting self-restraint by Bishop Wallace-Pedgett of Alabama and by the Council of Bishops.
- The decision of the Council of Bishops that soon followed to make a request for filing a charge against Bishop Talbert according to the Book of Discipline.
- The open disagreement with and criticism of the above decision of the Council of Bishops by some of other Bishops.
- The denominational trial that took place in November in Pennsylvania where the Reverend Schaefer was found guilty for officiating a wedding involving homosexual individuals and many similar denominational trials that are expected to follow.
- The absence of genuine conversation between those who share different views on this issue and the growing sentiment of condemnation and criticism within the denomination.
- Officiating a wedding between two United Methodist pastors who are lesbians by their District Superintendent in the Seattle area.
- The negative effect the coverage of Korean American media regarding this issue is having on the reputation of Korean United Methodist churches in the Korean American community and on their efforts of evangelism.

Considering the above outlined developments that are deeply concerning, we, the four people who have served as presidents of the National Association of Korean United Methodist Churches/National Caucus in the last 8 years have come to feel strongly that Korean American churches

can no longer remain as a silent observer of the situation and hereby state our position on this matter as follows as we seek to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to our call to be prophetic.

- First of all, we request that we pray for the Church, which is the body of Christ, and for the beloved members who are suffering directly and indirectly by these developments.
- We understand the pain of the homosexual individuals and respect their human rights. At the same time, we accept the statement in the Book of Discipline against homosexuality and the marriage of homosexual individuals as the Biblical teaching of the Church.
- We will no longer remain silent and do everything we can to protect the Church from the growing mistrust and conflict that is caused by the absence of respectful conversation about the issue of homosexuality in the Church.
- We will consider the act of provoking division in the Church by using aggressive words and deeds surrounding this issue as being anti-church that goes beyond expressing different opinions as a member of the Church whose head is the Christ.
- If this divisive and unhealthy situation continues to the point of causing serious challenges to the work of evangelism and mission, which are the essential call of the church, we will commit ourselves to using all possible means that can be taken in the church to prevent the division of our Church.
- If the division and conflict cannot be avoided despite our sincere hope and efforts, we, in the spirit of love and not condemnation, with discerning wisdom and not blame, may even consider seeking new arrangements in order to protect the Korean American churches from becoming divisive and suffering by this exhaustive and troubling issue.

We invite Korean American United Methodist churches and ministers to stand in solidarity with us regarding above outlined position by signing below. We pray that the justice and grace of God who called us to unity and who works for the good in all things be with all Korean American churches who are members of the United Methodist Church.

Rather, serve one another in love.
Love your neighbor as yourself.
If you keep on biting and devouring each other,
watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

- Galatians 5:13b-15

December 15, 2013

Rev. Ahn, Timothy Myunghoon, Current and 20th President

Rev. Lee, Sungchul, 19th President

Rev. Kim, James Chongho, 18th President

Rev. Lee, Hoonkyung, 17th President
National Association of Korean United Methodist Churches/National Caucus

I support the above position with my signature.

Name of minister

Name of church