

SYNOD OF THE MID-ALTANTIC
Report to the 243rd Synod Assembly
Administrative Commission
Atlantic Korean American Presbytery
March 11-12, 2019

Background:

The 241st Synod Assembly met March 12-13, 2018 in Richmond VA. Its Executive Committee recommended and the Assembly approved forming an Administrative Commission (AC) to address issues adversely affecting the life, health and vitality of the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery (AKAP), as provided in G-3.0109b(5) of the Book of Order. The Commission shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) persons and shall be appointed by the Synod Moderator and the Synod Stated Clerk. One-half of the AC's membership shall be Koreans.

Remedial Trial Decision:

Shortly after the 241st Synod Assembly adjourned, two Remedial Complaints were filed against the synod challenging the actions of the Assembly to establish an AC. One complaint was filed by a synod Commissioner of AKAP and the second complaint was filed by AKAP. Both complaints were filed with the Office of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC). The GAPJC accepted the case, combined the complaints and a trial was held in Atlanta GA.

The court's final decision states: **"It is therefore ordered that the synod action of March 13, 2018, establish an Administrative Committee is hereby suspended, pending modification of the action to delineate the powers of that Administrative Commission consistent with this decision and in compliance with G-3.0109," "The designated council shall state specifically the scope of the commission's powers and any restrictions on those powers."**

Administrative Commission Powers:

The powers of the Synod AC will be limited. The Commission will not have original jurisdiction powers. It will investigate any and all items related to life, health and vitality of the presbytery. The Commission will address the conflict, deteriorating disorder and inquire into the settling of difficulties, and to determine if the presbytery has the ability to function as a viable mid-council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In the event that AKAP's Presbytery Executive/Stated Clerk is not a PCUSA Minister of Word and Sacrament or belong to a denomination in which the PCUSA approves, the commission will be given the powers to remove the individual. It will bring a progress report or final recommendations to the 244th Synod Assembly as to the best way to move forward with AKAP in terms of addressing, but not limited to the following:

- a) Address issues surrounding Ministers of Word and Sacrament being admitted into the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery without proper credentials. When researched, the Office of the General Assembly does not have these clergy persons in its records.

- b) Address issues surrounding Congregation(s) being admitted into Atlantic Korean American Presbytery. Again, there exists at least one instance in which the Office of the General Assembly does not have the church listed as a PCUSA congregation.
- c) Conflict between AKAP's former Presbytery Executive and Stated Clerk with churches, leaders and pastors across the presbytery. The conflict has permeated the culture of AKAP.
- d) Constant judicial charges being filed against the presbytery with focus on the former EP/SC leadership and decisions.
- e) Failure of the Presbytery leadership to demonstrate and live out the principles of polity as provided by the BOO in relationship to nominations of committees and commissions. This area has given to consistent charges being filed about the presbytery.
- f) Failure of the presbytery to abide by rulings and decisions of the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission made in regard to several complaints.
- g) Failure to allow the synod to provide peacemaking services and mediation assistance to resolve judicial matters in order to move the presbytery's mission forward.
- h) Failure of the presbytery stated clerk to provide minutes of presbytery meetings for the two years.
- i) Loss of trust among members of the presbytery and its leadership.
- j) Misuse of leader's authority in the appointment of persons to serve on the commission and committees of the presbytery as well as removal of persons by said leader.
- k) The current Stated Clerk has done a poor job in meeting his commitment as a stated clerk. Whether he does not understand his duties or chooses not to do so is unclear. The AC is asked to examine and assess the suitability and capability of the current stated clerk to perform the job.
- l) Investigate and ascertain the current stated clerk/ep is a valid member of the PCUSA. What is the status? The AC may be given the power to remove the EP/SC if he is not a PCUSA Teaching Elder.
- m) Failure to appoint a Committee of Counsel and to provide the COC with materials needed. I believe it was 3 memos from you and just days before the trial.
- n) Failure to provide the Lists and Lists of Records and other documents related to the Remedial Complaint cases before the SPJC.

- o) Failure of the current SC/EP to address a Remedial Complaint from a Session dated February 2018, the latest complaint from MPC that is directed to AKAP's PJC. The complaint may fail to be valid but it does need to be addressed by the Presbytery.
- p) During one of the trials, it came to the attention of the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission that AKAP has an inappropriate way of determining a quorum. There is great concern over how AKAP determines a meeting quorum for presbytery meetings. There does not seem to be a way for retired pastors or those in some other form of ministry to be counted.
- q) It is not clear if AKAP has an approved manual. There have been several references to work started following the new Book of Order, but never approved.
- r) It is not clear if the Decisions and Orders of the SPJC have been properly shared with the Presbytery and spread upon their minutes.
- s) It appears that the previous stated clerk exercised unhealthy influence on the Presbytery. He made many questionable pronouncements by misinterpreting the Decision and Order of the SPJC on MPC v AKAP 1 on what was required vs what was recommended.
- t) The decision of the former EP/SC that if a new class had not been elected to the Presbytery Council that there would not be a Presbytery Council.
- u) It is clear that the disagreements within the Presbytery that have led to many SPJC cases have not been resolved in any way. While MPC has been the center most recently of the judicial cases there were others that preceded them.
- v) The ongoing role of the retired EP/SC in the current life of the presbytery continues to be problematic. The AC is asked to address the appropriate role of the return EP/SC so that the current presbytery leader may have a chance at success.
- w) Commissioners from AKAP to Synod failing to be present to participate in synod assembly.
- x) Failure of AKAP's Stated Clerk to provide names of presbytery members to serve on Synod's Committees and Commissions.

The Atlantic Korean American Presbytery has and continues to experience high levels of chronic conflict and dysfunction.