



미국장로교 한인교회 전국총회
National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches, PC(USA)



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June 17, 2020

Reports/recommendation of COTE to the 224th General Assembly as related to SFTS

I am a Korean Presbyterian minister who graduated from the San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) in 2002 (M.Div.) and was ordained in 2004 as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA) while I was a full-time faculty at the University of California in Davis which is located 80 miles away from seminary campus. I was a part-time student who completed a M.T.S. program at the GTU (Graduate Theological Union) before I continued to complete a M.Div. program at the SFTS. As a part-time student I commuted 80 miles one way three times a week. I am proud of having been educated at the SFTS and ordained to become a Presbyterian minister to serve the church until today even after my retirement with 30 years of employment at the university in 2008.

The reason I am telling this story is that it would not have been possible for me to complete a M.Div. degree as a part-time student while holding my secular profession and be ordained as a Presbyterian minister if it were not for the SFTS which is located in the west coast. This story goes with many Korean Americans who live in the west coast and become a second career seminary students. In addition, many Korean Presbyterian students and scholars from Korea have been enrolling in many academic programs at the SFTS. The greatest benefit of studying at the SFTS is the availability of many academic courses and programs through eight schools of theology of the GTU as well as the University of California in Berkeley. The GTU is the most comprehensive center for the graduate study of religion in North America. I took a few courses in the area of Christian spirituality and spiritual direction at the Jesuit School of Theology, one of the eight member schools of the GTU. If the PC (USA) excommunicates SFTS from its institutional membership, a great opportunity to offer a superb scholastic training to many bright minds will be lost.

Apart from my personal experiences of academic training at SFTS, I strongly oppose the recent action of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) that has usurped the General Assembly's power and denied due process to SFTS. The merger of SFTS and the University of Redlands (UR) occurred on July 1, 2019. It means the SFTS is still one of the institutional members of PC(USA) until the 224th GA takes an action about the relationship between the SFTS and the denomination. And yet the COTE excluded key references to the work of SFTS (approval for the administration of the Lord's Supper, approval of Trustees and President, summary of activities) in its reports to the GA. I believe the COTE does not have such an authority. The removal of SFTS from institutional members of the PC(USA) should be discussed and decided by due process in the General Assembly. In its report of recommendation, the

COTE says that it is in conversation with SFTS, the University of Redland and its Graduate School of Theology regarding its relationship with the PC(USA). **If COTE is still in conversation with SFTS and the UR**, how could it eliminate SFTS from the list of institutional membership of PC(USA) seminaries?

In reaching its decision to eliminate SFTS from the list of PC(USA) seminaries, the COTE repeatedly and deliberately flaunted due process – excluding SFTS and its supporters from participating in broad dialogue and exploration of the best option for the SFTS and the denomination.

In behalf of many Korean American graduates of SFTS for the past fifty years, I am requesting that the COTE be instructed to include SFTS in its report of activities and recommendations as long as the General Assembly continues to recognize SFTS as a PC(USA) seminary, and that COTE's submissions to the 224th General Assembly be withdrawn and/or amended to allow deeper discussion and due process. I further ask the COTE and the denominational leadership to take every possible action to rectify this wrong and to secure SFTS appropriate place on the list of PC(USA) seminaries at the present time. The COTE can submit a legitimate recommendation regarding the membership of SFTS to the 225th General Assembly (2022) after deeper discussion among all concerned parties and due process.

Faithfully,



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