

**PETITIONS – 2021**

**NO. 1 – PRESBYTERY OF EASTEN HAN-CA**

**Re: Confession to ethnic contingent of denomination**

WHEREAS, the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca and the Presbytery of Western Han-Ca question whether in this denomination we are nothing more than a marginal group, whose voice is deemed as one which can, and should be ignored. This is no less clearly evident in our current debates regarding human sexuality and the lack of response to our serious concerns surrounding the recently proposed recommendations to change our doctrine and practice of ministry. Because we are not willing to abdicate our beliefs, which cohere with the vast majority of the global church, in favour of that which is promulgated by the dominant culture in our denomination, we have not only experienced a silencing, but much mistreatment, and therefore wish to petition the 146th General Assembly to confess their sins to the large ethnic contingent, Koreans being but one group, of our denomination and repent of its treatment of ethnic congregations in this denomination by also acknowledging that we are as well, equally, The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

WHEREAS, the vast majority of congregations from both the Presbyteries of Eastern Han-Ca and Western Han-Ca are questioning if there is a place for us in this denomination, and also whether those not holding to the agendas and adopted ideologies of the Western, primarily Anglo-driven, dominant culture are really welcomed; and

WHEREAS, Eastern and Western Han-Ca Presbyteries are extremely alarmed, not only because of the specific nature of the recommendations being handed down to change our doctrine, but more so due to the manner in which those who seek change have been attempting to do so, and what this trajectory of change indicates about the nature of our denomination, for we believe we are moving in a direction that betrays our longstanding theological beliefs and practices of ministry, as indicated in our subordinate standards; and

WHEREAS, in The Presbyterian Church in Canada many are seeking to redefine our relationship to our subordinate standards, and in similar fashion our scriptures, which in practice seems tantamount to promoting or adhering to only that which one finds to be amicable; and with the unpalatable, often invoking the claim of relativity of interpretation, thus rendering it impossible for our subordinate standards or scriptures to function as that which we can subordinate ourselves to, nor uphold as any kind of real authority; and

WHEREAS, if in The Presbyterian Church in Canada we see the increasing erosion of the unity, clear-direction and purpose that our subordinate standards once provided, what now serves as their replacement and is able to again bring us together? In The Presbyterian Church in Canada are our subordinate standards now subordinated to the loud moral clarion calls of justice, the contents of which are handed down to us by our politically correct culture?; and

WHEREAS, since those in the Han-Ca Presbyteries remain faithful to our subordinate standards, and do not follow the transient nature of current Western culture, nor adopt its today-popular moral standards, we have collectively experienced many instances of slander, ridicule, racism, and even sadly demonization, which all unequivocally seems to be saying that there is no place for “the Korean” in this denomination; and

WHEREAS, similarly in our nation’s past, the actions of our forebearers indicated that there was no place for First Nations peoples who held on to their culture, beliefs and practices in this “new nation”, and such sentiments were promulgated by our own denomination as we established numerous denominationally run residential school, for which we have rightly confessed and spelled out the nature of our sins, as indicated in our confession:

We acknowledge that the stated policy of the Government of Canada was to assimilate Aboriginal peoples to the dominant culture, and that The Presbyterian Church in Canada co-operated in this policy. We acknowledge that the roots of the harm we have done are found in the attitudes and values of western European colonialism, and the assumption that what was not yet molded in our image was to be discovered and exploited. (The Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1994)

However, is our denomination now really different from the denomination of our past, and should the dominant culture in our denomination not entertain the possibility that they are perhaps again following in the hegemonic sins of their ancestors? And for this reason congregations in our presbyteries implore the larger Presbyterian Church in Canada to take notice of our current plight of marginalization in our denomination and provide a safeguarded place for us here, for we believe that we too are created in God’s image and have a specific mandate from God to live out our gospel calling in this nation, which is in complete accordance to our denomination’s subordinate standards. And therefore advise that the dominant culture in our denomination tread carefully as it attempts to dictate what should be considered to be authentic, faithful, Christianity, not only in our own denomination, but also to the wider, global church, with which it is at odds; and

WHEREAS, we encourage The Presbyterian Church in Canada to be The Presbyterian Church “in” Canada, and not The Presbyterian Church “of” Canada, and we believe that for our denomination to live up to its name, it must take into account the multiple expressions of Presbyterianism not only embodied in our Han-Ca congregations, but as well wonderfully represented in many other ethnic expressions such as those found in Arabic, Chinese, Taiwanese, Hungarian, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. Presbyterian congregations of our denomination; and

WHEREAS, there is a danger when The Presbyterian Church in Canada does not take into account other forms of Presbyterianism but only relies on one, Western cultural expression of it – it may find itself to be in error, but not able to recognize it, for when multiple expressions of Presbyterianism (and Christianity) come together, the truest, most accurate, and faithful expression of it will likely be found at the intersection of these multiple expressions. For this reason, we hope that The Presbyterian Church in Canada does not continue to ignore the many voices and expressions of Presbyterianism in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, of which the Korean expression is but one, to their overall detriment; and

WHEREAS, the multiple expressions of The Presbyterian Church in Canada will need creativity to maintain unity, as proposed by the third-party mediators in response to the 2016 Han-Ca petition, and this creativity may require heretofore unseen solutions for the denomination to listen to and care for the unanimous voice of the Han-Ca presbyteries; and;

THEREFORE, we, the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca, humbly petition the Venerable, the 146th General Assembly to confess their sins in written response to the large ethnic contingent of our denomination who have been mistreated by the dominant culture in our denomination because we and other ethnic minorities are not willing to abdicate our God-given expressions of Christianity to assimilate to the form of Christianity which the dominant culture dictates; moreover, we ask that The Presbyterian Church in Canada fulfil its commitment to care for the Han-Ca Presbyteries in real, actionable and creative ways, instead of treating its ethnic sisters and brothers in this denomination as second-class citizens, or do to otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, deems best.

## **NO. 2 – PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN HAN-CA**

### **RE: Confession to ethnic contingent of denomination**

WHEREAS, the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca and the Presbytery of Western Han-Ca question whether in this denomination we are nothing more than a marginal group, whose voice is deemed as one which can, and should be ignored. This is no less clearly evident in our current debates regarding human sexuality and the lack of response to our serious concerns surrounding the recently proposed recommendations to change our doctrine and practice of ministry. Because we are not willing to abdicate our beliefs, which cohere with the vast majority of the global church, in favour of that which is promulgated by the dominant culture in our denomination, we have not only experienced a silencing, but much mistreatment, and therefore wish to petition the 146th General Assembly to confess their sins to the large ethnic contingent, Koreans being but one group, of our denomination and repent of its treatment of ethnic congregations in this denomination by also acknowledging that we are as well, equally, The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

WHEREAS, the vast majority of congregations from both the Presbyteries of Eastern Han-Ca and Western Han-Ca are questioning if there is a place for us in this denomination, and also whether those not holding to the agendas and adopted ideologies of the Western, primarily Anglo-driven, dominant culture are really welcomed; and

WHEREAS, Eastern and Western Han-Ca Presbyteries are extremely alarmed, not only because of the specific nature of the recommendations being handed down to change our doctrine, but more so due to the manner in which those who seek change have been attempting to do so, and what this trajectory of change indicates about the nature of our denomination, for we believe we are moving in a direction that betrays our longstanding theological beliefs and practices of ministry, as indicated in our subordinate standards; and

WHEREAS, in The Presbyterian Church in Canada many are seeking to redefine our relationship to our subordinate standards, and in similar fashion our scriptures, which in practice seems more like promoting or adhering to only that which one finds to be amicable to us; or often repeatedly invoking the claim of relativity of interpretation so as to make it impossible for our subordinate standards and scriptures to function as that which we can subordinate ourselves to, or uphold as authority; and

WHEREAS, if in The Presbyterian Church in Canada we see the increasing erosion of the unity, clear-direction, and purpose that our subordinate standards once provided, what now serves as their replacement and is able to again bring us together? In The Presbyterian Church in Canada are our subordinate standards and scriptures now subordinated to the loud moral clarion calls of justice, the contents of which are dictated to us by our politically correct culture?; and

WHEREAS, since those in the Han-Ca Presbyteries remain faithful to our subordinate standards, and do not follow the transient nature of current Western culture, nor adopt its today-popular moral standards, we have experienced treatment at the hands of many in The Presbyterian Church in Canada which has caused us much pain and raises alarm, for we have collectively experienced many instances of slander, ridicule, racism, and even sadly demonization, which all unequivocally seems to be saying that there is no place for “the Korean” in this denomination; and

WHEREAS, similarly in our nation’s past, the actions of our forebearers indicated that there was no place for First Nations peoples who held on to their culture, beliefs and practices in this “new nation,” and such sentiments were promulgated by our own denomination as we established numerous denominationally run residential school, for which we have rightly confessed and spelled out the nature of our sins, as indicated in our confession:

We acknowledge that the stated policy of the Government of Canada was to assimilate Aboriginal peoples to the dominant culture, and that The Presbyterian Church in Canada co-operated in this policy. We acknowledge that the roots of the harm we have done are found in the attitudes and values of western European colonialism, and the assumption that what was not yet moulded in our image was to be discovered and exploited.

(The Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1994)

However, is our denomination now really different from the denomination of our past, and should the dominant culture in our denomination not entertain the possibility that they are perhaps again following in the hegemonic sins of their ancestors? And for this reason congregations in our Presbyteries implore the larger Presbyterian Church in Canada to take notice of our current plight of marginalization in our denomination, and provide a safeguarded place for us here, for we believe that we too are created in God’s image and have a specific mandate from God to live out our gospel calling in this nation, which is in complete accordance to our denomination’s subordinate standards. And therefore advise that the dominant culture in our denomination tread carefully as it attempts to dictate what should be considered to be authentic, faithful, Christianity, not only in our own denomination, but also to the wider, global church, with which it is at odds; and

WHEREAS, we encourage The Presbyterian Church in Canada to be The Presbyterian Church “in” Canada, and not The Presbyterian Church “of” Canada, and we believe that for our denomination to live up to its name, it must take into account the multiple expressions of Presbyterianism not only embodied in our HanCa congregations, but as well wonderfully represented in many other ethnic expressions such as those found in Arabic, Chinese, Taiwanese, Hungarian, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. Presbyterian congregations of our denomination; and

WHEREAS, there is a danger when The Presbyterian Church in Canada does not take into account other forms of Presbyterianism but only relies on one, Western cultural expression of it – it may find itself to be in error, but not able to recognize it, for when multiple expressions of Presbyterianism (and Christianity) come together, the truest, most accurate, and faithful expression of it will likely be found at the intersection of these multiple expressions. For this reason, we hope that The Presbyterian Church in Canada does not continue to ignore the many voices and expressions of Presbyterianism in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, of which the Korean expression is but one, to their overall detriment; and

THEREFORE, we, the Presbytery of Western Han-Ca, humbly petition the Venerable, the 146th General Assembly to confess their sins in written response to the large ethnic contingent of our denomination who have been mistreated by the dominant culture in our denomination because we and other ethnic minorities are not willing to abdicate our God-given expressions of Christianity to assimilate to the form of Christianity which the dominant culture dictates, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, deems best