

PCUSA, largest Korean church in dispute: Faction secedes

News in the [May 17, 2005](#) issue

In a complicated dispute with its largest Korean congregation, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has brought in a former General Assembly moderator, Syngman Rhee, to lead services for denominational loyalists off the property of the 2,700-member First Presbyterian Church of Torrance.

A “seceding faction” has seized control of First Presbyterian, said Margaret S. Wentz, stated clerk of the PCUSA synod of Southern California, to the Los Angeles Superior Court. Judge David Yaffe said he will hold a hearing in June to decide, among other things, whether Rhee should be allowed to act as a supply minister for the Korean-American congregation.

Rhee, a past president of the National Council of Churches, has been living in retirement in Virginia. He was moderator of the PCUSA a few years ago when he proposed a “third way” between proponents and opponents of gay ordinations and same-sex union rites.

According to a report on the conservative Layman Online Web site, an associate minister at the congregation said the church’s session has already voted to sever its ties to the PCUSA because of what it sees as the denomination’s espousal of nonbiblical causes and the congregation’s mistreatment by regional church bodies.