

20550-CC-R6135-G Korea Peace, Justice, and Reunification

Revise:

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us (Ephesians 2:14 NRSV).

At the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Busan, South Korea, in late 2013, the delegates declared in a statement the following, which could also serve as a faith statement of our commitment to peace and reconciliation:

“As a global body of believers in Jesus Christ, we confess our sins in having given in to the powers and principalities of the world in their wars and military conflicts full of hate and enmity, armed with nuclear arsenals and weapons of mass destruction targeting humanity and the whole of God’s creation. Also we lament our failure to adequately acknowledge the Korean people’s long suffering, caused by external powers fighting for colonial expansion and military hegemony. We hereby join the Christians in Korea in their confession of faith in Jesus Christ, who came to this world as our Peace (Ephesians 2:13-19); who suffered, died upon the Cross, was buried, and rose again to reconcile humanity to God, to overcome divisions and conflicts, and to liberate all people and make them one (Acts 10:36-40); who, as our Messiah, will bring about a new Heaven and new Earth (Revelation 21-22). With this confession, we join in firm commitment with the Christians of Korea, both North and South, especially in Korean churches’ faithful actions to work towards peace, healing, reconciliation and reunification of their people and their land” (WCC Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula).

This statement remains to be true. In pursuit of these biblical foundations, the greater Wesleyan family reinforced such understanding at a roundtable hosted by the General Board of Global Ministries, on behalf of The United Methodist Church, World Methodist Council, the Korean Methodist Church, with the support of the World Council of Churches and the group it coordinates, called the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula.

The roundtable held in Atlanta on 11 November 2018, provides an update to the context where we act out our advocacy for peace, justice, and reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula. The statement, says, in part, “During this year of the 65th anniversary of the Korean War armistice, great progress has been made in opening a new dialogue for peace between North Korea and South Korea, as well as between North Korea and the United States of America. An explosive escalation of tensions between North Korea and the United States last year caused a dangerous crisis, threatening to precipitate another war on the Korean peninsula that would have had catastrophic impacts on the North-East Asian region and the whole world. . . . In this emergency situation, we realized anew that the Cold War system of division on the Korean Peninsula is a serious threat to peace and life globally.

Fortunately, during this same period, people’s yearning for justice, peace, and democracy, exemplified by the Candlelight Civil Revolution, rose to political prominence in the Republic of Korea. Emerging from this revolution, President Moon Jae-in’s government initiated a new dialogue with North Korea. The PyeongChang Winter Olympics served to increase the momentum. From the April 27 Panmunjom Inter-Korean summit, to the June 12 Singapore U.S. & North Korea summit, to the September 19 Pyongyang Joint Declaration, North Korea and South Korea and the U.S. have been moving toward declaring the

end of the Korean War and resolving hostile relations among them, as well as denuclearization, and fostering a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

The Atlanta Statement included declarations, which in part said:

We confess that we, the followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace, have failed to seek Christ's peace for the divided and suffering people of the two Koreas. We have often demonized our enemies whom Christ calls us to forgive and love. We have been more skeptical than hope-filled toward peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. We have often embodied the spirit of hostility rather than the spirit of hospitality. We repent and seek God's transformative forgiveness that turns our failures into opportunities for grace and reconciliation. . . .

We believe that the grace of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, traversing the boundaries of ideologies and religions, leads all the unrighteous and ungodly from the wrath of God to the restorative justice of God (Romans 1:18; 3:20-21). . . . Notwithstanding this year's progress toward peace on the Korean Peninsula, we are still standing on the crossroads between choosing the God of life or choosing the nuclear idol of death.

The Tragedy of Division and the Urgency of Peace

Christians in Korea have spoken about the urgency of the reunification of their nation. The Atlanta consultation characterized the tragedy of division and the urgency of peace in this manner:

"For the last 70 years, North Korea and South Korea have been separated by a hostile wall of division and have not overcome the tragedy of antagonistic symbiosis. One seems unable to exist without the other's animosity. North Korea has been cited as an imminent threat to justify an authoritarian grip on power, while North Korea cited potential U.S. aggression as a pretext for keeping its people on a war footing and for building nuclear arsenals. Yet, God who reigns in history is capable of ending the captivity of the Korean nation. As the people of God press their hands together to pray for the Kingdom of God and its righteousness on the Korean Peninsula, God will start to 'disarm the rulers and authorities' (Colossians 2:15). . . .

"We pledge to work for peace, indeed the peace of Christ, which makes 'both groups into one' (Ephesians 2:14 [NRSV]). The time to enact this pledge is upon us. The system of division on the Korean Peninsula is now shaking. The stakes are high, and the moment is urgent. At the same time, the geopolitical world orders emerging during the last century, especially as then promulgated by the U.S., are taking new directions and shapes in some regions. Motivated by new ambitions, these changes are arguably affecting and even threatening peace. These changes may affect progress in Northeast Asia, including in Korea."

For the nation of Korea, justice, peace, and reconciliation are tragically overdue. In 1945, just before the end of World War II, the United States proposed and the Soviet Union agreed to the division of Korea, which resulted in the Korean War with more than 3 million lives lost and millions of families separated. The tragedy of the Korean people continued because the Korean War did not end with a Peace Treaty. Instead, the Armistice Treaty was signed in 1953 leaving the Korean Peninsula under a state of war and

tension for more than sixty years. This resulted in the separation of families, many of whom never saw each other again.

The enmity between the superpowers has been played out in the Korean tragedy of war and death, dictatorship and militarization, separation of one people into two hostile camps and divided families with no contact at all. All members of the body of Christ have a responsibility to support the Korean people in their attempts to build democracy, reduce tension, create trust on the Korean Peninsula, heal the divisions, and reunite their country. The threat to peace remains critical with the world's fifth and sixth largest armies facing each other across the Demilitarized Zone.

A Renewed Momentum for Diplomacy and the Korean Peoples' Resolve for Peace

A growing momentum for peace in the Korean Peninsula and the Northeast Asia region is palpable. Both governments of South Korea and North Korea are in direct contact with each other in ways never seen before. Through inter-Korea talks, they are seeking ways to achieve peace and reconcile; in what manner, only time will tell. That the diplomatic contact is at the highest levels, between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un, if any, is indicative of their determination to end the division of the peninsula, declare an end to the de facto Korean War, enter into a peace treaty, and forge an agreement of a denuclearized peninsula and region. The direct engagement of President Donald Trump of the United States with Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un initially in the Singapore Summit, proved as well the importance of diplomatic engagement and person-to-person dialogue in addressing difficult peace and security concerns between and among countries. Every such summit helps both or all sides to learn more of each other that is crucial in decision making. The engagement of other countries of consequence to the peace process in the Korean Peninsula, especially China, Russia, and Japan, must be encouraged.

The momentum for peace is not only pushed by governmental and diplomatic initiatives. The role of women in peacebuilding is gaining solid recognition. The successful crossing by women led by Women Cross DMZ of the two-mile wide Demilitarized Zone on 24 May 2018, International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, demonstrated how seemingly impregnable divisions can be overcome. Since that historic and symbolic crossing, Women Cross DMZ has continued to mobilize women globally for peace in Korea (see <https://www.womencrossdmz.org/>).

The role of sports in fostering peace was again demonstrated at the 2018 Winter Olympics. Capitalizing on the Olympic spirit "to build a peaceful and better world," the PyeongChang Olympics in South Korea in 2018 became the venue for the world to see the Korean peoples' desire for peace. Meetings and conferences at the grassroots, national, regional, and international levels have since been held around this Olympic spirit. At the first anniversary commemoration of the PyeongChang Olympics, more than 500 people from 50 countries and 200 nongovernmental organizations around the world, supported by the national, provincial, and city governments and citizens where the Olympics were held, met Feb. 9-11, 2019, to focus the anniversary celebrations on the search for peace in the peninsula and in the world.

The PyeongChang Declaration for Peace that the conference produced said the following in part:

“The astonishing peace process ushered in by the Candlelight Revolution and manifested at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and Paralympics became a great inspiration for people around the world. Breaking through thick historical and political barriers erected during the previous century, the new process presents a ground-breaking model for peacebuilding efforts.

“By participating in sporting events, cultural and art exhibits collectively, we consolidate efforts for lasting peace. These steps are necessary to build trust and show there is a commonality for peace talks and processes. . . . We note with special attention that democracy and a galvanized civil society are constitutive of all peacebuilding efforts. . . . We the participants solemnly declare:

1. We fully support the peace process in the Korean peninsula and call to put an end to the Korean War. We enjoin all countries in the region to craft a peace and cooperation regime to undergird this peace process. Peace in the Korean Peninsula leads to peace in the world.”

In another document from PyeongChang, called “Resolution for Sustaining Peace Process in Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia,” participants said in part, “ We call on the Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (hereafter North Korea), and other involved nations to immediately declare the end of the Korean War (1950-1953) and sign a peace treaty. . . . We call for full implementation of established treaties, as well as other international law regarding nuclear disarmament, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1996), International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons (1996), U.N. Security Council Resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (2004), Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2007), Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017), and the U.N. Human Rights Committee General Comment No 36 on the Right to Life (2018).

“We appeal to all parties to take concrete steps for regional and global denuclearization. All concerned nations in the region should establish Northeast Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, which will greatly contribute to confidence-building and security for the region. . . . Ending the war and signing a peace treaty will unleash the momentum for the Korean people to participate fully in the international community and multilateral institutions, including the U.N. The peace process will enable the peoples of the Korean peninsula to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“Comprehensive regional cooperation by both governments and citizens should be pursued in the fields of humanitarian, economic, and social development, based on the universally recognized norms and principles of human rights, democracy, human security, and gender equality. . . .

“The Korea peace process must extend to the region, focusing on the rivalry between superpowers and the ensuing dangerous arms race. All nations in the region must immediately end politics of might and at the same time, start disarmament negotiations in all three areas of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, and new weapon technology, in accordance with the U.N. Charter, international law and norms. We also call for the implementation of confidence-building measures including lifting of sanctions and the continued freeze of military exercises. . . .

“Along with the Korea peace process, efforts should be made to establish regional cooperation mechanisms for peace in Northeast Asia, to reduce and resolve the escalating military tensions and

conflicts in the region. We also call for the effective use of existing international mechanisms, including those within the United Nations. . . . All nations in the region must guarantee transparency and civic-democratic control in security and military sectors, immediately stop all efforts to use force or threats to resolve territorial disputes, and replace national rivalry with regional cooperation, prioritizing human security.”

North-South Reconciliation Efforts

In many ways, the Korean people, north and south, have expressed their strong desire for reunification. Since 1984, there have been official contacts and conversations on economic and humanitarian issues between the Republic of Korea (ROK, also known as South Korea) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, also known as North Korea). Emergency assistance by the DPRK and ROK following devastating floods in the south and floods and drought in the north was offered and accepted by each other.

The first government-sponsored exchange of visits between divided family members occurred in 1985. Thousands of overseas Koreans were able to visit their family members in the DPRK. Christians from north and south met in Glion, Switzerland, as part of an ecumenical process on peace and the reunification of Korea led by the World Council of Churches. In 1987, both sides offered proposals to lower military tensions on the peninsula.

In June 2000, an unprecedented historic summit between North and South Korean leaders took place in Pyongyang, DPRK. ROK President Kim Dae Jung and DPRK Chairman Kim Jong Il pledged themselves to work toward Korean reunification. Since the summit, both Koreas have had numerous exchanges such as reunions of separated families, ministerial-level talks, and other economic, social, cultural, and sports exchanges including reconnection of railways and roads through the Demilitarized Zone.

The two Koreas marched together in the opening ceremony of the 2004 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, carrying the Korean unification flag. In 2007, the late President Roh Moo Hyun urged U.S. President George W. Bush to resolve the Korean War by signing a peace treaty with North Korea. At the second summit between leaders of North and South Korea, President Roh and Chairman Kim Jong Il committed to resolving disputes in the West Sea surrounding the Northern Limit Line.

The relationship between the United States and the DPRK, however, has deteriorated due to the issues related to the DPRK’s withdrawal from the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, its violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework, and threats by the United States of pre-emptive strikes on North Korea.

In 1991, the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges and Cooperation was adopted by the Republic of Korea and DPRK; and in 1992, both countries signed a joint declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In 1994, the United States and DPRK signed the Agreed Framework whose objective “was the freezing and replacement of North Korea’s indigenous nuclear power plant program . . . and the step-by-step normalization of relations between the U.S. and the DPRK” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreed_Framework, accessed Feb. 1, 2015). The agreement stipulated that funds would be provided to the DPRK from the United States, Japan, and ROK for the construction of two light-water electric power reactors. In addition, the U.S. agreed to provide 500,000

tons of heavy oil annually to the DPRK. In return, the DPRK agreed to forego any further accumulation of fuel rods that could be used to produce atomic bombs.

Over time, the mandates of the Agreement were violated by both sides. It is most desirable that the United States and the DPRK, through direct negotiations, redraft or update the 1994 Agreement encompassing all vital matters of interest to both sides, including DPRK's nuclear-proliferation issues, and U.S. recognition of the sovereignty and security of the DPRK.

The Agreed Framework remains an important stabilizing element in U.S.-DPRK relations. It is one of the key tools of engagement by which DPRK uses incentives rather than threats to build inter-Korean and regional cooperation.

Historic Role of the Ecumenical Community for Peace in the Korean Peninsula

In 1986, as a result of consultations in Korea, North and South, with Christians and government representatives, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) adopted an important policy statement on "Peace and the Reunification of Korea." United Methodist representatives participated fully in the development of this statement, in consultations on peace and reunification, and in an official ecumenical delegation to North and South Korea in the summer of 1987.

"Since the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) held in Busan in 2013, the WCC and the international ecumenical movement have renewed their 30-year commitment to the search for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula. This has been done in accord with the WCC's 1984 Tozanso Consultation. The WCC and the international ecumenical movement have intensified their commitment to accompanying the peace efforts of the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the National Council of Churches in the Republic of Korea (NCCCK). They have continued their advocacy for an end to the Korean War through the replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace treaty.

An important instrument for this ecumenical engagement has been and continues to be the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification, and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula (EFK). The EFK was formed in 2006 with wide participation from international church bodies, including the WCC, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), and The United Methodist Church (UMC). The EFK has the dual purposes of strengthening ecumenical participation in the efforts for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula and North-East Asia, and of promoting effective ecumenical development cooperation in North Korea (cf. Atlanta Statement, 2018),

In an international ecumenical consultation held in May of 2013, United Methodist groups, including the United Methodist Korean American National Association Committee on Korean Reunification & Reconciliation and the National Council of Churches in Korea, issued the "Call for Peace and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula," stating in part: "For too long, the Korean people have been divided and suffered from political brinkmanship, the wall of ideology, and the scourge of militarism. The Armistice Agreement of 1953 only temporarily halted the war that claimed 4 million lives and divided 10 million families. This lingering state of war on the Korean Peninsula is a major contributor to tension and instability, both regionally and globally, and contravenes the spirit of United Nations Resolution 39/11 that recognizes a people's right to peace.

“We Christians of different communions, gathered together in the common cause of peace, are deeply concerned about the growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula over recent nuclear testing in North Korea and U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises. We join with the Korean people, both in North and South Korea, in yearning for reconciliation, reunification and sustainable peace. Replacing the Armistice Agreement with a Peace Treaty is and should be the first step in establishing a lasting and sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

Recommendations for Action

In support of the Korean people and in cooperation with partner Christian groups, it is recommended that The United Methodist Church, its members, local churches, annual conferences, and agencies undertake the following actions through intercession, education, public advocacy, and support of programs furthering justice, peace, and reconciliation:

1. Engage in prayer of penitence and petition with the Korean people and with Christians in the north and south, scarred and pained by the division of their nation and yearning for reunion, and establish working, collaborative and supportive relationships with the Korean Methodist Church, the National Council of Churches in Korea (ROK), and the Korean Christian Federation (DPRK) to seek peace and reconciliation.
2. Commend for study and action, the “Statement on Peace and the Reunification of the Korean Peninsula” adopted by the 10th WCC Assembly which called on churches to commit to, among others, the following:
 - a) Work with our governments to mandate the U.N. Security Council to initiate new efforts for peacebuilding across the Korean Peninsula and to lift the existing economic and financial sanctions imposed on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea;
 - b) Embark upon a universal campaign for a peace treaty to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953, bringing an end to the state of war;
 - c) Call upon all foreign powers in the region to participate in a creative process for building peace on the Korean Peninsula by halting all military exercises on the Korean Peninsula, by ceasing their interventions and reducing military expenditures;
 - d) Ensure the complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons and power plants in northeast Asia, by taking steps to establish a Nuclear-free World and simultaneously joining the emerging international consensus for a humanitarian ban on nuclear weapons in all regions of the world, so that life is no longer threatened by nuclear dangers anywhere on earth;
 - e) Urge the governments in both North and South Korea to restore human community with justice and human dignity by overcoming injustice and confrontation, and to heal human community by urgently addressing the humanitarian issue of separated families, by establishing a sustainable process allowing confirmation of the whereabouts of family members and free exchanges of letters and visits, and by offering the support of international agencies where necessary; and

f) Work with the governments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Republic of Korea in providing international cooperation to maintain a truly Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and transform it into a zone of peace (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/peace-and-reunification-of-the-korean-peninsula>).

3. Engage in a worldwide campaign for a Peace Treaty to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953.

4. Urge all governments that have relations with the ROK or the DPRK, or both, to exercise their influence to further mediation, interchange, peace, and reunification.

5. Urge all governments involved to forthright commitment to the following policy directions in support of Korean efforts for peace and reunification:

a. The peaceful reunification of Korea should be a formal U.S. policy goal.

b. A peace treaty should be signed among the nations involved to eliminate the threat of war, establish an enduring peace, and minimize tension in the Korean Peninsula. The peace treaty, replacing the existing armistice treaty, should be based on the conditions of a non-aggression pact between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the full participation of the United States and the People's Republic of China, as well as other related countries.

c. ROK and DPRK contacts should be encouraged;

d. Bilateral diplomatic and human contacts between the United States and the DPRK should be enhanced.

e. The U.S. should negotiate to end the war and to seek a comprehensive peace settlement in Korea.

6. Encourage continued humanitarian aid to the DPRK through agencies like the U.N. World Food Program (WFP). This aid is directed to those persons most at risk and is monitored carefully. The WFP has developed productive working relationships with its DPRK counterparts and continues to push for more open access to the food distribution process.

7. Increase communication, dialogue and exchange of delegations, with church and ecumenical representatives, with ROK and DPRK. Political, economic, social, and religious delegations are a high priority with DPRK leaders. They provide Korean middle management with experience outside their country and a greater perspective regarding the situation between the Korean Peninsula and outside it. Delegations from DPRK can also be matched with exchange delegations to DPRK, which allows people from around the world to see and understand the country, share ideas, and have personal contact with Korean peoples.

8. Advocate for removal of economic sanctions against DPRK. Sanctions limit the engagement of DPRK in the regional and global economy. Removing sanctions will also facilitate foreign investment in improving the DPRK production infrastructure. Because of economic and legal obstacles, development of foreign investment will be a difficult and long-term process, even without sanctions. Removing sanctions is a high priority with DPRK leaders.

9. Continue to redraft or update policies to comply with the Agreed Framework, of which the most positive element is U.S.-DPRK relations, by supplying heavy fuel oil and supporting ROK and Japanese financing for the Korea Peninsula Energy Development Office (KEDO) light-water reactors.

10. Encourage a consistent, bipartisan, and long-range policy formulation regarding both North and South Korea by governments around the world, but especially the U.S., China, Russia, Japan and the European Union. Policies that engage the ROK and DPRK governments effectively and promote change and moderation will stand a greater chance of resolving the current crisis and bringing every party, including the DPRK, to relate according to agreed international norms and mechanisms.

11. Urge the United Nations to look into the North Korean refugee situation arising from political and economic needs, as thousands of North Koreans are crossing the border seeking asylum in neighboring countries. The United Nations should declare them refugees, assist them as they seek asylum, and provide humanitarian assistance.

12. Urge continued humanitarian assistance to North Korea, at the same time calling on the North Korean government to work with the United Nations to abide by all internationally agreed principles of human rights and humanitarian law, principles that must guide all parties addressing the resolution of the crisis in the Korean Peninsula.

When these approaches can be taken, and most of them depend on U.S. government policy decisions, there are still no guarantees that the crisis can be resolved. But it is quite clear that a U.S. policy of isolation, sanctions and military buildup directed against DPRK will stimulate North Korea to rely more on its military, even at the expense of the lives of its population, and may lead to another catastrophic war on the Korean Peninsula. Continued engagement, steadfast negotiation, and careful cultivation of cooperative relationships with appropriate DPRK organizations provide the only real opportunity for a positive resolution of the Korean stalemate.

1. We call all Methodist and ecumenical partners to pray and work for the formal end of the Korean War and to replace the Korean War Armistice Agreement with a Peace Treaty, and we urge the international community to expedite negotiations for such a Peace Treaty.

2. We call all Methodist and ecumenical partners to embark on prayerful advocacy for the lifting of international sanctions through letter writing and petition efforts.

3. We call on U.S.-based partners to embark on prayerful advocacy for the lifting of the U.S. travel ban through letter writing and other petition efforts.

4. We call on U.S.-based partners to set a goal of contacting all senators and representatives to advocate for the calls above before the next anniversary of the Korean War, which began on June 25.

5. We call all Methodist and ecumenical partners to join the World Council of Churches in observing each year the Sunday closest to August 15, the day of Korean Liberation, as a day of prayer for peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

6. We call on all Methodist and ecumenical partners to engage in relationship-building efforts with the people of both North Korea and South Korea.

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AMENDED AND READOPTED 2000, 2004

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RESOLUTION #6135, 2012, 2016 Book of Resolutions

RESOLUTION #6100, 2008 Book of Resolutions

RESOLUTION #328, 2004 Book of Resolutions

RESOLUTION #309, 2000 Book of Resolutions