

International Consultation on
 "THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH FOR PEACE AND UNIFICATION
 IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA"
 The "100th Anniversary Conference of Korean Great Revival 2007"
 Peace and Unification Committee

9th - 11th August 2007
 Hotel Grand Hilton Seoul
 201-1 Hongeun-Dong, Seodaemun-Gu,
 120 – 710 Seoul, South Korea

CONSULTATION STATEMENT
OUR COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND UNIFICATION
IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

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Our Commitment to Peace and Unification in the Korean Peninsula

On the occasion of the centenary celebrations commemorating the Korean Great Revival, which originated in Pyongyang in 1907, an international consultation hosted by the Peace and Unification Committee of the One Hundredth Anniversary Conference of Korean Great Revival 2007, assembled in Seoul, Korea from 9 to 11 August, 2007. The consultation comprised all the churches belonging to the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Christian Council of Korea, and discussed 'The Role of the Church for Peace and Unification on the Korean Peninsula'.

Three hundred participants — representing churches and ecumenical organizations from Korea and twenty-seven countries in Asia and the rest of the world — participated in worship and Bible study, listened to lectures and engaged in discussions concerning the responsibility of churches in furthering the ongoing process toward the peaceful unification of Korea.

Nearly twenty years ago the churches of Korea took a bold step when they issued the 'Declaration of the Churches of Korea on National Reunification and Peace' (February 1988). In that Declaration the Korean Churches confessed their calling to labor as apostles of peace (Colossians 3:15): *"God has commanded the Korean Churches to undertake the mission of overcoming today's harsh reality of our one people divided north and south in confrontation, and we are thus obligated to work for the realization of unification and peace (Matthew 5:23-24)."*

At that time the mere discussion of unification was considered an offence punishable by law, noted the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, in his keynote address. And yet churches dared to mobilize people for reconciliation and healing, creating the conditions conducive to peace.

The Hon. Dr. Lee Jae-Joung, Minister of Unification of the Republic of Korea, in his keynote address, reflected on how the Korean churches spread God's gospel of hope for a new and brighter future in the face of the grim reality of Japanese occupation. He noted how the Great Revival was instrumental in ushering in a spirit of repentance, forgiveness and spiritual awakening. This Revival inspired the churches to shoulder the burden of the nation as an act of faith. He noted how the '1988 Declaration of the Churches' carried on this tradition and helped to establish the basic principles on which current unification policies are based.

In the sermon delivered during the opening worship, the Rev. Dr. Kim Sam-Whan, Pastor of Myongseong Church and chairperson of the consultation, drew on Ezekiel 37: 15-17. He reminded the participants that God has been with the Churches for the last 20 years, supporting their efforts to overcome division. All the consultations that have been held and declarations that have been proclaimed are merely instruments without power in and of themselves. It is only through the power of a peace-giving God that we experience the full and genuine accomplishment of unification.

The closing worship emphasized the call to all churches in the world to pray together constantly, for peace in the world, particularly for peace and unification in Korea.

Much progress has been made in the quest for reconciliation and peace in Korea. Inter-Korean trade, the Gaeseong Industrial Park, Mt. Geumgang tourism, separated family reunions, railway and road reconnection—all these attest to a gradual but steady process of mutual understanding and a reduction of tensions. The announcement that the second inter-Korean summit is to take place at the end of August greeted participants as they assembled for the consultation.

But the dark clouds of confrontation have not yet disappeared from the sky. International tensions continue unabated. As the hostage crisis in Afghanistan has shown us, peacemaking is a dangerous occupation that sometimes exacts great sacrifice. The nuclear issue has not yet been resolved. The goal of a regional peace mechanism remains beyond reach. Suspicion, prejudice and hatred have not yet disappeared from the hearts of the people.

Peacemaking requires patience, the building of confidence, new ideas and new approaches. Peacemaking requires the shared wisdom of the whole community of faith.

In this spirit, and with a healthy sense of humility, the participants of this consultation make the following recommendations and commitments:

- I. To the governments of North and South Korea and other concerned governments, with regard to the proposed second Korean Summit we urge that:
 1. This Summit lead to the establishment of peace on the Korean peninsula by fulfilling their pledge to make the Korean peninsula nuclear weapons free, and subsequently to sign a Peace Treaty to replace the existing Armistice.
 2. This Summit open the way for North and South Korea to develop their economies in a balanced manner through the establishment of a comprehensive economic development plan for the Korean peninsula.
 3. This Summit contribute to the invigorating and widening of exchanges at all

levels – political, military, social, cultural, and religious – through the promotion of exchange and cooperation projects that contribute to reconciliation and peace.

4. This Summit contribute to harmonious co-existence through increased commitment to humanitarian support, such as the provision of foodstuffs and the reunion of separated families.
5. The government officials of North and South Korea seize the historic opportunity that this Summit presents to realize specific and concrete steps toward unification.

II. To the churches in Korea, we encourage them:

1. To unite on a clearly articulated understanding of unification in the Korean peninsula based on the Biblical vision of 'shalom'.
2. To lift up the theological underpinnings of peace and unification to the end that Christians may see that the movement is and should be part of their mission, and to broaden perceptions of what it means to be Church in a situation of division and brokenness, as a reconciling and healing community.
3. To deepen and strengthen the relationship among all Christians regardless of denominational differences, all groups of people regardless of gender or age, with a view to collectively working for peace and unification.
4. To continue in their positive contributions to the alleviation of suffering, especially of the weak and vulnerable such as children and women, by increasing their sharing of resources and humanitarian aid for the people of North Korea.
5. To join people of other faiths and civil society groups in the common cause of peace and unification.

III. To the churches in the world, we recommend that:

1. They regularly lift up the churches and the people of Korea in prayer.
2. They recognize that peace and unification in the Korean peninsula is a regional issue with global implications.
3. The churches of the nations participating in the Six Party Talks (North and South Korea, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia) welcome the initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to facilitate a parallel meeting of the churches. At the same time, we request and encourage the WCC to promote the cooperation and contribution of the wider worldwide Christian communities, e.g. the Consortium for Social Development in North Korea (WCC, Christian Conference of Asia, and NCKK).
4. They engage their governments and communities in advocating peace and unification in the Korean peninsula, for example by strengthening networks of solidarity and peace education.

Seoul, 11th August 2007.