

**PROK Report on the Common Witness in the EMS Fellowship
"Thy Kingdom come: common witness put into practice"**

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It is a great privilege for me to present this report to the EMS Synod meeting in 2006. On behalf of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), I would like to express our deep appreciation for the continuing concern and support you have shown to our church for so many years. I feel we have become like very old friends who really can count on each other.

Today the global family is experiencing a fundamental crisis. The escalating conflicts, wars, and the war on terror led by the US are severely threatening peace and people's security on the global scale. Hope for a lasting peace among nations seems to slip away from us. Hundreds of millions of people in Asia as well as in the world become victims of economic globalization as they are stigmatized as "losers of the game". Our environment is being raped for short-term profit. In short, the culture of violence and death prevails at all levels of our daily life.

In the midst of this total crisis, the theme of the Synod meeting is very relevant to today's context. The theme challenges us with further questions: How can we, as committed Christians, articulate the vision of God's Kingdom (or Reign) in order for us to be faithful to our common witness? How can we concretize this common witness into the life and mission of our churches?

As clearly affirmed in the Mission Statement of the EMS fellowship in 2003, all of us believe that "the centrality of our faith is the Good News of salvation, of the fullness of life and the overcoming of death in Jesus Christ. The name of Jesus Christ means redemption, healing, reconciliation, justice, peace and hope."

In today's world, one of the central themes of God's Reign is peace - the peace that should be realized through 'fullness of life'.

As you well know, Korea is still a divided country. Therefore, the reunification of the two Koreas has been a decades-long mission imperative for the Korean churches. However, after the long years of active engagement in the reunification movement, our church has realized that reunification is not simply a matter of political and economic union of the two Koreas but is a critical task that must be addressed from the perspective of peace in the North-East Asia region and wider global context.

Peace here does not mean simply the absence of war or a combination of ideologies. It means a patient effort to concretize the biblical concept of the co-existence of different values at all levels of our life. Therefore, peace here has a very holistic

meaning including that of repentance, reconciliation, healing, justice and hope. It is in this context that our church formed the Peace Community Movement Center (PCMC) in 2005 to theologize peace from a holistic perspective and to promote the peace movement in all aspects of our life. Furthermore, it was clearly proclaimed in the final statement of the International Ecumenical Consultation on Peace in East Asia, hosted by the PCMC in May of this year, that "peacemaking is not part of our mission; it is our mission in our day." We believe that this understanding of the peace movement will eventually contribute to the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula, even though the Korean peninsula, at this moment, is situated at a very critical time after the missile test and the nuclear test conducted by North Korea in July and October respectively.

In order to promote the peace movement at all levels of our life, for example, the PCMC together with NCKK has initiated the formation of a 'Consortium for Social Development in North Korea' that will be a platform for sharing resources and for promoting ecumenical solidarity and the peace movement among the world-wide ecumenical community including the Korean Christian Federation in North Korea. The first meeting of the Consortium will be held next month in Hong Kong, and I am happy to tell you that the EMS, mission 21 and EKD are all participating in this Consortium meeting.

The PROK PCMC is developing a Peace Internship program through which our young people can learn about peace movements in different part of the world, through direct short-term involvement. We are also cooperating with the Ecumenical Volunteer Program of the EMS to encourage more youth to be involved in various aspects of the peace-building process. Currently, we are sending 2-3 peace interns every year mostly to Asian countries; however, in the near future we want to also send peace interns to the Middle East and Africa in cooperation with EMS member churches. I am sure these interns will be a grass-roots force who can drive the peace movement from the grassroots level.

In 2007, the PCMC will organize a "Peace Journey in Europe" to learn the theology of peace and the experiences and traditions of peace movements in European societies. I am sure that this Journey will encourage us to deepen our theology of peace and widen our network with European churches, particularly with the German churches. Therefore, I would say the vision and mission of the PCMC is pretty much in line with the objective of the EMS campaign "Sow Peace - Harvest the Future". In terms of peace and justice mission, the EMS has greatly inspired us, particularly during the military regimes of 1970s and 80s. We, the Korean church, owe the debt of peace to you as well as to the whole ecumenical community around the world. I think the time has come for us to repay the debt to all of you through joining the peace journey you have undertaken so far. It is in this context that in 2005 our church joined the effort of the EMS to support tsunami victims in South Asia and the girl-child project in India. We are also impressed by the EMS peace-building initiative in the Middle East region where in the Schneller Schools Children from Christian and from Muslim background are living and studying. Our church hopes to take part in the peace-building efforts of the EMS family in the Middle East.

We understand that the issues of HIV/AIDS and gender justice challenge the whole EMS family and urge us to take up these issues as a high mission priority. So far, however, only a few churches in Korea have been involved in the HIV/AIDS mission, because of the widespread prejudice of the Korean churches against those with AIDS. Our church is no exception. I want to urge our African partner churches in the EMS family to empower us with your wisdom and experiences so that we can join your painful journey.

The women in the Korean churches are the real actors who sustain the fundamentals of the Korean churches. However, the women have been excluded from the decision-making process at all levels of life in our churches, and thus only a few opportunities have been given to them to develop their leadership. It is also sad that still now a majority of the Korean churches do not ordain women. But I am happy to share with you that our most recent meeting of the PROK General Assembly in September of this year passed a resolution to form a Gender Justice Committee as a national-level standing committee. I am sure this committee will be a platform to realize gender justice at all levels of our church life. In terms of gender justice, we are slowly moving ahead, but we need your encouragement and support to achieve more radical changes.

I believe that our common witness as the EMS family can be more relevant as we actively participate in various peace works. I think now is the time we have to discern the signs of the time and reclaim ourselves as 'a community of peace' to transform today's world into a place of peace. This is our common witness to the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God. Through this common witness, we envision a community where all people can realize life in its fullness. I would like to humbly ask the EMS family to project a strong hope that this kind of community is possible through God's grace, and that we can thus transform ourselves into a visible sign of God's Reign.

Dr. Fernando Enns of the Mennonite Church in Germany wrote in the WCC "Weekly News": "If your tool is a hammer, then every problem after a while looks like a nail."

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