**PROK E-NEWS**  
**August 2006**

**PROK in Focus**

1. Loss of a leader
   The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) mourns the loss of one of its prominent leaders and prophetic voices with the passing of Rev. Dr. KANG Won-Yong on August 17, 2006 at the age of 89. At the same time, we thank God for the gift of his life which was an inspiration to so many.

   In 1945 Rev. KANG Won-Yong established Kyoungdong Church in Seoul, later described as “the seedbed of the PROK,” serving as minister there from 1949 to 1986 and as Minister Emeritus until his death. He served on various committees of the PROK, and as PROK Moderator in 1966. Serving as General Secretary of the Korean Student Christian Federation in 1947 was perhaps the catalyst that awakened his lifelong commitment to the worldwide ecumenical movement. He was President of the National Council of Churches in Korea in 1964 and 1980; member of the Central Committee and Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches from 1968 to 1983; President of the Christian Conference of Asia in 1973. In 1959 he founded the Christian Academy in Seoul, serving as Director from 1965 to 1995 and as Chair of the Board from 1996 to 2000. During the brutal years of Korean dictatorship government he led the Academy in its courageous work for justice and democratic government.

   His initiatives, involvement, and influence extended well beyond church circles, where his many positions outside the church included that of Representative of the People’s Council for Democracy (1974); Co-Chair of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (1994-1999); and as Chair of the Board of the Korea Peace Forum, which he founded in 2000. The many awards and honorary doctorates granted him reflect the wide recognition and respect he gained from every sector of society.

   The funeral service at Kyoungdong Church on August 21 will be a grateful celebration of the life and witness of this faithful servant of God who will always be central to the life and history of the PROK.

2. Solidarity with the people of Lebanon
   On July 24, 2006 the PROK sent a pastoral letter to Mr. Guiguis Ibrahim Saleh, General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) in Lebanon expressing our deep solidarity with those who have lost their loved ones, homes and livelihoods in the recent conflict. In its letter the PROK affirmed the position of...
the World Council of Churches (WCC) that “measures to counter terrorism must be
demilitarized and the concept of the war on terror must be firmly challenged by the
churches.” The PROK urged “all concerned countries to agree to an immediate
cease-fire and to return to peace negotiations....[and] to immediately implement
the long-delayed UN Security Council resolutions for peace in Lebanon, Israel and
the occupied Palestinian territories, including an urgent end to the illegal 39-year
occupation that is the vortex of the regions violent storms.” Copies of the letter
were sent also to the Embassy of Lebanon and Embassy of Israel in Seoul, as well
as the WCC and NCCK.

On July 28, several PROK ministers and lay leaders together with members of the
NCCK gathered in front of the Embassy of Israel in Seoul to protest against Israel’s
violent attack on Lebanon.

On August 10, five PROK delegates including General Secretary Rev. Yoon Kil-Soo
met with Mr. Hussein Rammal, Lebanese Ambassador to Korea, to express deep
solidarity with the people of Lebanon and to share their views on the Middle East
situation. The Ambassador expressed heartfelt appreciation to the PROK for praying
for his people and country, and asked the PROK to continue to pray and act for
peace in Lebanon as well as in the whole Middle East. The Ambassador told the
PROK delegates that “exclusive Judaism”, US hegemony and the cultural clash
between East and West have been the most critical factors that have led the region
into continuous violence. He also shared his conviction that all humanity must learn
how to live together peacefully, accepting the differences of others and respecting
the diversity of human life. At the end of the meeting Lay Vice-Moderator, Elder
Choo Byoung-Ku, on behalf of the PROK donated a small fund in support of the
victims in Lebanon.

3. Emergency aid for flood victims in North and South Korea
After heavy rains ravaged the whole Korean peninsula last month, the PROK
appealed to its member churches to provide emergency aid to the flood victims in
both North and South, urging them to donate supporting funds particularly for
North Korea without conditions, even though the relationship between South and
North Korea has worsened since North Korea conducted missile tests in July. The
PROK believes that this humanitarian action by South Korean churches and society
can break the deadlock between the two Koreas and encourage them to move
towards peace and reconciliation.

The Peace and Reunification Committee of the PROK General Assembly aims to
raise US$100,000 for emergency aid to North Korea, to be used for food, medicines
and other basic necessities. On August 7, Rev. Na Haek-Jib, Chair of the
Committee, sent a solidarity letter to Rev. Kang Young-Seob, Chair of the Korean
Christian Federation, assuring him that the PROK together with other Korean
churches will continue to pray and act for the people of North Korea in their
desperate situation.

In South Korea, more than 50 people died and property damage and loss amounted
to billions of dollars. In North Korea, however, over 550 people died and more than
three thousand were injured; some 30,000 houses were destroyed and 2,400 acres of farm land were devastated by the floods.

4. Solidarity with the people and churches of the Philippines
As the PROK continues to receive messages from its partner the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) and from the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) about the killings of so many church people and other activists who stand on the side of justice, the Church and Society Committee of the PROK General Assembly discussed the situation in the Philippines with deep concern during its meeting on July 24. The Committee listened to the report given by Rev. Shin Seung-Min, PROK Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, who attended the International Summit on Human Rights and Peace held by the UCCP and NCCP on July 21, 2006 in Manila. Rev. Shin told the Committee members that the situation is becoming worse every day as the majority of the people point out that the Arroyo regime, particularly the military and police, have been directly or indirectly involved in the extra-judicial killings.

After listening to the report, the Committee expressed strong solidarity with the people and church in the Philippines, likening their situation to that of Korea under the military dictatorship regimes. The Committee decided to make a pastoral visit to the Philippines in October to meet families of victims of the political killings and to develop, with the UCCP, concrete programs through which the two churches may work together for human rights and peace in our countries. The Committee also agreed to launch a fund-raising campaign to help the victims’ children who desperately need financial support to continue their studies.

On August 7 the PROK received yet another message from the NCCP that Pastor Isaias Sta. Rosa of the United Methodist Church of Malobago was murdered on August 3 by 10 armed men. He was the 21st church worker killed since May 2001.

Ecumenical Movement in Focus
In our Korean people's journey toward peace and unification, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) and the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) in the North have met together once a year since 1989 to jointly write a common prayer for peace and reunification. This prayer is raised every year in commemoration of the August 15th anniversary of liberation from Japanese colonial rule, followed too soon by the cruel division of the peninsula against the will of the Korean people. The NCCK every year asks partner churches around the world to join the Korean people in this heartfelt prayer of pain and faith-filled hope, on the Sunday closest to August 15th. This year's prayer is reprinted here by permission of the NCCK. While it comes to you well after August 15th, we believe that God hears this prayer of our people and you who join with us, at all times of the year.
2006 Common Prayer for Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula

God of peace,
We give thanks for your loving hands caring for every life and all of history.

God,
We recovered our freedom after thirty-six years of Japanese occupation, and since then, another sixty-one years has passed.
This is not a short time; but still there are voices around us defending the old structure of division.
Nonetheless, this land abounds with dreams for reunification.

"The North and the South have agreed to join our strength as a sovereign and responsible people, and to independently solve the problem of national reunification."

On that day of June 15, 2000 when news of the North-South Joint Declaration was broadcast,
We could not believe our own ears and eyes.

God,
Who will dare obstruct your plans?
Though the sharp teeth of barbed-wire fences remain along the truce line,
Coming and going over those fences
Are the hearts of the divided families,
With their sharing of wisdom for life together,
And their care and concern for each other.
These have laid down the base for our future peaceful community.

God,
We thank you for giving us new opportunities.
Rather than clinging to outdated pride in our past leadership role for reunification and peace,
May we, the churches of North and South, embrace a greater value:
Our hope in a new day filled with strength and vitality, a new day we will build together.

We believe
That the peaceful economic and cultural community we dream of
Will result from the hope that binds our hearts together.
However fierce may be the suffering that we face,
However fearsome may be the storms that try us,
We steadfastly believe in the amazing plan of God, who has brought us out of brokenness and ruin and into a relationship of trust and understanding.

God of love,
Now we are awakened to the knowledge
That though we have been divided for the past sixty years, there was never any division in You;
That though we doubted, there was always the reality of oneness in You.
Therefore, in You we already have experienced reunification.

We pray our reunification will be strong and beautiful.  
We pray it will set aright our history of pain and suffering,  
Bring unity to our nation, and offer hope to the whole world.

May the train departing from this land, pass through the Asian and European continents and finally reach the ocean at the far end of the western land.  
May the fire-pillar of peace starting from this land, shine a light on the continents to the utmost reaches of the western land.  
Grant that our reunification will be hope for the world.

God,  
In You, once again we dream a great dream.  
The dream you dreamed on the cross in that ancient time,  
The great dream of every person and all of history abiding in You,  
Is our dream also.

With hope for the peace of this land and the unity of its people,  
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ,  
Amen.

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Editor’s Note:  PROK E-News will not be published in September, because of staff preparation for the annual PROK General Assembly. The next issue will be sent in October.

PROK E-News is a publication of The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK).  
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