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- Peace on the Korean Peninsula - NOW!

"We pray – Peace now – End the War!" This is the motto for the "Light of Peace" Prayer Campaign for the Korean Peninsula.

"Peace now!" Now we are caught in the global Corona pandemic. The airtime in TV and Radio is occupied by news related to the spread of the SARS-Cov-2 virus with many bad consequences for health and wealth of humankind. In this crisis we tend to forget other urgent needs. One of them is the call for peace for the Korean Peninsula.

June 25, 1950 the Korean War started. 70 years later Korean people are still waiting for an official end of the war. There is no peace treaty, just an armistice. Lots of money has been spent for weapons pretending protection against the other side; US-American nuclear weapons are constantly displayed in South Korea and North Korea is responding with nuclear armament. Militarization has not only negative side effects on the environment, it also poisons the feelings and attitudes of people.

Peace is needed – NOW - not despite of the Corona virus, but because of the crisis we are facing. Now is the time to re-think the priorities in our personal lives, in the countries we belong to and in the international relationships. As followers of Jesus Christ we do not aim for back to what was normal when the Corona Virus caused a push of the pause button. 67 years of an armistice which is not even signed by

South Korea is not the normal we wish to continue with.

Although most political decision-makers want us to believe that increasing armament is a means to appeasement, we know that the Korean Peninsula is a tinderbox. Stronger sanctions on North Korea cause more harm to ordinary people; they f.e. impede an import of medical supplies urgently needed in a health crisis. The sanctions so far did not lead to a change towards peace nor did they minimize the violation of human rights towards the people in North Korea.

Together with many others the National Council of Churches in Korea, the World Council of Churches and the World Methodist Council pray and work for a better future in Korea. It is time for peace – now. Peace can only be achieved by peaceful steps. These steps include an end of the sanctions and the openness to let the people in Korea develop a process which helps them to overcome division and pain.

2019 Rev. Dr. James T. Laney, a former ambassador of the USA to South Korea, received the Peace Award of the World Methodist Council. At the celebration November 21, 2019 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, Dr. James T. Laney offered three lessons learnt from his lifelong endeavor for peace on the Korean Peninsula: “Peace is not possible as long as we demonize the other side. Peace is best achieved through face-to-face conversations. We have to move in peace stage by stage.” And he continued: “Peace is the foundation of all human flourishing. Modern warfare is the Armageddon of life. Let us all promise each other that in our sphere of life, we will seek to be instruments of God’s peace and justice.”

We pray for a better world now. We work for peace with justice. Now. Not despite of the Corona crisis, but because we learn the Corona lesson: There is only one earth and one humankind. That is why it is in our own interest to care for one another, work for healing and reconciliation and develop an economy of life.