



VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

MEDIA RELEASE: PRAYERS FOR THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Romans 14:19: *“Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”*

August 15 is the National Liberation Day of both South and North Korea, marking the date in 1945 when Korea gained independence from Japanese colonial oppression after 36 years.

Sadly and ironically, the year 1945 also marks the year Korea was divided into two countries by foreign powers, instead of building a self-determined independent country like the one the Korean people had lived in for more than 5,000 years. The Korean War broke out on Sunday 25 June 1950. Since the War and the armistice, the Korean Peninsula and her peoples, and the Korean Diaspora, have lived out the great pain of division, generation after generation.

Each year, the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches call member churches to pray for peace and unity in Korea, and peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. This is usually on the Sunday before 15th August each year.

Rev Seung Jae Yeon, Chair of the Uniting Church’s Korean National Conference, reflects:

“In recent years, we Koreans have been concerned about the international situation amongst countries around the Korean Peninsula and the rising of neo-colonialism in the Pacific. What we learned from the past is that we would act for peace as a mediator, so that we might create harmony and reconciliation in that situation rather than ride on crisis as a player in that power game. We believe that at this time of the year, as we celebrate Liberation Day and remember our past, we are called by each other to bring an end to division locally, and call on the name of God, *Hana-Nim Abu-Ji* (meaning ‘Heavenly Father’ in Korean) who can only bring the wave of reconciliation and reunification in the world as well as in the Peninsula. We commit ourselves to making peace because we Korean people are known as a people who love harmony and unity, respect all humanity and do good for others in the neighbourhood.”

Prayer points

1. Peaceful, considerate, mindful leadership and co-operation across the Korean Peninsula and in the Pacific.
2. A renewed will for humanitarian cooperation, reconciliation and sustainable reunification.
3. Strengthen Korean Christians in the Peninsula and all around the world/Australia as they deal with complex and often difficult situations.
4. Uphold the people in the Korean Peninsula especially those who are affected by the extreme flooding. (8 August-Present)

A prayer by Second-generation Korean migrant and young UCA leader Joy Han

Hana-nim*, Holy One,

We praise you for your promise of renewal throughout the cosmos.

We thank you for Christ's reconciling work

and recommit ourselves to the ministry of reconciliation.

We lament the historical and ongoing violence and trauma that divide people from one another.

As a people for whom Christ's gift and will is unity,

we lift up before you the Korean community,

both in the homeland and the diaspora,

who are hurting from more than 70 years of partition.

We especially lift up before you the people of North Korea,

a people estranged from the rest of the world,

as they struggle against the pandemic.

We grieve alongside those who are mourning,

and we share the anguish of the many –

North Korean refugees, families separated by the war –

who are anxious for their loved ones across the border.

We yearn for your comfort, healing and hope

for all who are sick and suffering.

Grant an extra measure of your strength and sustenance

to the people of North Korea

and to all those who would come to their aid,

bringing them vaccines, other medical supplies

and basic food supplies as well.

We cry out against the inaction

that entrenches inequality;

We cry out against the vested interests

that entrench systemic violence.

We cry, come, Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit, bring your liberation and Gwang-bok[^]

to the Korean peninsula and to the whole cosmos.

Move us to live out your unity in witness to the world.

In Christ's name we pray. **Amen.**

J. Han, (6 June 2022: Sydney).

** Christians who speak Korean all around the world may call Heavenly Father Hana-nim*

[^] The National Liberation of Korea is called gwang-bok. The word "gwang-bok" means "restoration of light".

Other resources

Various resources for [Prayers for Peace in the Korean Peninsula](#)

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