



Christian Conference of Asia

● Payap University, Muang, Chiang Mai 50000 Thailand
Tel: +66-(0)53-243906, 243907 Fax: +66-(0)53-247303

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CCA General Secretary's Solidarity Message on the Occasion of PROK's Pilgrimage of Healing and Unification in the Korean Peninsula

The division of Korea into North and South continues as one of the most painful remnants of Cold War politics. The Korean War, which began across the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950 and ended with the Armistice on 27 June 1953, left Korea devastated and cruelly divided. Although sixty-seven years have passed since the Armistice was signed, technically both Koreas are still at war with each other. The year 2020 is the 70th year of the start of the Korean War and it reminds us of distressing political and ideological conflagrations in international relations that revolved around it. The still simmering tension on the Korean peninsula is a residue of international power games that stretch back to the troubled 1950s. The long history of the Korean War and its aftermath have proved that wars and military conflicts bring nothing but fear, enmity, destruction, and suffering.

As peace continues to be at stake in the Korean peninsula, especially when tensions rise and the geopolitical dynamics change, the new initiative undertaken by the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) to intensify the renewed commitment towards a pilgrimage of healing and unification is a valuable additional impetus to intensifying the wider ecumenical efforts towards Korean unification. The ceremonial function PROK is organising in the context of the 70th memorial of the Korean War with the participation of 500 representatives across the country, and scheduled to take place on 20 June 2020 is commendable. As PROK envisages its vision to recognise once again that "the people are subject and initiators of a peaceful process of healing and unification", it is reaffirming the vision of the peace and unification and asserting the fact that the subject of the Korean unification process is rooted in the aspirations of the people themselves. It is heartening to know that the ceremonial event to be held under the auspices of the PROK in Cheorwon along the Civilian Control Line and the DMZ will proclaim a peace statement and reaffirm the Korean people's commitment to reunification of the divided Korean peninsula. This is in fact, another commitment to walking together with everyone in the ecumenical family on a pilgrimage of healing, reconciliation and unification.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) gives thanks to God, for all that has been accomplished thus far to accompany and be in solidarity with the people of the Korean peninsula through various efforts by different actors and players in the ecumenical family. Over the years, the CCA has been journeying together with the Korean churches as a prime partner and faithful witness in their search for peace with justice, reconciliation, and reunification of the Korean peninsula. Jesus, in His kenosis, was acquainted with our infirmities, yet Jesus reconciled us to God through his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus came to liberate all people and make them one. He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall (Ephesians 2:14). On behalf of CCA, I wish every success for fruitful deliberations of PROK's ceremonial event in Cheorwon to proclaim a peace statement and to reaffirm the Korean people's commitment to the peaceful unification of their divided ancestral land. May God Almighty continue to accompany and strengthen all of us in our journeying together.

Yours along the journey,

Dr Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA