

COMMITTEE 5

A CALL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE AND REUNIFICATION IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

WHEREAS, the Korean War ended on July 27, 1953 with the signing of an Armistice Agreement and creation of a demilitarized zone between the two Korean regimes, which was designed by the U.S. and Soviet Union in August 15, 1945 as only a temporary political arrangement, and yet after sixty years a formal peace treaty has never been reached, leaving the peninsula and its people divided by fear and hostility, and subject to recurring incidents of violence;

WHEREAS, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of Korea's independence from Japanese occupation, enabled by the U.S. through the Taft-Katsura Agreement in 1905, yet the Korean people are still not free from the occupation of extensive militarization, and of antagonistic domestic policies and Cold War international politics, intensified in recent years as South Korea, a client of U.S. military hegemony in North East Asia, has been the apex of an aggressive U.S. policy to "pivot" or reposition arms and forces into the Pacific;

WHEREAS, for more than 60 years the U.S. has led sustained economic sanctions on North Korea, continues to wield wartime operational control of South Korea's military, and has planned to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile system in the country to intercept missiles from North Korea, China and Russia, further threatening the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia;

WHEREAS, communities and families separated by the Korean War and subsequent division between the North and South desire reunion and reconciliation before generations pass without ever seeing or knowing the fate of loved ones; and separated families have rarely been able to communicate or visit across the border, but rather have been kept distant, disconnected, and often are used as leverage in political negotiations;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ maintains a close partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, which together with the National Council of Churches in Korea, the Korean Christian Federation of North Korea, and with the World Council of Church 10th Assembly meeting in 2013 in Busan, Korea, have called on the international community to advance a new era of commitment to work for peace and reunification in the Korean peninsula;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, reminded that the Twenty-Fourth General Synod in 2003 resolved to advocate for "Peace and Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula," being grieved that the Korean people remain divided and disturbed disrupted by recurring violence and hostility more than 60 years after the end of the Korean War, faithfully joins our partners the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and the National Council of Churches in Korea, as well as responds to the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly, in recommitting our communion to work for peace and justice; and committing to work for reunification in the Korean peninsula;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod, recognizing that 2015 is the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Korea from occupation at the end of Second World War, and yet that the peninsula remains occupied by militarization and nuclear weapons, and believing that with "God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26), advocate with that the U.S. government and international community commence a new process of peace-building across the Korean peninsula, that includes a commitment by all parties to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953 with a permanent peace treaty, finally bringing an end to the state of war; and a mutual commitment to end provocative military

exercises on the peninsula, to reduce military expenditures, and to eliminate nuclear weapons on the peninsula, establishing a model for peace and demilitarization in Northeast Asia;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod, trusting that Christ “has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph. 2:14), rededicates itself to accompany our Korean partners in their efforts, working with the governments in both North and South Korea, with the churches and Christians in both North and South Korea, and through religious, humanitarian and advocacy initiatives, to seek the reconciliation and restoration of families and communities long divided by conflict and hostility, so that social, spiritual and psychological healing can occur among the people of Korea;

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod calls upon its members and congregations to accompany our partners in Korea by praying for peace with the peoples and churches of Korea, recognizing the Sunday before August 15, Korean Independence Liberation Day, as the “Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula”; by expressing solidarity through bridge-building relationship building trips, in partnership with Global Ministries as their ecumenical partner, to churches in North and South Korea; by supporting efforts such as the World Council of Churches’ Tozanso Process and complementary initiatives to foster dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual support between the North and South; and by advocating with that the U.S. Congress and Administration change U.S. foreign policy and military strategy and pursue policies of peace and reunification.

FUNDING

The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.