

1 The Board of Directors recommends this resolution be sent to a Committee of the General
2 Synod.

3
4 **A CALL FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND REUNIFICATION**
5 **IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA**
6

7 **Submitted by Wider Church Ministries**
8 **(A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ)**
9 **A Resolution of Witness**

10
11 **SUMMARY**
12

13 More than sixty years after the close of the Korean War, there is still no formal peace treaty
14 between North and South Korea. Communities and families separated by the division of the
15 Korean peninsula desire reconciliation before generations pass away without reuniting with
16 loved ones. Suspicion, hostility and recurring incidents of violence persist as a result of the
17 unresolved state of conflict and extensive militarization of the peninsula, worsened under the
18 current U.S. policy of repositioning substantial forces to the Pacific and to South Korea in
19 particular. 2015 is the 70th Anniversary of Korean Independence from Japanese occupation, but
20 the peninsula remains divided and occupied by the threat of war. This resolution calls on the
21 United Church of Christ to rededicate itself to accompany our partners in efforts to seek
22 reconciliation and reunification of the peninsula and its people, and to call on political leaders to
23 commit to sign a final peace treaty ending the Korean War and to turn from policies of
24 militarization and confrontation between North and South Korea.

25
26 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING**
27

28 Paul assures us “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has
29 broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph. 2:14). As Jesus Christ
30 broke down the walls of hostility that divide God’s people, we too are called to seek
31 reconciliation and peace. The Armistice Agreement of 1953 only temporarily halted the war that
32 claimed 4 million lives and divided 10 million families. For more than 60 years, the Korean
33 people have remained divided and disturbed by extensive militarization of their land, policies
34 that reinforce separation and suspicion, and a Cold War ideology that sustains a climate of
35 hostility and provocation between North Korea and South Korea and the U.S. This unresolved
36 conflict not only risks violence and warfare on the peninsula, but in the region and globally.

37 The United Church of Christ, together with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through
38 Global Ministries, has a deep partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
39 (PROK). We respond in solidarity with the PROK and ecumenically with the National Council
40 of Churches in Korea and the Korean Christian Federation in the Democratic People’s Republic
41 of Korea, in efforts to seek a sustainable peace, reconciliation, and reunification of the Korean
42 people. Many of these efforts we support are humanitarian or aimed at fostering dialogue and
43 exchange between people and churches in the U.S., South Korea, and North Korea. We also
44 advocate for a U.S. commitment to pursue international negotiations toward peace rather than
45 military commitments that lead to episodes of confrontation, to reduce rather than increase its

46 arms and forces positioned on the peninsula, to prefer dialogue over distrust. Most notably our
47 partners and the ecumenical community globally, led by the World Council of Churches (WCC)
48 at its 2013 Assembly in Busan, Korea, are advancing a campaign for a Peace Treaty to finally
49 replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953. After 60 years the message is that replacing the
50 Armistice Agreement with a Peace Treaty should be the first step in establishing a lasting and
51 sustainable peace on the Korean peninsula.

52 This resolution invites the General Synod to go further than the resolution passed in 2003 at the
53 Twenty-fourth general Synod “Advocating Peace and Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula,”
54 which focused largely on supporting a political process of peace and disarmament negotiations.
55 This resolution would call our church to accompany our partners in a processes aimed at political
56 reunification and intentional reconciliation and reunion of families and communities separated
57 by the conflict. Beyond a Peace Treaty, this is the solidarity that would bring justice to the
58 families divided by war and hostility. This is the moment for our united Christian witness to the
59 peace and reconciliation made possible in Christ.

60 In addition to the solidarity expressed in partnership relationships and visits undertaken by
61 United Church of Christ constituents and conferences, Global Ministries staff and
62 denominational leaders in advocacy and ecumenical cooperation with all churches in Korea,
63 including the Korean Church Federation in North Korea, as well as with various civil society
64 organizations with whom we share common goals. This expression of partnership with Korean
65 churches commits us to pursue those objectives of mutual cooperation, accompaniment, and
66 advocacy toward peace with justice that derive from Global Ministries’ core values.

67 A main focus of our advocacy is participation with international ecumenical initiatives aimed at
68 advancing Korean peace and reunification. Some of this activity corresponds to a long-term
69 peace and dialogue process initiated by the WCC called the Tozanso Process. This initiative of
70 the world-wide ecumenical community to dedicate collective action to seek peace and
71 reunification in Korea began in 1984 in Tozanso, Japan, following on an earlier
72 interdenominational meeting of Christian scholars and church leaders from North and South
73 Korea and representatives from North and South Koreans living in Europe and North America,
74 which met on November 1981 at Albert Schweitzer House, Vienna, Austria. This important
75 movement was renewed at the 25th anniversary of the Tozanso Consultation marked at the
76 International Consultation on Peace, Reconciliation and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula,
77 held in Hong Kong, in 2009, and been carried forth through our participation in the 2013 WCC
78 Assembly in Busan and more recently in the WCC International Consultation on Peace, Justice,
79 and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula at Bossey in June 2014.

80 A complementary initiative to the global churches’ commitment to peace and dialogue has been
81 the work of the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on
82 the Korean Peninsula. The Ecumenical Forum serves as a cooperative endeavor of churches,
83 national councils of churches, mission organizations and church-related development agencies in
84 cooperation with the WCC, Christian Conference of Asia and other ecumenical bodies. The
85 goals of the Ecumenical Forum are to mobilize dialogue and cooperation for peace and
86 reunification and to improve chances for the church leaders of South Korea and North Korea to
87 meet together in order to engage in mutual peace and development efforts.

88 **MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

89

90 The United Church of Christ and Global Ministries maintain a close partnership with the
91 Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), and ecumenically work with the National
92 Council of Churches in Korea, the Korean Christian Federation in the Democratic People’s
93 Republic of Korea, and various agencies and projects in Korea, all of whom are stakeholders
94 with whom we engage in expressions of mutual support and accountability. Our United Church
95 of Christ constituencies participate in visits and exchanges with Korean partners to communicate
96 and reinforce common commitments to peace and reconciliation, not just on the Korean
97 peninsula but globally as well. Global Ministries’ staff and denominational leaders participate in
98 efforts that promote a sustainable peace, reconciliation, and reunification of the Korean people,
99 including advocacy, dialogue and witness through the WCC Tozanso process and related
100 ecumenical, development, and justice initiatives like the Ecumenical Forum. We will be
101 expected to continue support for ecumenical engagements toward peace and reconciliation,
102 including promoting the campaign to finally replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953 with a
103 Peace Treaty and the commitment to recognize and resource the Sunday before August 15,
104 Korean Independence Day, as the “Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the
105 Korean Peninsula.”

106

107 **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**

108

109 The resolution would require no additional financial or staff support. The resolution advances
110 the public witness of the United Church of Christ and provides a new focus for partnership and
111 advocacy on Korea by shifting the message to an urgent call for sustainable peace rather than
112 militarization, and reunification of families and communities separated by the conflict.

113

114 **PROBABILITY OF INFLUENCING SOCIAL CHANGE**

115

116 With this Resolution of Witness the General Synod affirms its shared commitment to seek Just
117 Peace, to work with partners and others to advance initiatives in South and North Korea that
118 reunite people in the short and long-term, and in the U.S. to advocate and support policies that
119 reduce militarization and commit to a Peace Treaty, fostering a change in the climate of hostility
120 in the peninsula and region

121

122 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

123
124 WHEREAS, the Korean War ended on July 27, 1953 with the signing of an Armistice
125 Agreement and creation of a demilitarized zone between the two Korean regimes, which was
126 designed by the U.S. and Soviet Union in August 15, 1945 as only a temporary political
127 arrangement, and yet after sixty years a formal peace treaty has never been reached, leaving the
128 peninsula and its people divided by fear and hostility, and subject to recurring incidents of
129 violence;

130
131 WHEREAS, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of Korea's independence from Japanese
132 occupation, enabled by the U.S. through the Taft-Katsura Agreement in 1905, yet the Korean
133 people are still not free from the occupation of extensive militarization, and of antagonistic
134 domestic policies and Cold War international politics, intensified in recent years as South Korea,
135 a client of U.S. military hegemony in North East Asia, has been the apex of an aggressive U.S.
136 policy to "pivot" or reposition arms and forces into the Pacific;

137
138 WHEREAS, for more than 60 years the U.S. has led sustained economic sanctions on North
139 Korea, continues to wield wartime operational control of South Korea's military, and has
140 planned to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile
141 system in the country to intercept missiles from North Korea, China and Russia, further
142 threatening the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia;

143
144 WHEREAS, communities and families separated by the Korean War and subsequent division
145 between the North and South desire reunion and reconciliation before generations pass without
146 ever seeing or knowing the fate of loved ones; and separated families have rarely been able to
147 communicate or visit across the border, but rather have been kept distant, disconnected, and
148 often are used as leverage in political negotiations;

149
150 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ maintains a close partnership with the Presbyterian
151 Church in the Republic of Korea, which together with the National Council of Churches in
152 Korea, the Korean Christian Federation of North Korea, and with the World Council of Church
153 10th Assembly meeting in 2013 in Busan, Korea, have called on the international community to
154 advance a new era of commitment to work for peace and reunification in the Korean peninsula;

155
156 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod of the United Church of
157 Christ, reminded that the Twenty-Fourth General Synod in 2003 resolved to advocate for "Peace
158 and Reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula," being grieved that the Korean people remain
159 divided and disturbed by recurring violence and hostility more than 60 years after the end of the
160 Korean War, faithfully joins our partners the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and
161 the National Council of Churches in Korea, as well as responds to the World Council of
162 Churches 10th Assembly, in recommitting our communion to work for peace, justice and
163 reunification in the Korean peninsula;

164
165 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Thirtieth General Synod, recognizing that 2015 is the
166 70th anniversary of the liberation of Korea from occupation at the end of Second World War, and
167 yet that the peninsula remains occupied by militarization and nuclear weapons, including by U.S.

168 arms and troops intensified under the current U.S. “pivot” or policy of repositioning military
169 forces to the Pacific, advocate with the U.S. government and international community to
170 commence a new process of peace-building across the Korean peninsula, that includes a
171 commitment by all parties to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953 with a permanent peace
172 treaty, finally bringing an end to the state of war; and a mutual commitment to end provocative
173 military exercises on the peninsula, to reduce military expenditures, and to eliminate nuclear
174 weapons on the peninsula, establishing a model for peace and demilitarization in North East
175 Asia;

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

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

193

194 **FUNDING**

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

197

198 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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