

Together with the Churches of the World

2017 Sunday Prayer Worship for  
Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula

# “Let Us Pursue What Makes for Peace and for Mutual Upbuilding.”



Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017



National Council of Churches in Korea  
Reconciliation and Reunification Committee

## Theme/ Lectionary

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

## Goals

1. To pray, with all the churches of the world, for the reconciliation and healing of the divided Korean peninsula
2. To overcome the South/North antagonism and conflict by opening an interaction between North and South
3. To foster an environment which will see peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula by concluding a Peace Treaty
4. To create a spirit of cooperation and solidarity among the churches of the world who pray for peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula as well as for peace in the global village

## Background

1. August 15 is celebrated as Liberation Day in Korea, the day that signifies Korea's Liberation from Japanese colonization.
2. In 2013, the WCC 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly meeting in Busan, Korea passed a resolution that the churches of the world will annually observe each Sunday prior to August 15 as a “Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula.”
3. The Reconciliation and Reunification Committee of the NCKK drafted this liturgy in the hopes that each church could apply it with reference to their own situation.
4. The Joint Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula was prepared by both the NCKK (South) and the Korean Christian Federation (North) together.
5. In 2017 the NCKK together with global ecumenical community has continued the Korea Peace Treaty campaign which will last until 2018. A Korea peace treaty will be a corner stone establishing the permanent peace system in the Korean peninsula.

# 2017 Sunday Prayer Worship for Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula

## {Order of Worship}

**Sounding of the Gong** (Praying for the presence of the Trinity God- 3 strikes)

**Call to worship** (Please stand)

Liturgist: God of creation, you brought life to all that we see. You set the boundaries of the universe and placed us within its care.

**Congregation: Creator God, breathe life into your creation.**

L: Holy Spirit, you bind your children together in community. Your bonds transcend borders created by human kind. You kindle the fire within us that stirs our passion for faith, justice, and reconciliation.

**C: Spirit God, inspire us to reconciliation.**

L: Jesus the Christ, you came to teach and to lead. You showed us the cost of discipleship when you stood up against the powers of the world, and they tried to suppress your truth by sentencing you to death. Your life was more powerful than death and your truth lives on in us.

**C: Jesus the Christ, help us reflect your light of truth and peace.**

## Opening Hymn – Chuyo Chuyo

Korea / Frankreich

I

1 Chu - yo chu - yo tu - ro chu - so - so  
2 Hö - re, hö - re uns, Gott, wir bit - ten dich!

II

Chu - yo chu - yo tu - ro chu - so - so  
Hö - re, hö - re uns, Gott, wir bit - ten dich!

L: God, please be with your people. Carry us through this wilderness of fear and cycles of retaliation. Show us the path to the land where we will study war no more, where the Korean peninsula becomes one again, and give us the strength to take every step.

C: God of the Holy Trinity, please be with us.

(Please be seated)

## Confession of Sin

L: God of forgiveness, we often stray from your path. As soon as we begin the journey we become easily distracted. We flirt with ideologies that distort your reality. We reduce our neighbor to an enemy image when we should honor each other as a beloved child of God. We neglect our neighbor's needs and place our own interests as an idol above your commandment to reconciliation. We ignore our neighbors' wounds and claim that, "God only cares about my suffering." We take steps in the direction you lead us sometimes, but we become tired and lose energy. We lose faith in your ability to carry us on your path when your living water should fill us with all that we need. God, please turn us back to your path and fill us with the strength to persist. In your mercy, unite us as one.

C: God have mercy. Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy upon us.

## Assurance of Pardon

L: Friends, believe the good news. In Jesus Christ you are forgiven. Now extend this same grace to your sisters, your brothers, your neighbors around you.

Sung Response: Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass clef, in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are: "Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah!"

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah!  
hal - le -

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah!  
Hal - le - lu - jah!

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le -  
hal - le -

lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! *Fine*

# {Hearing the Word}

## Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 33:6

I am going to bring it recovery and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them abundance[d] of prosperity and security. (NRSV)

## New Testament Reading: Romans 14:19

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. (NRSV)

## Sermon

“Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”

# {Thanksgiving and Response}

## 2017 North South/South North Joint Prayer for Peaceful Reunification

16 Mortal, take a stick and write on it, "For Judah, and the Israelites associated with it"; then take another stick and write on it, "For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with it"; 17 and join them together into one stick, so that they may become one in your hand. (Ezekiel 37: 16-17, NRSV)

### **God of grace!**

Once again, we greet the month of August, the month of Independence where North and South still celebrate separately and remember it differently. It has been a long, harsh period, one with cruel struggles between the two countries. No longer are we oppressed by Japanese forces, but our people are still filled with contempt for each other and our country is still challenged by neighboring forces. Lord, pity us.

### **God who rules history,**

For the last 72 years, we dreamed of being one, but we lived like foes, not living up to our dreams. We lived separated from our family and torn apart by different ideology and systems. Lord, bring the history of our people together with your holy hands. Let us hope for unification with passionate hearts and work together so fervently that we shed the sweat of hope. For every August we encounter, help us sincerely repent with our hearts, and fill us with a strong will for unification.

### **God who leads peace,**

Lord, we speak of one people, one sisterhood/brotherhood while filled with hatred against each other. We have violated the spirit of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement, the June 15 Joint Declaration, and the October 4 Joint Declaration and also firmly locked the doors of the Keumkang Mt. and Gaeseong Industrial Complex. Thus, we were left with a greater danger and greater threat. Lord, listen to our desperate cries that thirst for peace.

### **God who gives hope,**

Lord, help us to dream once more of a beautiful land where no joint-military exercise is needed. Let us welcome a new world where we are not interfered with or challenged by neighboring strong powers. Let us once again begin with the same overwhelming determination we had as of August 15, 1945. Please

quickly open the doors of intercommunication and let us walk hand in hand for joint prosperity. Lord, let the North and South greet each other without prejudice. Help us newly begin a history of reconciliation and embracement on this land.

**God of grace!**

Bestow your grace upon the whole of Korea. Shine down pure rays of peace from Baekdu to Halla, and wet the entire land with showers of joy. Give happiness to the 80 million fellow Koreans throughout this land and this world, and guide them to be leaders of their own lives. Bring our strengthened community to be servants of the world.

God of Peace, we pray in Jesus name.

August 15, 2017

National Council of Churches in Korea

Korean Christian Federation



## Response to Prayer - O Lord, hear my prayer

1 O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer  
2 Gott, hör mein Ge - bet, Gott, hör mein Ge - bet:  
3 En - tends ma pri - ère, en - tends ma pri - ère:

when I call ans - wer me. O Lord, hear my prayer. O  
Komm und er - hö - re mich. Gott, hör mein Ge - bet, Gott,  
Seig - neur viens, é - coute-moi. En-tends ma pri - ère, en -

Lord, hear my prayer. Come and li - sten to me.  
hör mein Ge - bet. Komm und er - hö - re mich.  
tends ma pri - ère, Quand j'ap-pelle, ré - ponds-moi.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are provided in three parts: English, German, and French. The first system contains the first three lines of lyrics. The second system contains the next three lines. The third system contains the final three lines, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots.

## Offering

## Offering Hymn

# {Sending to the World}

## Sharing of Peace

L: God grants us peace not so that we can hide it away in a dark room to keep ourselves comfortable. God grants us peace so that we may share it with all those around us, neighbors near and far. God calls us to take this peace into uncomfortable situations of conflict. It is a peace that passes all understanding. It is a peace more powerful than all machinations of violence. It is a peace that challenges dangerous idolatries. It is a peace that binds us together even across boundaries of conflict. May that peace fill you up until it overflows. May the peace of the Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

All: Now, filled with the transcendent peace of God, reach out and share it with your sisters and brothers next to you.

(Everyone exchanges the sign of peace according to one's own custom.)

## Closing Hymn - Put peace into each other's hands

C F C G<sup>7</sup> Am G C England

1 Put\_ peace in - to each o - ther's hands and  
2 Gebt euch den Frie - den in die Hand, um\_

F C F <sup>3</sup> G<sup>4</sup> <sup>3</sup> C F C Dm

like a trea - sure\_ hold it, pro - tect it like a  
ihn als Schatz zu \_\_\_ wah - ren. Be - hü - tet zärt - lich

C E<sup>7</sup> Am C Dm C G Am F C

can - dle - flame, with ten - der - ness en - fold it.  
die - ses Licht, gebt Schutz ihm vor Ge - fah - - ren.

## **Blessing (unison)**

All: May the blessing of God be with you all. May the healing of God restore your wounds. May the peace of God transform your communities in conflict so they may become communities of God's commonwealth; a commonwealth where all God's children receive the bread and water they need to survive and live life in abundance. May the Korean peninsula become one again. May God grant you the power to go out into this world and join God in the work cultivating this peace. Amen.

### *Concluding note from NCKK to our partners:*

If you have used this service, we thank you. Please send a brief note to Kurt at [kurt.pcusa.nckk@gmail.com](mailto:kurt.pcusa.nckk@gmail.com) so that we will have a record. In addition, if you would like to give any suggestions for improvement, NCKK would very much like to hear them.

## A Moment of Forgiveness and a Moment of Grace<sup>1</sup>

Dr. David Suh was born in the village of Kanggye near the northern border of Korea and China before North and South Korea became separate nations. His father became a pastor during the years Korea was occupied by the Japanese Empire. His father's outspoken resistance to Japanese occupation put them in danger, so they moved to Manchuria closer to the edges of the Japanese empire. Dr. Suh's father sent him to a Japanese middle school because he said, "You must learn the language of the empire." Dr. Suh was attending school the day that empire fell, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945. He was the only Korean in a class full of Japanese youth. He remembers the Japanese teacher calling the attention of the class to announce that the emperor had just surrendered to end World War II. While his classmates all expressed their grief, he had to hide his feelings of joy. He ran home to his father and celebrated openly with him.

After Japan left Korea, Dr. Suh and his family moved back to their home in the village of Kanggye. As the south and north zones became two separate countries in 1948, his father became outspoken against the communist leadership of the new North Korean administration. Some Christians were joining the communist administration and created the Korean Christian Federation (KCF), urging pastors like his father to join. His father refused, becoming an enemy of the KCF. Thus, the police of North Korea took a negative interest in his father's outspokenness. Eventually, Dr. Suh's family moved further south toward Pyongyang. Five years after Japan surrendered Korea to the Soviet Union and the United States, war flared up again in June of 1950. Soon after the war began, Dr. Suh's father went missing. While wondering who might have taken his father and what they might have done to him, Dr. Suh also had to worry about being picked up by the North Korean army himself and taken to fight in the war, since he was 19 years old in 1950. He and his younger brother would hide in a hole in the floor of his house. His ability to hide did not last forever; however, the kindness of a stranger saved him from likely death on the battlefield.

The North Korean army finally picked him up when the August heat of 1950 got so uncomfortable that he had to get out for some fresh air. They trucked him into town and lined him up to see the doctor who was supposed to determine his physical fitness for the war. To his astonishment, the doctor told him, "You are sick." He describes his response, "I don't

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<sup>1</sup> This story is a summary of an interview of Dr. David Suh (Korean: Suh, Kwang Sun), retired pastor and professor of Ewha University, done by Kurt Esslinger, pastor and mission co-worker of the Presbyterian Church (USA) assigned to the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK). The interview was broadcast as a webinar hosted by Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ/Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in cooperation with the NCCCK Reconciliation and Unification Committee.

know what I was thinking at the time, of course I should have said, 'Yes I am sick.' Instead I argued with him, 'No I am not sick, I am healthy.' Thankfully, he insisted, 'No, you are sick.' He gave me a piece of paper that said I was not healthy enough to join the army. I didn't know him; he was not a member of our church. To this day I still have no idea why he decided to do that for me. The easy answer would be to say it was God, I guess?"

As he was heading away from the line of young men, he heard his little brother call out to him. The army had also found his little brother. His brother said to him, "Older brother, where are you going? You should be going in that [other] direction. We are supposed to go that way to the war." Dr. Suh showed his brother his medical release paper. His brother then responded, "Okay, older brother. You shouldn't go to war. I will go to the army instead of you." He hasn't seen his little brother since that moment. Dr. Suh explains that these memories make him wonder, "Why am I here, then? What is my purpose if these people did so much to make sure I could survive?" He humbly muses that as old as he is, and as many years as he has spent praying, he is still asking himself this question.

After the US won access to North Korea, his family was finally free to look for his father. Eventually they found him. Someone told him his father's body was by the Taedong River in Pyongyang. He went looking, and sure enough he found a group of four other ministers who were executed and tied together. He found his father's body covered in bullet holes and blood. Dr. Suh remembers the anger he felt as he held his father's body, and he remembers the strong desire for revenge.

Dr. Suh then moved to the South. He joined the South Korean Navy as a way to avenge his father. He received another special opportunity when he scored highly on an entrance test. His results gained him access to a program that sent high-performing Koreans to study in the US, and a friend he made in the US Navy encouraged him to take it up. Near the end of his study at a US school, his friend had him over for dinner and asked him, "What are you going to do next?" Dr. Suh was planning on returning to the Korean Navy at that time, but the friend suggested, "No, you are not the navy type. You are a scholar type." His navy friend helped him return to the US and register for a Christian college in Montana. Dr. Suh went on to study theology and then earned admission to Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 1962. There he read Bonhoeffer's letters from prison, he went to hear Martin Luther King Jr. speak of the Civil Rights Movement in Washington D.C., and he watched his friends and fellow students join in the Civil Rights Movement. He says that this time tested him theologically as he began to reflect on his own attitude toward his enemy and his desire for revenge. He began reflecting theologically on revenge, forgiveness, and "What should be my Christian attitude toward my enemies who killed my father?"

After receiving a PhD from Union Theological Seminary, he returned to Korea and joined in the movement for human rights and democratization against the forces of South Korean dictatorship while teaching at Ewha University. At that time, Park Jung-Hee, father of the recent former president Park Geun-Hye, was in power, and in the name of anti-communism and pro-USA rhetoric severely oppressed South Korean workers, students, and Christian

intellectuals who opposed him.

Dr. Suh explains, “I thought, ‘My father fought against the communist dictator and gave his life for human rights and democracy and freedom in North Korea, and here is this so-called democratic dictator . . . . What is the difference between a communist dictator and a capitalist dictator?’ So I should follow my father’s example against all dictatorship.” That is when he became involved with the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK). Dr. Suh was eventually arrested by South Korean police for “agitating his students to demonstrate against Park Jung-Hee.” They forced him to resign his position at Ewha in 1980, which then freed him up to be ordained as a pastor of a local congregation. Despite the pressure from his government, he never ended his involvement in the Korean peace and unification issue.

This gave Dr. Suh the opportunity to join the NCCCK for a consultation in Montreal, Canada in 1991 that included the KCF, his father’s old North Korean Christian enemies. There he encountered the head of the North Korean delegation, who was the same age as Dr. Suh and was the son of one of the founders of the KCF, his father’s main enemy. Both Dr. Suh and this representative of the KCF were set to speak before Canadian church and government leaders as well as representatives of the World Council of Churches.

He describes the encounter: “Then I really struggled the night before. ‘Father, your son is here to talk about peace, and I’m representing South Korean Christians. What do I do? How can I meet this guy?’ But the following morning, right before the meeting started, he came to me and said, ‘Dr. Suh, can you translate, interpret my speech?’ I said, ‘You have your own interpreter who came with you.’ He responded, ‘No, no, he is no [kind of] interpreter. His English is [not] good. He came here to watch me.’ But if I were to help him translate his speech that is a violation of South Korea’s National Security Law I could get arrested. ‘Wait a minute, I have to talk with my friends from South Korea.’ I went to them to say that guy is asking me to translate his speech. And my friends, my really close friends, turned away from me and said, ‘Hey that’s your business.’ What a help?!

“Then I made a decision . . . . Do I choose revenge or forgiveness? And then I heard a voice, ‘Loving your enemy is the real revenge.’ Okay, I will do that. So I helped him with translation. Then after him I did my own keynote address representing South Korea. After I did that, it was a small act, but violating South Korean law, helping my North Korean enemy, I felt a sense of freedom from the bondage of thoughts of doing bad things to my enemy. It was like a moment of grace, a chance for me to perform a loving action for my enemy. From then on, I felt so free to talk about North Korea, peace, and reconciliation. In 2004, I had a chance to visit Pyongyang and give a sermon in front of a congregation of 300. There I told them about my story [this story], and in Pyongyang they all wept. They are Christians, they are Koreans, and they have the same feelings that I have for peace and unification. Now I am not only free on these issues, but also I have conviction that we may be united once again as brothers and sisters.”