

## **A Statement on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War**

### **Bishop Hee-Soo Jung (Wisconsin Conference)**

Matthew 18:21-22 recounts, “Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven.’” Seventy is an important number in scripture, and here it is associated with forgiveness. The day has come for forgiveness for the Korean peninsula. It is the time to end former division and violence and to reunite a broken country. The time has come to finalize the peace treaty and officially end the war. Our separation has gone on too long; the time for reunification is upon us.

Seventy years kept families apart for over three generations. Seventy years rewrote significant history for all Korean people. Seventy years is a human lifetime, according to the prayer of Moses in Psalm 90. One lifetime is enough to live apart; it is time for reconciliation and reunion.

Jesus blessed the peace-makers. Peace-making is central to the identity of Christian disciples. There is a three-fold effort needed for God’s peace to be established in our world. Peace-making is the hard work of preparing hearts, minds, and spirits to truly love, accept, affirm, and celebrate one another. Peace-makers cast the vision and prepare the plan. Peace-builders implement the plan, provide a witness to others, and help to teach and communicate what makes for peace and justice. Peace-keepers walk the walk and talk the talk. They live peace-filled and peace-driven lives. They embody and embrace the rituals and practices that maintain and sustain peace. The dynamic work of peace-makers, peace-builders, and peace-keepers is the Spirit guided work of the transformation of the world.

Central to each peace function is prayer. Our prayers for peace, our meditations and contemplations of God’s vision of peace, our focused attention on the gospel call of peace, embrace God’s will in our own hearts and spirits, preparing us for the challenges of peace work. A primary responsibility of Christian disciples is to pray and work for peace and justice.

Seventy years of division, hostility, and strife is long enough. Join me in praying for ongoing dialogue and negotiation between Korea North and South. Pray that a vision of true and lasting peace emerges for the Korean peninsula, and that this vision become an inspiration to the whole global community that peace is not only possible, but is the very will of God for our world.

Let us be advocates for change, for peace, and for justice. Begin with prayer, prepare your hearts and minds, then act. Together we can make peace, build peace, and keep peace, in Korea and around the planet.