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*“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”
(Ephesians 2:14)*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace to you in the most precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior!

August 15th is a day of national celebration of the Independence Day in Korea. The Japanese occupation of Korea ended that day in 1945. However, the joy of liberation ended quickly. Soon after, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two and the hostility between them has continued for over 70 years. The Korean War during 1950 to 1953 cost injuries and loss of lives numbering in the millions. The present situation is so alarming and serious and it is escalating toward the breaking point.

The World Council of Churches has designated this Sunday, August 13, 2017, as the Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula. I call upon our people to pray for peace to prevail. You can find out more information about the World Council of Churches call for prayer at <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/sunday-of-prayer-for-the-peaceful-reunification-of-the-korean-peninsula>.

Please have a time of prayer for Korea during worship this Sunday.

Let me offer a prayer:

*“O God of every nation, of every race and land, redeem your whole creation with your almighty hand; where hate and fear divide us, and bitter threats are hurled, in love and mercy guide us, and heal our strife-torn world.”**

Eternal Father and Mother of us all, these words of hymnody speak so well of what we feel in our hearts. At times, O Creator, we see a world torn and divided by fears, anxiety, and misunderstanding. We fail to recognize that this is not our world, but yours and that you do not belong to any one race, faith, creed, or nationality. You sent your Son into the world in the hopes that we might learn to put aside our instruments of war and take up instead implements of peace. Wherever we look we see the on-going struggle for peace and forgiveness instead of war and hatred. O God, how long will it continue to be so?

We especially pray today for the people of Korea and for a nation divided. It is hard for any one of us to even begin to comprehend what it must be like to live in constant uncertainty and fear of what could happen at any time.

We pray for those who are living through generations in unwanted separation from their loved ones; so close to one another and yet so far away. O God, how long will it continue to be so?

So we pray today for the Korean people. Our brothers and sisters yearn for the day when the hope of peace for their country shall become a reality.

In the meantime, O God, we pray the words of the same hymn writer, *“Keep bright in us the vision of days when war shall cease, when hatred and division give way to love and peace, till dawns the morning glorious when truth and justice reign, and Christ shall rule victorious o’er all the world’s domain.”**

This is our prayer, a prayer of peace and reconciliation for lands afar and near. So hear our prayer, O God of all the nations, we give ourselves to you, let your will be done.”

In the name of the Jesus, Prince of Peace, Healer of our Brokenness, and Hope of the World. Amen.

Your Brother in Christ,

† 

Jeremiah J. Park

**Words by William W. Reid, Jr., 1958 (United Methodist Hymnal #435, “O God of Every Nation”)*