

More than 150 primates, clergy and lay leaders from around the Anglican Communion gathered for TOPIK, hosted by the Anglican Church in Korea (ACK).

"TOPIK has certainly placed the issue of reunification of the Korean Peninsula high on the agenda of the Anglican Communion," noted the Rev. Canon Brian Grieves, director of Peace and Justice Ministries.

Communique

Official Communiqué by Participants of TOPIK Paju, South Korea 2007 November 20

For Christ is our peace, and has made both groups one, and has broken down the dividing wall.-
-Ephesians 2:14

Arising from the heart of the Korean people, and in response to a resolution of the 13th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), a "Worldwide Anglican Peace Conference" entitled Toward Peace in Korea (TOPIK), was held November 14-20 in Seoul. Hosted by the Anglican Church of Korea, we came from all parts of the globe including: Korea, Japan, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the United States, Australia, Canada, the Philippines, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Aotearoa New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, Palestine, Cyprus, Myanmar/Burma, Switzerland, and Hong Kong. We regret the absence of members from the China Christian Council, due to their Synod being held at the same time as this conference. The Most Rev. Dr. Francis Kyong-Jo Park, Primate of the Anglican Church of Korea, reminded us that "as servant members of the Body of Christ, we are called to be apostles of peace in a world where discord and conflict are prevalent." Through participation in this conference, we acknowledge that the "transformation of unjust structures of society" is one of the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion.

The appropriateness of Korea as the site for this conference was duly noted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams. Reflecting on the fact that "the majority of Koreans have no memory of a time before the division of the peninsula," Archbishop Williams observed that a deeper awareness of the difficult issues of Korean reunification can "empower and encourage those seeking to overcome the obstacles in the path to peace." Unable to attend the conference, the Archbishop named as his special envoy and president of the conference the Most Rev. Dr. Robin Eames, former Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. He shared with us from the start that "only by coming together in a spirit of humility and with a willingness to learn from one another can we find the common ground that can allow us to move into the future in peace."

Our conference began on Wednesday November 14 as the 41 international members joined some 100 Korean members on a peace trip across the Korean Peninsula, over the Demilitarized Zone and into the Geumgangsan special tourism region of North Korea. It was significant for us, gathered from many nations, to make this crossing in a spirit of prayer. Surrounded by the beauty of these mountains a representative group was able to make a presentation of goods both to aid reconstruction of buildings and farms damaged by the serious floods last summer, and to provide medical relief.

That same evening we, representing member churches of the Anglican Communion, gathered to celebrate the Eucharist. This was the first official Anglican worship in North Korea since the Korean War and division of the Peninsula over fifty years ago.

Following our return to Paju, near Seoul in South Korea we gathered for a 4-day peace forum. We celebrated the Eucharist each day, led in turn by Korean, Japanese and American members. We heard from many speakers about the background to the conflict in the Korean peninsula and the deep-seated pain resulting from that conflict and subsequent division. We also heard the experiences and views of those living in other regions of conflict. During this conference, we have met in an atmosphere of prayerful fellowship and have followed a path taken by many pilgrims and disciples of peace before us in the way of Christ. We acknowledge and repent our own role in creating and adding to conflict, and have reflected theologically on the tasks of reconciliation, reunification and peace. Now, at the conclusion of our conference, we wish to share several specific observations, followed by some possible follow-up recommendations.

First, in regards to the Anglican Communion and its member Churches, we recognize the concern shown for the Korean situation in the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution v.26, which called for "peace, reunification, and cooperation" between the governments and people of the divided Korea. We believe that the work done here this week could serve as a model for other parts of the Communion where conflict persists. We appreciate the support given by the Archbishop of Canterbury for this conference, and hereby ask the organizers of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, as well as member Churches' national synods and conventions, to provide time in their agendas for presentations on peacemaking in general and the Korean situation in particular.

To our ecumenical and interfaith partners, we welcome further conversation with all who committed to peacemaking and affirm that what we can do together, we must not do alone. Therefore, we commend the World Council of Churches' "Decade to Overcome Violence" and offer our support to that ongoing work, as well as to specific peacemaking projects sponsored by other denominations and faith groups.

To the governments of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we acknowledge and appreciate their recent efforts towards peace and denuclearization, and we encourage further summit meetings in the future. Constructive dialogue is the first step in the process of reconciliation. We ask both governments to recognize that each has much to offer the other, beyond economic resources. We offer our assistance to this ongoing process when needed and as possible. We commend to both governments the need for common space to support education programs for young people from both countries, following models such as the Middle East-based program, "Kids for Peace."

To other governments, we remind them that Korea is part of the global family, and that if one part of the family is suffering, the entire family suffers. Specifically, we encourage the various governments of Northeast Asia as well as the United States to take active steps to reduce the military tension in that region, reminding them that long-term prosperity and stability is dependent on peaceful resolution of the Korean situation. We urge the countries that make up the Six-Party Talks to adopt specific practices to change the Cold War system into one of peace, leading to normalization of relationships. Concerning next steps that we in the Anglican, we recognize that this Conference is but one step along the way of peace, and that there are a number of initiatives which can be taken in response to the Korean situation. We make the following specific recommendations:

- Anglicans
- Utilize existing Anglican resources, particularly the Anglican Peace and Justice Network, for learning about and sharing information on peacemaking.

- Create a task force, authorized by the Archbishop of Canterbury and working with the Anglican Peace and Justice Network, to initiate future programs, including a similarly-designed peace conference in another part of the world such as the Middle East.
- Authorize that task force to create peace-focused educational and liturgical materials for churches throughout the Communion.
- Build on the work of the World Council of Churches' "Decade to Overcome Violence."
- Provide programs in conflict resolution for those in theological and ministry formation, specifically creating an Institute for Peace-Training within the Anglican Communion.
- Encourage the development of grassroots, parish-based peace training programs.
- The Anglican Church of Korea
- Organize a further peace conference which would include a wider range of participation, particularly from North Koreans, young people, women, those of other faiths and those from regions under-represented at this conference.
- Sponsor the translation and publishing of "Kumhee's Journey" (the story of a North Korean refugee) into at least English and Japanese.
- The Anglican Consultative Conference and Lambeth Conference
- Initiate a specifically Anglican follow-up to the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence.
- Provide time in the agenda for Lambeth 2008 for discussion of the issues raised by this conference.

We again wish to share our deep appreciation to the Most Rev. Dr. Francis Kyong-Jo Park, Primate of the Anglican Church of Korea, for his vision in convening this conference and for his gracious hospitality towards all the participants. We give thanks for the work of the Most Rev. Dr. Robin Eames as president of the conference. We also offer our appreciation to the Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church; the Most Rev. Nathaniel Uematsu, Primate of Nippon Sei Ko Kai; the Most Rev. Roger Herft, Archbishop of Perth, attending at the request of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia; and all the other primates, bishops, clergy, laity, and religious who have participated in this conference. We extend our special thanks to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams for his support for this peace conference, and for tireless efforts on behalf of the Anglican Communion.

We affirm that peace is a gift from God to which we must remain open. We, the participants of the Worldwide Anglican Peace Conference, TOPIK, commit ourselves to this Communiqué, and offer it for your consideration and action.

The Most Rev. Dr. Robin Eames President of the TOPIK Conference

The Most Rev. Dr. Francis Kyong-Jo Park Host-Convener of the TOPIK Conference